# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT
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AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

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ASSISTANT CATERING ACCOUNTANT—Mrs. B. A. Langley

EXECUTIVE CHEF—I. Gabay

HEAD CELLARMAN—D. Balcombe

HEAD STOREMAN—A. E. Edmond

SHORTHAND WRITER TO THE HOUSE—Mrs. E. M. C. Holland

PARLIAMENTARY WORKS OFFICER (PSA)—B. C. Sewell

HEAD OF SECURITY—Chief Superintendent A. J. Coxon

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER—Mrs. J. Garbutt

POSTMASTER—J. Arnold

TRANSPORT MANAGER—R. H. Hyde

*17 July 1989*

# THE
# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
## OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 25 JUNE 1987]

THIRTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES VOLUME 157

SIXTEENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1988-89

# House of Commons

*Monday 17 July 1989*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

### PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

### PRIVATE BUSINESS

UNITED MEDICAL AND DENTAL SCHOOLS BILL
*[LORDS]*
*Read a Second time, and committed.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## WALES

### Labour Statistics

1. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the most recent figures for male and female unemployment in the Ogmore constituency, Ogmore borough, Mid Glamorgan county areas and the total in Wales; and what were the equivalent figures in June 1979.

**The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Walker):** On 8 June 1989, there were 1,981, 3,080, 14,919 and 68,021 unemployed males in the Ogmore constituency, Ogwr borough, the county of Mid Glamorgan and Wales respectively. The comparable figures for unemployed females were 626, 1,147, 4,727 and 24,783. Unadjusted figures for June 1979 are not available on a basis that enables a valid comparison to be made.

**Mr. Powell:** All Opposition Members will be grateful to the Secretary of State for finding time in his busy diary to answer Welsh questions. I am grateful for his comprehensive answer to my question. I am sure that many unemployed people in Wales will be shouting hallelujah because unemployment is coming down. Will the Secretary of State give the House an assurance that unemployment will come down to the figure that he and his Government inherited in 1979? Will he bear in mind the fact that many people who are now unemployed could be employed in the Health Service as doctors, nurses and auxiliary workers? If he were to consider the views that Opposition Members would like to express to him in the Welsh Grand Committee——

**Mr. Speaker:** Briefly.

**Mr. Powell:** This is my last point, Mr. Speaker. Will the Secretary of State mark in his diary 19 July or 26 July for a debate on the Health Service?

**Mr. Walker:** I shall answer the parts of the hon. Gentleman's question that were in order and then, if Mr. Speaker permits me, I shall answer the points that were out of order. The hon. Gentleman will be delighted that in the first year that I had the privilege to be Secretary of State for Wales, unemployment in his constituency fell by 17·5 per cent. He will be even more delighted to know that last year it fell by 23·7 per cent. Such progress in reducing unemployment has never been seen in his constituency or in Wales.

**Mr. Raffan:** I warmly congratulate my right hon. Friend on his latest inward investment success and the major part that he played in bringing the Toyota engine plant to Shotton in the constituency of the shadow Secretary of State for Wales, who could never have brought it there had he tried. My right hon. Friend did so without costing the taxpayer a penny. How many jobs will be created by that project in the engine plant itself and among local component manufacturers and service industries?

**Mr. Walker:** The Toyota engine plant is an important investment. In fairness to the hon. Member for Alyn and

Deeside (Mr. Jones), he was enthusiastic and delighted about the decision that the plant will be in his constituency. It presents enormous opportunities for component manufacturers and shows the world at large that north Wales can offer a good labour force, good communications and good facilities. As a result, I hope that there will be much more inward investment in the months ahead.

**Mr. Rowlands:** Is the Secretary of State aware of the announcement in the past few minutes of the proposed closure of the Merthyr Vale pit at Aberfan? That is one of the worst acts of industrial vandalism perpetrated in the south Wales coalfield. Is he aware of the investments and developments that he has supported and the efforts that have been made to reach targets? I know that he made representations about the future of the colliery a few weeks ago. May I plead with him to intercede at the highest level with the chairman of British Coal to try to get the decision reconsidered?

**Mr. Walker:** I understand the real distress and anxiety of the hon. Gentleman at the announcement affecting his constituency. Like the hon. Gentleman, I heard of the announcement literally only half an hour ago because the meeting with the miners ended around lunchtime. He also knows that I conveyed the information with which he provided me to the chairman of British Coal and asked him to consider the representations carefully. I will have a look at the detail of the announcement and see what matters arise.

**Mrs. Clwyd:** I join my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) in expressing concern about the closure of Merthyr Vale. Many people in my constituency who have lost their jobs in the coal industry not once or twice but three times, and they will be made redundant again by this announcement. Is the Secretary of State concerned by the recent report of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, which shows that the Cynon valley ranks third in the country for the death rate among men? Is he aware that the Cynon valley has the highest male unemployment rate for Wales? Does he now accept the link between unemployment and ill health? What is he going to do about it?

**Mr. Walker:** I am sure that unemployment causes a range of health problems. However, in the Cynon valley, as in other parts of Wales many health problems are connected with the coal industry. It has been a major factor in ill health in a number of the valley regions, including the hon. Lady's constituency. There is a connection with employment and with unemployment.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** In support of my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, I ask for urgent help regarding the grave closure faced by the community. Recognising the importance of the Welsh Development Agency to employment creation in Wales, may I ask the Secretary of State to explain why the two suspended officers of the west Wales office of the Welsh Development Agency were allowed to continue their plans for the management buy-out? Why were they allowed to believe that they had the support of the agency, with which they say they had six months of detailed discussions?

**Mr. Walker:** I assure the hon. Gentleman that the Welsh Development Agency has made clear its attitude to the offer by the management of one part of the agency and that it has constantly rejected that proposal. As the hon. Gentleman knows, while I have had responsibility, I have increased massively the activities of the Welsh Development Agency. I am pleased to say that its budget for this year alone is more in cash terms than the total amount spent by the agency in the whole period of office of the previous Labour Government. The agency has an important and positive role to play and I am pleased to say that it turned down those proposals.

### Education—Industry Links

2. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the progress being made to establish better links between schools, training and industry in Wales.

**The Minister of State, Welsh Office (Mr. Wyn Roberts):** A network of eight advisers, operating within local education authority boundaries, has now been appointed. They are actively encouraging all employers in their areas to participate in creating new or strengthening existing links with educational establishments and to contribute towards the prime objectives of providing work experience for all young persons before they leave school and business experience for teachers.

**Mr. Jones:** In view of the close relationship between economic and industrial development, and the special training needs of the work force, does the Minister now agree that the responsibility for education-industry links and special training in Wales should be transferred to the Welsh Office?

**Mr. Roberts:** We have anticipated the hon. Gentleman to a large extent, in that my right hon. Friend and the Welsh Office have a responsibility for training in Wales and work closely with the Training Agency. We are actively involved with the training advisory group in setting up training and enterprise councils.

**Mr. Rogers:** In examining the link between industry and training, will the Minister consider carefully some of the activities in the Polytechnic of Wales—an institution of which I am proud, having been chairman of the governors for eight years? With the publication of the National Audit Office report this weekend, will the Minister find out whether other senior people in the polytechnic have been involved in activities in which taxpayers' money may have been wasted?

**Mr. Roberts:** As a former chairman of the governors, the hon. Gentleman knows full well that responsibility for staffing lies with the local authority and that dealing with the two cases involved is and has been a matter for that local authority.

### Welsh Development Agency

3. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if there are any plans under consideration for the privatisation of part or all of the functions of the Welsh Development Agency.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** The agency has constantly reviewed the scope for increasing private sector involvement in the range of its activities, in accordance with its statutory responsibilities and the policy guidelines laid down by the

Government. Accordingly, over the past year—as in previous years—it has sold assets worth some £12·5 million to private sector interests. It has also contracted out its legal, press and information services and it has announced an intention to seek the adoption of utility services by the statutory providers on a number of its estates.

**Mr. Williams:** May I express my anxiety about the circumstances surrounding the suspension of the two officers who have been removed from west Wales? Were not those two men guilty simply of jumping the gun and making public proposals that the agency is considering in a larger way? Will the Secretary of State confirm whether there have been detailed discussions between the WDA and Barclays de Zoete Wedd Ltd., the merchant bank arm of Barclays bank? There have been tremendous comings and goings during the past six months. Will he confirm that the agenda includes hiving off services, more private funding—with perhaps a 50-50 public-private structure —and possibly even outright privatisation?

**Mr. Walker:** No, Sir. The proposals of the two officials were for a straight management buy-out of the services and assets operating in one region of the WDA. There are constant examinations with, I would guess, all sorts of advisers about gearing up the money coming into the WDA from the private sector. If successful proposals and suggestions were put forward, I expect that the hon. Gentleman would warmly welcome them.

The WDA is an important agency, carrying out enourmously important functions. If the main desire was to see that it was sold off to somebody quickly, there would not have been the enormous increase in activity that there has been during the past two years. The hon. Gentleman is totally wrong. If there are any ways in which we can bring more money into Wales by gearing up the activities of the WDA, I hope that hon. Members of all parties will welcome them.

**Sir Anthony Meyer:** Is it not all too typical of the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams) that he is fussing about the structure and ownership of the organisation when what really matters are its functions and activities and that it should continue to attract industry to Wales and to promote industrial development within Wales?

**Mr. Walker:** During the next few years, the WDA is committed to firm programmes with a considerable dimension, including the biggest-ever derelict land clearance programmes, and the biggest-ever advanced factory building programmes, and we must not forget the range of services that it is providing at present. As I said in answer to an earlier question, in the coming year alone we shall be spending more money on the WDA than was spent during the previous Labour Government's entire period of office.

**Mr. Coleman:** I welcome what the right hon. Gentleman said about the security of the Welsh Development Agency, but will he go a little further? On behalf of the Conservative party and Conservative Members, will he now recant their actions which, had they succeeded, would have prevented the setting up of the Welsh Development Agency, in which the right hon. Gentleman now takes so much pride and pleasure?

**Mr. Walker:** I have been the biggest user of the Welsh Development Agency of any Secretary of State since it was started, so the hon. Gentleman should enthusiastically support the manner in which I have given it a considerably expanding role and a new dynamism which never attained under the Labour Government.

**Mr. Gwilym Jones:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that there is nothing wrong with employees of an organisation such as the WDA making suggestions about what could be better privatised? Such employees may be well placed to offer their employers advice on those matters. May I urge my right hon. Friend, if necessary, to continue to examine all such proposals on the basis of what is best for the achievement of the WDA's objectives and for the taxpayer who has to pay the bill, rather than following dogma for dogma's sake?

**Mr. Walker:** I knew nothing of those proposals until they were announced by the press. Officials of the WDA knew of them and had rejected them, and a number of my officials knew that the rejection had taken place. The proposals were firmly rejected at an early stage there was great surprise in the WDA and the Welsh Office that such proposals were eventually made.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** If the right hon. Gentleman did not know, he should have known. He has given us wriggling answers. Is it not the case that the two west Wales officials simply jumped the gun by making public a proposal that the WDA was examining in a wider way? Does that explain why the WDA finance director spent time with the privatised National Freight Corporation? Will the Secretary of State explain those matters?

**Mr. Walker:** The WDA is perfectly free to explore any ways of bringing more private capital into its activities. I see nothing wrong with that. I should be surprised if it was the Labour party view that the WDA should refuse gearing or additional investment for Wales on the grounds that it was tainted because it came from private enterprise. The only proposals for the WDA involve continuing its present activities. The proposals made by the two men to whom the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) referred had nothing to do with the sort of proposals that the WDA had been examining.

## Milford Haven Business Plan

4. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects the Welsh Development Agency to publish the Milford Haven business plan; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** This is a matter for the WDA and the South Pembrokeshire and Preseli district councils which are jointly working to identify opportunities within Milford Haven for developing existing businesses and encouraging new ones. I am advised that they expect to launch their Milford Haven concept early in the autumn.

**Mr. Bennett:** Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the present problems affecting the west Wales office of the WDA will have no effect on the timing and announcement of the Milford Haven business initiative?

**Mr. Walker:** Yes, I can.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** On the west Wales WDA buy-out proposals and the questions that the Secretary of State did not answer, was a prestigious merchant bank—BZW—involved in drawing up plans for privatisation?

**Mr. Walker:** It may have been involved in drawing up plans to bring private participation into a range of WDA activities. I see nothing wrong with that.

## Rail Services

5. **Mr. Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he next expects to meet the chairman of British Rail to discuss rail services in the Principality.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** My right hon. Friend is in frequent correspondence and discussion with senior staff of British Rail at regional and national level. He expects to meet the chairman again soon.

**Mr. Anderson:** In the light of the incompetence shown by the chairman and his senior staff in the current rail dispute, can we in Wales have any confidence that they will show the necessary dynamism or vision in respect of matters of great importance to Wales such as the electrification of lines and preparing for the Channel tunnel? If the Prime Minister does the dirty on the Secretary of State for Wales, can we expect him to apply for the job of chairman?

**Mr. Roberts:** I understand the hon. Gentleman's position as he is sponsored by the National Union of Railwaymen. However, he will be aware that the Transport Salaried Staffs Association and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen have accepted the 8·8 per cent. offer. I am sure that the House will come to its own conclusion about British Rail's conduct of its affairs. With regard to the Channel tunnel, the hon. Gentleman will know that British Rail has been conducting meetings throughout the land with a view to preparing a document, outlining its plans, for publication before the end of the year.

**Mr. Win Griffiths:** When the Secretary of State next meets the chairman of British Rail will he suggest sending a task force to France to see how the French are linking their railway system into the Channel tunnel and emphasise to him the need for direct rail links from south Wales to the main continental centres?

**Mr. Roberts:** I am sure that British Rail will take note of what the hon. Gentleman has said. We are well aware of the preparations on the other side of the Channel. However, preparations are being made in this country.

**Mr. Raffan:** Is my hon. Friend aware of the great concern in north-east Wales, particularly among business men and industrialists, that the Welsh Dragon does not stop at Flint or Prestatyn, although it stops at Stafford, Lichfield and Nuneaton? Will he suggest to the chairman of British Rail that the Welsh Dragon either stops at more stations in north-east Wales or is renamed the English Unicorn?

**Mr. Roberts:** I am well aware that the train does not stop at Flint, but British Rail tells me that that is for a good reason—that very few passengers get on or off there.

**Mr. Wigley:** How can they get on or off if the trains do not stop there?

**Mr. Geraint Howells:** The Minister will be aware that there are two major railway stations in my constituency—Aberystwyth in Cardiganshire and Fishguard in north Pembrokeshire with its vital Irish connection. The next time the Minister meets the chairman of the board will he press him to spend more on those two stations to make sure that they can play a major part in the economy of Wales? Will the Minister write to me afterwards?

**Mr. Roberts:** These matters are among those that are discussed with British Rail. I am well aware of the position of those ports and their importance not only to the hon. Gentleman but to the whole economy of west Wales. I am also aware of their importance in trade with Ireland.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** Will my hon. Friend have a word with the chairman of British Rail about the quality of service between Swansea, Milford Haven, Haverfordwest and the other stations in Pembrokeshire where we are forced to suffer 25-year-old diesel multiple units? They are filthy, hot in summer and cold in winter and do not have enough accommodation for passengers' luggage on this holiday line. Will he also tell the Opposition that their continued support for the National Union of Railwaymen against the passenger has meant that my constituents have been unable to keep hospital appointments in Swansea, Carmarthen and London on the days on which the railways are not operating?

**Mr. Roberts:** I can tell my hon. Friend that British Rail is investing at a record level—some £781 million in the current year—and that is due to increase over the next three years. I hope that some of the money may find its way into some of the services that are being criticised in Wales.

**Mr. Michael:** As the Minister previously acknowledged the success of initiatives by Mid Glamorgan and South Glamorgan county councils with British Rail in opening new stations and new services, does he recognise that the spending plans of the Government and the high inflation rate for which the Government are responsible imply a real cut this year of £104 million, or 20 per cent., in British Rail's external financing limits? Is that not the cause of most of the complaints that have been made by hon. Members? Does the Minister accept that this constraint and his refusal to put in more Welsh Office money is undermining the public interest? Will he offer more money to expand local services and reopen lines such as the Vale of Glamorgan line, with a spur to Cardiff Wales airport to benefit the whole region, as was argued by my hon. Friend the Member for Vale of Glamorgan (Mr. Smith)?

**Mr. Roberts:** The hon. Gentleman is clearly not in touch with the Labour county council of south Glamorgan. It is entirely up to that council whether to make a proposal about the Vale of Glamorgan line.

**Mr. Michael:** Not true.

**Mr. Roberts:** The hon. Gentleman says "Not true." I defy the hon. Gentleman: the statement that I have just made is true.

## Countryside Commission

6. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met the chairman of the Countryside Commission; and what issues were discussed.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** I spoke to the chairman of the Countryside Commission last week when we discussed the proposed merger of the commission and the Nature Conservancy Council in Wales which has been widely welcomed.

**Dr. Thomas:** May I widen that welcome? Of course, we welcome the fact that the Government have established an independent conservation body for Wales which the previous Labour Government failed to do. How does the Minister see the merger of the two bodies taking place? For example, is it the intention that the two existing advisory bodies should remain in place until the transition in 1991? Is it the intention that Professor Gareth Owen and Mr. Meurig Rees should remain as chairmen of the advisory bodies until 1991 to ensure a smooth transition? Will he ensure that the body will be a statutory agency that is entirely accountable to his Department?

**Mr. Roberts:** I certainly confirm the latter point. With regard to the first point, the hon. Gentleman will know that the progress of reorganisation requires legislation. Meanwhile, we shall consult the various bodies that are involved in this merger in Wales. At present we have two advisory committees and it is our intention to make them an executive body.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** Does the Minister recognise, however, that the welcome is not entirely unqualified, especially as the purpose of the merger is to ensure that there is no independent conservation voice on matters which will be within the remit of the new body in Wales? Can he give a guarantee that the body will be free from direct political control? As most conservation bodies have an international dimension, can he tell us whether the new body will be present at international conferences? If so, will the Welsh Office now be responsible for ratifying international conventions in so far as they apply to conservation issues in Wales?

**Mr. Roberts:** Issues that require to be addressed at United Kingdom national or at international level will continue to be the responsibility of the central bodies in England. I think that that is a wise move on our part. The single body that we shall have in Wales will be concerned with Welsh matters.

### Marginal Land Farms

7. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales why certain marginal land farms in Wales have been excluded from the latest less-favoured area status review.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** All those farms whose owners or occupiers put forward representations or appeals against exclusion from the LFA, after the 1984 extension, had their cases fully considered during the recent review. Some 974 farms satisfied the initial land quality tests and, of these, 500 satisfied the strict economic and demographic criteria laid down by the EC. A case to include those 500 farms in the LFA has been submitted to Brussels.

**Mr. Livsey:** Does the Secretary of State agree that it is extremely unfair that only half of the farms that were originally passed are now included—500 of them, in Dyfed, Clwyd, Gwynedd and Gwent—and that none of the 139 farms submitted for Powys is included at all? Does he agree that that is a disgraceful situation which he and his Department should investigate immediately and put right?

**Mr. Walker:** No, Sir. The Commission's proposals were that the basis of stocking rates should be one livestock unit per hectare. I decided to put forward proposals which go for a higher stocking rate than that as I believe that there was an argument for so doing. We have put forward all those cases which submitted not just one, but 1·2 livestock units per hectare. I am afraid that no application in Powys had a stocking rate of less than 1·57 livestock units per hectare. There is no way of negotiating that with the Commission under the present proposals. To do so would damage my negotiating position, which is to seek an extension of what the Commission proposed.

**Mr. Flynn:** Is the Secretary of State not concerned that these marginal lands and other lands in Wales may have been treated with the fungicides identified by the United States as causing an additional 100,000 cancer deaths? Is he aware that those fungicides will not be tested or examined in the Harpenden, Hertfordshire laboratory in Britain possibly for 10 years, because staffing there is 25 per cent. below strength? How much longer must we go on eating food treated with chemicals that have not been properly tested and which present a threat to our lives?

**Mr. Walker:** I hope that before this matter is properly examined the hon. Gentleman will not yet again create an enormous scare which may not be well founded. As his question has nothing to do with this application to the European Commission, I shall reply to him separately.

### A55

8. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what economic effect will result from the completion of road improvements on the A55; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Economic opportunities in north Wales will be greatly enhanced by the dualling of the A55, which will improve accessibility between north Wales, including Holyhead, the motorwork network and continental Europe. Journey times between Bangor and Chester will be reduced to around one hour.

**Mr. Jack:** I thank my right hon. Friend for that excellent answer, which shows clearly the Government's commitment to the development of the infrastructure of north Wales. Can he tell the House how much all the works will cost, when they will be completed and their effect on inward investment into north Wales?

**Mr. Walker:** We believe that the cost, at current terms, will be about £550 million. The work will be completed in the mid 1990s. The impact is already considerable. I believe, for example, that decisions such as that of Toyota to come to the area, and the substantial reductions in unemployment along the length of the A55 over the past two years have been influenced by that improved communication.

**Mr. Alex Carlile:** Bearing in mind the eulogy that the Secretary of State has been able to give about the benefits of the A55 to north Wales, will he adopt a similar strategic approach to the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth route, so that mid-Wales and west Wales can gain the same strategic economic benefits?

**Mr. Walker:** I am delighted to say that the road improvements throughout the Principality including mid-Wales and west Wales, when one considers their use, density of traffic and population, show that Wales has done exceedingly well compared with the rest of the United Kingdom.

### Second Severn Crossing

9. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many representations he has received on the proposed changes to the routes of the approach road to the second Severn crossing on the Welsh side.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** At the recent public exhibitions at Caldicot and Rogiet, 24 representations were recorded. Those and all other views will be carefully considered before a final decision is taken on the route.

**Mr. Stern:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the proposals for changes to the route on both sides of the Bristol channel have been largely welcomed? Indeed, there is a general belief that the road should now go ahead as quickly as possible. Does my hon. Friend further agree that the one thing that might possibly hold it up would be any attempts to hold down the toll regime on either of the new bridge or of the old one to less than economic levels?

**Mr. Roberts:** My hon. Friend is well aware that the increase in toll charges is still subject to inquiry and decision, but certainly we are most anxious that the second Severn crossing should go ahead. We have expedited as far as we can the appointment of four consortia as full tenderers, and we hope that the successful tenderer will be announced around the end of the year.

**Mr. Roy Hughes:** Why did the Secretary of State conspire with Cardiff to have Newport removed from road signs on the M4 motorway? Does he appreciate the harm that has been done to the commercial interests of Newport, which has a more favourable geographical location on the eastern seaboard than Cardiff? Those signs had been there for 25 years—many years before Cardiff even had a motorway—so why were there no discussions with Gwent county council or Newport borough council before the signs were removed? Is this yet another example of open government, and what is the Minister doing to remedy the situation?

**Mr. Roberts:** I can assure the hon. Gentleman that Newport is still very much on the map and is becoming more so as the Government continue in office and continue to bring more industry and new development to Newport. The hon. Gentleman is right that the directional sign for Newport has been removed at one point, but the reason for that was that when the sign was put up the M4 did not reach Cardiff. Hon. Members who represent Cardiff will agree that it is important that Cardiff should also be on the map.

### Planning Appeals

10. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consideration he gives to the wishes of the local community when considering appeals against planning refusals by local planning authorities in Wales; and how many planning appeals he has upheld against authorities' decisions during the past 12 months.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** All representations made to the Department about the planning merits of an appeal are taken into account in arriving at my decisions. Out of 1,060 appeals decided during the past 12 months, 343 were allowed.

**Mr. Wigley:** Does the Secretary of State accept that when large-scale tourist projects are considered by local authorities they should be given the go-ahead only if the local community wants the project in that form, and that if there is a threat to the environment, the social fabric or the culture of the area, the project should not go ahead? Given the threat posed by some such projects, and the fact that when tourist projects occur it is important that they have the backing of the local community—which, after all, is supposed to welcome the people who come to its area—should not the final decision rest with the local authorities and not with the Welsh Office?

**Mr. Walker:** The hon. Gentleman is really saying that there should be no rights of appeal on certain projects, but that would be a dangerous position to adopt. Many planning applications are made in Wales and in the rest of the country to which people in the immediate locality object, but to which a wider range of people do not object because of the job opportunities and the new activities created—indeed, they probably support such projects. So far, under all Governments, there has been a right of appeal, and that is perfectly correct. The figures that I have given show that out of 1,060 appeals, 343 were allowed, so the large bulk were rejected. To take away the right of appeal because a local authority has made a decision would be a mistake.

### A55

11. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many accidents there were on the A55 in Wales for the last year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** One hundred and ninety three personal injury accidents were recorded in 1988 on the A55 trunk road in Wales.

**Dr. Marek:** Will the Minister admit that his penny-pinching policies in previous years regarding the construction of the A55 led to some of those accidents? In a spirit of co-operation with the opposition that is felt by everyone in north Wales, will he undertake to ensure that the dangerous right turns into oncoming traffic on the dual carriageway sections of that road are closed off and grade separated underpasses provided instead?

**Mr. Roberts:** All the improvements that we have carried out on the A55 have improved the accident rate. Currently the A55 is a mix of single and dual carriageways and its accident rate is equal to the national average. The total number of fatal and serious personal injury road accidents on the A55 has fallen in each of the past three years. We are, of course, always looking at ways in which to improve road safety.

## THE ARTS

### Imperial War Museum

30. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what improvements have been made to the Imperial War museum in the last 12 months.

**The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce):** On 29 June I attended the opening by Her Majesty the Queen of a substantial redevelopment of the Imperial War museum's main building.

This impressive project has significantly increased the museum's gallery space and is an excellent example of the many imaginative developments both under way and in planning at the national museums and galleries.

**Mr. Mans:** I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. Does he agree that that project is an excellent example of co-operation between the public and private sector? Will he take this opportunity to congratulate the staff and the director of the museum on the recent refurbishment work and the way in which they carried it out?

**Mr. Luce:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks. I certainly join him in congratulating the director and staff on a remarkable achievement. It is interesting to note that that redevelopment cost £16·7 million altogether. The Government contributed just over £12 million and the rest came from the private sector. The project is a fine example of joint funding by the public and the private sector.

**Mr. Robert Sheldon:** While welcoming the improvements in the Imperial War museum, will the right hon. Gentleman turn his attention to those other museums which, in the words of the Public Accounts Committee which took evidence on this matter in October last year, have faced

"a major breakdown over many years in the proper stewardship of major national assets"?

Museums are a striking example of failure to deal with the problem of inflation as well as the problem of lack of repair work over many years. The problems that we are now facing at the Victoria and Albert museum and other major national institutions must be dealt with properly and can be dealt with only by the injection of substantial sums of money.

**Mr. Luce:** That is exactly why, over the four years beginning 1987-88, I took the decision to increase by 53 per cent. the amount of money available for building and maintenance. The money allocated for building and maintenance this year will amount to £48 million, rising to £55 million by 1991. The right hon. Gentleman knows that there is three-year funding, but I have retained a certain flexibility in relation to building and maintenance so that in years two and three I can respond to the particular demands of particular institutions. I naturally attach great importance to the maintenance of such buildings.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** Can my right hon. Friend say whether the Imperial War museum is bound by national agreements on pay and staffing levels and what effect that has upon that and other museums? Is it right to straitjacket museums in that way? Should they not make their own arrangements on pay and staffing levels as they see fit?

**Mr. Luce:** My hon. Friend has raised an important point. Since 1963, all the main national institutions have been linked to Civil Service pay and conditions, but some of the national institutions are looking for new ways in which to approach this problem and are coming forward with ideas. I believe that the main way forward must be more flexible pay arrangements for each institution. Museums are free to operate such a scheme under present arrangements and there is nothing to stop them moving forward in that direction.

### Museums (Staff Costs)

31. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on the proportion of staff salary costs to total central Government grants in the national museums.

**Mr. Luce:** In 1988-89 the total salary costs of the Office of Arts and Libraries sponsored national museums and galleries represented 90 per cent. of annual Government grant-in-aid for running costs and 56 per cent. of the institutions' total grant-in-aid from the arts programme.

**Dr. Marek:** Is the Minister aware that the percentage is creeping up? For example, this year for the V and A 98 per cent. of the total grant is used for running costs. Will the Minister try to correct the problem not by cutting the number of museum staff or their salaries, but by ensuring that the funding for museums is put on a proper basis so that staff have a high morale and good salaries, and the pictures and exhibits are not at risk, as stated in the letter from the five chairmen of the national musuems which is on the Prime Minister's desk this afternoon?

**Mr. Luce:** Before responding to the hon. Gentleman's point, I must make it absolutely plain that the past few years have seen an unprecedented expansion and refurbishment of our national institutions—ranging from the Tate galleries to the Imperial War museum and the National Portrait gallery, which has extended its position in north Wales, to a range of other refurbishments which have been quite dramatic and unprecedented. The hon. Gentleman is right, of course—it is essential to ensure that the buildings are maintained in good condition. That is why since 1979 there has been a 50 per cent. increase in real terms in the amount of money for building and maintenance, and why I am putting extra money into that work in the present four-year period. I take my responsibility for the welfare of those institutions very seriously, and I take serious note of the views expressed by the chairmen and directors.

**Mr. Jessel:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that that substantial increase in real terms since 1979 is highly important? Does he further agree that inflation is the one thing which threatens to erode the benefits of that increase? Does it not follow, therefore, that the museums —like everyone else—should support policies which bring down inflation?

**Mr. Luce:** My hon. Friend must be right. Inflation is, of course, the biggest threat to museums and galleries. That is why the Government's highest priority is to tackle inflation.

The issues that we are discussing arise from my request that all institutions should have corporate strategies, forecasting five to 10 years ahead what they need to remain in good shape, and from their untying from the Property Services Agency, which has revealed certain additional requirements. Those issues have been revealed in the past few months and I shall take them on board.

**Mr. Fisher:** Does the Minister agree with the five chairmen of the national galleries and museums who, having prepared corporate plans as requested, have written to the Prime Minister today to say that unless the Government provide extra money before the next pay round in the autumn, galleries will close, exhibitions will be fewer, staff will be cut, opening hours will be shorter and works of art will be at risk? Does the Minister agree that the present situation is the result of 10 years of neglect by the Government of our museum world, as documented by the Public Accounts Committee and the National Audit Office, and in particular the result of a grant increase this year of only 2·5 per cent. when inflation is 8 per cent. and wage rises are 8 per cent. plus? Will the Minister go to the Chancellor and fight for more money for our national museums, or will he sit idly by and let them crumble?

**Mr. Luce:** The hon. Gentleman should be careful about suggesting that there have been cuts to the national museums and galleries over the past 10 years. If he makes such suggestions, I shall make comparisons with what happened under Labour Governments, which would not show his party in a healthy light. There has been a 25 per cent. increase in real terms in overall funding for our national institutions and a 50 per cent. increase for building and maintenance. That was our response to the urgent demands of the chairmen and directors of those institutions. As I said, the corporate strategies have now revealed further priorities. For example, officials at the Victoria and Albert museum have said that they require £100 million over 10 years. I have already earmarked a minimum of £25 million for the next three years. The gap between what the museum requires and what it is likely to receive from the Government is not very large.

### Small Theatres

32. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what steps he is taking to assist small theatres.

**Mr. Luce:** Through its funding of the Arts Council and the regional arts associations, the Government give substantial support to theatre in all its forms.

**Mr. Bowis:** Perhaps my right hon. Friend will agree that this week the theatres should not miss the opportunity to pay tribute to the great actor whom we have lost in the past few days, Lawrence Olivier. We shall greatly miss his stage presence, but the memory of his acting and production will, I suspect, never leave us. He had a great interest in theatre of all sizes, but not even Archie Rice would have appeared on the stages to which this question refers.

Small theatres are having enormous problems, as my right hon. Friend knows, because they are expected to meet the absurd requirements applying to cinemas, drinking clubs and large theatres. Some small theatres are having to close because of the 48-hour rule. Will my right hon. Friend talk to the Home Secretary to see whether that burden can be lifted?

**Mr. Luce:** My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the sad death of Lord Olivier and to his great achievements, and I should like to add my tribute. His genius added new heights of achievement to British drama, and his contributions as a director of the Royal National theatre and the Chichester theatre led to great achievements for both institutions.

My hon. Friend has been in touch with me about small theatres and pub theatres and I have been in touch with my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, especially about the licensing laws, which are principally a matter for him. It may help, however, if I explain that the Greater London Arts Association has invited the pub theatre network to put together the necessary information so that an approach can be made to the London boroughs so as to ensure that the law is operated as fairly and consistently as possible.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### Induction Course, Sunningdale

52. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what representations he has received seeking the introduction of an induction course at Sunningdale for all new hon. Members after the next general election.

**The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce):** Introductory briefing sessions about the Civil Service were held for hon. Members of all parties during 1988. The facility for briefing Members remains available at any time through the usual channels.

**Mr. Allen:** The briefings that took place were exceptionally good and I commend them to new Members who are elected next time. It is important that new Members find their way around. Novices and virgins in parliamentary procedure such as myself need all the assistance that we can get. That particularly applies to Conservative Members, who have to learn all the techniques of planted questions and planted supplementaries with which Opposition Members are unfamiliar. Does the Minister agree that it will be all the more important to hold an intensive induction course after the next election, when there will be more than 100 new Labour Members?

**Mr. Luce:** I am glad that the hon. Gentleman took advantage of that facility and thought it valuable. It is available not just for new Members but for any Member who feels at any time that he needs to know more about how the Civil Service operates and about the changes and reforms taking place.

**Mr. John Marshall:** Will my right hon. Friend confirm that when he arranged such a course for Labour Members after the last election, only three turned up? Does he feel that that was value for money for the taxpayer?

**Mr. Luce:** It might mean that Labour Members were pessimistic about their chances after the next election. Whatever the reason, the existence of such a facility is valuable, especially to new Members who knew little about the Civil Service, in helping to get rid of some preconceptions and teaching Members a little more about how it operates.

### Government Information Officers

53. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service if he has received further representations from the Institution of Professional Civil Servants seeking talks about the code of ethics for Government information officers.

**Mr. Luce:** I have received no such representations from the Institution of Professional Civil Servants.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Will the Minister be meeting Bill Brett on this subject?

**Mr. Luce:** I am happy to meet him if he would like to do so to discuss any matter to do with the Civil Service.

### Child Care Facilities

54. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service whether he will encourage child care within the Civil Service to encourage recruitment and retention of staff.

**Mr. Luce:** Yes, I am already doing so. The Civil Service seeks to employ staff of the highest quality of both sexes and recognises the importance of providing good child care facilities if it is to recruit and retain such staff.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I thank my right hon. Friend for that encouraging reply. Does he agree that the effects of the demographic trough of which we are all aware, which mean that in Nottinghamshire 30 per cent. fewer children will be leaving school by 1995, underline the importance of good-quality child care, of career breaks and of other ways of encouraging part-timers back to work?

**Mr. Luce:** My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the demographic changes. There will be a substantial fall in the number of 16 to 19-year-olds in the next five or six years. That means that we shall have to look more widely to recruit the most able people, to keep up the standards of the Civil Service. I hope that as a result of our equal opportunities policy we shall be able to recruit more women to the service. There are a number of schemes—self-financing holiday schemes, care-parent schemes, and value-for-money nurseries—being established. There is also the evolution of part-time work, job-sharing and flexible working opportunities, all of which should help to recruit more people, particularly women, in the next five or six years.

**Mrs. Clwyd:** As this country has one of the worst records in Europe on child care provision, why do the Government not put their money where their mouth is and enable local education authorities to make statutory provision for child care facilities?

**Mr. Luce:** The hon. Lady must put that question to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science. My concern is with the provision in the Civil Service. We are providing facilities to enable us to recruit and retain the best and most competent people, including women. We have to grapple with that problem. We are providing an increasing range of facilities which should encourage able women to stay rather than leave, as well as encouraging more to join the service.

### Civil Service Unions

55. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service when he last met representatives of the Civil Service unions; and what subjects were discussed.

**Mr. Luce:** I met members of the Council of Civil Service Unions on 27 June to discuss the future of the Civil Service Commission.

**Mr. Barnes:** Has there been any discussion about the freezing of the mileage allowance over the past two years, which seems a particularly mean-minded approach to the Civil Service? Have there been any consultations about shifting the Civil Service Commission to agency status, or is that, too, to be done without consultation? Should not the Government at least adopt a policy of no annihilation without consultation?

**Mr. Luce:** The hon. Gentleman's first question is principally for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have already announced on behalf of the Government that, except for high grades, more recruitment can be done by Government Departments and that a Government agency is to be established which can recruit on a competitive basis for all levels and grades within the service and for all Departments. I have already had discussions with trade union leaders about that. It will lead to an improved service and an even more effective way of recruiting the best people.

**Dr. Marek:** A few weeks ago, staff at passport offices had to take industrial action to make the point that the service provided by the Government was not properly staffed. The Prime Minister said that the civil servants could not care a damn. What is the Minister's view?

**Mr. Luce:** The hon. Gentleman knows that there has been an increase in the number of civil servants at the passport office. Incidentally, he should note that the passport office is a candidate to become a Government agency, where targets can be established to provide the best possible performance, including performance to the public. That is an important part of the reforms announced by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in February last year, which are designed to improve the service to the public.

### European Community

56. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how many persons in the Civil Service are engaged in the consideration of matters relating to the European Community; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce:** All civil servants are alerted as necessary to the implications of the European Community for their work. Some are directly involved, others indirectly.

**Mr. Taylor:** As Britain seems to get a particularly rotten deal from the Common Market with the highest ever net contribution and trade deficit and as all member states except ourselves are blissfully ignoring decisions of the European Court, would it not be appropriate for some civil servants to watch the position to see whether Britain could get a relatively fairer deal rather than the present dreadful one?

**Mr. Luce:** To leave aside my hon. Friend's general remarks about the Community, it follows from what he said that whether he is right or wrong it is essential that the civil servants who advise Ministers are well equipped to do so, knowledgeable about the Community and heavily involved in it. If we want British interests to be served properly, that is the right thing to do. That is why we provide a range of facilities, courses and assistance to civil servants.

## Civil Service Unions

58. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service when he last met representatives of the Civil Service unions; and what subjects were discussed.

**Mr. Luce:** I met members of the Council of Civil Service Unions on 27 June to discuss the future of the Civil Service Commission.

**Mr. Fisher:** What assurances did the Minister give the trade unions about the level of staffing at the new British library, and about the future level of staffing at our national galleries and museums?

**Mr. Luce:** I have not had discussions with the union leaders about the level of staffing at the British library, but hon. Gentlemen should note that the support for the British library from the taxpayers is substantial. We have committed no less than £400 million of taxpayers' money to the new British library, based at St. Pancras. The hon. Gentleman should welcome that warmly.

## Civil Service (Establishment)

59. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how many civil servants there are in his Department at the current time; how many there were on 3 May, 1979 and 1974, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce:** There are 944 civil servants within the responsibility of the Office of the Minister for the Civil Service. Of these, 640 are employed in areas which have assumed, or are planning to assume, agency status.

As the office did not come into being until 1 October 1987, there are no previous comparative figures.

**Mr. Greenway:** Will my right hon. Friend give the overall number for the Civil Service? In so doing, will he note that there are far fewer civil servants now than there were 10 years ago, and will he join me in congratulating the reduced number of civil servants on a greatly improved output of work? Does this not show that we did not need a vast army of civil servants to run this country and never shall?

**Mr. Luce:** My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the size of the Civil Service, which has been reduced by 21 per cent. in the last decade. He is also right to draw attention to the fact that we now have not only a slimmed down Civil Service but a highly professional service, which does an outstanding job in advising the Government of the day.

## Economic Summit (Paris)

3.30 pm

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** With Permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall make a statement on the economic summit held in Paris from 14 to 16 July, which I attended with my right hon. and Learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The texts of the various declarations issued at the summit have been placed in the Library of the House. As the main declaration recalls, the seven-year round of summits beginning in 1982 has been one of the longest periods of sustained growth since the second world war. These summits have permitted effective consultations and offered the opportunity to launch initiatives and to strengthen international co-operation.

This summit dealt with four main issues: economic matters, including Third world debt; the environment; drugs; and international relations.

The economic declaration reaffirms the sound economic policies which have brought greater prosperity to all our countries. It stresses our common commitment to bring down inflation. It underlines the need for further progress in reducing external imbalances. It emphasises the importance of structural reforms—that is, improving economic efficiency and getting rid of subsidies and restrictions.

The declaration also confirms our determination to fight protectionism in all its forms and to avoid any policies which would undermine the prospects for the successful completion of the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations by the end of next year.

The declaration reaffirms the case-by-case approach to debt problems, and welcomes the recent decisions taken by the IMF and the World bank to encourage debt and debt service reduction for middle-income countries. It notes that the measures agreed at the last economic summit to help the poorest countries are being successfully implemented. It confirms that the most effective way to deal with the problems of the developing countries is through the existing international financial institutions, rather than by creating new bodies or structures.

The declaration gives particular weight to the problems of the global environment, and especially the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect. These are matters of deep and growing concern, because of the accumulating weight of scientific evidence.

The summit endorsed the United Kingdom's call for a United Nations framework convention on global climate change, similar to that which we already have for the ozone layer. It also underlined the need to make sure that our policies on environmental protection are both scientifically and economically sound. It pointed out that clear assessments of the costs, benefits, and resource implications of environmental protection help Governments to take the necessary decisions. There is no incompatibility between economic growth and environmental protection—indeed, the former is essential to create the wealth to finance measures to protect our environment.

The declaration calls for the strengthening of existing international bodies dealing with the environment, particularly the United Nations Environmental Programme, rather than the creation of new ones.

It also gives strong support to the international effort to preserve the world's tropical forests, while recognising the sensitivities and the sovereignty of the developing countries for whom these forests are an important natural resource.

The declaration signals the very strong determination of all seven Governments to tackle the drugs problem, which has reached such devastating proportions, particularly with the growing threat of crack. We agreed on a number of measures, in particular. The first was greater help for efforts to counter illegal production of drugs. The second was action to reduce demand for drugs; here, I was able to draw attention to the international conference which Britain will host next year on demand reduction for drugs and cocaine in particular. The third was the establishment of a financial action task force from summit countries and others to investigate, and recommend measures to prevent, money laundering. The fourth was the conclusion of further bilateral agreements for the tracing, freezing and confiscation of the proceeds of drug trafficking and crime. These problems can be solved only by growing international co-operation.

In our discussion of political and regional issues, and in particular of East-West relations, we agreed to provide practical support for political and economic reform in eastern Europe and especially in Poland and Hungary. We also agreed to help meet Poland's urgent need for food. For this purpose, we asked the European Commission to co-ordinate the necessary arrangements.

We issued a strong condemnation of repression in China. Our statement also underlined the common interest of all seven summit countries in a stable and prosperous future for Hong Kong; and confirmed the importance of support from the international community to maintain the confidence of Hong Kong's people, which has been badly shaken by recent events.

We issued a strong denunciation of terrorism, referring in particular to the Lockerbie disaster, and reaffirmed the policy of making no concessions to terrorists. We called on those holding hostages to release them immediately and unconditionally.

This was an exceptionally friendly and worthwhile summit—*[Laughter.]*—an exceptionally friendly and worthwhile summit. Much credit is due to the skilful chairmanship of President Mitterrand. The desire to work together to resolve the problems of the world economy, the environment and drugs was very marked, and the United Kingdom is making a major and positive contribution to this. I am sure that the results of the summit will be warmly welcomed in all the seven summit countries and more widely.

**Mr. Neil Kinnock** (Islwyn): May I thank the Prime Minister for her statement, and welcome especially the proposals for combined international action against the production, distribution of and trafficking of illegal drugs? Will the Prime Minister tell us what reply she would wish to make to Mr. Gorbachev's letter to the summit, which was rightly welcomed by President Bush as a

> "fascinating manifestation of the exciting changes under way in eastern Europe"?

On a matter which is not unrelated, does the Prime Minister agree that, while co-ordinated and urgent food aid to Poland is certainly necessary, both Poland and Hungary also need a considerable programme of technical and economic assistance to ensure that their steps towards

*[Mr. Neil Kinnock]*

democracy are both protected and strengthened? What will be Britain's contribution to the European Community's co-ordinated effort in this respect?

In her statement, the Prime Minister reported the group of seven's reaffirmation in its economic declaration of what she described as

"the common commitments to ... reducing external imbalances"

and

"to bring down inflation."

As the result of the Government's policies is that Britain now has the largest proportionate current account deficit and the highest inflation rate of all G7 countries, was not the right hon. Lady's authority on these matters something less than convincing at the meeting in Paris?

When the Prime Minister commented in Paris that in countries where inflation had not risen, it was because sound policies had been rigidly adhered to, which country did she have in mind as having most clearly failed to pursue sound policies?

Does the Prime Minister accept that the Group of Seven's preference for allocating prime responsibility for dealing with Third-world debt problems to the private banking system will simply ensure that the problem remains a persistent drag on the world economy for many years to come—not only perpetuating poverty in the South of the world, but seriously impeding policies to protect the global environment? Before the next summit, will the Prime Minister come forward with proposals for action by Governments that will help to deal more speedily and effectively with the Third-world debt problem?

On the vital question of the global environment, to which the summit rightly paid so much attention, does the right hon. Lady agree that, while exhortation has its place, the highest priority must be given to effective action? With that in mind, why, under her Government, will expenditure on research into global warming this year be only one quarter of 1 per cent. of all research funded by the Government? Why are the resources that the Government subscribe to the intergovernmental panel on climatic change, referred to in the communiqué, simply money being reallocated from research into clean coal techniques?

The Prime Minister endorsed the section of the summit communique that condemned the indiscriminate use of oceans as dumping grounds for polluting waste. How does she explain the inconsistency between that position and the fact that Britain, is now the only country dumping sewage sludge into the North sea, with no plans to make changes?

The summit communiqué urges action on energy conservation. Why have the Government cut, and why do they intend further to cut, spending on energy efficiency? Why do the Government still propose to block the all-party amendment that would impose an obligation on the British electricity industry to give conservation and efficiency the highest priority?

The summit appeared to show full understanding of the need to assist Third-world countries in their efforts to protect the environment. How does the right hon. Lady justify the fact that, during her time in office, development aid as a proportion of gross domestic product has been cut in half? How does she excuse her enthusiastic support for International Monetary Fund regimes that require many countries to put compliance with imposed economic programmes far above environmental security?

I applaud the right hon. Lady for giving credit to what she called

"the skilful chairmanship of President Mitterrand."

That quality of the president was exceeded only by the skill that he showed in making seating arrangements.

**The Prime Minister:** On the right hon. Gentleman's last point, he would do well to take some lessons in courtesy and skill from President Mitterrand. With regard to the more serious questions that he asked, I can tell him that Mr. Gorbachev's letter was sent to the president of the summit, President Mitterrand, and he will respond to it. We all have copies of the letter, which essentially calls for more interdependence in global economics—a call to which we shall gladly respond. As Mr. Gorbachev says, it will require perestroika to be satisfactory before the Soviet Union can play a full part in that global co-operation.

On the question of food aid for Poland, we first called for that at the Madrid summit, and the actions that Britain agreed to take were announced when General Jaruzelski was here. They consist of agreeing to reschedule the debt for 1989 due this year to the Paris Club without awaiting IMF reform. That is a considerable amount, and we have agreed to a five-year period of grace, after which the debt must start to be repaid. We also agreed to ask the European Community—and have done so—to get rid of some of the quotas on Poland's trade with the Community. If Poland is to pull out of its problems, it must be able to trade more with the Community. We further agreed to provide £5 million per year for five years for management training, and to send my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade to Poland, with a group of industrialists, to investigate joint ventures.

The rest of the improvement will come, as with other countries, after proper agreement is reached with the International Monetary Fund. We do not feel that it would be right to open more credits now. In the past, much credit was wasted and turned to debt that Poland must now repay. We want to be certain that there is a different economic reform programme before more aid is given.

The external imbalances refer mainly to Germany and Japan, which do not always open their markets to our goods as easily as we open our markets to theirs. They operate a number of artificial trade barriers that we do not have. Our membership of the Community helps to bring down Germany's artificial barriers by majority voting on some directives. That means that Germany must get rid of some of the barriers that it would otherwise gladly maintain. Germany also operates greater subsidies than we do, and the Community will bring those down too, to ensure fair competition.

Last year, under the initiative of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, we agreed to write off the debts of the poorest sub-Saharan countries. We have now done that, and so has France. Before this year's summit, under Mr. Brady's proposal, we agreed to help countries with middle-income debt. As a result of those two measures, £20 billion-worth of dollars have been rescheduled in the Paris Club since we met in Toronto last year. Some of the debt was, of course, written off. Those were two very good initiatives.

Much of the debt is the responsibility of the commercial banks that lent it. Government may become involved to the extent that, if the loans turn into bad debts, or bad debts in part, a provision can be made against the banks' profits for tax purposes. By that combination, the commercial banks meet part of the debt and the taxpayers meet another part. We think that such debts must be dealt with case by case. We met many Heads of Government at the summit, and some pointed out that countries which are conscientious and did not borrow more than they are able to repay would take it very hard if the debts of profligate countries were written off wholesale. That would make it very difficult for the Heads of State of conscientious countries to continue their wise policies.

On the subject of global climate change, this country has one of the world's four climate research stations, because we have some excellent meteorologists. Twenty per cent. more is spent in real terms on basic research now than when we first took office. How that money is spent is a matter for the Advisory Board for the Research Councils to decide, in dividing it between the various research councils. At present, there is not a great demand for more money to be spent in that respect, so we spend a great deal more on research in the Antarctic, which gives the first warning of global climate changes.

At the recent North sea conference, we agreed on a number of measures to reduce pollution. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the dumping of sewage sludge. According to the OECD, 84 per cent. of the United Kingdom's population is served by waste treatment plants, but the percentage is lower in Finland, France—where it is only 50 per cent.—and Spain—where it is only 29 per cent. —and elsewhere. Some countries are better than we are in that respect, but many are worse. Our country has sufficient growth and increasing prosperity to be able to spend far more on improving the situation than was ever the case under the last Labour Government.

The Electricity Bill will require electricity supply companies for the first time to provide their customers with guidance about efficient use of electricity: that will be a licence condition which the director general can enforce.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to the amount spent on energy efficiency. It is interesting to note that he always equates efficiency with the amount of money spent. That is not correct. In 1986, Energy Efficiency Year, expenditure was heightened because of the awareness programmes that were launched. This year we are spending £15 million on energy efficiency—about six times as much as was spent in 1979. We are spending only about 0·32 per cent. of GNP on development aid, but our spending under the second heading—private flows to developed countries—is among the best, and well above target.

The right hon. Gentleman's last question—referring to economic reform being placed before the environment—suggests that he cannot have listened. A successful economy is essential if we are to be able to spend money on environmental protection. That is why the east European Communist countries, whose system he admires so much, are not able to spend money on it.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I ask the House for brief questions. I shall give some priority to those who were unable to be called following the Prime Minister's last statement.

**Mr. Terence Higgins** (Worthing): Is my right hon. Friend aware that her clear statement that economic growth and a solution to environmental problems can go together is very much to be welcomed as a balanced appraisal, in contrast with the view expressed by others that, if the environment is to be protected, economic growth must be stopped? Does she agree that there is a clear link between aid to Third-world countries and the environment—in the context of Brazil, for example—and can she tell us whether any progress has been made in that regard?

**The Prime Minister:** I entirely agree with my right hon. Friend. The western countries are now prosperous enough to make special provision to ensure that the environment is protected—both its global and its local aspects—unlike some of the east European countries, which pour so much into the rivers that run into the German bight in the North sea.

We were particularly aware of the importance of keeping the tropical forests going and not allowing them to be cut down at the same rate. As my right hon. Friend knows, we have signed the first agreement with Brazil on the maintenance of tropical forests and research into how their ecologies can be maintained, the pharmaceuticals that can be obtained from the trees and their effect on climatic change. That is another first for Britain: we have led the way.

In the environmental statement, we expressed particular concern that the work should continue and that further measures should be sought to maintain the forests. We were very much aware that we must handle the matter carefully and keep in view the sovereignty sensitivities of the countries involved. We are doing this to try to help, and we can put some of our research and our aid in that direction. We have given a lead. We have also given an extra £40 million to India to help it to protect some of its tropical forests.

**Mr. Paddy Ashdown** (Yeovil): May I congratulate the Prime Minister and other heads of the Group of Seven on placing the environment so high on their agenda? We must now hope that what was a collection of words will become a collection of effective actions.

On a different topic, I note that the Prime Minister said that the summit had

"confirmed the importance of support from the international community to maintain the confidence of Hong Kong's people".

Will she tell us, in specific, practical terms, what that means and how it will benefit the people of Hong Kong?

**The Prime Minister:** I think that it will be obvious to the right hon. Gentleman that Hong Kong is a very prosperous centre, and that it must retain that prosperity. To do so it must also retain the confidence and support of the international community. I think that it is extremely good that, whether at a European or an economic summit, we all think sufficiently highly of Hong Kong, and are concerned enough about her to mention the matter in every communiqué. This one is no exception, and I hope that it will bring forth practical action. If we say that we are going to support Hong Kong and enable it to remain prosperous, it means that we are concerned to retain that prosperity.

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the recognition by the major economic powers of the singular importance of Hong Kong and the need to maintain its survival will be a substantial reassurance to the people of Hong Kong? Will she commit herself to trying to get the free nations of the world, particularly the European Economic Community and the

*[Mr. Ivan Lawrence]*

Commonwealth, to back her in her positive attempts to ensure the survival and protection of the colony for the future?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, of course, we know exactly how the people of Hong Kong feel after the events in China. Whatever international forum we are in—we shall raise the matter again in the Commonwealth forum in October—we seek the support of all nations for the problems of Hong Kong. The communiqué was very good, as it said:

> "We recognize that the continuing support of the international community will be an important element in the maintenance of confidence in Hong Kong."

We shall continue to seek further such support from the international community.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Does the Prime Minister agree that, as a result of the economic summit and the one that preceded it, attempts by adults at organised happiness at these parties and binges always result in tears and recriminations because somebody turns up to spoil fun? Will she reveal to the House whether she intends to go to all the economic summits right up until the general election?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not see why the hon. Gentleman should so limit his question in time.

**Mr. Norman Tebbit** (Chingford): Does not my hon. Friend agree that the principal imbalance in the economies of eastern Europe is between the excesses of Socialism and a lack of capitalism? Will she therefore take the greatest care before offering any further credit to Socialist countries, which inevitably dissipate it, until they reform their ways and follow the capitalist path, as Mr. Gorbachev is now tentatively suggesting? Secondly—[Hon. Members: "Briefly."]—I shall be perfectly brief when I can be heard above the noise opposite. Will my right hon. Friend say whether any progress was made on determination—[*Interruption.*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Mr. Tebbit.

**Mr. Tebbit:** I am not prepared to shout above the rabble, so I may take a long time. Was there any renewed determination to deal with the problems of agricultural subsidies, which are a principal cause of the risk of an outbreak of protectionism in the world?

**The Prime Minister:** I thank my right hon. Friend and agree with him that political freedom cannot persist unless it is backed by economic freedom, which means having the overwhelming majority of the property in the hands of people. It is interesting that the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man", contains a right to private property. Without that economic reform, and much more responsibility, initiative and personal effort political reform will not persist; nor will Communist countries achieve greater prosperity.

The Communist countries produce neither liberty nor prosperity. Now that they are achieving greater political liberty, we are not prepared to give them substantial assistance until they have agreed a programme of economic reform with the International Monetary Fund. Many of them may welcome that, as it is evident that they do not now how to set about producing economic reform or free enterprise. Under the aegis of the IMF, they should have a very much better idea of that, and the World bank and other international institutions will then provide extra credit and grants to help them.

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. Molyneaux.

**The Prime Minister:** On my right hon. Friend's next point—[HON. MEMBERS: "Briefly."] The Leader of the Opposition asked about 10 questions and I answered them. My right hon. Friend asked but two, and they are far more perceptive than the 10.

Agricultural subsidies also have to come before the GATT in the Uruguay round. We started the process at the Toronto summit last year and have agreed again this year that agricultural subsidies must be brought down. The place to do that is between the three blocs within the summit nations—Japan, the United States and Canada, and the Europeans—through the mechanism of the Uruguay round.

**Mr. James Molyneaux** (Lagan Valley): Does not the Prime Minister agree that aid to Poland and Hungary without too many strings attached could pave the way for the reunification of that wider European family, which would be very different from and wider than the Delors vision or nightmare of the European Community?

**The Prime Minister:** The aid to Poland and Hungary is by way of a special position there. They are the two countries in eastern Europe which are changing from their former totally centralised political control to something far more akin to democracy. In making the political change and in having much more political freedom, we wanted to help them to go further before the International Monetary Fund has come in and fully agred programmes of reform. As I have said, we are giving a certain amount of immediate aid for that.

In both cases, it involves negotiating with the European Community more exports from those two countries to the Community and dropping some of the quotas they have already. We have achieved that with Hungary through a fairly long negotiation and we shall achieve that with Poland. We shall, of course, always look carefully at the politics of the situation, but at present we feel, rightly, that every enlargement of liberty in those countries is to the advantage not only of the people there, but of mankind as a whole.

**Mr. Hugh Dykes** (Harrow, East): Would my right hon. Friend express warm congratulations to the French authorities on the combination of a highly successful festival—the 200th anniversary—and an extremely successful summit?

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): What was it the anniversary of?

**Mr. Dykes:** Does that not emphasise the fact that relations between Britain and France are extremely cordial, despite what the press has been saying, and does it not presage a good period of co-operation between the two countries for the EC presidency?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, relations are good. The summit was very successful and augurs very well for the future. The European Community was there, with M. Delors, Mr. Christophersen and Mr. Andriessen, and it took a full part in all the discussions. There was more agreement on that occasion than ever before, perhaps because we have been meeting for quite a long time and have come to know the right economic recipes. We do not need to dwell on them long and we can go on to other measures, including political co-operation.

**Mr. Harry Ewing** (Falkirk, East): When is the Prime Minister going to learn to behave herself when she goes to Paris? Is she aware that the press and television in this country gave us a good picture of her behaving like a party pooper? Does she understand that, when she conducts herself in that way, she damages the standing of this country abroad? When will she apologise to the people of France for her conduct towards them, and to the people of this country for damaging our standing in Europe?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Gentleman is totally and utterly wrong, as he knows. I do not even recognise the expression that he uses, or know its meaning. We had a very dignified summit, with excellent discussions and excellent arguments coming to a very good communiqué. It is interesting that, when the seven summit countries and the whole of the European Community have had a good and constructive summit and are united, somehow the Opposition think that they know better.

**Dame Jill Knight** (Birmingham, Edgbaston): Is my right hon. Friend aware that a major problem of tackling drug abuse is the ease with which drug dealers can launder their profits through the banking system? As that matter was discussed at the summit, were any steps suggested to deal with that matter?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. As she knows, a United Nations convention was signed in 1988, requiring all countries to make provisions in their criminal codes for those dealing in drugs; to trace where the assets went; and to include sentences for money laundering. We were ahead of that convention in our statute in 1986. We have also signed reciprocal agreements with other countries to trace assets. It is interesting to note that, since the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 came into effect, over £8 million of drug-related financial assets have been confiscated by the courts under that Act, with a similar amount under restraint. In addition, we are getting increased co-operation with other countries through the reciprocal agreement. That is our effort.

However, the summit countries still felt that we did not know enough about how the money was laundered and through what channels. Therefore, in addition to the United Nations convention, which most of the signatories have ratified and some are putting into effect, we are seeking the help of the international financial institutions to set up a task force to see whether we can find out more about the channels through which the money is laundered, because if we know more about it, we can stop it.

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): Would the right hon. Lady explain why she consistently comes here to talk such utter nonsense about the free market, as if all countries with a free market have political democracy? She must be aware of the fact, but we know that her history is not very good, so I shall try to explain to the right hon. Lady—*[Interruption.]*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Heffer:** —that throughout the world many Fascist and military dictatorships have totally accepted the free market economy but, nevertheless, have no democracy. Therefore, should not the right hon. Lady begin to learn some history and to understand that, before the 1688 revolution in this country, we had the 1640 revolution, when we cut off a king's head and established Parliament as the basis of democracy in our country?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Gentleman is going back on arguments that we used to have many years ago in the House. They can be summed up in this way. Every free country is a capitalist country—*[Interruption.]* Wait a moment, wait a moment. Capitalism is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of liberty, but every free country has to be a capitalist country. Of course, the free market operates within a framework of law. That is why we have rules to keep competition; it is why we have rules against monopoly; and why we have rules about health and safety. We have set up a framework of law, agreed in this House, and free enterprise is left to prosper to the benefit of a rate of growth and prosperity in this country that we never had when the Labour party was in power.

**Mr. Tim Rathbone** (Lewes): Does my right hon. Friend accept that everybody concerned with drug misuse will commend this Government's international lead in such matters? Will she reassure the House that, with the advent of crack and the horrors associated with it, this Government, from their economic strength, will make sufficient extra sums available to fight that battle, especially among the young in this country?

**The Prime Minister:** I agree with my hon. Friend that it is absolutely vital to fight that battle. That drug has not hit this country to anything like the same extent as in the United States. We are taking action to try to see that it does not. We have called an international conference for next year—my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced it some time ago—to warn young people about the approaches that they may receive and about the dangers of the drug. It is a conference on demand reduction. It addresses specific problems related to heroin, cocaine and its derivatives, marijuana and amphetamines, as well as methods of reducing demand, education, treatment and rehabilitation, law enforcement and the extent of the problem. We believe that we must tackle the problem at both ends. We must warn people and reduce the demand at this end and also stop the supply. We believe that we are most likely to stop the supply by stopping the money.

**Mr. Alex Salmond** (Banff and Buchan): On the subject of energy efficiency, did the Prime Minister take the opportunity to explain to the other G7 leaders why the cuts in the United Kingdom's energy efficiency budget this year are such that the budget is only marginally greater than the funds devoted to refurbishing the Department of Energy's new offices opposite Buckingham palace? Will we see a change in the spending priorities as a result of the summit?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Gentleman always thinks that energy efficiency is dependent upon the amount of propaganda which the Government put out. That is just not so. Since 1973, energy usage in the United Kingdom has fallen by 4 per cent., although we have had a 26 per cent. increase in gross domestic product. Also, for the last four years for which figures are available, the United Kingdom's ratio of energy use to GDP growth has been

*[The Prime Minister]*

improving at twice the Community average. Of course, the private sector is spending an enormous amount on improving energy efficiency. That is vital to keep costs down and that is where the improvement comes from.

**Mr. David Sumberg** (Bury, South): My right hon. Friend will be aware that, in the past, the economic summits have been derided as capitalist clubs. Now that Mr. Gorbachev wants to join, how long will it be before the Opposition recognise that only free-market capitalism effectively guarantees personal prosperity and personal freedom?

**The Prime Minister:** I totally agree with my hon. Friend. It is amazing, after our success in this country in freeing up the economy, with tax incentives and putting into private enterprise industries which should never have been in the hands of Government, how many other countries now wish to follow the same path—and that includes Communist countries—because they have seen the success of a Government who have had the courage to do the right thing.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** May I come back to the Prime Minister's style at the summit? Did she set out deliberately to be offensive to the French people with her ill-informed comments about the French revolution and the "Declaration of the Rights of Man"? Was she in any way surprised that she was abused on the streets of Paris, or did that make her feel at home?

**The Prime Minister:** May I remind the hon. Gentleman that the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man" lists freedom of speech, opinion and expression? May I also remind him that President Mitterrand agreed with me at the end of the summit that there were other accounts of human rights which started long before the French revolution? May I remind him that is a matter of history that that is so? There were very few people on the streets of Paris who were against me—*[Interruption.]* Opposition Members were not there. The overwhelming majority were cheering and saying, "Madame Thatcher, Madame Thatcher!"

**Mr. Derek Conway** (Shrewsbury and Atcham): Despite some of the cheap gibes from Opposition Members about the French celebrations, will my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister not be deflected from her determination to uphold Britain's interests as a world leader in tackling drugs, world debt and the environment—a position which will be opposed and gibed at by the mean-mouthed Members on the Opposition Benches?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, we have taken the lead, as I have said, in getting the legislation through and in tracing the assets of those who traffick in drugs. We took the lead before the United Nations convention and we shall give the lead through the new international conference as we did with the ozone layer. My hon. Friend should not worry very much about the Opposition: I do not.

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): Is the Prime Minister aware that last year there was a net outflow of capital from the poorest countries in the world to the richest? This year there will be an even greater net outflow of capital from the poorest to the richest countries. In that context, could she tell us what the Group of Seven proposes to do to increase the living standards of people in the poorest countries, to protect their environment and to increase the real prices that they get for the commodities that they are forced to sell?

**The Prime Minister:** They are not forced to sell commodities—what nonsense. Those countries wish to grow more to sell, and they also wish to diversify. For that they must have an investment code, because people will not invest in those countries if they cannot get a reasonable return of profit or if their investment will be nationalised. More and more, those countries are realising that, and more and more private flows of capital and expertise will go to those countries, which will help them to build up their prosperity as we built up ours. One cannot build the strength of a country just by giving it constant grants. One must also see improvement in the whole economic programme at the same time.

**Mr. Robin Squire** (Hornchurch): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the summit reasserted the important role of nuclear power in energy generation? Does not this endorsement of the Government's current position stand in stark contrast to the muddled policies of the Opposition parties, which will be bad for energy generation and bad environmentally in terms of global warming?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I agree with my hon. Friend. Of course nuclear power is one of the very important ways to reduce global warming. The summit statement said:

> "We are committed to maintaining the highest safety standards for nuclear power plants and to strengthening international cooperation in safe operation of power plants and waste management, and we recognise that nuclear power also plays an important role in limiting output of greenhouse gases."

That was signed by all the countries which were represented.

**Mr. Brian Wilson** (Cunninghame, North): Does not the Prime Minister realise that the 90 per cent. that she claims were cheering in the streets of Paris were cheering the 10 per cent. who were booing her? If a foreign statesman came to this country for a summit set to coincide with a great national celebration and gratuitously set about denigrating that national celebration, would she regard him as an influential and skilful diplomat or as a self-satisfied ignoramus?

**The Prime Minister:** I assure the hon. Gentle that he is incorrect about many people in the streets of Paris. I am very happy that he and his fellow Members are reduced to such pathetic, small-minded comments. That is just what the Opposition are like. They cannot criticise the results of the summit countries so they show their true small-mindedness. *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**The Prime Minister:** As for human rights, one was asked the simple question as to whether one believed that human rights started in 1789 with the French declaration of human rights. The simple answer in historical terms is no.

**Mr. Jeremy Hanley** (Richmond and Barnes): The whole House should congratulate my right hon. Friend on her contribution to this excellent summit. May I also congratulate her on putting the drug issue at the top of the agenda? She spoke earlier about how to reduce the demand for drugs and on laundering. Could she say what international steps should be taken to reduce the supply of drugs, especially in producer countries?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend has lit upon what is perhaps the most difficult thing. We know where the drugs are grown and the extent to which they are grown. They are grown in sovereign countries and we are not able, except by exhortation or by getting at the money which those drugs fetch on the international market, to reduce the amount that is sold. Of course there are United Nations programmes for substitute crops, but they bring in but a small income compared to the amount that people get for drugs; it is difficult to get at the problem in that way. Therefore, we have decided that the best way to do it is to try to track down the money, to see if we can find out where it is being laundered so that we can confiscate it and stop the traffic by that means.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We have a very heavy day ahead of us. I shall allow three more questions from each side, then we must move on.

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): Was it recognised, particularly by President Bush, that if the countries of eastern Europe are to be able to go their own way, which I certainly support, the same should apply equally to countries in central and south America? One thinks of what happened in Chile in 1973, and the United States involvement there. Could the Prime Minister simply answer this question—why is it that, of all those Heads of Government who went to the summit, she was the only one who considered it appropriate to denigrate the events of 1789 and to act in such an impertinent way when she was asked questions on French television?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Member likes freedom of speech for himself but not for anyone else. I was asked a straight question—did I think that human rights began with 1789 in France? The honest answer can only be no. Surely the hon. Member is not saying yes.

**Mr. Nicholas Baker** (Dorset, North): Does my hon. Friend accept that she is entitled to some sympathy in having to attend events that commemorate bloodshed and terror which led to the suppression of freedom and to one of the worst tyrannies that Europe has ever known, by comparison with which what the Chinese Government did to their own citizens in Peking recently would appear trivial? Does my right hon. Friend agree that the assurances given by the economic nations to the people of Hong Kong are worth very much more than the Yeovil plan to allow 3·25 million people to have the right of residence here?

**The Prime Minister:** Tyranny does not vary very much from country to country where it is practised; that is what comes out of all the history books. With regard to Hong Kong, yes, we understand precisely the lack of confidence which people there feel because of events which have taken place in China, which is why we constantly raise the matter in every international forum. We have to try to bring back some confidence to the people of Hong Kong and to make sure that the agreement which we honourably entered into is honoured when it comes to 1997 so that the way of life of the people of Hong Kong can continue to be maintained. The best chance of that is for Hong Kong to continue to be prosperous and to have its way of life as now, although we shall obviously increase the amount of democracy there. We have full international support for that. I hope that the financial institutions will continue to give their full international support to Hong Kong.

**Mr. Alan W. Williams** (Carmarthen): In discussions on global warming, did anyone agree with the Prime Minister's rather eccentric view that nuclear power is the answer to the greenhouse effect, or was there a wider consensus that energy conservation, insulation and efficient use of energy are the answer?

**The Prime Minister:** Obviously, a great deal can be got from energy efficiency, as I have already said.

We are now producing a quarter more gross domestic product using less energy than we were in 1973. That shows the much greater efficiency we have now, and that efficiency has been stepped up in the past four years for which figures exist

With regard to nuclear energy, I said that paragraph 4.1 of the communiqué—I will not read out the whole paragraph again—stated:

> "we recognize that nuclear power also plays an important role in limiting output of greenhouse gases".

We are not suggesting that we rely totally on nuclear power, but I doubt very much whether we shall be able to get the output of greenhouse gases down sufficiently without the use of nuclear power. Of course, France is the lead country in the proportion of electricity generated from nuclear power.

**Mr. Jacques Arnold** (Gravesham): Does my right hon. Friend agree that, in coping with Third-world debt, the principle of fairness is extremely important? Should all Third-world countries that have an equal state of development not be treated equally, whatever the state of their external debt? I am thinking particularly of Chile, which has an excellent record of repayment and servicing of debt.

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend is aware of what has been done about the debts of the very poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Under the leadership of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, we agreed to write off their debts, because they were never going to have a chance to get out of their great difficulties. For the middle-income countries, we have the special Brady plan. Beyond that, much of the debt is, of course, debt from commercial banks and must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis between the commercial banks and the countries concerned. My hon. Friend is aware that some negotiations are going on at present. Otherwise, I agree that it must be on a basis of fairness. We should recall, too, those many countries which have borrowed not more than they could afford but smaller amounts, and have never failed to repay and service their debts on time.

**Mr. Rhodri Morgan** (Cardiff, West): The Prime Minister's views of the French revolution can perhaps be best summed up by saying that there is no vinism like chauvinism. In contrasting her ozone-friendly words with her pollution-infected deeds, can she tell the House whether this week she intends to provide some back-up action to those brave declarations by telling her Energy Secretary that he should accept the spirit of the cross-party amendment to bring in an obligation to consider energy efficiency and conservation on Thursday, when we will

*[Mr. Rhodri Morgan]*

consider the Lords amendments to the Electricity Bill? Or are we to assume that, when the Prime Minister says that she intends to fight for protectionism in all its forms, she includes environmental protectionism as well?

**The Prime Minister:** If the hon. Gentleman looks at all the facts and figures, he will be aware that this country's record on environmental protection is better than it was under any previous Government and is going ahead fast —whether it is in taking out the sulphur dioxide from our coal, which is costing some £2 billion, in the vast amount of more than £1 billion that we are investing this year to provide better water supplies or in energy efficiency. The Electricity Bill will for the first time require electricity supply companies to provide guidance to their customers about the efficient use of electricity, which will be a licence condition that the director can enforce. The trouble with the Opposition is that they canot hold a candle to the excellent record of the Government, whether it be in economic growth or in providing environmental protection.

**Mr. Keith Raffan** (Delyn): I join in welcoming the setting up of the financial action task force to attack the laundering of illicit profits from the drug trade. Will my right hon. Friend tell the House whether the international conference on drugs next year will have as one of its main objectives a multilateral agreement to back up that task force, so as to ensure that the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 can be implemented even more effectively?

**The Prime Minister:** We shall do that. The conference is to reduce the demand for drugs. We are not waiting for an international conference to try to get more bilateral agreement so that we can trace the profits of the drug peddlers. That will continue to be the case.

The international task force is due to report to us in April 1990, so that we can consider its proposals in the next economic summit.

## EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

*Ordered,*

That the European Community Document No. 8337/88 and the Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum submitted by the Department of the Environment on 10th July 1989 relating to the control of discharges of dangerous substances to water be referred to a Standing Committee on European Community Documents &c.—*[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory.]*

# Football Spectators Bill *[Lords]*
## (Allocation of Time)

4.23 pm

**The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham):** I beg to move,

That the following provisions shall apply to the remaining proceedings on the Bill:—

*Committee*

1. The proceedings on the Bill in the Standing Committee to which the Bill is allocated shall be brought to a conclusion at or before 1 p.m. on 27th July 1989, and the Standing Committee shall report the Bill to the House on or before that day.

*Report and Third Reading*

2.—(1) The proceedings on consideration and Third Reading of the Bill shall be completed in one allotted day, and on that day—

(a) the proceedings on consideration shall be brought to a conclusion at Ten o'clock; and

(b) the proceedings on Third Reading shall be brought to a conclusion at midnight.

(2) The Business Committee shall report to the House its Resolutions as to the proceedings on consideration of the Bill not later than the third day on which the House sits after the day on which the Chairman of the Standing Committee reports the Bill to the House.

(3) The Resolutions in any Report made under Standing Order No. 80 (Business Committee) may be varied by a further Report so made whether or not within the time specified in sub-paragraph (2) above, and whether or not the Resolutions have been agreed to by the House.

(4) The Resolutions of the Business Committee may include alterations in the order in which proceedings on consideration of the Bill are taken.

*Procedure in Standing Committee*

3.—(1) At a sitting of the Standing Committee at which any proceedings on the Bill are to be brought to a conclusion under a Resolution of the Business Sub-Committee the Chairman shall not adjourn the Committee under any Order relating to the sittings of the Committee until the proceedings have been brought to a conclusion.

(2) No Motion shall be made in the Standing Committee relating to the sitting of the Committee except by a member of the Government, and the Chairman shall permit a brief explanatory statement from the Member who makes, and from a Member who opposes, the Motion, and shall then put the Question thereon.

4. No Motion shall be made to alter the order in which Clauses, Schedules, new Clauses and new Schedules are taken in the Standing Committee but the Resolutions of the Business Sub-Committee may include alterations in that order.

*Conclusion of proceedings in Committee*

5. On the conclusion of the proceedings in any Committee on the Bill the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without putting any Question.

*Dilatory Motions*

6. No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, proceedings on the Bill shall be made in the Standing Committee or on an allotted day except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

*Extra time on allotted days*

7.—(1) On an allotted day paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings on the Bill for two hours after Ten o'clock.

(2) Any period during which proceedings on the Bill may be proceeded with after Ten o'clock under paragraph (7) of Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) shall be in addition to the said period of two hours.

(3) If an allotted day is one to which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20

stands over from an earlier day, a period of time equal to the duration of the proceedings upon that Motion shall be added to the said period of two hours.

*Private business*

8. Any private business which has been set down for consideration at Seven o'clock on an allotted day shall, instead of being considered as provided by Standing Orders, be considered at the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill on that day, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the private business for a period of three hours from the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or, if those proceedings are concluded before Ten o'clock, for a period equal to the time elapsing between Seven o'clock and the conclusion of those proceedings.

*Conclusion of proceedings*

9.—(1) For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion at a time appointed under this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee or the Business Sub-Committee and which have not previously been brought to a conclusion, the Chairman or Mr. Speaker shall forthwith put the following Questions (but no others)—

(a) any Question already proposed from the Chair;

(b) any Question necessary to bring to a decision a Question so proposed (including, in the case of a new Clause or new Schedule which has been read a second time, the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill);

(c) the Question on any amendment or Motion standing on the Order Paper in the name of any Member, if that amendment is moved or that Motion is made by a member of the Government;

(d) any other Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded;

and on a Motion so made for a new Clause or a new Schedule, the Chairman or Mr. Speaker shall put only the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

(3) If an allotted day is one on which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) would, apart from this Order, stand over to Seven o'clock—

(a) that Motion shall stand over until the conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee, are to be brought to a conclusion at or before that time;

(b) the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee, are to be brought to a conclusion after that time shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

(4) If an allotted day is one to which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee, are to be brought to a conclusion on that day shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

*Supplemental orders*

10.—(1) The proceedings on any Motion made in the House by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order (including anything which might have been the subject of a report of the Business Committee or Business Sub-Committee) shall, if not previously concluded, be brought to a conclusion one hour after they have been commenced, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(2) If on an allotted day on which any proceedings on the Bill are to be brought to a conclusion at a time appointed under this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee the House is adjourned, or the sitting is suspended, before that time no notice shall be required of a Motion made at the next sitting by a member of the Government for varying or supplememting the provisions of this Order.

*Saving*

11. Nothing in this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee or Business Sub-Committee shall—

(a) prevent any proceedings to which the Order or Resolution applies from being taken or completed earlier than is required by the Order or Resolution; or

(b) prevent any business (whether on the Bill or not) from being proceeded with on any day after the completion of all such proceedings on the Bill as are to be taken on that day.

*Re-committal*

12.—(1) References in this Order to proceedings on consideration or proceedings on Third Reading include references to proceedings, at those stages respectively, for, on or in consequence of re-committal.

(2) On an allotted day no debate shall be permitted on any Motion to recommit the Bill (whether as a whole or otherwise), and Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith any Question necessary to dispose of the Motion, including the Question on any amendment moved to the Question.

*Interpretation*

13. In this Order—

"allotted day" means any day (other than a Friday) on which the Bill is put down as first Government order of the day, provided that a Motion for allotting time to the proceedings on the Bill to be taken on that day either has been agreed on a previous day, or is set down for consideration on that day;

"the Bill" means the Football Spectators Bill *[Lords]*;

"Resolution of the Business Sub-Committee" means a Resolution of the Business Sub-Committee as agreed to by the Standing Committee;

"Resolution of the Business Committee" means a Resolution of the Business Committee as agreed to by the House.

The House will be familiar with the aims of the Bill from our debate a few weeks ago. It has two major objectives—first, to provide the statutory framework for a national membership scheme for football spectators; and, secondly, to enable the courts to impose restriction orders on hooligans to prevent them from travelling to key matches abroad.

The Bill was introduced because powerful measures are needed to break the link between football and hooliganism. That was apparent when the decision to legislate was taken after the serious incidents at the European championships in 1988. It is still apparent now in the light of the events that spoiled the end of the 1988-89 football season—more than 100 arrests only a week after the Hillsborough tragedy and other serious incidents right up to the last weekend of the season when a pitch invasion at Crystal Palace resulted in 16 injuries, including a stabbing.

Against that background, it would be totally irresponsible for the Government to waste the progress that has been made on this Bill and to throw away, for another year, the opportunity to deal with hooliganism. That is why I am introducing this motion today, to ensure that there is proper consideration of the Bill, but also steady progress. We cannot neglect our responsibilities while serious incidents continue to disrupt matches, to drive potential spectators away and to harm the reputation of the game.

The tragic events at Hillsborough meant that we delayed consideration of the Bill. That was entirely seemly and proper. But acts of hooliganism and violence did not cease after Hillsborough and it would be totally irresponsible to go on delaying while we wait for further incidents to confirm the low regard in which English fans are held across Europe. The Government do not accept the

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argument that the Bill should be postponed until we have seen the findings of the Taylor inquiry. We fully recognise the importance of this inquiry into safety matters and we have, at all stages, promised to look with care at its recommendations, particularly any that may be relevant to the setting up of the football membership scheme.

**Mr. Menzies Campbell** (Fife, North-East): If Lord Justice Taylor says that a football membership scheme such as is proposed would have contributed to the events at Hillsborough or even made them worse, will the Government abandon the scheme?

**Mr. Wakeham:** It is not helpful to have a hypothetical discussion of such matters. We shall have a proper debate on them when we have the report to consider. As I have already said, we have promised to look with care at the Taylor inquiry recommendations, particularly any that may be relevant to the setting up of the football membership scheme. However, as has been explained before, the Bill does not implement the national membershiip scheme. It provides an enabling framework within which the football membershp scheme will be set up. The Government recognise that the Taylor inquiry's findings may be relevant to the scheme and that Parliament will want to be aware of them before final decisions are taken. There is no question of the Government rushing through the scheme before those findings have been considered, but Government amendments have been tabled to the Bill to meet the concerns about safety matters.

**Mr. Robert N. Wareing** (Liverpool, West Derby): The Minister has just said that the Government have no intention of rushing the scheme through without the House being given a chance to consider the Taylor report. Should the final report of the Taylor inquiry not be published until December, does that mean that the Government are willing to hold back on the Bill until such time?

**Mr. Wakeham:** No. We are proceeding with the Bill. What we are talking about is its implementation, and we have given an undertaking that the national membership scheme will not be set up until we have had a chance to consider the Taylor report. That does not mean that we shall hold up the Bill.

**Mr. Denis Howell** (Birmingham, Small Heath): I am obliged to the Leader of the House for giving way, as this is an important matter. What he is now saying is that the House will have no opportunity to write into the Bill any conclusions that we draw as a result of the Taylor proposals. What he is saying is that the Football Membership Authority, or the Secretary of State acting under the powers in the Bill, will have that opportunity, but not this House. That is thoroughly objectionable.

**Mr. Wakeham:** The important point is that the House will have the opportunity to approve or to reject such proposals. There will be two opportunities for full parliamentary consideration of the scheme after the inquiry's report—one before the FMA is appointed and one after the scheme has been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.

We cannot afford to lose, for another year, the chance to deal with these important matters, especially with the approach of the world cup in 1990. I have therefore tabled this motion. It is, of course, not a matter for me how time in Committee is allocated, but I think that I have allowed reasonable time, given that there is substantial agreement about part II of the Bill. Having said that, it is important that we get on. The Committee has still to discuss some important matters in part I, in particular the role that the licensing authority might play in safety issues. The House agreed to the instruction allowing safety matters to be considered and the relevant Government amendments were tabled on Thursday. Given the great concern about safety, I should have thought that everyone would be anxious to reach that part of the debate. Some progress has been made, but it has been rather erratic.

**Mr. Keith Vaz** (Leicester, East): If the Leader of the House has had a chance to look at the *Hansard* reports of the Committee stage, he will note that, in respect of clauses 2 and 3, his ministerial colleagues have told the Committee and given undertakings that they will consider suggestions made by the Opposition. Does he agree that this occurred only because of the lengthy discussions which took place and the evidence produced by Opposition Members? Bearing in mind the fact that the spirit of the Bill should produce co-operation between Front-Bench Members and others to ensure that we solve the problem of hooliganism and put forward suggestions which will benefit football and that Ministers have said that they will consider suggestions, does the right hon. Gentleman agree that to allow us more time in Committee would permit more suggestions to come forward that would help to make the Bill a constructive vehicle which ensured that football progressed?

**Mr. Wakeham:** My hon. Friend the Minister of Sport said that he would consider a number of points raised, and certainly he will do so. The substance of my case is that there is plenty of time, both in the remaining Committee sessions and on Report, for answers to be given. There will be a Report stage and a Third reading and, in my judgment, that is adequate time.

After nine sittings over 37 hours the Committee has reached the first set of amendments to clause 5 of this 24-clause Bill. It is not even half time yet, which is not surprising since the first two sittings were largely repeats of the Second reading debate. I have already explained about the future opportunities to consider the Taylor recommendations, although it is difficult to understand why the Opposition are so keen to implement a report that they have not seen, but not to push ahead with measures in line with the Popplewell report, which we have all had a chance to read and consider—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] The measures are in line—*[Interruption.]* Keep calm.

The Popplewell report suggested that the clubs should consider a membership scheme. It was the clubs which said that they were not prepared to do so unless the scheme had statutory backing. Therefore, I stick to my point.

During the first two sittings of the Committee——

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): Is it not the case that in an interim report—not the final report—Popplewell said that he recommended that urgent consideration be given by football clubs to introducing a membership system so as to exclude visiting fans? He recommended only consideration of a scheme, which is utterly different from the Government's recommendation.

**Mr. Wakeham:** Of course, the Popplewell scheme was not identical to the Government's. He was suggesting a voluntary scheme. It was the football clubs' failure to come up with one which led us to take action. These matters can and will be the subject of great debate. It does not mean that we need not get ahead and deal with these matters.

During the first two sittings of the Committee, the Opposition team was ruled offside on no fewer than 17 occasions and asked to remain within the scope of the debate. Events since then have made it difficult to know what to expect from the players in a team who seem unable to settle their team tactics from one sitting to the next.

On clause 1 there were 13 groups of Opposition amendments to consider, but after four of them were discussed, there was a change of heart. The remaining nine sets were withdrawn and the Committee went straight to the clause stand part debate. This encouraging progress continued on clause 2 where all the Opposition amendments were once more dropped. Clause 3 went to the other extreme, and a closure motion was needed to get on; and so it continues. I should like to think that, by introducing this motion, I am doing a favour to everyone on the Committee by focusing their minds on a reasonable timetable which will allow sensible and steady progress through the remaining stages of the Bill. Otherwise, I fear that we shall not be able to act in time for the 1994 world cup, let alone the 1990——

**Mr. Joseph Ashton** (Bassetlaw): Despite the long list that the Leader of the House read out and the fact that there have been more than 30 hours of debate, does he accept that the Government Whip moved the closure only once in all that time—so how could there have been filibustering?

**Mr. Wakeham:** The hon. Gentleman is wrong: I gather that it was moved twice. I am not arguing that there has been filibustering. It has never been my case that there has been. My case is that we need a structured debate to achieve finality on this matter in a reasonable length of time.

As I am often reminded, I have introduced a number of timetable motions in my time as Leader of the House, so I have had the opportunity to explore the various philosophies on the use of the guillotine. I have often had cause to quote the distinguished expert on the subject, the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), who believes that guillotines are justified only towards the end of the Session to get Government measures through.

I have favoured an early introduction of timetable motions to allow proper time to be assigned to each part of the Bill. I have tended to rely on my judgment rather than on that of the right hon. Gentleman who, as he well knows, was the only Leader of the House since the war to lose a guillotine motion and to fail to pilot one of his guillotined Bills to Royal Assent. But on this occasion, the motion meets his test and mine, which convinces me that I am right to introduce it, and I look forward to his support.

The provisions of the motion are entirely adequate. Thirty-seven hours have already been spent on part I, which is the more contentious part of the legislation. This timetable allows at least 30 more hours to consider the rest of the Bill, depending on when the Committee chooses to sit. After that, there will be a full day for Report and Third Reading, when proceedings on Third Reading can continue until midnight.

I stress again that this will not be the last opportunity for parliamentary scrutiny of these measures. In all, I see this motion as a happy release for everyone. We can go off for the summer in the knowledge that we are well on the way to completing the necessary measures. For the first time, we shall have an effective way of keeping troublemakers out of football matches at home and abroad and to restore the reputation of the game. I therefore commend the motion to the House.

4.43 pm

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): There are three main reasons for today's guillotine motion to curtail debate on the Football Spectators Bill: first, the Government's business managers are no good at getting their legislation through the House; secondly, the Bill is a ludicrous measure; thirdly, the Government are so embarrassed by the way in which they are losing the argument that they want to bring debate to an end as soon as possible.

Let us look first at the record of the Government's business managers. In the first Session of this Parliament, we sat for 218 days, the fourth longest Session in history. The Government curtailed debate by use of the guillotine on no fewer than six Bills—the highest ever number of guillotines in one Session.

Despite all that, the Government got through only 49 Bills, the lowest total in the first Session of a Parliament in modern times. The average for a first Session is 70 Bills, and the record is 104. So far in this Session, the Government have introduced just 33 Bills which, if the final total, would be the lowest number in any Session not interrupted by a general election.

However, to get these 33 Bills through, the Government have had to limit debate by guillotining six of them. So almost one fifth of this year's business has had to be guillotined. Clearly, much of this low production results from the effectiveness of the Opposition. The only other explanation is the incompetence of Members on the Government Front Bench—in particular, the ineptitude of the Chief Whip and of the Leader of the House. That, presumably, is why, with a majority of 100 and having made so little progress, they feature so largely in all the rumours about a Cabinet reshuffle.

Let us examine the Bill itself. Despite objections from us, it was introduced first in the House of Lords. By custom, controversial measures are not first introduced in the Lords, but this one was. Surely that was not because their Lordships had any special experience of, knowledge of, or insight into what happens on the terraces or even in the stands of English and Welsh football grounds. In my time they have always been regarded as experts on "huntin', shootin' and fishin'"—certainly not on football.

Whatever the reason, it is a fact that the Bill introduced in the Lords related only to hooliganism at football matches and to no other problem. It recognised no danger to the safety of football spectators other than that posed by hooligans. Then came the Hillsborough disaster, at

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which point even the Government had to acknowledge that other factors affected the safety of football spectators, so they deferred consideration of the Bill.

At that point, we suggested that the Government should withdraw the Bill and await the outcome of the judicial inquiry into the disaster. We suggested that, once the country had the benefit of Lord Justice Taylor's report, football authorities, the police and representatives of the supporters, together with the Government and the Opposition, should sit down to work out practical proposals designed to reduce hooliganism and to make it safer for men, women, children and old and handicapped people to watch football matches in comfort and security.

We offered to help to formulate such proposals and we promised that we would help the Government to get the necessary legislation on the statute book as soon as possible. The Government refused point blank——

**Mr. David Sumberg** (Bury, South): Can the hon. Gentleman answer the reverse of the question put to my right hon.Friend by the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell)? If the report from Lord Justice Taylor says that a football membership scheme would help to defeat the hooligan, will the Opposition withdraw their objection to it?

**Mr. Dobson:** We shall consider it—*[Interruption.]*— and so should the Government. We shall consider any proposition from the Taylor inquiry, but as the Government continually say that Mr. Justice Popplewell recommended this scheme, and he did not, we should need to examine closely anything that they claimed emanated from the Taylor report.

After what they considered a decent interval, the Government pushed the original Bill through the Lords. When it arrived before this House, it was still so exclusively concerned with hooligans that amendments designed to deal with other aspects of safety would have been out of order, so the Government had to introduce a special procedural motion to empower the Committee to deal with any aspect of crowd safety. The Committee cannot do that properly, because Lord Justice Taylor's inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster finished taking evidence only last Friday.

Instead, we are told that the Bill will leave everything on crowd safety to the discretion of the Secretary of State. The Bill will enable him, after Lord Justice Taylor reports, to look at the recommendations of the judicial inquiry, and will give the power to him alone to accept, reject or vary its recommendations in any way he chooses. He will then propose regulations relating to crowd safety. Any regulations that he comes up with will not be capable of amendment by the House. We know his track record on regulations and on safety, because on Wednesday this week——

**Mr. Vaz:** My hon. Friend mentioned the Secretary of State for the Environment. Has he had a chance to see the reply to my parliamentary question, in which I asked the Secretary of State to list the number of football matches that he had attended and the number of football grounds that he had visited over the past year? Is he aware that the Secretary of State has not visited a single football ground or attended a single match in the past year? Does he agree that it would be appropriate not to proceed with the Bill until the right hon. Gentleman has had a chance to attend one?

**Mr. Dobson:** The right hon. Gentleman is more familiar with the Eton wall game than with Britain's national sport. On Wednesday, he is asking the House to approve no fewer than 15 sets of regulations under the Water Act 1989. That Act is the brainchild of the Secretary of State and he has drawn up the regulations. The House will have just three hours in which to debate 15 sets of regulations. That is less than a quarter of an hour per set. At least the context of those water regulations should have been partly covered in the debates on the Water Bill, but that will not be the case for any regulations made by the Secretary of State based on the recommendations of the Hillsborough inquiry which, if the guillotine motion is passed, will not have been considered in Committee at all. Less than a day will be provided to consider them on Report. They will be the product of those who introduced this barmy Bill in the first place.

If his record is anything to go by, the Secretary of State will be more concerned with the control of ordinary citizens than their safety. He was previously Secretary of State for Transport. London Regional Transport was enjoined by law to secure the efficiency, economy and safety of its operations. The Secretary of State decided to spell out his priorities for LRT in a letter. In his 823-word letter he talked only about efficiency and economy, and about cutting costs and staff. It was not that he did not put safety first; he did not put it anywhere. The word "safety" was not mentioned once in his letter.

His record shows that when it comes to the safety of ordinary people the Secretary of State literally does not give a damn. That is why any safety measures to be implemented following the Hillsborough inquiry cannot be left to him. Nor can they be left to any other Ministers or to any of his successors because, as we know, they are just as bad. After all, his successors permitted the installation of the death-trap ticket barriers on the tube. The recommendations of the Hillsborough inquiry must be discussed in detail and decided in the House. The guillotine motion will deny us the opportunity to do that.

**The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley):** That is pathetic.

**Mr. Dobson:** The right hon. Gentleman says that that is pathetic. It was pathetic of him to pay no attention to the safety of people on London transport, and it is just as pathetic to introduce a Bill that pays no attention to the safety of football spectators.

All those objections to the guillotine relate to what is left out of the Bill. What it includes is just as ludicrous. The greatest victims of hooligans in football grounds have been the rest of the spectators. They have suffered from what the hooligans do. The Government do not propose to deal with the minority of troublemakers. The Bill is not targeted on them. It proposes to inflict a form of collective punishment on the innocent victims, the law-abiding spectators. It will impose extra costs on them and interfere with their right to watch a football match. It will impose on them the inconvenience of having to obtain an identity card. It will erode their civil liberties by requiring compulsory selective identity cards in a country which does not require such cards to be carried by any comparable group.

Against all those costs to spectators, what would be the benefits? Most people in football, most of those who go to football matches and most of the police believe that the proposals will not improve matters, but make them worse. Set against that wealth of experience, we have a Prime Minister whose direct knowledge of football grounds seems to have commenced at a Wembley cup final which she saw from the royal box, an old Etonian Secretary of State who does not even claim that, and a Minister for Sport who would do anything if he thought that it would help him keep his job, even volunteering to be a target at a clay pigeon shoot.

Those are the people who insist, for example, that women should be included in the scheme. There is no evidence that women have been involved in violence at football matches. What do the Government fear? Apparently, they are frightened that hooligans will dress up as women or girls. If Ministers lived in the real world they would know that the average heavily tattooed skinhead does not look right in a frock. These Ministers do not know that, because they do not live in the real world.

**Mr. John Carlisle** (Luton, North): Many thousands of football supporters will be upset that the hon. Gentleman thinks that they are all heavily tattooed skinheads. Is he aware that at Newport some 40 men went to the local Oxfam shop, bought clothes and dressed up as women in order to get into the game? As such, many were arrested. That could happen again if women were exempted from the scheme. That is the problem with the hon. Gentleman's proposal.

**Mr. Dobson:** In response to the hon. Gentleman, who spends as much time representing Johannesburg, South as Luton, North, I would say that not all football supporters are skinheads—and, for that matter, not all skinheads are hooligans. I was talking about hooligans who, in the fantasies of the Government Front Bench and apparently the hon. Gentleman, might dress up as women. We should not pay any attention to what he said.

The Government also insist on pensioners having identity cards. The consequence of that will be rotten. What about the grandad who has not been to many matches in recent years, but who reminisces about Stanley Matthews or Jackie Milburn or, going further back, Dixie Dean? One fine Saturday or perhaps a Boxing day his children or grandchildren may say to him, "Come on then, it's a nice day, we'll take you in the car. We'll be able to get a seat. They're playing Wolves. See how you rate this new lad Steve Bull." The old man will perk up but then they will say, "Oh no, you haven't got a flaming ID card. We won't be able to go." That is what will happen in the real world inhabited by football spectators but not by the Government.

**Mr. David Martin** (Portsmouth, South): If we assume that we have a scheme where people have to put a card through a machine, surely the more exemptions there are, the more bunching there will be, so the less safe it will be to arrive at the gates. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that that danger is the more likely one?

**Mr. Dobson:** All sorts of provisions could be made for various types of spectators. There could be separate turnstiles, children's enclosures and family enclosures. All sorts of practical, targeted measures can be taken to reduce hooliganism so that non-hooligans who go to football matches feel safe. The whole preposterous scheme will not achieve that.

The final reason for the guillotine is the Government's embarrassment about losing all the arguments. They have lost the argument with the public, in the House of Lords and on Second Reading when my right hon. and hon. Friends, and, to be fair, some Conservative Members, ripped the Bill to shreds in a cracking series of speeches. The same has been happening in Committee. The Government have only one answer to the weight of the arguments—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) says, "Oh." On one occasion when I listened to the Committee he was talking about compulsory ID cards for pensioners. He said that pensioners would be encouraged to get involved with Bury football club by being forced to have an ID card. That is a peculiar form of encouragement.

**Mr. Alistair Burt** (Bury, North): It is to his disadvantage that the hon. Gentleman did not stay longer. My point was that the violence has discouraged several pensioners in Bury and elsewhere from going to the game. My point was that there are already safe enclosures which are advertised as such, and many people take out membership of them. I argued that that concept should be extended to the whole ground. In that way, the whole ground would be safe, and pensioners would benefit.

**Mr. Dobson:** Why is the answer to make it compulsory for pensioners to have ID cards? If the scheme, in dealing with people below pensionable age, results in the grounds being safe, pensioners will be safe wherever they go in those grounds. The hon. Gentleman's arguments are just preposterous. We have this guillotine because the Government have lost the argument and are using the crude weight of their majority.

**Mr. Alan Meale** (Mansfield): My hon. Friend may not have had time to read the *Official Report* of last Thursday's sitting, which shows the statistical evidence about people aged over 65 who committed offences in the last season. Only three cases could be found. The first involved a pensioner who was arrested while trying to steal a car outside Chelsea football ground; the second was an over-65 person found illegally selling hot dogs outside Norwich; the third was a very elderly gentleman arrested outside Southampton ground late one afternoon in an inebriated condition and pretending to be Father Christmas. Charges have not been brought against that man.

**Mr. Dobson:** My hon. Friend, who so rightly and heartily speaks for Mansfield Town, has exposed the threadbare nature of the argument that pensioners should be forced to carry ID cards.

The Bill is like the Government: it ignores the things that it ought to do and fails to do the things that it claims to do. It is out of touch. It owes everything to the Prime Minister and nothing to common sense. Its only role is propaganda and publicity. It flies in the face of practical experience. It will create more problems that it resolves. It is not up to the job—it never has been and it never will be.

5.1 pm

**Mr. David Evans** (Welwyn Hatfield): The Opposition object to the motion on two grounds—that it has come too early in the Committee proceedings and that we should wait for Lord Justice Taylor to produce his report on the Hillsborough tragedy. I reject both grounds.

On the first ground, my argument is that the motion should have come earlier. In 1985, the Procedure Committee recommended timetabling of Bills. The automatic timetabling of contentious Bills would make good sense. Under present procedures, when a Bill gets bogged down in Committee or looks as though it will, a guillotine motion is introduced. That happens under all Governments. Precious time on the Floor of the House is wasted discussing the motion. The Opposition, of whichever party, criticise the motion and the Government of the day defend it. It is all a load of nonsense.

A rational timetable aids sensible debate and ensures that all parts of the Bill receive consideration. It does not rob the Opposition of any of their rights. As the Procedure Committee recognised in 1985, the power of delay is a myth. Attempts at obstruction reduce rather than enhance the likelihood of the Government making concessions. In the interests of more rational debate, I support the motion and I hope that we can look forward to the automatic timetabling of Bills in the future, thus avoiding the need for motions such as this.

As for the Opposition's contention that we should not rush proceedings but wait until Lord Justice Taylor's report is to hand, I take the contrary view. The Bill is an enabling Bill and deals with an issue that is different from that being considered by the Taylor inquiry. To wait for the Taylor report would confuse rather than clarify the issue. The Bill is about separating the true football fans from the cowards, the bullies, the hooligans, the criminals and others of that type. Safety at football grounds, and at all sporting stadiums, is an important issue which needs careful consideration, free from the controversy that surrounds the subject of hooliganism and membership card schemes.

Contrary to what opponents of the Bill may like to think, nothing has changed as a result of the awful tragedy at Hillsborough. Hooliganism was ruining our national game and dragging this country's name through the gutters of Europe before Hillsborough and, unfortunately, it has continued to do so unabated since then. The need for action to tackle the problem of hooliganism is as strong now as it has ever been. The events of the last two months of the season bear this out. In the Littlewoods cup final at Wembley, when Luton played Nottingham Forest, mounted police had to separate rival fans who were fighting outside the ground. There were 66 arrests and 65 were subsequently charged. Not one was a Luton fan. The scheme had worked there.

On 22 April, just one week after the tragedy at Hillsborough, 94 people were arrested and 28 were ejected from the ground during a match between Chelsea and Leeds United. Arrests took place before, during and after the game. Something similar happened at the game between West Ham and Millwall, during which 24 people were arrested and 24 were ejected. On 13 May, the last Saturday of the season, trouble throughout the country culminated in over more than 200 arrests and dozens of injuries. After a pitch invasion by Birmingham fans at Crystal Palace, 16 people ended up in hospital, the game was held up for 26 minutes and 24 people were arrested. Some 200 Sheffield United fans went on the rampage in Weston-super-Mare after the team had lost to Bristol City, and 24 were arrested. Some 40 Leeds yobboes were arrested after fighting in a pub on their way back from a match with Shrewsbury. Chelsea fans celebrated promotion by causing thousands of pounds' worth of damage.

**Mr. Wareing:** Would the hon. Gentleman care to give the House the advantage of his experience and explain how 52 people from Luton in a coach coming back from a game with Ipswich Town managed to damage the coach, and spent some time in a local lock-up? Why did the Luton ID card scheme not prevent that from happening? The incident involved 52 arrests and was not the one mentioned by the Minister in a parliamentary answer.

**Mr. Evans:** Had the Government's scheme been in place, those 52—they were not members of Luton—would have been banned from football grounds for two years.

On 13 May, there was also trouble involving Plymouth, Bournemouth and Bristol Rovers fans—the latter were returning from Gigg lane, Bury—and on 27 May more than 150 were arrested after the England v. Scotland game at Hampden. Offences included a breach of the peace, spitting on shoppers, resisting arrest, fighting and swearing. One fan was charged with being in possession of a CS gas canister and discharging it into the crowd. This was all immediately after the Hillsborough disaster.

**Mr. Harry Barnes** (Derbyshire, North-East): Will the hon. Gentleman give a detailed list of the matches at which no people were arrested, or hardly anyone was arrested, or after which few were charged and no convictions followed? We need a full picture of what is happening. We cannot base our response on specific instances, although we want them to be dealt with.

**Mr. Evans:** I do not intend to go though all the matches at which there were no arrests. I am trying to explain to the House the seriousness of problems affecting the national game, and its possible demise if we are not careful. I am all for identifying the bullies and the hooligans, and stopping them attending football matches for two or three years afterwards, or perhaps for ever.

The Government are right to bring forward this enabling Bill, and it is right to proceed with it now and to try to get it on the statute book during this parliamentary session. Only then can we hope to salvage a dying game. Let us by all means address ourselves seriously to improving crowd safety when the Taylor report is published, but let us not confuse that with the need to do something now about the scourge of hooliganism. Once the Bill is passed and in place, it will be much easier to take action after considering any recommendations from the Taylor report. Let the Football Membership Authority, which will write the scheme, include them if it wishes. The guillotine motion is eminently reasonable, and I support it.

5.10 pm

**Mr. Michael Foot** (Blaenau Gwent): The Leader of the House has said that I am an expert on guillotines. I can tell him that I am a greater expert on watching football. I have probably watched more away games than most hon. Members put together. First, in 1934, I watched my team —Plymouth Argyle—taking two points from Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart lane on Christmas day. I have been watching away matches ever since, and I have seen some home games as well. I have had plenty of opportunity to see what really happens at away games.

I am bitterly opposed to the Bill because of the widespread injury that it will inflict on football, especially the small teams. There is not the slightest doubt that, if the proposed scheme is introduced, it will reduce the number of away supporters who attend matches, at least for a number of seasons. My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) drew attention in Committee to the consequences. The numbers of casual supporters who decide on the afternoon that they will attend a match, or only a day or two before, will be seriously reduced. In addition, the paraphernalia of an identity card scheme will reduce numbers.

Many of the smaller teams, perhaps in the third and fourth divisions, will be driven out of business, but the Government seem not to give a damn that. What will happen in the towns and other places where young people have been reared to give allegiance to their clubs? It is a proper pursuit that many of us have followed over many years. In the places where clubs are knocked out, the increase in hooliganism will be incalculable. The Government do not understand the cause of the hooliganism that has increased so rapidly during their period of office. If clubs throughout the country are caused to close, the chances of many young people to attach themselves to a club and see it prosper will be swept away by a Government who do not give a damn what happens in football and have never taken the trouble to find out.

Anyone who examined the facts could see what was likely to happen outside football grounds. By pursuing the Bill, the Government will add to all the problems of bitterness, rows and arrests. Many more Hillsboroughs could be provoked by the scheme. That is the view of many police forces, but the Government do take no notice of what the police say on these matters. They are apparently not interested in what the police have to do outside the grounds. The risks and dangers will be enormously increased by the Bill. In effect, the Government are saying, "We are not even going to listen; notwithstanding what happened outside the ground at Hillsborough, we intend to go ahead with the scheme." There will be a far greater risk of roughhouses outside grounds. It is scandalous for the Government to proceed in such a way.

**Mr. John Carlisle:** The right hon. Gentleman has said, in effect, that the police have forecast trouble. I trust that he will acknowledge that the police were members of the original working party and that they have had a major input in the discussions on the proposed scheme. Secondly, the right hon. Gentleman made some serious remarks about the Hillsborough disaster. I put it to him with all due respect that it is dangerous to allege that Hillsborough could happen again as a result of the introduction of the membership scheme. If a membership scheme had been in existence at Hillsborough, the police might have had a better facility by means of a filtering process to prevent many people from getting to the ground. First, they could have ensured that people had tickets. Secondly, they could have ensured that individuals had membership cards. In those circumstances, the police might have been able to prevent some of the trouble by ensuring that those without tickets did not get to the ground.

**Mr. Foot:** That was not a proper intervention. If the hon. Gentleman wants to make a speech, let him make one. I shall reply, however, to the issues that he has raised. It cannot be denied that the police have been opposed to the scheme from the beginning. The Government have used every method available to them to try to persuade the police to produce different evidence. Anyone who has studied the facts knows that when the Government first came forward with their cock-eyed scheme the football clubs were against it. Only a few supported it. I understand that Luton, for example, has a scheme designed to stop away supporters from attending matches. That is a scandalous interference with the individual's right to watch a football match. If such a scheme were applied throughout the country, football would be wrecked. What is football but a contest between two sides at which supporters can express their support from both sides? The Luton scheme would wreck British football, but the hon. Member for Luton, West (Mr. Carlisle) apparently supports it.

As I have said, the police were against the proposed membership scheme from the beginning, and I am sure that that is still their position. I am sure that, whatever differences of view emerge as a result of the evidence given about the Hillsborough disaster, the police will still be against the scheme, but the Government are not prepared to take any notice of that. I shall consider it an amazing event if the Taylor report comes out in favour of the scheme. Of course, it would be a great victory for the Government. If the Government do not bring pressure to bear on Lord Justice Taylor—I am sure that he would be able to resist it if they did—there is an overwhelming certainty that the report will only add to the arguments that those who know about football have advanced from the beginning. In other words, the Taylor report will fortify the arguments of my right hon. Friend the Member for Small Heath and many others.

The Government are wasting a great deal of parliamentary time. There may be a few obscure recommendations in the Taylor report which will be used by the Government to support their argument. I believe that the report will be written clearly and will not support the Government, but if the report blurs the issue, what will happen? It is monstrous for the Government to say that they will wait until the Taylor report is produced, consider what it recommends and then bring forward proposals which cannot be altered by amendment in the House. The Leader of the House should be in his place to respond to this. The Minister for Sport merely takes the orders of the Prime Minister. The Bill is clearly the Prime Minister's responsibility. If the Government had a real leader of the House, a real Minister for Sport and a real Cabinet, the Bill would never have been presented to the House. Unfortunately, Cabinet members are afraid to oppose the Prime Minister and simply agree with virtually everything she says.

That attitude should have changed over the past few months. The Prime Minister's authority has been greatly weakened following the elections. The atmosphere in the Cabinet, in Parliament and throughout the country is changing. Secondary Ministers who might have some interest in their future careers should have plucked up the courage to tell the Prime Minister that it is nonsense that a measure such as this Bill should be proceeding through the House. It is shameful that the Minister for Sport supports the Bill, and it is even more shameful that

*[Mr. Foot]*

members of the Cabinet—many of whom will probably be shunted into other jobs when our discussions on the Bill come to an end in a few weeks' time—have lent their support to it.

The Minister for Sport has never been able to persuade the football authorities, the police or anyone else that the Bill has merit. One of the reasons for that is that, when he meets the clubs and others, he spends far too much time talking and scarcely listens to anything that others have to say. That applies even more to the Prime Minister. It would be best if we could finish off the Bill here and now, but if we cannot, let it be finished off soon. The Minister for Sport will go into obscurity as the Minister who tried to ram through a measure that will do nothing but injury to the greatest of British sports.

5.20 pm

**Mr. David Sumberg** (Bury, South): I follow the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) with some reluctance, not least because his reputation as a parliamentary speaker has no equal, but also because his knowledge of the guillotine probably makes him the world's greatest expert on it.

I support the motion because of the experience of my membership of the Standing Committee. At times I felt isolated and lonely because at every juncture when hon. Members on both sides felt obliged to speak, they prefaced their remarks by expressing their love, devotion, commitment and knowledge of the game of association football. After a time, I began to think that that commitment was a condition of membership of the House. Hon. Members combined that commitment with pointing an accusing finger at the guilty men—those who, especially in the eyes of the Opposition, know nothing about football.

I must make it clear that although I have attended the occasional match, I am not the world's greatest expert on football. I make no apology for that, for three main reasons. First, since coming to the House it has been my experience that lack of knowledge has never prevented hon. Members from making speeches either in this Chamber or in Committee. Secondly, in view of the state of association football, the declining gates, the conditions of the grounds and the way in which the game is perceived both here and abroad, I realise that those responsible for all that are people who know about the game. Perhaps it is time for those who do not know very much to have their say——

**Mr. Denis Howell:** If the football authorities are responsible for the malaise of the game, why are the Government proposing to put them in charge of the Football Membership Authority which will regulate this ludicrous Bill?

**Mr. Sumberg:** They are being involved simply because of force majeure. The right hon. Gentleman must remember that in Committee my hon. Friend the Minister made it clear that he is prepared to consider the involvement of other people and other bodies in the football membership scheme. I hope that he will do so.

Thirdly, I make no apology for supporting the motion because it gives me an opportunity to speak for the forgotten majority—not the majority of decent, honourable, peaceful football supporters, because powerful and influential voices already speak for them, but for the vast majority of the population who never go to a football match, and never want to go to one, but who foot the bill for the behaviour of the mindless few who create all the mayhem at football games. If it can be argued, as I believe it can, that law-abiding football supporters have had a raw deal from football, it can be argued that the millions of people who never go to the game have had an even greater raw deal.

**Mr. Meale:** Is the hon. Gentleman aware that about 32 million people in Britain support one sport or another? Is he further aware that hooliganism occurs across the whole spectrum of sport, including rowing, rugby union and cricket, to almost the same degree as in football? Why does he not argue that a similar scheme should be introduced for every sport?

**Mr. Sumberg:** I sometimes wonder what Labour Members do and where they have been. Of course there are outbreaks of violence at most sports, but the predominant problem is with the game of football. If the Opposition do not recognise that, we shall not make much progress. Every Saturday throughout the season, our cities and towns become almost semi-military encampments with masses of police patrolling the streets. The ordinary people have to think about changing their plans as they face the fact that there may be violence against themselves or their property. Above all, the cost of providing protection for them and their property falls on the ratepayers and taxpayers. They are entitled to be heard in this House.

Without the guillotine, the behaviour of some Opposition Members will continue unabated. There will be yet more hypnotic law lectures from the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz); we will hear yet again the same stories from the hon. Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton) about his wartime RAF experiences and his distinguished service for the Crown on the railway stations of Britain; we will hear again about the wonderful moment in the career of the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) when he discovered, or so he thought, the fatal flaw in the Luton Town membership scheme. We have heard those stories time and again. Indeed, the hon. Member for Mansfield (Mr. Meale) retold, even today, the story of three old-age pensioners who apparently were arrested outside a football ground. Having heard those stories many times, I have a great deal of sympathy for Members' wives and husbands who have to listen to the old jokes and stories and smile politely each time we tell them at every meeting that we attend.

Another theme that came out in Committee is worthy of mention—the class war. Conservative Members thought that in the modern, chic, radical, cordless-telephone Labour party, the class war was dead and gone. I have news for the House—it is alive and kicking in Committee. "This is a working-class game," runs the Opposition argument, "and we do not want it interfered with by the public-school twits on the Conservative Benches." If it is a working-class game, the working classes have had a pretty raw deal from it. They stand on awful terraces supporting clubs that will spend £1 million on a player but not a penny on their grounds. They watch their favourite clubs being bought and sold in boardroom coups over which they have no control. They suffer violent attacks from the mindless hooligan minority.

**Mr. Jim Lester** (Broxtowe): Although my hon. Friend may be right to suggest that some clubs do not do their best by their supporters, no one is compelled to attend a football match or to endure such conditions if he chooses not to do so. The only element of compulsion entering football is the introduction of the Bill, whereby one is not allowed to watch a football match unless one becomes a member under the Football Membership Authority scheme.

**Mr. Sumberg:** My hon. Friend's point goes to the fundamental principle of the Bill, but I happen to believe that it is not the greatest infringement of civil liberties to compel a person to hold a membership card to prevent the sort of behaviour to which I referred.

The party of the working class may think that the conditions that I mentioned are good enough for the working class, but we do not. Such conditions are not good enough for the working, middle, upper or any other class. That is why the Government mean to do something about them.

At the start of my remarks, I freely confessed to knowing little about association football—but because many of my constituents are interested in football, I thought that I should know more about it. I accepted an invitation from the chairman of Manchester United, Martin Edwards, whom I know, to visit that club's ground, together with one or two Opposition Members, to watch a match. During the interval, I met another guest, who was Asian. He told me that he was a keen football fan but did not regularly attend matches. I asked him why not. He answered, "Mr. Sumberg, if the colour of your skin was the same as mine, you would not go to football matches either. At best, you would receive taunts and jeers—at worst, a brick or bottle on the back of your head."

**Mr. Vaz:** That is nonsense. Absolute rubbish.

**Mr. Sumberg:** That is an appalling indictment of the game. If the Government fail to do anything, it will be an appalling indictment of them. I do not pretend that the Bill is the whole answer to football violence, but it can play a vital part. It is time that football had a better deal, and time that the Bill became law.

5.33 pm

**Mr. Menzies Campbell** (Fife, North-East): Such is the nature of the Government's majority in the House that I harbour no doubt that the motion will pass at the due moment. When it does, that will be eloquent testimony to the Government's obduracy and intransigence, because there is no need for the motion. To go beyond that, there are very good reasons why it should not pass.

Those right hon. and hon. Members who have participated in the Committee stage have known since it began that the passage of the legislation is much more important to the Government than its intrinsic merit. That belief is based on an ill-concealed, blind and insensitive determination on the Government's part to drive the legislation through. The less time the Bill spends in Committee, the less time there will be for the scrutiny which is required—and which would make it obvious that the Government have created expectations that they are unable to satisfy. The more detailed the examination, the more flawed the Bill has appeared.

The guillotine is not being introduced as an expression of the Government's frustration: it is provoked by their realisation of the extent to which the Bill exposes them to political and intellectual embarrassment. The guillotine is not justified by the nature of the legislation. Such legislation should in any case be non-partisan and ought to command the support of right hon and hon. Members in all parts of the House. Notwithstanding that, however, the Government are determined to press ahead.

The guillotine is also not justified by the views of many right hon. and hon. Members who, while they oppose the legislation, are as determined as any Conservative Member to find a solution to the problem of football hooliganism and to ensure, so far as they can, the speedy return of English clubs to continental competitions. Neither is the guillotine justified by the parallel inquiry of Lord Justice Taylor, whose preliminary report may be available by the end of this month. Instead, the guillotine will prevent the Standing Committee appointed by the House to consider the Bill from examining Lord Justice Taylor's proposals. That is why many right hon. and hon. Members find the introduction of the guillotine at this stage so objectionable.

In Committee, the mask has slipped on occasions—usually in the absence of the hon. Member for Watford (Mr. Garel-Jones)—and reasonableness has made a brief appearance. From time to time, the Minister for Sport has conveyed a properly constructive attitude to matters brought to his attention in the context of safety. That is hardly surprising, because in the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) and the hon. Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton), the Committee has two Members who were present on the occasion of the Hillsborough disaster, and who bring to the Committee's work not only considerable experience of and a deep love for football but an appreciation of at least some of the conditions which gave rise to that most tragic occurrence. That spirit of constructiveness could have been more effectively utilised if the Government had been willing to exercise greater sensitivity towards Opposition Members who, while opposed to the principle of the Bill, are none the less determined to ensure that the eventual legislation is the best possible.

If we must have a Bill, it should be the best Bill possible. That requires proper scrutiny of the terms of the legislation and adequate time for that scrutiny. If we must have a Bill, it should be based on the best available information—which requires consideration at least of Lord Justice Taylor's interim report. The guillotine will allow neither. For that reason, it ought to be opposed.

5.37 pm

**Mr. Alistair Burt** (Bury, North): I follow the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) in his reminiscences, and I am pleased to be the first Conservative Member to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg). As the House may know, we share the same metropolitan borough and often find that we have both parallel and tandem interests. My hon. Friend confessed that he was speaking for a group of people who are not football supporters and who attend few matches, but who have a legitimate interest in

*[Mr. Alistair Burt]*

the outcome of the Bill. I speak for a different group of people again—for those who were football supporters but who are no longer.

My credentials follow more those of the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent than those of my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South. I spent my formative years as a football supporter following a small town club. I refer to my local team, Bury. My father has been a season ticket holder at that club for 40 years, which is a triumph of hope over experience. The club had occasional cup triumphs, with victories over West Bromwich Albion and over Middlesbrough, when they were a force in the first division. They have had good cup runs, poor seasons and good seasons, but Bury has always been a friendly club and I am grateful for the support and friendship that I have enjoyed from its chairman and directors——

**Mr. Ashton:** On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker. Surely the debate should concern itself with the question of whether or not there is a need for a guillotine. It is not another Second Reading, or an opportunity to reminisce.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** I have been listening carefully to the hon. Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt), but he has said nothing out of order. It is in order for a debate on a timetable motion to be fairly wide-ranging.

**Mr. Burt:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sure that the hon. Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton) will seek to catch your eye when he has a chance, so that he can give his views.

The kind attention that the local club has paid to my work on the Bill is very welcome and I appreciate the attempts of the current chairman, Terry Robinson, and the other members of the board to develop the club over the past few years. There is no doubt, however, that the game has changed, as has its impact on local society. Years ago it had a positive image in Bury—people were interested in the club's affairs and results, and wanted to be involved —but that is no longer so. The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent properly drew attention to the fears among small clubs about the membership scheme as a result of declining attendances. I wonder where he has been for the past 30 years.

**Mr. Steve Norris** (Epping Forest): He has been leader of the Labour party.

**Mr. Burt:** I missed that bit.

Over the past few years, as a result of the constant decline in attendances, my club and those of hon. Members on both sides of the House have been put into a precarious financial position, and they are now wondering what to do. They are worried less about what will happen in the future than about the damage that has already been done.

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. How wide is "wide" in this debate?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I have heard nothing from the hon. Member for Bury, North that is out of order.

**Mr. Burt:** I am answering a point made by the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent. I cannot remember whether the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) was in the Chamber at the time, but he certainly arrived relatively recently.

Our reason for wanting a speedy enactment of the Bill is our concern about the decline in attendances, and the part that violence has played in removing spectators from the terraces. I have expressed that concern on behalf of sports clubs.

**Mr. Tom Pendry** (Stalybridge and Hyde): The hon. Gentleman asked where my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) had been for the past 30 years. I must ask where the hon. Gentleman has been for the past three. Since closed-circuit television has been placed in every ground and segregation and policing have been better organised, gate takings have increased year by year, up to the past three years. That applies to the hon. Gentleman's own team. He must ensure that his information is up to date before bringing such charges against my right hon. Friend.

**Mr. Burt:** The past 30 years show a pattern of continuous decline, followed by a rise in the past two or three years. If the hon. Gentleman turns his attention to other spectator sports, he will observe that there has been a return to attendance at them as well. It is a general and common trend. Our argument is that the damage done to football, and to football clubs in particular, is peculiar to violent hooliganism and it is lasting damage which will take more than a small rise in attendance over the past two or three years to correct it.

Conservative Members need no lessons or diktats from the Opposition about the purpose of a guillotine. At the beginning of his speech, the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent was kind enough to say that he knew all about them—and so do Conservative Members. Five in a day is quite a record. Timetable motions happen—Governments of all persuasions use them, and ours is no exception. I am quite prepared to give the reasons why we need this Bill.

The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) made two points in particular which require answers. The first referred to the serious issue of safety: was it correct for the Bill to proceed without due reference to the findings of the Taylor report? I feel strongly that, although Hillsborough was a watershed in terms of safety in football grounds, it was not—sadly—a watershed in terms of dealing with violent spectator behaviour. That has been amply chronicled by my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Evans) who described what happened immediately post-Hillsborough. I say "immediately post-Hillsborough" because, according to my recollection, within four days Blackpool and Bolton supporters had been reported for fighting. I accept that Hillsborough has made an enormous difference to the way in which we shall look at public safety in football grounds in the future, but it has not had the same impact on the way in which violent hooligan spectators are dealt with, which is the main point of the Bill.

The Government must consider carefully what Taylor has to say about every aspect of the problem. There will be some overlap, which I believe will be covered by the fact that the Bill will have to return to the House in the autumn, and also by the fact that the scheme cannot be put into effect without a further order of the House—long after the Taylor inquiry has reported. If, as is quite likely, major safety flaws are revealed, we should produce either separate orders relating to safety in grounds or a separate Bill. I feel that the point about safety made by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, although well meant, is wide of the mark.

**Mr. Dobson:** If the Government do not want the Bill to reflect the Taylor report, why did they move an instruction to enable safety to be dealt with in the Bill?

**Mr. Burt:** As I said earlier, there will be a degree of overlap between aspects of football hooliganism and violence and what the Taylor inquiry is considering. We know that the causes of the Hillsborough disaster were many and various, and that they do not relate to the substance of the Bill. I feel that it is perfectly sensible to allow a small overlap, but that it is far more important to wait for a Bill which will deal fully with public safety.

Secondly, the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras questioned the benefits to spectators that would result from the Bill. Earlier I drew a distinction between two points of view. On Second Reading and in Committee, the hon. Gentleman and his friends took the side of committed present-day football supporters, and defended their right to the status quo above all else. My hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg) described clearly what the present status quo in football means to many spectators—standing around in inadequate grounds, standing on the terraces in the open, or being handled with the most utmost rigour and control by security forces.

Let us consider the average Saturday afternoon spent by a group of away spectators visiting a large first-division ground. They may have committed no offence, and may intend to commit none. They arrive by train—free of drink, because they have been deemed not responsible enough to travel on a train providing it. Arriving at the railway station, they are met by policemen, often with dogs and horses if the game and the crowd are big enough. They are then marched to the ground, under guard, enclosed—imprisoned—in the appropriate section and physically segregated from other supporters, because they cannot be trusted to mix. During the ensuing 90 minutes they are watched constantly by means of closed-circuit television. At the end of the game they are detained, possibly against their will—no one says anything about civil liberties in such cases—until the other spectators have gone; then they are marched back to the station, under police protection, at great cost to the ratepayer and everyone else.

**Mr. Lester:** When those same people are members of the football membership scheme, will they be treated any differently?

**Mr. Burt:** If my hon. Friend will look into the future, he will see that that is possible. *[Interruption.]* Hon. Members on both sides of the House may scoff, but I am making a serious point. We live in what is all too often a cynical and defeatist world, and one of the problems is that over the past 20 to 30 years no one has successfully tackled the virus afflicting football. We have all believed in some form of gentle containment, but no one has stood out against the problem because we all assumed that it could not be beaten.

Opposition Members say that the Bill cannot tackle the problem because, in their heart of hearts, they do not believe that it is possible to change the attitudes on the terraces. I believe that it is indeed possible, as do other Conservative Members, because 30 or 40 years ago people attended football matches in large crowds and in greater safety without the abuse and the problems on the terraces which have contributed so much to the game's collapse. That is one reason why attendances have fallen so much and the game no longer has a positive image. That is why the casual supporter who used to take his children to football and may have been taken to matches by his father no longer goes to football. I genuinely believe that Opposition Members do not care whether those people come back to the terraces, but it is absolutely vital that they do.

The Bill at last tries to tackle the problem of attitude. If there is a changed attitude to the game, and if supporters change their approach, segregation can in time be broken. Most membership clubs and supporters' clubs throughout the country maintain good relations with opposing supporters' clubs. Often they will meet in the morning before the game, there are football matches between them, and that builds up a good spirit. I was taken to Manchester City and saw the Junior Blues. That is happening everywhere. Most supporters look forward to a time when supporters of different teams can mingle together at the ground.

I do not believe that the idea that the average football supporter can be herded around and filmed every moment he is at a football ground can go on for ever. If it does, we shall never attract back the people whom football needs to get the bums on the seats and the money rolling in. There must be a change in attitude. I believe that the problem can be broken down, and I believe that the Bill will help. The fundamental flaw in the argument put by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras was that he addressed himself solely to present-day football supporters, who have gradually dwindled in numbers over the past 20 or 30 years, rather than to those whom the game needs to attract.

In conclusion, I feel strongly that the failure of the game in the past 30 years to cope with the problems of modern competition has been exacerbated by its failure to deal with violent supporters. Various schemes have been tried in the past 20 years, sometimes when Labour Members were in government—and they were experts—but those measures have failed. We have not eradicated the cancer. The Bill is designed to change attitudes within the game. It will take time and it will be only part of a package designed to bring people back to the game. The casual supporter has been neglected for too long. He or she needs to be attracted back to football if the game is to survive the crisis and develop into the mass-supported activity that it once was.

**5.52 pm**

**Mr. Tom Pendry** (Stalybridge and Hyde): You have said that the debate can be a wide one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we could not disagree with your ruling. The hon. Members for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) and for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg) made our case for us. Whether or not we agreed with them, they made good Committee speeches. We should be listening to those speeches in Committee and not on a guillotine motion.

When the Leader of the House first announced that the Bill was to go through another place first, Opposition Members rightly objected. My hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) in particular

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pointed out that it was a contentious Bill and should begin its passage in this House. The response from the Government was that it was contentious on both sides of the House, and that somehow made it all right. That was partially true at the time, but it was before the Leader of the House and the Government Whips ensured that their placemen and political Josephines were on the Standing Committee—with one honourable exception, the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester).

**Mr. Norris:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Pendry:** No. I may refer to the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) and he may well want to intervene then.

The hon. Member for Broxtowe understands football, came to the Committee with an independent mind and on occasion voted with the Opposition.

The disgrace of the Government is that they are hurrying through the measure instead of facing up to the new problems and issues that have arisen since the Hillsborough disaster. They have set out to impose ID cards upon all football supporters at any price. As we have argued in Committee, that is no solution; nor is the blinkered approach of the Government relevant to the difficulties experienced by our national game.

Admittedly, as has been said, the Government have decided to add safety to the remit of the Committee, but what is the use of that if the Committee is not to be allowed to scrutinise, analyse or debate safety issues? We have only reached clause 5 of a 24-clause Bill, without the Opposition in any way delaying the proceedings.

There are contentious issues in the Bill which need to be fully debated. Already much of the Bill has been endorsed by the other place without any discussion of its contents. I refer, of course, to part II. It is well known that the Opposition have a great deal of sympathy for its aims, but the details need proper discussion to ensure that they are fully relevant now and after 1992. The other place discussed part II for less than half an hour, after midnight, with just a few of their Lordships present. That is no way for legislation to reach the statute book—especially legislation which affects the civil liberties of hundreds of thousands of our countrymen and women.

One has only to look at what has happened so far in Committee to see that the timetable motion is a disgrace. During the fourth sitting, for example, we discussed how Wembley stadium and its special problems fitted in to the provisions of the Bill. It became quite clear that, even at this late stage of the legislative process, the Government do not know what they will do with our national stadium. Will it be included in the ID card scheme? Will it be excluded for internationals but included for club matches? Will foreign tourists have to buy ID cards, or, equally absurd, queue with their passports to seek entry? The Minister even let slip the fact that we could face the crazy situation that English fans would have to carry ID cards when Scotland visits Wembley, but Scottish fans would not, because, luckily for them, they are outside the scheme.

Will hooligans simply buy black market tickets for the Scottish end to cause trouble? At which end is a Scot who lives in London expected to be? Will an Englishman convicted of an offence face a five-year ban from football, while a Scottish fan gets a lesser sentence? All those are legitimate issues raised in Committee and left in the air as the Government have not thought the scheme through properly. That was in clause 1. We have now reached clause 5 and issues which are just as worrying.

The Government seem to think that pensioners and women are a serious threat to public order. We heard from my hon. Friend the Member for Mansfield (Mr. Meale) about the number of pensioners who were caught who were not even inside the ground. The inclusion of women in the scheme does not make sense. The football authorities, and the Government have no record whatsoever of women having been arrested or ejected from grounds. Despite what the Prime Minister and others have said, for the first time women are being attracted to football, through voluntary membership schemes, family areas, creche facilities and so on. The ID scheme will set that back a long way.

Are those matters such a serious threat to public order that all pensioners must be forced to carry ID cards to matches? That is nonsense, and Conservative Members know it and are embarrassed about it. Should important debates on such matters as civil liberties be curtailed simply so that the Government can railroad the Bill on to the statute book at the earliest opportunity? What is the hurry? We must ask the Government that. The Minister has said repeatedly that he would not put the legislation in place until the technology was there, and everyone agrees that it is not there at present.

When one considers who has been delaying the Committee, the Government's tactics become clear. I cite the afternoon sitting of Thursday 6 July as a case in point. No fewer than 13 Conservative Members, including the Minister, spoke between 9 pm and the midnight Adjournment. The hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) spoke for more than 50 minutes and concentrated mainly on the relevance of the ferret to matches between Bolton and Preston. Progress may not have been made to the liking of the Leader of the House, and we know why.

The reasons I have given so far for opposing the timetable motion are reasons of detail. The matter of principle is that Lord Justice Taylor's inquiry has not yet reported and will not report while the Committee is sitting. The inquiry has examined the tragedy on 15 April in detail and from every angle, yet the inquiry's findings—in particular, the final report—will have no bearing on the Committee's discussions.

Just last Friday, as the inquiry finished, relatives of the 95 people who died decided to pursue criminal proceedings for manslaughter against the senior police officers involved in the incident. Senior police officers were criticised harshly for their actions and strategy on that fateful day, yet against that background, the Government proceed merrily with this irrelevant and possibly dangerous Bill.

The Government retort that the findings can be taken on board at a later stage; we have heard that again today. How late will that stage be? The Government have already started to table amendments and new clauses on safety matters, even though Lord Justice Taylor himself has not reached any conclusions. There will be virtually no opportunity to debate the Taylor report in relation to the Bill, as just one day has been allocated for Report and Third Reading. We shall have only one day to take on board any serious findings and recommendations from Lord Justice Taylor's interim report alone. Even when the Bill becomes law and the new Football Membership Authority sets up the scheme, perhaps incorporating some of the ideas of the Taylor inquiry, there will be no opportunity to amend the scheme in the House, but only to accept or reject it.

Lord Justice Taylor's sensible approach is already a contrast to the Government's. The Government want to force the Bill through come what may, because the Prime Minister wants to be seen to be acting. The Taylor inquiry, on the other hand, is thinking ahead and has already asked the Football League for details of all matches in August at which it expects capacity crowds. Clearly, safety rather than expediency is at the heart of Lord Justice Taylor's approach. It is a disgrace that we are even debating a timetable motion to guillotine the Committee today. If Conservative Members had any real interest in football, the Bill would have been shelved long ago. As it is, the match is being halted before we have even reached half-time.

6.2 pm

**Mr. John Carlisle** (Luton, North): I am delighted to follow the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry), whose knowledge of football is well known in the House and whose views command respect here and in the all-party football committee. His contributions in Standing Committee were similar to the opinions he expressed today in the House. They have been somewhat shallow and based on the old, tired remedies. New remedies have been lacking from the Opposition. The reasons he put forward for objecting to the guillotine are as spurious as most of the arguments from the Opposition.

There is no doubt in the minds of my right hon. and hon. Friends—with one possible exception—who want the Bill to be passed, that the actions taken by Opposition Members have been such that the matters they have raised in Committee have been almost laughable in some cases. Their somewhat pious view that they represent the interests of football and the so-called "class" who go to watch football—again, a rather outdated notion—is totally refuted by Conservative Members, among whom are people with a deep knowledge of the game and an active interest in seeing it improved. That is why we have supported the Government consistently in this admirable measure. My hon. Friend the Minister for Sport is to be congratulated for his activity and the enormous amount of work he has undertaken in pushing the Bill forward and ensuring that it comes before the House at the earliest possible moment.

In the decade in which I have been in this place, I have perhaps found favour with the Chairman of the Committee of Selection, my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) and his predecessor, Sir Phillip Holland, in that I have not been able to become a member of a Committee that has been cut short. I was somewhat bemused by the fact that Bills were brought before the Floor of the House to be guillotined. My own feelings were that such a procedure was unfortunate.

However, having sat through the proceedings of this Committee for almost 40 hours and heard the rantings, ravings and nonsense of the Opposition, I am going down the road of my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Evans) on the basis that perhaps every Bill should be guillotined. There is no doubt in my mind, those of my hon. Friends and those of members of the public who come to listen to our proceedings and who will read about it in *Hansard* that the Opposition's tactics on the Bill have been nothing less than wrecking. They could not have been considered helpful, or in the best interests not only of football but, as my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg) said, of those who could not care a toss about the game itself. That is the tragedy of the Opposition's tactics on the Bill.

**Mr. Barry Porter** (Wirral, South): I am in something of a dilemma. I too rather agree with my hon. Friend that most, if not all, Bills should be timetabled in some way. I came into the House today, therefore, happy to vote for the timetable motion. However, I have had to listen to the debate, and I am beginning to be a bit worried. I think that I shall still vote for the timetable motion, but I would not wish that to be interpreted as full-hearted support for the Bill. I voted for the Bill once out of loyalty and a desire for unity, rather than out of conviction. I am not sure that those emotions and feelings can be stretched too far on Third Reading.

**Mr. Carlisle:** If my hon. Friend waits and listens to my words of wisdom, and those of my hon. Friends, if they catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well as the words of wisdom of my hon. Friend the Minister, he will remain wholly convinced that the Bill should be guillotined and put into practice as quickly as possible.

I want to deal with some of the points put, rightly, by the Opposition, which were also brought up in Standing Committee about why the Bill should not be guillotined. At the heart of the Opposition's arguments right the way through have been the natural arguments and emotions surrounding the Taylor report. As I said earlier to the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), he and his right hon. and hon. Friends seem to be treading on dangerous ground in pre-empting what Lord Justice Taylor will say. It is unfortunate that Opposition Members seem to assume that Lord Justice Taylor's conclusions will be what they believe and a solution to the problems in football.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) put the point cogently: what happened at Hillsborough will not necessarily be relevant to what has happened throughout the past decade and more in football. It must be taken into account, and that is why I fully support what the Government have done. I was one who urged some postponement of the discussion. The report must be taken into account and it is right that we should have a chance on the Floor of the House, when we return after the summer recess, to consider the interim report which, as most of us who take an interest in these matters will understand, will contain recommendations that could be included in the Bill if it is considered necessary.

However, it is dangerous for the Opposition to keep quoting what Lord Justice Taylor may say. I hope that he will almost ignore the proceedings on the Floor of the House this evening and the proceedings in Committee in drawing up his conclusions. Hillsborough is important to the Bill, but it is not an essential part of it.

The other basis to the Opposition's tactics has been reminiscence. Many of us who served on the Committee have enjoyed, indeed revelled in, the reminiscences of the hon. Members for Mansfield (Mr. Meale) and for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton), both eloquent men. However, I wonder whether those comments are relevant to the modern world, which was seen in what happened in front

*[Mr. Carlisle]*

of the pavilion at Lord's on Saturday. I was present and saw a gang of youths, intoxicated—having had a long and enjoyable day at that ground, just as I had—and incensed to such an extent that they started fighting among themselves. I found the comments of Colonel Stephenson, the secretary of the Marylebone cricket club, somewhat interesting when he said—I paraphrase—"We do not usually have trouble, other than at the Benson and Hedges game, because that is the only major game that is played outside the football season." His comments were particularly apt—[HON. MEMBERS: "He was wrong."]

Of course, those hooligans could well move from football into other sporting events. That is the essence of the Bill. I can never understand the Opposition's total antagonism to the Bill which, uniquely, says to football, "We will try to take the problem away from your game and where we put it is the Government's, society's or whoever else's problem. However, we will try to ensure that those who go to football matches can do so in peace and tranquillity and with the knowledge that their sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, nephews and nieces will return home without having been molested, subjected to obscenities and jostled in the crowd on the way to the ground."

Opposition Members who protest that the Bill infringes civil liberties and takes from individuals the chance to go to a game when they want to do so should remember those who live in and around our football grounds. As my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South has said, those Opposition Members should remember the millions of people who are not interested in whether or not football games take place.

Those are the reasons for the Bill, and that is why, purely because of the Opposition's tactics, the Government have had to table this timetable motion. As far as we can, all Conservative Members are anxious to see the measure through; hence our relative silence in Standing Committee. Conservative Members have a deep knowledge of the game and wanted to allow the Opposition the chance to advance their arguments.

**Mr. Denis Howell:** I refer to the "relative silence" of Conservative Members in Committee. So far, they have made 50 speeches and have intervened, in debates on the five clauses that we have covered so far, 286 times. The hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) spoke for 50 minutes in one debate, during which the Minister for Sport intervened 17 times. That shows how ludicrous the hon. Gentleman's case is.

**Mr. Carlisle:** How extraordinary for the Opposition to accuse Government Back Benchers, who are actively trying to discuss the Bill and to take up the points made by the right hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends, of non-silence. That is an extraordinary attitude when so often Opposition Members have accused Conservative Members of saying nothing. I think that the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) will recall the word "poodles" or "stooges". It is disgraceful that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) is now saying that we should not say anything.

Conservative Members have had their say and have disagreed with everything that the right hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends have said. Perhaps that is what gripes the right hon. Gentleman. What gripes him even further must be the fact that the sense and good reason expressed by Conservative members on the Committee will be cut short by the guillotine motion. Indeed, Conservative Members are sorry that we will not be able to sit for 100, 200 or even 300 hours so that we could go through all the points and put our case to Opposition Members.

The most important reason why the Bill should proceed as swiftly as possible is that football is running out of time. That is the tragedy. As my hon. Friends have already said, even after the awful events of Hillsborough and the terrible events at Selhurst park and other grounds, we must ask when the so-called "football supporters" will learn that they should go to games to enjoy the game and not to enjoy a punch-up or to disrupt the match for the remainder who are attempting to see the match.

As I said in Committee and in the House on Second Reading, I was present at the Millwall v. Luton game and never want to see such actions again. However, Opposition Members have adopted the regrettable attitude of saying that the Bill should be thwarted and defeated on the basis that they are happy with the status quo. In nearly 40 hours of debate in Committee, we have heard absolutely no alternative from them. The Opposition are, inevitably, the status quo party. They are happy that things should go on as they are.

The Opposition have pointed to an increase in crowds. That has come about partly because there have been more games but also because, as one of my hon. Friends has said, this game in particular, and spectator sports in general, have been attracting more people. I refer to rugby league, rugby union and other sports.

**Mr. Irvine Patnick** (Sheffield, Hallam): Does my hon. Friend remember the occasion when he tried to take the Committee through the night to ensure that the Bill was properly debated but the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) said that there were several elderly people among Opposition Members, so they could not go through the night—[HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish."] Well, I am sure that my hon. Friend can remember the occasion when the Opposition moved that the debate be adjourned, but did not have the guts to carry it through.

**Mr. Carlisle:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There is no doubt——

**Mr. Wareing** *rose*——

**Mr. Carlisle:** I shall give way in a moment.

As the Bill proceeded, my hon. Friends seemed to get not a second or a third, but a fourth wind. We really got into the basics and——

**Mr. Wareing** *rose*——

**Mr. Carlisle:** Yes, in a moment.

We are debating the importance of the Bill. We heard some admirable speeches; our conviction about how right the Government were grew minute by minute.

**Mr. Wareing:** Will the hon. Gentleman accept that his hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) was wrong to allege that I said that elderly people would not be willing to go through the night? What I cared about—and expressed a care for—was the fact that the health of hon. Members could be affected. No other legislature in the world would discuss a controversial issue such as this, which deserves positive and proper deliberation, at 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock in the morning.

**Mr. Denis Howell:** The Government moved the closure.

**Mr. Carlisle:** I have a great deal of sympathy with what the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) has said. However, in his position as an Opposition Whip, he must ask himself why the first five hours of discussion in Committee were spent on the sittings motion. If he was so anxious to get on with the Bill and, as his hon. Friend the Member for Stalybridge and Hyde said, to get on with part II, in view of the tight timetable and the fact that there was time to return to the Bill after the summer recess, why did he encourage his right hon. and hon. Friends to argue spuriously about the time we should take instead of getting on with the guts of the Bill? If the House is to have any sympathy with the hon. Gentleman's argument, it must be on the basis of the record. The hon. Gentleman knows how far we got, and he knows the basis of the Opposition's tactics.

**Mr. Patrick McLoughlin** (Derbyshire, West): Does my hon. Friend agree that the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) has just let the cat out of the bag? He has welcomed the timetable motion, which will ensure that the whole Bill is debated properly and timetabled and that the hon. Gentleman will know what time he can go home to bed every night.

**Mr. Carlisle:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We have great respect for Opposition Members, especially senior Opposition Members such as the right hon. Member for Small Heath, who is making his swan song. Obviously, we should like to give him the opportunity to speak in the House with great eloquence and at great length and the opportunity to make his mark with this Bill for the first time in the 30 years that he has been in the House.

The right hon. Member for Small Heath knows that I have the utmost respect for him. However, he must be aware that he will be soundly defeated, on the last major legislation in which he will be involved. The people of this country and his constituents will say to him in his dotage —hopefully, he will be in another place—that his one mistake was not to support this Bill.

**Mr. Ashton:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I put it to you again that this is an abuse of the House. We are supposed to be debating the reasons for a guillotine on this Bill. We have heard from Conservative Members four Second Reading debate speeches which were full of jeers, scoffing and personal abuse. We have heard no arguments about the need for a guillotine. This is a very short debate. Can you bring Conservative Members to order?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman was present earlier when I told the House that allocation of time motions lend themselves to fairly wide debates. I have heard nothing that is out of order.

**Mr. Carlisle:** I will conclude my remarks, because the House should have the opportunity to hear what Opposition Members have to say. Opposition Members have been an advantage to the Bill; the public will probably want to hear the Opposition's arguments to convince them that the Government are absolutely right.

It is sad that deliberation on this major and important Bill must be cut short because of the Opposition's tactics. However, the Opposition have this very much in their own court. They plead the interests of the small clubs, but they know in their hearts that when the Bill comes into effect and is successful the small clubs and not the larger clubs will be successful under the scheme. The Opposition plead that the Bill will do nothing to remove hooliganism inside or outside grounds. However, in their hearts they know that something had to be done because of the scourge of hooliganism and violence which has besmirched our national game for so many years.

The Government are right to say to the House that enough is enough. There is still ample time to discuss Taylor after the summer recess. There is still ample time in Committee, between now and the end of July, to discuss the important measures before us. At least now we will know that those measures and our discussions will be relevant to the Bill and not consist simply of rhetoric and emotion from Opposition Members.

6.22 pm

**Mr. Keith Vaz** (Leicester, East): All hon. Members must want to dissociate themselves from the disgraceful personal attacks made by the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle), who revealed one reason why the timetable motion had to be put before the House. His speech was similar to that made by the hon. Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg), who has also made personal attacks on hon. Members both in the Chamber and in Committee. On one occasion in Committee, the hon. Member for Luton, North used parliamentary privilege to defame someone in the Public Gallery and invent an incident which took place when the Committee had risen.

**Mr. John Carlisle:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The incident to which the hon. Gentleman referred was not invented. It is recorded and evidence can be made available to the hon. Gentleman or the House on the basis of the allegations that I made. What the hon. Gentleman has said is certainly a slur on my character and the comments that I made in Committee.

**Mr. Vaz:** This is the most important Bill in the history of football and it deserves a great deal of parliamentary time to enable the Opposition to scrutinise its effects. My right hon. and hon. Friends are right to say that the Bill will have severe effects on civil liberties. Judging by the comments made by the hon. Member for Luton, North, the Government may be considering the possibility of imposing identity cards on cricket supporters and supporters of other sports. That is why it is extremely important that the House should devote a great deal of time to considering the Bill.

We need more parliamentary time to consider the possible effects of the Bill on hooliganism, although we believe that it will have no such effect. We need more time to consider the costs involved in clubs installing the proposed machinery and we need more time to consider the inconvenience involved for all those who have supported the game loyally for so many years. We need more time to consider the non-registration of casual supporters and the social effects of the Bill on families who want to watch matches. We need more time to debate the

*[Mr. Vaz]*

possibility of criminal offences involving the transfer of cards between holders and non-holders and to consider the various clauses restricting people's liberties.

As the Bill proceeds through the House and is reported in the national and local press, I—and, I am sure, other hon. Members—receive many letters from football supporters who are keen to know what is happening and to express their opposition to the Government's scheme. Last Saturday I met supporters from Leicester City football club. Mr. Gary Sikle, secretary of the Fox editorial board which circulates a local football newspaper in Leicester, was anxious to raise several points which had been referred to by the Minister and other Members in Committee. Supporters wish to raise those matters, but they can advise members of the Committee properly only if they have time to consider the various clauses as they come before the Committee.

I have also received a letter from my parish priest, Father Brown, who is a keen football supporter. Contrary to what the hon. Member for Luton, North said about my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell), Father Brown wrote:

> "Denis Howell is the only successful Minister for Sport in recent memory; as no Tory Minister has ever understood the problems involved, or even cared about his job or soccer supporters in general . . . Instead of improving safety and facilities, the government and the Press are obsessed with the problem of hooliganism. Yet the majority of hooligans are not football supporters . . . Root out them, and treat the 99·9 per cent. who are law-abiding, as human beings."

Father Brown has supported Derby County football club for more than 30 years. He wants an opportunity to put before the Committee his views about the effects of the Bill. As I said on Second Reading, I am the president of two local football clubs, Hillcroft football club and Thurnby Lodge football club, and I continue to receive representations from both clubs about the practical effects of the Bill.

I understand that the hon. Member for Bury, South is the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Attorney-General. I cannot understand why he and the Government do not want to wait for the outcome of the Taylor inquiry. As we are dealing with a major piece of legislation which will have severe consequences for football, it must be appropriate to await the outcome of a major inquiry commissioned by the Secretary of State for the Environment. Surely we should hear what the clubs have done in their schemes.

We have heard a great deal about the scheme at Luton. Two members of Luton Town's football supporters scheme visited me on Saturday. They brought me their membership cards and told me about the various tricks that certain supporters get up to in passing their cards to other people. Those supporters do not even live in Luton, but their cards are passed to other people who gain admission to the ground. That shows the flaws in the scheme proposed by the hon. Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Evans).

**Mr. David Evans:** Irrespective of whether there are holes in Luton Town's scheme, does the hon. Gentleman agree that for three consecutive seasons there has been only one arrest inside or outside Luton's ground? We are well aware that supporters of other clubs belong to Luton Town's scheme, but it is significant that they all stand together and enjoy the game as supporters used to 20 or 30 years ago without fear of being punched on the nose.

**Mr. Vaz:** The supporters who brought me the cards do not like the bureaucratic principles which operate at Luton. They have proved that it is possible to live elsewhere and to misuse cards produced by Luton Town football club. They produced persuasive arguments showing the tremendous increase in crime in the city centre. Such crime may not occur during the games, but it certainly occurs in the city centre. Crime has increased.

**Mr. John Carlisle:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Vaz:** No, the hon. Gentleman had a chance to put his arguments but he chose to spend his time engaging in personal attacks on hon. Members.

It is important for the Minister to look at the international evidence. I commend to him an article in *World Soccer* magazine this month which shows the effect that the experimental scheme is having in Holland. It says:

> "The dangers of the card scheme have been touted for some time and predictably made an international impact at what is for all Dutch people the most emotive confrontation of all: the international match against West Germany.
>
> The experiment has been deemed a failure."

That is new evidence, but we shall not have the time to discuss it, because the Bill is to be guillotined.

In addition, I discovered on Friday that the Secretary of State for the Environment, who has overall charge of the Bill, has not visited a football ground or attended a match in the last couple of years. I put down a question to the Secretary of State asking him to list the number of football matches that he had attended. Although the Minister for Sport says that he has attended about a dozen matches and that his hon. Friends in his Department have been to matches, the Secretary of State for the Environment has not even visited one.

We need to take evidence and to understand what the police are saying. Certainly the police in Leicester are convinced that the scheme will not work. They have managed to fashion a good relationship with the football club. They have bought video equipment, they ensure that supporters are segregated, and they have worked in partnership with those who run Leicester City football club. I wish that they could work more closely with the supporters, and I hope that one of the effects of our deliberations in Committee will be to encourage more clubs to work with supporters.

We need more time to expose the problems in the Bill, many of which have been accepted by the Minister. I referred to that in an intervention. Clause 2 creates an absolute offence in terms of the entry of supporters to grounds without cards. Because hon. Members on both sides of the Committee raised that issue and the serious nature of the offence to be created, the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department decided to look again at the clause. On clause 3, in view of the nature of the Opposition amendments and the experience of my right hon. Friend the Member for Small Heath, the Minister decided to look again at some of those amendments. That is why we need additional time.

We need to debate in great detail the effects of the Bill and we must be able to bring to the attention of the Minister matters of which he may not be aware. His officials may not be aware of them either because they have been told to pursue the Bill with blind dogma. It is also necessary to debate matters at great length in order to expose problems. As has been said, clause 5 creates two new offences, one of them a very serious offence of supplying false information. Another clause gives enormous power to the Football Membership Authority in terms of its dealings with private citizens. We need to debate that at great length to show why it will be a major erosion of civil liberties.

I am not clear from the arguments of the Leader of the House as to why we have to proceed with such haste. No evidence was adduced by the Leader of the House or by the Minister in Committee to show why we should move so quickly. It is clear that the Government have something to hide and have to move quickly, that they are unaware of the consequences of the Bill or—this is the most likely explanation—they do not care at all about the future of the game. The Opposition care about the future of football. We know that the scheme has disastrous implications for the game, and we urge that more time should be given to discuss these serious and very important matters.

6.44 pm

**Mr. Steve Norris** (Epping Forest): I have listened to the entire debate, including the speech of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, and at this stage I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that I shall vote for the timetable motion.

In Committee I heard the clearest possible evidence from the Opposition that they are not interested in making progress on the Bill and never have been. A straightforward example of that is that they spent about five hours debating the sittings motion. As hon. Members will know, but as those who read *Hansard* may not, the sittings motion is merely to decide when and for how long a Committee will sit. It is usually decided that a Committee will sit on Tuesdays and Thursdays and it may sit mornings and afternoons. If both sides are prepared to get on with the business, the motion should detain the Committee for about 45 seconds. In this case it took longer because Opposition Members made a series of spurious points and did so with considerable repetition. That meant that we spent hour after hour simply debating whether to sit on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In view of that, it is beyond reason to imagine that the Opposition have taken a constructive attitude to the Bill.

The Opposition are not the slightest bit interested in making progress. That is because they and we have fundamentally opposed views about the Bill. The shadow Leader of the House, the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), spoke about us losing the argument. He cannot have read his Committee *Hansard* very carefully, because it shows that the argument was lost by hon. Gentlemen—hon. Members—opposite. If I was their football manager I would say that I was as sick as a parrot because they have consistently managed to fumble the ball, and more often than not they kicked it into the back of their own net. Their fundamental assertion—we heard it again today—is that they do not think that football and violence are particularly linked. I could not believe my ears when I heard them say again today that there is violence in other games such as rugby, tiddleywinks and croquet. They must be blind and deaf.

When the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) was speaking, somebody was heard to ask where he had been. He has been the leader of the Labour party, but we all know that that is hardly a position from which one is likely to get a realistic view of the world. None the less, one would have assumed that hon. Gentlemen opposite would have seen enough of the sickening scenes on television to know what every man, woman and child knows: that there is an inextricable and sickening link between violence and football. The reasons for that are many and varied and there is no point in yet another sociological lecture such as those that we had for hour upon hour from the Gentlemen opposite. The link exists, and it is high time that something was done about it.

I agree on one matter with the Opposition. Hon. Members on both sides have tended to wring their hands rather too much and say, "Oh, isn't it awful? It is very difficult and has all sorts of sociological reasons which are somehow beyond our control and which we cannot do anything about." At last we have a Government who have said that they are sickened by what they have seen.

My hon. Friend the Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle) spoke about the Crystal Palace game. I was at West Ham that week and, as hon. Members will know, at each Football League ground there was supposed to be a minute's silence for the Hillsborough victims. At that match between Millwall and West Ham, people could not keep quiet for even 60 seconds. They could not restrain themselves from shouting abuse at each other or from catcalling and arm waving in the hostile way that they do. It was revolting. I do not want to know about the history of this great and glorious working-class game of ours; I want to know what we must do to eradicate that sort of behaviour.

First, we have to take the issue seriously. The Government are to be commended for being the first to be prepared to put together a Bill and to say, "We shall do something about it."

**Ms. Kate Hoey** (Vauxhall): I am pleased that the hon. Gentleman has made it clear that he agreed with absolutely everything I said in Committee, because he continually refers to hon. Gentlemen in Committee. Does that mean that he agrees that to link women in any way with football hooliganism or violence in or outside football grounds is disgraceful and that he is sorry that the Government and Conservative Members will not accept our amendment, which would exclude women from having to have identity cards?

**Mr. Norris:** I thought that I had corrected myself when, referring to the Committee's composition, I talked about hon. Gentlemen. It would have been remiss of us all not to recognise the constructive role that the hon. Lady has played in the Committee's deliberations, although she has been somewhat at odds with some of her more experienced colleagues.

The point that the hon. Lady raised is an important principle. The Bill, rightly or wrongly, is an enabling Bill. It creates a Football Membership Authority, which is charged with producing the details of the scheme. It is entirely consistent with that that we do not predetermine what the FMA will produce. We should allow it to consider all the issues and as much evidence as it can, and to bring forward a scheme which will tackle the problem in the round.

It is self-evident that neither women nor pensioners are particularly dangerous groups when it comes to football attendance. I know that my hon. Friend the Minister

*[Mr. Norris]*

would be urged by me and by any sensible person to tell the FMA that, when it considers the issue, he will be sympathetic to that point of view. Although it is perfectly reasonable and straightforward to take that point of view, it is another matter to start to write the detail of the scheme, as Opposition Members are trying to do, before the FMA has had a chance to consider the issue. That is what seems to me to be so irredeemably stupid.

**Mr. Denis Howell:** The plain fact is that the exemptions for disabled persons and for children accompanied by adults were written into the Bill in the other place. The attempt there to get exemptions for women and pensioners was voted down at the instigation of the Minister—[HON. MEMBERS: "That is detail."] It is not a detail that when Parliament seeks to put into the Bill the same exemptions as the Government have already allowed, they are beaten down.

**Mr. Norris:** I will not repeat myself, as others want to speak. This is a straightforward enabling Bill. It creates a Football Membership Authority which is charged with the preparation of a scheme and with presenting it to the Secretary of State. If one accepts that general principle —the scheme cannot come fast enough for me—it is most illogical to bind the hands of the FMA by laying down conditions.

It is perfectly reasonable to tell the FMA, "By all means consider the evidence that members of the Committee have adduced. By all means integrate it into the scheme and then present the scheme to the Secretary of State for him to consider and, we hope, approve".

**Mr. David Evans:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the Opposition, who want to exclude pensioners and women, may change their tune when they see the benefits that may accrue from holding such a card?

**Mr. Norris:** My hon. Friend will know that I made precisely that point in Committee. The need to possess a membership card is presented as an appalling affront to civil liberties, and it is forgotten that the greatest loss of civil liberties is that occasioned to the tens of thousands of people who live around football grounds and whose lives are made an absolute misery on Saturday afternoons. Opposition Members seem to regard it as a mark of Cain to hold a card when the principle of most clubs of which one wants to be a member is that one will carry the card with pride. Setting aside all that, we have the experience of my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Evans) in operating a scheme that is eminently successful in marketing terms—he has said that 32 companies are involved in it.

I have no doubt that the House will ultimately divide on this simple issue. We have had delay and obfuscation from Opposition Members, and no doubt that will continue. It is ironic that, during consideration of the Bill, Opposition Members have covered themselves in the most appalling tactical confusion. When, in response to their opinion that there was not enough time to debate the Bill, we said, "Fine, in that case we will sit Wednesdays as well," they said, "Oh no, please don't let us do that." When we said, "Please don't let us stop now, it is only 1 o'clock in the morning and after all you should not have taken this job if you could not take a joke and go through the night," Opposition Members said that they might get sick and had elderly Members to consider. I appreciate the point, but it is the quintessence of everything that we have known about the Opposition for the past 10 years—when push comes to shove, they have no bottle.

There are Opposition Members who have a vision of the game of football, which we have heard in colourful detail. I will not repeat them—[HON. MEMBERS: "Go on."] No, I promise no ferret or whippet stories. Some of us find that vision of the game of football amusing, if only because it is so rose-tinted that it completely ignores what, sadly, the game has become.

One's attitude to the Bill is dictated by one overriding consideration——

**Mr. Wareing:** No. 10.

**Mr. Norris:** There will be members who refuse, for whatever anarchic and quixotic reason, to have these cards and who will therefore deny a football club the opportunity to admit them and to be profitable as a result, and then there will be the dozens of people who will go along when the game is cleaned up and it is safe for women, children and families to go and watch. Those hundreds of thousands of potential supporters who are prepared to go to Luton because of the experience they have there, but who are not prepared to go to many other grounds in all four divisions of the football league, are the people at whom the Bill is aimed.

I am happy that the Bill that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary has so skilfully piloted through Committee so far should be on the statute book at the earliest possible moment.

6.47 pm

**Mr. Robert N. Wareing** (Liverpool, West Derby): The last 10 minutes of folly from the Conservative Benches have been a testament to the attitude taken by the Tory party, with the honourable exception of the rebels, to a Bill which affects millions of people in their pursuit of a decent national sport.

Let us get one or two facts straight. We did not debate the sittings motion for five hours. We debated it, as is the rule in the House—it is almost a convention—for two and a half hours on the morning it was presented. When, in indecent haste, only two sittings later, the Government brought forward another sittings motion, proposing that we should meet on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, we debated that for only about five minutes.

This is called a guillotine motion, but in reality, the Bill has been guillotined from the outset. Our argument with the Government has been over the fact that they have been absolutely rigid about the Bill being out of Committee by 27 July. Why? Because the woman in 10 Downing street has decided. That all-wise all-powerful and all-knowledgeable Prime Minister, who never makes a mistake, must be obeyed. The date that the Government set was 27 July.

Our argument was that there was every reason in the world to extend that into the overflow Session in October, because by that time we may have—we cannot be certain —Lord Justice Taylor's interim report. I have asked the Leader of the House whether the Government would still go ahead with the Bill in October if Lord Justice Taylor showed that he was opposed to it or suggested that there might be a fault in the Bill—perhaps even a teeny-weeny mistake on the part of the Prime Minister. The Leader of the House replied that the Bill would go ahead, but he used the word "implemented".

If in the interim report in October there is a suggestion by Lord Justice Taylor that harm could be done and that it would not be in the interests of public safety to implement the Bill, when the Bill reaches the statute book —unfortunately, the Government have the majority to enable them to get it there—will the Minister for Sport refuse to implement it? The whole world will be waiting for the answer. I say "the world", because in Committee on Thursday morning we were told that the scheme would be worldwide. We asked what would happen if an American tourist, when given the choice on a Saturday afternoon between the theatre, a cinema or a football match, chose to go to a football match. The Minister's answer was that he could not go unless he had had his photograph taken and his membership application had gone through the computer.

We then asked the Minister what would happen if English clubs get back into Europe—as we all hope they will, except, perhaps, the Minister, who has done all he can to stop them—and, for example, Arsenal is drawn at home against Ajax of Amsterdam and 10,000 Dutchmen come over to see the game. The answer was that every one of those 10,000 Dutchmen will have to fill in membership forms and have their photographs taken before they can watch the match.

**Mr. David Martin:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Wareing:** I am sorry, but I shall not give way, because there is not time.

When the Minister was asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) whether the scheme would apply Communitywide, he said that it would apply worldwide. We can imagine the position of someone leaving, for example, the Soviet Union to visit the United Kingdom. When he applies for a visa, he will have to ensure that he fills in an application for a football club membership card just in case he should decide, when in London to see Chelsea or Tottenham play. Everyone in the country, with the exception of the Prime Minister, knows that that is nonsense.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry) asked us to imagine the situation at Wembley when the half of the fans who support England must have identity cards, but the half who support Scotland do not. However, suppose a Scotland fan lives in Manchester and travels to Wembley with his English friend, who is also from Manchester. When he gets to Wembley stadium, will he go into the Scottish end of the ground? Is the Scottish fan who comes from Manchester to be dealt with in a different way from the Scottish fan who supports Manchester United? There are a hundred and one different facets to the Bill. They all lead to one ludicrous conclusion. The Government have not done their homework, and they are acting on a whim—the whim of one woman, who knows as much about football as, these days, she appears to know about the British economy.

The hon. Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Evans) is continually telling us how crowd numbers are down. They may be down at Luton—that is what happens when one bans away supporters—but that is not true elsewhere. Clubs up and down the country are making a real attempt to improve attendances, with such things as closed circuit television, advantages to season ticket holders and family enclosure tickets. Everton football club, for example, can account for 24,000 people, which is three times the average gate at Luton Town—and that is before the season starts. That number represents the season tickets and other facilities that have been taken up by potential supporters. The picture is different from the one painted by the Government.

During the 1987-88 season, 99·996 per cent. of people attending football matches were not arrested. Of course, we do not know from the Government what percentage of that small percentage who were arrested were actually convicted.

Part II of the Bill, which needs to be properly debated, is at fault. When the Minister talks about the use of the Bill to deal with those convicted of offences abroad when they follow the England soccer team, we should ask the Minister how many people were convicted in, for example, West Germany. The answer would be none; it was a nil return. Even if the measure had applied last year, it would not have applied to any person attending football matches in West Germany.

The argument that England is unique or has the worst problem is wrong. One only has to look at the position elsewhere. The security officer of the Dutch Football Association almost had his home bombed. In October 1987, there were riots at the Olympic stadium in Athens. Police were called in and tear gas was used. In December 1988, at Tilburg in Holland, 82 Ajax supporters were arrested and one was found to be in possession of a home-made fragmentation grenade. At the Den Haag match at that time, three people were injured in an explosion near the ground. In Enschede in Holland, there were 30 arrests when Feyenoord lost 6:1. In March 1987, a match between Den Haag and Ajax was abandoned at half-time because of crowd trouble. We tend to take all the stick, as we did for the Heysel stadium incident. Italians were involved in that incident, but not one Italian—some of them were flaunting Fascist banners—has faced the same consequences as Liverpool supporters.

It is a scandal that this country's name has been dragged through the gutter because of the way in which false criticism is aimed at people in this country because they invade football pitches. The only pitch that I saw invaded last year was the one at Seoul in South Korea, where the Minister for Sport could not contain himself when the England hockey team won a trophy. Perhaps he will understand the passion which is aroused in people with real red blood in their veins when they see our national sport being played. That is the reason for the excitement and why very often there is an invasion of the pitch. Who has heard of trouble when the Liverpool and Everton teams play? Why should the Liverpool and Everton fans be called upon to have identity cards when, at the last local Derby match at Anfield last December, there were only three arrests, and those were all outside the ground—two for attempting to break into cars and one for ticket touting? Of course, we know that the hon. Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) loves ticket touts, so they are not so important as real football fans.

There can be no doubt that there will be a breach of civil liberties. Conservative Members should ask themselves what would happen if they had to have identity cards to get into a cinema, a theatre or a race course. It would be an absolute scandal. That is what we are coming to as a

*[Mr. Wareing]*

result of the Government's antics. It is, however, one more nail in the coffin of a Government whose ignorance is outstripped only by their arrogance.

6.59 pm

**Mr. Denis Howell** (Birmingham, Small Heath): There are many compelling reasons for opposing the guillotine motion, and contempt for Parliament and its procedures is one of them. Throughout the Bill's passage in another place, on Second Reading and in Committee, the views or parliamentarians have been shown to be of no account. As Lord Hailsham said, that is one of the first proofs of an elective dictatorship.

The Bill was conceived in the depths of the Prime Minister's prejudices, which are considerable, and it has been brought to us by her political pageboy. Throughout the proceedings, he has dutifully carried out the bidding of his mistress.

Issue after issue has been properly raised, but they have been met not with rational argument, but with the brute force of a massive parliamentary majority. In Committee, although we have been told that there will be certain exemptions to the scheme, we have also been told—my intervention today reaffirmed it—that everyone within the European Community and in the rest of the world must register as a result of the Bill; otherwise, they will be under threat of being judged criminals for going to a football match here. No other civilised country in the world has adopted such a lunatic approach to such problems.

The hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris)—he stirs now and again—told us that the Government had picked out this problem and decided to deal with it. They have, of course, because they told us that they would get rid of violence in society. They were elected in 1979 to get rid of violence in society, but it is worse now than it has ever been; the incidence of violence has increased every year. The Bill has nothing to do with football; it has everything to do with camouflaging the Government's failure to deal with that violence.

In Committee, the Government had sufficient logic to accept that accompanied children and the disabled should be exempt from the scheme. We have attempted to extend that exemption to women and pensioners. We had a song-and-dance act and we were told that women cannot be exempted because 40 male supporters might go to an Oxfam shop to buy women's clothes. What a basis for the great constitutional law of this country. Our exemption has been rejected because some people might turn up at an Oxfam shop to buy women's clothes. In Committee that argument has become known as the "doctrine of drag".

No one has ever heard of one pensioner taking out his pension book and hitting another pensioner with it at any football match in this country, but we have been told that pensioners cannot be exempted. There is no other entertainment, be it theatre, concerts, sport or the cinema, that does not make special arrangements for pensioners. It is perfectly proper to extend the concept of family-member enclosures to take account of the other desirable classes of people. The Government have turned that down. At one stroke, they have managed to insult 26 million women and 10·5 million pensioners.

The Government are not attacking the hooligan or the criminal. This is the only time in history that legislation will be enacted in which the innocent will be singled out. The Government intend to take away their civil liberties and to make impositions on their rights. That is absolutely disgraceful.

Morning, afternoon and night, the Government just churn it on in Committee. We have been told that we have been working morning, noon and night, and Committee members have become hallowed because of the hours that have been clocked up. In other words, the Government are not interested in the argument or in civil liberties: they are only interested in clocking up the hours. They have clocked up the hours to justify the guillotine motion. It has nothing to do with the merits of the case, and it is an absolute disgrace.

Given the Government's tremendous speed, it is interesting to look at the history of the case. The Leader of the House has told us that the Bill arose from the Popplewell report. The interim Popplewell report was issued four years ago and the final report was issued three and a half years ago. If the problems are such that they require desperate legislation, what on earth have the Government done in the four years since Popplewell? Why did they not introduce this Bill earlier? If the Government are right about the need for the Bill, they are guilty of criminal negligence because they allowed four years to go by before doing anything about the problem. Now the Government are trying to rush the Bill through in about four days, and that is ridiculous.

The Minister has already said that everyone in the world must register if they wish to attend a football match here. That is a classic case to consider. In other words, the 352 million people who make up the EC must register. Those people have rights, however, and if the Bill discriminated against them, as well it might, it could be unlawful under European law. We have had no opportunity to consider that possibility, but it is an important matter. Previously, we were told that overseas visitors would be allowed to produce their passports at the turnstile. The Minister has abandoned that; now, he tells us that they must all register.

We are producing a Bill that will last for about 50 years. What will happen if, as we all hope, English clubs get back into Europe? Imagine that Anderlecht or Real Madrid is drawn away to play at Liverpool or Everton. Such a match would take place three weeks after the draw and those clubs might well want to bring 10,000 supporters with them. There is no way that any club secretary in this country could register, photograph, computerise and process 10,000 European visitors in the space of three weeks. That proposition is a prescription for another disaster. When that happens, it will be on the head of the Minister and his friends.

During our discussions, the Government have said that the scheme is not negotiable. They have said that they know it all, and that they know best. They have said that they know better than the police, football supporters, the Opposition and everyone else. Therefore, the next disaster or the next public order disturbance will be the responsibility of those who know it all. Let there be no doubt about that; future problems have been accepted by the Government and their supporters.

Today we have heard a lot about Lord Justice Taylor. We have been told that we should leave it all to the FMA. The proposition that Parliament should allow any outside body to enact legislation that affects the civil liberties and the public safety of our people is absolutely monstrous. It is quite scandalous that we should allow that. The Opposition are certainly not prepared to do that. We are not prepared to say of the Football Membership Authority, even were it the repository of all wisdom—which even Conservative Members doubt—that Parliament has the right to pass legislative powers to such an outside body, over which it has no control. That is what Ministers are doing.

Lord Justice Taylor's inquiry was set up after the death of 96 people and the serious injury to several hundred others at Hillsborough. He has had the most harrowing experience of listening to that terrible evidence, and he now has to decide on the matters and make recommendations. Any intelligent parliamentarian would wish to take account of his findings and what he had to say.

Let us consider the list of issues to be considered. I told the Committee that I had identified 16 issues that Lord Justice Taylor—*[Interruption.]* I am sorry if the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle) thinks that this is an opportunity for yet another of his cheap gibes.

I have been told by some of my police friends that I was 50 per cent. out, and that 31 or 32 issues had been raised. Let the House think for a moment about the seriousness of these issues, because it is now deciding to pass this Bill without considering them. The list includes the following: crowd control outside the game and the surges of masses of people in a short period; how one controls the entry of 30,000 or more people at the turnstile; who is in charge of a football match—the police officer on duty or the football authority promoting the match; whether the police need more powers.

The list includes the issue of the effect of alcoholic consumption in circumstances such as those at Hillsborough, the fences round the field and how many people were killed at the fences at Hillsborough because they could not escape on to the pitch. If the scheme becomes reality, we must consider the extra time needed to process the card at the turnstile.

In Committee the Minister told us that the additional time needed to process one of these cards was 0·06 of a second per person. Such ludicrous futility! I timed myself using the smart card which the Minister favoured. I came up to the machine, put the card down, waited for the light to shine, and picked up the card. That process took 20 seconds. If 20 seconds were added to the passage of every one of the thousand people standing in the queue, the additional time needed for the queue to pass through the turnstile would be about half an hour, which would add to the aggravation. We want to hear about that issue.

Other issues which should be considered include the video and loudspeaker systems and the total lack of co-ordination of the emergency services at Hillsborough. All these matters are of the greatest importance and require the judgment of Solomon. We are not even to be allowed to know the judgment of Lord Justice Taylor. That is the proposition which the Government put before us.

We are proceeding with this Bill in a vacuum. These matters have been raised and Lord Justice Taylor finished hearing evidence only last Friday. We are told that we must proceed, the Government know best, and members of the Football Membership Authority—made up of football administrators who have been castigated by the Government and in Committee—are the very people to be charged with carrying out the football membership scheme. We are not prepared to accept that.

My hon. Friends who do not sit on the Committee, and even some who do, have not yet had the opportunity to consider amendment No. 50, which, I think, is the next to come up in Committee. The amendment proposes that the football membership scheme must include such provision

"in relation to the admission of spectators to the premises, as the Secretary of State may specify in writing".

This Secretary of State——

**Mr. Ashton:** He might not be here tomorrow.

**Mr. Howell:** That may be true.

This Secretary of State has never been to a football match in his life, but is placing powers in the Bill so that he and his successors, without coming back to the House or Committee, can lay down the law about what has to be written into this scheme and this Bill.

The guillotine motion provides us with about another three or three and a half days of sitting twice a day in Committee. That means only one day for the scheme and licensing system, one day for the all-seater stadium—a subject which we have not yet even reached—and public safety, one day for part II of the Bill, which deals with offenders from overseas—which we have not discussed yet and which was hardly discussed in another place—and half a day for the rest of the business.

In the light of Hillsborough and the criminality which is called hooliganism, Parliament has one overriding duty in this matter, and that is to get the Bill right this time. By this guillotine motion, Her Majesty's Government deny that obligation to get it right. This is a high-risk policy of great irresponsibility, and we shall vote against it tonight.

7.16 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Colin Moynihan):** We have heard a succession of predictable speeches from Opposition Members. Parties favour timetable motions in appropriate cases when they are in power because they need them to get their business through. But, of course, they oppose them when in opposition. As my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House said, the Labour party never hesitated to introduce timetable motions during those far-off days when it was in office.

There is no case for all the anger which we have witnessed about this motion. It is essential that we see the Bill on the statute book this Session—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"] We must take steps now to tackle the continuing problem of hooliganism and violence which is ruining football—that is why. We must enable genuine supporters to go to game in safety and return home in safety—that is why. I do not want to be for ever talking about the need for 5,000 police officers on football duties every Saturday. We want to see the day when those living and working in the vicinity of the football ground no longer dread match days. In response to the interventions of Opposition Members, those are good reasons.

By enacting the legislation this Session we can ensure that the framework for a national membership scheme, and the means of preventing convicted hooligans from travelling to matches abroad, are in place. We can then move on rapidly with the scheme, if Parliament agrees that we should do so in the light of Lord Justice Taylor's report on the Hillsborough disaster. If the Bill is to reach the

*[Mr. Colin Moynihan]*

statute book this Session, we need to complete the Committee stage far faster than we will if we continue with our present progress. This timetable motion will enable us to do so and to proceed with the Bill in an orderly and sensible fashion.

We have heard much, just as we did on Second Reading and in Committee, about how wrong it would be to anticipate Lord Justice Taylor. I entirely agree. It would be wrong for me to speculate on the timing or the content of his report. His is an independent inquiry and his report is a matter for him. If he should comment on the national membership scheme, it is right that Parliament should decide whether to proceed with the scheme, in the light of his comments. The amendments that we made to the Bill in another place will provide Parliament with the opportunity to make that decision at the appropriate time —after we have seen his final report. Indeed, Parliament will have two such opportunities; the first before the Football Membership Authority is appointed and the second after the detailed technical scheme has been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.

Much has been made of why we thought it important for the football authorities to be involved in the preparation of the scheme and appointed as a central part of the Football Membership Authority. We regard that as an important way forward. It is welcomed by the football authorities, which wrote to the Secretary of State requesting first refusal. It was right and proper in the proceedings of the Committee that hon. Members on both sides should point out that it may benefit the running of the scheme and the Football Membership Authority if it is strengthened by outsiders and possibly even by an independent chairman.

We agree with this proposal, which is why amendments have been tabled in Committee. But there is no case for delaying the Bill until we have Lord Justice Taylor's report. Part I provided a framework for the national membership scheme; it does not introduce the scheme. If we have that framework on the statute book and Parliament decides to proceed with the scheme when it has seen what Lord Justice Taylor has to say, we can have the scheme in place during the season that begins in August 1990.

If we were to delay, we would throw away the progress that we have made this Session. We might have a new Act of Parliament by August 1990, but it is unlikely that the scheme would be in place for another year after that.

**Mr. Lester:** If Lord Justice Taylor's report in any way questions the framework that we are rushing through the House, how will the Government react?

**Mr. Moynihan:** As I have told my hon. Friend on many occasions, rather than pontificate about hypothetical circumstances it is right and proper that the House should consider in detail what Lord Justice Taylor says. In that way it will be able to make a proper judgment of the arguments on which he reached his conclusions. To hypothesise about what he might say, when we have provided in the Bill that Parliament should decide on the merits of what he says before we ask for a Football Membership Authority to be established and to start work —let alone before we have a scheme to consider—cannot be right. So my hon. Friend's question is redundant.

**Mr. George Howarth** (Knowsley, North): Apart from the technical defects in the Minister's argument, does he realise that the failure to wait for the conclusions of the Taylor report will show the Government to be acting with stunning insensitivity, particularly on Merseyside?

**Mr. Moynihan:** I reject that view on the following grounds. It was because of the need to respond sensitively that the progress of the Bill was delayed. It was because of the same need that we proposed amendments in their Lordships' House to take full account of what Lord Justice Taylor states. It was because of that need that we now have a different Bill from the one that we had before Hillsborough. We shall have the opportunity when the full Taylor report is before the House to consider in detail whether we should establish a Football Membership Authority and set up a scheme——

**Mr. Dobson:** If, as the hon. Gentleman claims, the Government amended the Bill in the Lords so that safety considerations could be dealt with, why was it necessary for the Government to pass an instruction to the Committee to enable it to consider safety? Without it, safety would have been out of order.

**Mr. Moynihan:** The hon. Gentleman surprises me. When we were just discussing the national membership scheme—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) keeps saying, "No, no, no." He should listen to the point that I am making and learn that there is a clear distinction in the Bill between proposals for a national membership scheme and the separate and important measures on safety.

I am sure that the hon. Gentleman welcomes our response to his suggestion that the Committee should be instructed to consider matters related to safety. If he carefully considers the amendments tabled last week he will find that they are enabling amendments to allow the Secretary of State and the Home Secretary to take account of any measures on safety that Lord Justice Taylor may recommend and with which the House agrees. The House will have the chance to consider whether it wants to use the enabling framework on safety and on the anti-hooligan measures—the national membership scheme—to implement recommendations. That must be the right way to proceed.

This way combines two important elements: first, the Government's deep desire to rid football of the hooligan element and to make sure that appropriate action is taken against the hooligans who have besmirched our national game; secondly, it ensures that we are capable of responding swiftly to the Taylor recommendations, whether on safety or on hooliganism, with which the House and their Lordships agree.

During the Committee's first two sittings Opposition Members spent most of their time on the same subject on which they had laboured on Second Reading—the timing of the Bill in relation to Lord Justice Taylor's inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster. That is why I have spoken at length on this point. The Committee has now sat for 37 hours and reached clause 5. Its first sitting was on Tuesday 4 July, and it was entirely devoted to debating the sittings motion for two and a half hours. Two hours of the second sitting were taken up with the order of consideration, during which I made the only speech from the Government side. There were four and a half hours of debate before even the first amendment was reached. When we finally reached it, we heard a remarkable series of interventions by Opposition Members.

The hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) made the same point that supporters of a club such as Tranmere might also want to attend matches in which Liverpool and Everton were playing—not once or twice, but four times. I hope that all Opposition Members realise that all that is required to visit any of the 92 grounds is one card.

The hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) regaled the Committee at length with the history of his schooling, not once but twice. The hon. Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton), speaking to an amendment to restrict the scheme to divisions 1 and 2, spoke of the lack of a football club in Croydon, of the closure of Sheffield's nightclubs, of lager louts at the Notting Hill carnival, Trafalgar square and the coast, and of his experiences of dodging rail fares during national service.

The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) today displayed a staggering ignorance of the contents of the Bill and of the measures that the Government have already taken. He said that we had done nothing in the past four years, studiously ignoring the introduction of closed-circuit television——

**Mr. Denis Howell** *rose*——

**Mr. Moynihan:** —and the important agreement between the FA, the League and the Government. It was written into the agreement reached in February 1987 and which we have had to push and push and push——

**Mr. Howell** *rose*——

**Mr. Moynihan:** —to ensure that football clubs up and down the country introduce it. The right hon. Gentleman ignores the fact that we had to sit down——

**Mr. Howell** *rose*——

**Mr. Moynihan:** I have one minute left. The hon. Gentleman should consider the work done on closed-circuit television and on police segregation at the instigation of this Government. There is also better police co-ordination.

**Mr. Howell** *rose*——

**Mr. Moynihan:** The right hon. Gentleman is blind to the steps that have been taken, and it is a great shame that he and his hon. Friends in Committee have not begun to address the issues that are relevant to the future of football. It is appalling that he has underestimated the vital work that is needed.

*Question put:*

*The House divided:* Ayes 327, Noes 221.

**Division No. 290]** **[7.28 pm**

**AYES**

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert

**Macfarlane, Sir Neil**
**MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)***
**Maclean, David**
**McLoughlin, Patrick**
**McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael**
**McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick**
**Major, Rt Hon John**
**Malins, Humfrey**
**Mans, Keith**
**Maples, John**
**Marland, Paul**
**Marlow, Tony**
**Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)***
**Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)***
**Mates, Michael**
**Mawhinney, Dr Brian**
**Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin**
**Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick**
**Mellor, David**
**Meyer, Sir Anthony**
**Miller, Sir Hal**
**Mills, Iain**
**Miscampbell, Norman**
**Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)***
**Mitchell, Sir David**
**Monro, Sir Hector**
**Montgomery, Sir Fergus**
**Moore, Rt Hon John**
**Morris, M *(N'hampton S)***
**Morrison, Sir Charles**
**Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)***
**Moss, Malcolm**
**Moynihan, Hon Colin**
**Mudd, David**
**Neale, Gerrard**
**Needham, Richard**
**Nelson, Anthony**
**Neubert, Michael**
**Newton, Rt Hon Tony**
**Nicholls, Patrick**
**Nicholson, David *(Taunton)***
**Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)***
**Norris, Steve**
**Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley**
**Oppenheim, Phillip**
**Page, Richard**
**Paice, James**
**Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil**
**Patnick, Irvine**
**Patten, John *(Oxford W)***
**Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey**
**Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth**
**Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)***
**Porter, David *(Waveney)***
**Portillo, Michael**
**Powell, William *(Corby)***
**Price, Sir David**
**Raffan, Keith**
**Raison, Rt Hon Timothy**
**Rathbone, Tim**
**Redwood, John**
**Renton, Tim**
**Rhodes James, Robert**
**Riddick, Graham**
**Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas**
**Ridsdale, Sir Julian**
**Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm**
**Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)***
**Roe, Mrs Marion**
**Rossi, Sir Hugh**
**Rost, Peter**
**Rowe, Andrew**
**Rumbold, Mrs Angela**
**Ryder, Richard**
**Sainsbury, Hon Tim**
**Sayeed, Jonathan**
**Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas**
**Shaw, David *(Dover)***
**Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)***
**Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')***
**Shelton, Sir William**
**Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)***
**Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)***
**Shersby, Michael**
**Skeet, Sir Trevor**
**Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)***
**Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)***
**Speed, Keith**
**Speller, Tony**
**Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)***
**Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)***
**Squire, Robin**
**Stanbrook, Ivor**
**Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John**
**Steen, Anthony**
**Stern, Michael**
**Stevens, Lewis**
**Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)***
**Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)***
**Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)***
**Stokes, Sir John**
**Stradling Thomas, Sir John**
**Sumberg, David**
**Tapsell, Sir Peter**
**Taylor, Ian *(Esher)***
**Taylor, John M *(Solihull)***
**Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman**
**Temple-Morris, Peter**
**Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)***
**Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)***
**Thorne, Neil**
**Thornton, Malcolm**
**Thurnham, Peter**
**Townend, John *(Bridlington)***
**Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)***
**Tracey, Richard**
**Trippier, David**
**Trotter, Neville**
**Twinn, Dr Ian**
**Vaughan, Sir Gerard**
**Viggers, Peter**
**Waddington, Rt Hon David**
**Wakeham, Rt Hon John**
**Waldegrave, Hon William**
**Walden, George**
**Walker, Bill *(T'side North)***
**Waller, Gary**
**Walters, Sir Dennis**
**Ward, John**
**Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)***
**Warren, Kenneth**
**Wells, Bowen**
**Wheeler, John**
**Widdecombe, Ann**
**Wiggin, Jerry**
**Wilkinson, John**
**Wilshire, David**
**Wolfson, Mark**
**Wood, Timothy**
**Woodcock, Dr. Mike**
**Yeo, Tim**
**Young, Sir George *(Acton)***
**Younger, Rt Hon George**

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Tom Sackville.

## NOES

**Abbott, Ms Diane**
**Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)***
**Allen, Graham**
**Alton, David**
**Anderson, Donald**
**Archer, Rt Hon Peter**
**Armstrong, Hilary**
**Ashley, Rt Hon Jack**
**Ashton, Joe**
**Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)***
**Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)***
**Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)***
**Barron, Kevin**
**Beckett, Margaret**
**Benn, Rt Hon Tony**
**Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)***
**Bermingham, Gerald**
**Bidwell, Sydney**
**Blair, Tony**
**Blunkett, David**
**Boateng, Paul**
**Boyes, Roland**
**Bradley, Keith**
**Bray, Dr Jeremy**
**Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)***
**Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)***
**Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)***
**Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)***
**Buckley, George J.**
**Caborn, Richard**
**Callaghan, Jim**
**Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)***
**Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)***
**Campbell-Savours, D. N.**
**Canavan, Dennis**
**Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)***
**Cartwright, John**
**Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)***
**Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)***
**Clay, Bob**
**Clelland, David**
**Clwyd, Mrs Ann**
**Cohen, Harry**
**Coleman, Donald**
**Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)***
**Cook, Robin *(Livingston)***
**Corbyn, Jeremy**
**Cousins, Jim**
**Crowther, Stan**
**Cryer, Bob**
**Cummings, John**
**Cunliffe, Lawrence**
**Cunningham, Dr John**
**Dalyell, Tam**
**Darling, Alistair**
**Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)***
**Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)***
**Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)***
**Dewar, Donald**
**Dixon, Don**
**Dobson, Frank**
**Doran, Frank**
**Douglas, Dick**
**Duffy, A. E. P.**
**Dunnachie, Jimmy**
**Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth**
**Eadie, Alexander**
**Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)***
**Fatchett, Derek**
**Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)***
**Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)***
**Fisher, Mark**
**Flannery, Martin**
**Flynn, Paul**
**Foot, Rt Hon Michael**
**Foster, Derek**
**Fraser, John**
**Fyfe, Maria**
**Galloway, George**
**Garrett, John *(Norwich South)***
**Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)***
**George, Bruce**
**Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John**
**Godman, Dr Norman A.**
**Gordon, Mildred**
**Gould, Bryan**
**Graham, Thomas**
**Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)***
**Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)***
**Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)***
**Grocott, Bruce**
**Hardy, Peter**
**Harman, Ms Harriet**
**Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy**
**Heffer, Eric S.**
**Hinchliffe, David**
**Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)***
**Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)***
**Home Robertson, John**
**Hood, Jimmy**
**Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)***
**Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)***
**Howells, Geraint**
**Hoyle, Doug**
**Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)***
**Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)***
**Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)***
**Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)***
**Illsley, Eric**
**Ingram, Adam**
**Janner, Greville**
**Johnston, Sir Russell**
**Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)***
**Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)***
**Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)***
**Kennedy, Charles**
**Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil**
**Kirkwood, Archy**
**Lambie, David**
**Lamond, James**
**Leadbitter, Ted**
**Litherland, Robert**
**Livingstone, Ken**
**Livsey, Richard**
**Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)***
**Loyden, Eddie**
**McAllion, John**
**McAvoy, Thomas**
**Macdonald, Calum A.**
**McFall, John**
**McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)***
**McKelvey, William**
**McLeish, Henry**
**Maclennan, Robert**
**McNamara, Kevin**
**McWilliam, John**
**Madden, Max**
**Mahon, Mrs Alice**
**Marek, Dr John**
**Marshall, David *(Shettleston)***
**Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)***
**Martlew, Eric**
**Maxton, John**
**Meacher, Michael**
**Meale, Alan**
**Michael, Alun**
**Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)***
**Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)***
**Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)***
**Molyneaux, Rt Hon James**
**Moonie, Dr Lewis**
**Morgan, Rhodri**
**Morley, Elliott**
**Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)***
**Mowlam, Marjorie**
**Mullin, Chris**
**Nellist, Dave**
**Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon**
**O'Brien, William**
**O'Neill, Martin**
**Orme, Rt Hon Stanley**
**Parry, Robert**
**Patchett, Terry**
**Pendry, Tom**
**Pike, Peter L.**
**Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)***
**Prescott, John**
**Primarolo, Dawn**

Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the following provisions shall apply to the remaining proceedings on the Bill:—

*Committee*

1. The proceedings on the Bill in the Standing Committee to which the Bill is allocated shall be brought to a conclusion at or before 1 p.m. on 27th July 1989, and the Standing Committee shall report the Bill to the House on or before that day.

*Report and Third Reading*

2.—(1) The proceedings on consideration and Third Reading of the Bill shall be completed in one allotted day, and on that day—

(a) the proceedings on consideration shall be brought to a conclusion at Ten o'clock; and
(b) the proceedings on Third Reading shall be brought to a conclusion at midnight.

(2) The Business Committee shall report to the House its Resolutions as to the proceedings on consideration of the Bill not later than the third day on which the House sits after the day on which the Chairman of the Standing Committee reports the Bill to the House.

(3) The Resolutions in any Report made under Standing Order No. 80 (Business Committee) may be varied by a further Report so made whether or not within the time specified in sub-paragraph (2) above, and whether or not the Resolutions have been agreed to by the House.

(4) The Resolutions of the Business Committee may include alterations in the order in which proceedings on consideration of the Bill are taken.

*Procedure in Standing Committee*

3.—(1) At a sitting of the Standing Committee at which any proceedings on the Bill are to be brought to a conclusion under a Resolution of the Business Sub-Committee the Chairman shall not adjourn the Committee under any Order relating to the sittings of the Committee until the proceedings have been brought to a conclusion.

(2) No Motion shall be made in the Standing Committee relating to the sitting of the Committee except by a member of the Government, and the Chairman shall permit a brief explanatory statement from the Member who makes, and from a Member who opposes, the Motion, and shall then put the Question thereon.

4. No Motion shall be made to alter the order in which Clauses, Schedules, new Clauses and new Schedules are taken in the Standing Committee but the Resolutions of the Business Sub-Committee may include alterations in that order.

*Conclusion of proceedings in Committee*

5. On the conclusion of the proceedings in any Committee on the Bill the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without putting any Question.

*Dilatory Motions*

6. No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, proceedings on the Bill shall be made in the Standing Committee or on an allotted day except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

*Extra time on allotted days*

7.—(1) On an allotted day paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings on the Bill for two hours after Ten o'clock.

(2) Any period during which proceedings on the Bill may be proceeded with after Ten o'clock under paragraph (7) of Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) shall be in addition to the said period of two hours.

(3) If an allotted day is one to which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, a period of time equal to the duration of the proceedings upon that Motion shall be added to the said period of two hours.

*Private business*

8. Any private business which has been set down for consideration at Seven o'clock on an allotted day shall, instead of being considered as provided by Standing Orders, be considered at the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill on that day, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the private business for a period of three hours from the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or, if those proceedings are concluded before Ten o'clock, for a period equal to the time elapsing between Seven o'clock and the conclusion of those proceedings.

*Conclusion of proceedings*

9.—(1) For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion at a time appointed under this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee or the Business Sub-Committee and which have not previously been brought to a conclusion, the Chairman or Mr. Speaker shall forthwith put the following Questions (but no others)—

(a) any Question already proposed from the Chair;
(b) any Question necessary to bring to a decision a Question so proposed (including, in the case of a new Clause or new Schedule which has been read a second time, the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill);
(c) the Question on any amendment or Motion standing on the Order Paper in the name of any Member, if that amendment is moved or that Motion is made by a member of the Government;
(d) any other Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded;

and on a Motion so made for a new Clause or a new Schedule, the Chairman or Mr. Speaker shall put only the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

(3) If an allotted day is one on which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) would, apart from this Order, stand over to Seven o'clock—

(a) that Motion shall stand over until the conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee, are to be brought to a conclusion at or before that time;
(b) the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee, are to be brought to a conclusion after that time shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

(4) If an allotted day is one to which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order or a

Resolution of the Business Committee, are to be brought to a conclusion on that day shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

*Supplemental orders*

10.—(1) The proceedings on any Motion made in the House by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order (including anything which might have been the subject of a report of the Business Committee or Business Sub-Committee) shall, if not previously concluded, be brought to a conclusion one hour after they have been commenced, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(2) If on an allotted day on which any proceedings on the Bill are to be brought to a conclusion at a time appointed under this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee the House is adjourned, or the sitting is suspended, before that time no notice shall be required of a Motion made at the next sitting by a member of the Government for varying or supplememting the provisions of this Order.

*Saving*

11. Nothing in this Order or a Resolution of the Business Committee or Business Sub-Committee shall—

(a) prevent any proceedings to which the Order or Resolution applies from being taken or completed earlier than is required by the Order or Resolution; or

(b) prevent any business (whether on the Bill or not) from being proceeded with on any day after the completion of all such proceedings on the Bill as are to be taken on that day.

*Re-committal*

12.—(1) References in this Order to proceedings on consideration or proceedings on Third Reading include references to proceedings, at those stages respectively, for, on or in consequence of re-committal.

(2) On an allotted day no debate shall be permitted on any Motion to recommit the Bill (whether as a whole or otherwise), and Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith any Question necessary to dispose of the Motion, including the Question on any amendment moved to the Question.

*Interpretation*

13. In this Order—

"allotted day" means any day (other than a Friday) on which the Bill is put down as first Government order of the day, provided that a Motion for allotting time to the proceedings on the Bill to be taken on that day either has been agreed on a previous day, or is set down for consideration on that day;

"the Bill" means the Football Spectators Bill *[Lords]*;

"Resolution of the Business Sub-Committee" means a Resolution of the Business Sub-Committee as agreed to by the Standing Committee;

"Resolution of the Business Committee" means a Resolution of the Business Committee as agreed to by the House.

# Orders of the Day

## Antarctic Minerals Bill *[Lords]*

*As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.*

### Clause 1

### GENERAL PROHIBITION

7.43 pm

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): I beg to move amendment No. 2, in page 1, line 12 at end insert

', and nationals and bodies incorporated under the laws of any colony, dependent territory or overseas territory for whose international relations the United Kingdom is responsible'.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 3, in page 1, line 13 leave out subsection (3).

No. 10, in clause 2, page 2, line 14, leave out from 'below' to 'State' in line 15.

No. 11, in page 2, line 17 leave out 'the Crown or another Contracting State'.

No. 12, in page 2, leave out lines 24 and 25.

**Mr. Anderson:** The nature of the problem is clear and was discussed in Committee. The ecosystem in the Antarctic is a unique and fragile system that needs to be protected. However, there is a danger, if minerals are to be researched, prospected and exploited, that international and multinational companies will take advantage of every possible loophole, including changing their place of registration. If the dependent territories of the United Kingdom are granted rights in the Bill, they should have corresponding and consequential obligations.

We proposed a similar amendment in Committee, when the Government replied that it was possible to extend coverage of the obligations to the dependent territories by the Order in Council procedure, and it was their intention so to do. They argued that this procedure was adopted by convention, and that it was only a matter of courtesy to those territories that it was adopted.

However, it is possible to extend jurisdiction directly to any territory for which we are responsible, and there are a number of precedents for doing it that way rather than by an Order in Council. We believe that this is a matter of some urgency, which demands a commitment from the Government. If there were to be an accident, there would be a major liability on us. As to the courtesies, it was possible for the Government, since the convention was signed in Wellington in June of last year, to have consulted each of the relevant territories, explained the importance of the matter and informed them that on this occasion, because of the special factors involved, it was their intention to apply the convention directly to the territories rather than by the Order in Council procedure.

I hope that the Minister will recognise the dangers that could arise. He and I remember, during the Iran-Iraq war, how easy it was, when ships were under threat in the strait of Hormuz, for them to take on a British dependent territory registration so as to come under the protection of the Armilla patrol. That illustrates how easily people can flow from one area to another when it suits their commercial interests. The danger is there. We hope that the Government will see that our amendments are a proper safeguard against that danger, and will accept them.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar):** As the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) said, this matter was debated at some length in Committee. As I said then, the amendments would breach the constitutional convention by which, when we extend international obligations to our dependent territories, we consult them about how this might best be done, rather than instruct them. I said that it was rather curious to find Labour Members arguing for what one might call the imperialist position.

**Mr. Anderson:** There is nothing wrong with that.

**Mr. Eggar:** I shall store that one up for future use.

I assure the House that there will be no loophole. I can give a categorical assurance that nationals and bodies incorporated under the laws of any British colony will be obliged to comply with the Bill and with the convention.

**Mr. Anderson:** Can the Minister give any timetable or target date by which he hopes that the Bill will be extended to all dependent territories?

**Mr. Eggar:** We shall seek to proceed in a timely manner. I assure the hon. Gentleman that the Bill will be extended by the time that the convention comes into force.

*Amendment negatived.*

## Clause 2

### Exception for Prospecting Activities

**Mr. Anderson:** I beg to move amendment No. 14, in page 2, line 31, after 'activities', insert

'means activities for the purposes of further scientific investigation which do not cause damage to the Antarctic environment or dependent or associated ecosystems and'.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 23, in page 3, line 16, clause 3, after 'damage', insert

to the Antarctic environment or dependent or associated ecosystems'.

No. 34, in page 4, line 28, clause 7, at end add

'and especially if there is any risk of environmental damage'.

No. 36, in page 4, line 36, clause 8, at end add

'among whom shall be individuals nominated by either or both national or international organisations which have standing in the field of environmental protection.'.

**Mr. Anderson:** The lead amendment, No. 14, attempts narrowly to redefine "prospecting". The House will recall that the essence of the Bill is to allow only prospecting and to set out a new series of procedures before any country or licensee can proceed to the next stages of development and exploitation of any mineral resources that may be found. We are seeking to redefine prospecting and to distinguish it from existing scientific research. The key word is "further". We seek to limit prospecting to scientific investigations. Thus, prospectors would be able to undertake only activities that have a sound and purely scientific basis and are of a nature that is not damaging to the Antarctic environment.

"Damage" is to be interpreted according to the convention, and is defined in article 1(15) of the convention:

"'Damage to the Antarctic environment or dependent or associated ecosystems' means any impact on the living or non-living components of that environment or those ecosystems, including harm to atmospheric, marine or terrestrial life beyond, that which is negligible or which has been assessed and judged to be acceptable pursuant to this Convention."

We accept that, even under the limits of current scientific investigations, there can be grey areas. We are not always certain exactly who pays for the scientific investigations and what their motives are in so paying. We have discussed definitions in Committee, however, and we have made it clear that there should be definitions of what is permitted and what is prohibited. In our judgment, the Bill should be self-contained. Any definition should arise from the convention and not from definitions in other domestic legislation in the United Kingdom.

Amendment No. 23 widens the definition of damage to include damage to the environment and ecosystems. We seek to move away from the purely commercial definition of damage, such as loss of profits, in this peculiarly sensitive area.

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): Are the Government in a position to give the House any scientific advice on this issue? Is it their view that the ecosystem will necessarily be damaged in all circumstances if minerals are found? As I understand it, there has been mining at Spitzbergen for decades without great effect on the ecosystem there. I shall be interested to know the facts that are available to the Minister.

**Mr. Peter Hardy** (Wentworth): I shall take a little longer than my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), partly because two of the amendments, Nos. 34 and 36, stand in my name. I tabled those amendments and others because I share the view expressed by Greenpeace, that the Bill is fatally flawed. I deeply regret that the British position is not the one that has been adopted by France and Australia. I am delighted that France and Australia have taken what I believe is the only independent position that the civilised world could take.

If the House had been debating the extension of the deserts 25 years ago, I believe that it would have taken the same attitude as it appears to be taking to the Antarctic this evening. If, 15 years ago, the House had been talking about the destruction of tropical forests, it would probably have taken the same attitude as many hon. Members are taking to the Antarctic now. In the past three or four decades we have seen the destruction of large parts of our planet with consequences that only now are beginning to be accepted. Indeed, the summit meeting could find agreement only by suggesting that there should be research before it is too late. That is the position on global warming. We have had sufficient experience over the past two or three generations to understand that we should approach ecosystems as large, substantial, attractive and important as that of the Antarctic with rather more sensitivity than the Government have displayed.

I do not always agree with every organisation in the environment lobby, but in this instance I agree wholeheartedly with Greenpeace. I deeply regret that the Government must stand high on the list of the culpable. The Government have reacted far too late to past despoliation and they should be a great deal more careful before they run the risk of seeing an important part of our planet destroyed. I know that the Minister made some relevant comments in Committee, but I hope that he will

*[Mr. Peter Hardy]*

spell out on Report—*[Interruption.]* I note that the Minister is amused. I am glad that he finds this issue amusing. He should understand that some of us find it an extremely serious matter.

I ask the Minister to respond to the latest batch of questions which Greenpeace has sent to hon. Members. For example, who will ensure compliance with the convention? Who will ensure compliance with the convention in the area of the Antarctic whose ownership is disputed by the United Kingdom, Chile and Argentina? Do we supervise the Chileans? Do the Argentines supervise us? Who will accept responsibility? If development follows the arrangement that is before us, someone will have to accept responsibility to ensure that devastation does not take place.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): How can we trust the Government when they have given away Hong Kong?

**Mr. Hardy:** My hon. Friend is right. I remind the Minister that I am accustomed to hearing fine-sounding words from denizens of the Government Front Bench, but I am still angry that on 16 January, when I stood on King's Cross station applauding the Prime Minister——

**Mr. Skinner:** Did my hon. Friend do that?

**Mr. Hardy:** I did. I know that my hon. Friend will be surprised. I stood on King's Cross station on the centenary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Those who were gathered there were addressed by the Prime Minister, who made the most heartening speech. She called for the protection of hills, wetlands, the coast, lakes, rivers and hedgerows. I left that meeting to come to the House to present, with all-party support and with the blessing of every conservation body in Britain, a Bill to protect our significant hedgerows. A Government Whip blocked that Bill.

**Mr. Skinner:** My hon. Friend has told us that he went all the way to King's Cross to cheer the Prime Minister. Is that the same Prime Minister who supported the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Act 1988, a Bill that we tried to stop night after night? We argued that it would destroy an area in which lovely little birds——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. The Bill is about the Antarctic. Let us return to the Antarctic.

**Mr. Skinner:** I am talking about a Bill that will damage the environment at Felixstowe. That environment will be destroyed by the Government, who pushed the Bill through. I say to my hon. Friend: judge people by what they do, not by what they say.

**Mr. Hardy:** My hon. Friend must recognise that I was brought up as nonconformist and I always rejoice when the sinner comes to repentence. I thought that the right hon. Lady had done so. I was heartened because I thought that it gave hope for Antarctica as well as for the English hedgerows. Imagine my distress when the Government blocked that Bill; imagine my anger when I wrote to the right hon. Lady saying that she had blocked that Bill, which was presented on the very day that she had called for hedgerows to be protected. One passage from her reply will ever stick in my mind. She said that we have to think about other things as well as conservation—as though she had not always thought about things other than conservation.

8 pm

My hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) was with me on that memorable occasion and shared my pleasure at the right hon. Lady's speech and my disappointment when my Bill was blocked. I speak today from an experience that makes me intensely suspicious of the Government's attitude—a suspicion increasingly shared in Britain by all the green organisations. They are right to be suspicious, as they are right to ask questions. The Minister will be aware of the questions posed by Greenpeace in its latest missive to hon. Members, and I trust that when he replies he will give answers which, although they might reassure trusting, docile Conservative Members, will also be sufficiently powerful to persuade my hon. Friends and I.

The Government say, "We will ban exploration and ban exploitation, but we will not stop prospecting." That is ridiculous. The Minister may have read cowboy books or watched western films when he was a little boy. He may imagine that a prospector is a hoary old man riding on a mule with a backpack of beans and dried bacon, hoping to extract a few bits of rock with a hammer and a shovel and so discover gold.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): Sounds like Nicholas Ridley.

**Mr. Hardy** That description applies to a number of Conservative Ministers.

Modern prospecting is a different kettle of fish. Prospectors have high academic qualifications; they have some understanding of the use of explosives; they can drill——

**Mr. Skinner:** Yuppie prospectors.

**Mr. Hardy:** They are indeed the yuppie prospectors that my hon. Friend conjures up in his mind.

We are not talking about people with little hammers who chip off bits of rock; we are talking about people who could easily perpetrate an enormous amount of damage to an area, which our colleagues in Australia and France believe, as I do, should be a world reserve, and not subject to destruction by whatever interest group thinks that it can play ducks and drakes with an administration that does not have a record of constancy.

I want to know whether the Minister will answer all the questions posed by Greenpeace. How will we avoid the worst implementers of legislation being those with responsibility for implementation? Will the least competent administrations in the world be relied upon to interpret the regulations to protect Antarctica? Will we leave that attractive and important area to the mercy of the incompetent, the greedy, the feckless and the irresponsible? Will we leave it to those interests that have already destroyed the tropical forests and allowed the deserts to expand at an astonishing rate over the past 30 years?

Someone has to be concerned about the environment, because life must survive on this planet for a long time. I do not know whether it is appropriate to discuss the ecology of Antarctica on this group of amendments, or whether I should leave it until we discuss the next group.

**Mr. Eggar:** Leave it.

**Mr. Hardy:** The hon. Gentleman prefers me not to mention the subject at all. If you think that it should be left until the next debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall be happy to comply with your wishes.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) mentioned another reason for speaking in this debate—the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Act 1988. Every Conservative Member voted to break an international commitment——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman can talk about ecosystems in Antarctica, but not Felixstowe.

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to raise the citing of examples in passing during a speech. The Bill involves the administration of an area. If the Government support a particular system and a particular piece of legislation, surely it is necessary to point out their inconsistencies in previous legislation to show that they cannot be trusted.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Of course it is in order for hon. Members to draw analogies, but it is not in order for them to give a detailed description of them. I was advising the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) against doing that.

**Mr. Hardy:** I am happy to accept your advice, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My only reason for referring to the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Act was as a lead to discussing the Ramsar convention, an international agreement to which Britain was a principal signatory. To comply with the terms of that convention, Britain identified three or four sites in the British Isles that it pledged to the remainder of the world would be protected unless it be necessary to do otherwise because of the most grave and serious national predicament or interest. We selected the Orwell estuary for permanent protection, and said that it could never be touched other than in the most dire national extremity. Along came some people, aided and abetted by a few Conservative Members who smelt the possibility of making a bit of money, and the Ramsar convention went through the window, just as the Prime Minister's commitment to the British countryside went through the window.

The Government must understand that growing numbers of people in Britain, and throughout our planet, want them to act with a little more wisdom than thay have shown in this legislation. I refer the House to a letter to hon. Members from Sir Peter Scott. I received my copy this morning. I do not know which political party Sir Peter supports, but I know that for many years—as some Conservative Members will appreciate—he has played a more active part than any other living human being in promoting the conservation of our planet. He has a particular knowledge of Antarctica, so the House should be aware of the letter written by that distinguished, experienced British citizen, who has given great international service. Sir Peter said:

> "Many assurances have been given that this is an 'environmental bill'. However its primary concern is minerals exploitation, not the environment and its effect will be to facilitate the exploitation and almost inevitable despoliation of Antarctica.
>
> Concern for the protection of the environment is increasing both nationally and globally. Both Australia and France have declared that they will not sign CRAMRA, rather they would like to see Antarctica designated as a 'Wilderness Park' I applaud their bold initiative and sincerely believe that a Wilderness Park, with a permanent moratorium on minerals exploitation, is the only way to ensure that the Antarctic wilderness is really protected. Having been to the Antarctic five times, including visits to my father's huts and to the South Pole, I have first hand knowledge of the potential vulnerability of the area."

I refer also to some very interesting comments in a book by Sir Edmund Hillary. Like Sir Peter Scott, he is a distinguished person who is familiar with the most far-flung corners of our planet.

**Mr. Cryer:** My hon. Friend quoted Sir Peter Scott's remark that he is so dissatisfied with the Bill that he urges right hon. and hon. Members to vote against it. If we are really concerned about environmental protection, we must take Sir Peter's recommendation seriously into account.

**Mr. Hardy:** I hope that we shall act on Sir Peter's advice. Such advice from a man of Sir Peter's standing should be taken seriously. I have served on a number of national and international conservation bodies over a long period, so I have met Sir Peter occasionally and know of his record. I am aware of no other occasion on which he has given such advice. When such advice comes from a man who in the past has stood away from party politics, it should be taken very seriously.

I also take seriously the advice of Sir Edmund Hillary. I remind right hon. and hon. Members of his contribution in flying the British flag at the summit of Mount Everest in coronation year, and of crossing Antarctica. Sir Edmund Hillary writes about his visit to McMurdo sound in 1982, when the talk was about mineral resources and krill farming. There was very little talk in the relevant circles about protecting the environment and an area of the world that he acknowledges as superbly beautiful. Sir Edmund Hillary comments in his book "Ecology 2000" that he dreads the thought of drilling and of the risk that it would pose to the Antarctic. He dreads the inevitable risk of inadequate supervision and of the lack of any control or protection of the environment. Sir Edmund Hillary observes that such activities would destroy a significant part of our environmental inheritance.

In his book, Sir Edmund reminds us that the water in Antarctica has been frozen for 200,000 years. He notes that the pockets of air trapped in that water contain half the level of carbon dioxide that is to be found in the air that we currently breathe. There are many lessons to be learned from Antarctica.

No one is suggesting that we should ignore the lessons that Antarctica can teach us. The Opposition amendments merely seek to ensure that Antarctica will not be destroyed or at least disfigured before those lessons can be learned. I have no objection to the scientific establishments in Antarctica that have fulfilled a useful role there for some time, for their activities are quite a different matter from unleashing the forces of commercial exploitation. It is that which we fear most. The fear of commercial exploitation and of the consequences that it could bring led me to table my two amendments.

Amendment No. 34 would amend clause 7 by adding at the end the words

> "and especially if there is any risk of environmental damage."

That amendment is perfectly reasonable. It represents a compromise. I do not like the Bill at all, but the Government could at least make a gesture to people who are concerned about the environment by adding the words that I suggest, as a way of reassuring environmentalists and of warning off the greedy whose depredations we fear.

*[Mr. Hardy]*

Amendment No. 36 to clause 8 is also wholly reasonable. If there is to be an advisory committee, as there should be, the individuals who comprise it should be capable of giving proper advice. They should not necessarily be members of the Conservative party. Far too many Conservative placemen who have been appointed to such advisory bodies in recent years believe that their job is to tell the Government what they want to hear. The advisory committee should instead be comprised of individuals who are prepared to eschew lickspittling.

8.15 pm

**Mr. Elliot Morley** (Glanford and Scunthorpe): Is my hon. Friend aware that the governors of the Nature Conservancy Council, which is supposed to be responsible for protecting nature, have appointed a master of foxhounds? How can we have confidence in the Government when they allow an appointment such as that?

**Mr. Hardy:** My hon. Friend speaks with considerable knowledge of such matters, as the Minister said. Perhaps we should not tread on the topic of quangos. In 1979, the Government declared that they would abolish quangos but then decided that if they could not beat them, they should join them. Governments should be able to obtain independent advice from people who know what they are talking about—not from people who seek to please the Government with comfortable words.

**Ms. Dawn Primarolo** (Bristol, South): Does my hon. Friend agree that all the undertakings that were made to prevent the exploitation of Alaska did not stop the Exxon disaster earlier this year? Even though promises and undertakings about environmental protection, consultation, and emergency action to clear up pollution were given, they proved worthless. A disaster occurred because the companies operating in Alaska are there not for any philanthropic reasons connected with understanding the environment but to exploit and destroy it. Does my hon. Friend acknowledge that, although his amendments are important, companies would ignore such provisions and continue to destroy the environment?

**Mr. Hardy:** Yes, my hon. Friend is right. But if the Government use their majority, as they will, to ensure that the Bill becomes law, the least that we can do is to incorporate in the legislation a damage limitation—if only so that should such a tragedy occur in Antarctica, we shall be able to say, "We told you so." That would give further encouragement to those who already recognise that the Government's service to the environment is grossly unsatisfactory.

**Ms. Primarolo:** The company that markets Exxon products in this country is Esso. Its current advertising campaign, which features a barrage balloon, promotes unleaded petrol and uses the phrase "Caring for your future". Yet both Exxon and Esso have shown that they do not care at all about our future but only about their own profits.

**Mr. Hardy:** My hon. Friend may be unaware that I am particularly concerned about environmental matters. For the past three years, I have served as chairman of the Council of Europe's environment committee. During that time, the committee has taken a number of initiatives with regard to marine pollution. It is sad that calls from my committee, from the European Parliament, and from committees of other national legislatures are ignored.

The scale of that disdain was shown in Alaska. The part of Alaska in which the oil spillage occurred is remote, difficult to reach and a long way from centres skilled in harbour and coastal protection. If that part of Alaska is far from the reservoirs of support, how far away from them is a part of the world a good deal south of the Antarctic circle? There would be no guarantee, which is why it is essential that those people should at least be in a position to tell the Government what is needed. We should be able to exercise a very critical role if the Government ignore the resulting evidence; the Government, of course, might find it possible to appoint to the committee people who would be prepared to speak out should their advice be ignored, but we need to be sure that that advice will be tendered and officially and formally received.

In the absence of such advisers, the Government would be able to say, "We did not know; we were not told." I should like to remove any possibility of such an excuse: hence the amendment, which I hope my hon. Friends will support unless the Government are prepared to accept it. I do not consider it unreasonable, although my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo) was somewhat critical because her hostility to the Bill is more root and branch.

**Mr. Skinner:** During the economic summit, the Prime Minister has been gallivanting around Europe, spending taxpayers' money and indulging in parties and binges. Apparently, between bouts of sipping claret and Beaujolais, all those countries got together and decided to set up a 10-point plan for the environment. I find it a bit odd that the same Government, headed by the same Prime Minister, should not be prepared to accept my hon. Friend's amendment.

My hon. Friend should remind the Minister that he may not be in his job much longer. There is going to be a big reshuffle, and he has not been sparking on every plug, has he? He has a chance of being kicked out. The course that should appeal to him is to adopt the 10-point plan and accept my hon. Friend's amendment. To do otherwise would be hypocritical, in view of all the great plans that were made at the summit.

**Mr. Hardy:** The 10-point plan seems very strong on investigation and very weak on action. We have seen a good deal of investigation. I have been making speeches in the House for 15 years about the need to protect the environment, and on occasion after occasion have presented evidence to justify my arguments. In a small way I have contributed to the pursuit of the learning in which the Government have now agreed to engage. It is a form of paradox. The other day—I think that this is relevant, Mr. Deputy Speaker—I attended a meeting with Lech Walesa, and I asked him a question.

**Mr. Skinner:** He is a Catholic shop steward.

**Mr. Hardy:** My hon. Friend's description, although less than generous, may be reasonably accurate.

I asked Lech Walesa, "Are you familiar with a development that we watch in western Europe? Are you familiar with the phenomenon of western leaders visiting your country and saying one thing there and something entirely different when they return to their own countries?" Lech Walesa does not speak English, but he stuck his thumb up and gave me a broad grin. Over the headphones I heard the interpreter say, "Mr. Walesa says yes, and now he is going to talk about paradoxes as well."

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I think that the hon. Gentleman is on the wrong Pole.

**Mr. Hardy:** I shall now return—in a southerly direction —to the appropriate latitude, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I could not resist the intervention of my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), who was, to some extent, leading me astray; I now return to relevance. I could not, however, overlook the fact that we were discussing a strange paradox. The Paris summit has been celebrating the French revolution: I only wish that it had met 200 years earlier for, as I am sure some of my hon. Friends will agree, I think that 1789 would have been a more appropriate date for such a gathering than 1989.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** They might have chopped her head off.

**Mr. Hardy:** I had always thought that my hon. Friend was opposed to capital punishment.

**Mr. Banks:** I make exceptions.

**Mr. Hardy:** The House is being offered reasonable amendments. If the Government wish to retain any vestige of consistency between their words and their actions, they have no alternative but to take a generous attitude. I do not think that I need say more; the case that we have advanced is utterly convincing, and I trust that the Minister's reply will be acceptable to us.

**Mr. Morley:** I wish to concentrate exclusively on amendment No. 14, which deals with the definition of exploration. Clause 2 of the Bill provides that

"'prospecting activities' includes field observations".

There is no problem there; field observations are not particularly damaging, although if large numbers of people set up bases in the area that in itself could be damaging. We discussed that in Committee. As it stands, the Bill does not appear to limit the number of people who can take part in any kind of prospecting expedition in the Antarctic, with all the associated problems of waste and disturbance.

"Prospecting activities", says clause 2, also include

"geological, geochemical and geophysical investigations".

Those are likely to involve the use of drilling rigs. The Bill lays down certain conditions, stating that such activities do not include, for example,

"drilling to depths exceeding 25 metres or such other depth as the Commission may determine for particular circumstances".

That would be helpful in certain circumstances, because drilling also involves the risk of dirt and waste and the possible danger of blow-outs, problems associated with the control of machines and the disturbance caused by mud that is used for cooling the machinery—although I imagine that it would not be very difficult to cool machinery in the Antarctic.

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): My hon. Friend has made a fair point. Cooling material in the Antarctic might not be much of a problem, as for the most part the air is very cold anyway. Is he aware, however, of a serious problem that has occurred in some of the scientific stations there? If fire breaks out, it is extremely difficult to extinguish it. All the water has, of course, turned to ice, and other forms of fire-fighting equipment are very difficult to use in such extreme temperatures. That is yet another reason for caution. Where fires have broken out in some scientific stations, it has been impossible to put them out and the entire station has had to be allowed to burn out, with considerable consequent pollution.

**Mr. Morley:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend, whose knowledge of the Antarctic is considerable. He has raised an important point. I understand that there has been only one large-scale fire in the Antarctic, but in the event of one we would not know what the effects would be, and fighting it would be extremely difficult, especially if it were associated with an oil rig blow-out. Those are difficult to extinguish even in the most favourable circumstances, and the possibilities in the Antarctic make one shudder.

According to clause 2, prospecting activities also include

"the use of remote sensing techniques and the collection of samples".

I am willing to be corrected by the Minister if I am wrong, but I suspect that the use of remote sensing techniques will involve the kind of geological survey that entails setting off an explosive charge. Sensors will be used to read the shock waves and to gain an idea of the geology of the area. I imagine that the Minister would feel somewhat anxious about any proposal to prospect for oil in this country and to set up explosive charges in, for example, Hyde Park for the purposes of establishing the geology of the area.

The Bill permits companies to set up explosive charges without defining or controlling what that will do. My hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) told us that the ice build-up on the continental shelf is hundreds of thousands of years old. Explosive charges used for geophysical investigations could cause immense permanent irreversible damage and the history locked within the ice would be destroyed forever. The Bill does not contain adequate safeguards against that.

8.30 pm

The Bill defines prospecting activity as "the collection of samples". I give it credit for dealing with

"dredging or excavation otherwise than for the purpose of obtaining small-scale samples"

I should like a definition of "small-scale". Dredging of the seabed can cause enormous damage of which we may not be aware. We know that the Antarctic seas are an important source of krill and shrimp and therefore the beginning of an important food chain. I am not sure that we understand the possible scientific impact of dredging along the seabed and disturbing it. The Minister may say that the Bill quite clearly deals with "obtaining small-scale samples", but I should like to know the definition of small-scale and how the operations will be defined and controlled.

The Minister should consider amendment No. 14 very carefully. In Committee it was quite clear that there was no difference between the two sides of the House in terms of protecting the sensitive and unique ecology of the Antarctic. I see no reason why the Government cannot accept the amendment. Bearing in mind the fact that the Bill deals with companies under United Kingdom control, the amendment would limit activities for the purpose of investigation to those which did not damage the Antarctic environment. That puts the responsibility on the

*[Mr. Morley]*

companies or individuals who apply for a licence to prospect. The pressure would be on those individuals or companies to demonstrate successfully that their prospecting would not destroy or damage the environment.

There are further safeguards in later amendments, but amendment No. 14 goes to the root of the problem by putting the onus of the people who want to go to Antarctica. It will be up to them to demonstrate that they will cause no damage. I believe that that would be difficult, and that the Government will therefore oppose the amendment, but if we are truly serious about preserving the ecology of the Antarctic, we must accept the amendment and make it clear that people who wish to exploit it must bear the responsibility of demonstrating that whatever they do will not cause ecological damage.

**Mr. Peter Griffiths** (Portsmouth, North): I have listened with considerable interest to the arguments of Opposition Members in support of the amendments. Broadly speaking, I sympathise with the amendments, but there is a distinction between them and what Opposition Members have said about them. The amendments seek to make more certain the controls which are obviously necessary if scientific research continues and a process of prospecting is carried out under strict licensing, which surely must be better than a process carried out without those provisions.

In Committee, the Minister assured us that the Government accepted their responsibilities and would ensure that they would be exercised effectively by the commission. However, hon. Gentleman ought not to give the impression that there is something undesirable about scientific exploration of the Antarctic or of prospecting there. We have had years of statements that there is untold wealth in the Antarctic which could be exploited. As long as we are not sure that just what is there, where it is and what would be the difficulties of seeking to exploit it, we shall hear comments such as those reported to have been made by one political leader: "There is gold in the Antarctic and we want our share".

I do not know whether that is a fair interpretation of what that leader said, but it may represent the attitude of poor Third-world countries which find it much more difficult than relatively wealthy nations to take an objective view of preserving a wilderness and rejecting the opportunity for economic exploitation. If we are asking them to take an attitude similar to ours, we shall have to tell them that scientific exploration and careful prospecting is giving them the information that they require.

**Mr. Morley:** There is a clear difference between scientific exploration and prospecting, which goes to the heart of the debate. Opposition Members do not object to scientific exploration, although there should be safeguards. The hon. Gentleman says that we need to know what is in Antarctica and that, until we know, there will always be pressure for exploration. There may be some truth in that, but surely the best way of finding out is through various scientific institutions and organisations rather than prospecting, which will be led mainly by multinational corporations which are in it for their own gain rather than for scientific knowledge or for the greater good of the entire community.

**Mr. Griffiths:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention, and I do not disagree with him. Obviously, commercial prospecting is carried out with an eye to some future advantage. But that applies to prospecting whether or not it is licensed. Because there are human frailties and the desire to take advantage of whatever wealth there may be, and perhaps not all countries will take the same view as the Government have taken in the Bill, we need to write in safeguards. I suggest that Opposition Members, in addressing their amendments, should not talk about oil rig blow-outs as the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) did. Nothing in the Bill would permit an oil rig to drill for oil, or a blow-out. Such comments are unhelpful because they refer to something which the Bill would never permit.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** I shall pick up a point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) in his excellent speech. I always knew that my hon. Friend was a great supporter of green issues, but I did not realise that he was quite as green as he reveals himself to be. He was very green if he cheered the Prime Minister and believed what she said about her sudden conversion to environmental issues. In my opinion, the Prime Minister is about as environmentally friendly as bubonic plague.

**Mr. Hardy:** In my own defence, I got off one platform and got on another, because my train arrived at King's Cross. I was there as a member of the council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, although I had no part whatsoever in the invitation that was extended to the right hon. Lady to address that gathering.

**Mr. Banks:** I realise that my hon. Friend has far more good sense than to want to have the Prime Minister there.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman** (Lancaster) *rose*——

**Mr. Banks:** He has far more good sense than to want to have the Prime Minister——

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Banks:** I will give way to the hon. Lady. I always look forward to her highly constructive, intelligent and perceptive remarks.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** Thank you very much. I have in my possession a letter from my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister welcoming the formation of the Conservative Conservation Society, which was written in the middle 1970s. My right hon. Friend is by no means a new convert to this concept. As she is a scientist, she knows a great deal more about it than most hon. Members here today.

**Mr. Banks:** I accept what the hon. Lady says. If the Prime Minister wants to support the Conservative Conservation Society, that is a good thing. Personally, I would be happy to see the Prime Minister stuffed, mounted, put in a glass case and left in a museum, and I look forward politically to that day. The Prime Minister's wandering into King's Cross station was in itself an event —not only because she was there for the anniversary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, but because that was the closest she has been to a British Rail train for a long time. She does not like travelling on trains and had not travelled on one since February 1987.

It merely goes to show that the Prime Minister is not the best source to quote when talking about the environment or the sincerity with which she holds views about the environment, in which we have suddenly found her so interested. Like many other Conservative Members, she realises that there are votes here. They are green if they believe that we are so green as to believe that the conversion of the Prime Minister or the Conservative party is genuine.

Through the Bill, the Conservative Government are once again supporting the interests of the great mineral developers and prospectors. That is what the Bill is all about. We shall come later to the philosophy behind the Bill, but I will point out now that the Minister is saying in effect that there will be exploitation of the Antarctic. Rather than trying to stop that happening, he says that we should try to regulate that exploitation. He says, "Let us have it exploited, but let us do it on our terms."

Amendment No. 14 seeks to probe how genuine the Government and the Minister are about protecting the Antarctic. If one looks at clause 2(2), one realises that the definitions of "prospecting activities" come from existing mining legislation in this country and not from definitions within the terms of the convention. That is why we are so worried and why we seek to limit the definitions and terminology in clause 2. We want to be certain that there will be genuine protection for the environment.

Amendment No. 14 is specific, referring to

"activities for the purposes of further scientific investigation which do not cause damage to the Antarctic environment or dependent or associated ecosystems".

That seems perfectly reasonable and I wait with great interest to hear what the Minister will say about the amendment if he is not prepared to accept it.

So much evil is being done in the world at present under the guise of scientific investigation. One thinks, for example, of the Japanese, who, in the so-called interests of science and scientific whaling, are proposing to slaughter 300 minke whales to find out how large the minke whale population is. I can tell them straight away that it will be 300 less than when their ships started slaughtering the whales. What is happening there——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. What has that got to do with amendment No. 14?

**Mr. Banks:** What is happening there is precisely what will happen in the Antarctic in the name of scientific investigation. There will be commercial exploitation, or a movement towards it, precisely as the Japanese are doing now in whaling. I will say one thing for the Government and Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food: he is doing his best to prevent the Japanese from getting away with that blatant commercial exploitation of whales under the guise of scientific investigation. All we are saying is that we do not want the same to happen in the Antarctic.

8.45 pm

As my hon. Friend the Member of Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) said, field observations are acceptable within limits. However, geological, geochemical and geophysical investigations require far more tightening of definitions in the Bill. I am not a scientist or a geologist, but I know that, because the Bill is drafted so slackly and imprecisely, all sorts of activities may be carried out. I am assured that we shall vote against the Bill on Third Reading, but if we are attempting to make the unacceptable remotely acceptable, the amendment must be carried.

Clause 2(2) says that prospecting does not include

"drilling to depths exceeding 25 metres or such other depth as the Commission may determine for particular circumstances".

What circumstances are meant? The Bill is imprecise. If somebody said that he wanted to go to a depth lower than 25 m, he would need only to ask the commission and the commission could determine that he could do precisely that.

Clause 2(2) also excludes

"dredging or excavation otherwise than for the purpose of obtaining small-scale samples."

An enormous amount of damage can be done to the ecosystem by the use of dredgers to obtain small-scale samples. Clause 2 does not set a limit on the size of dredgers, the scale of dredging or the scale of excavation.

Given what we have said earlier about the Prime Minister and her failure to match her actions to her words —one judges politicians not by what they say, but by what they do—we do not believe that the Prime Minister or the Government are genuine in their concern for the environment. We believe that they are paying lip service to the issue because they realise suddenly that it threatens their electoral position. Nothing concentrates the minds of politicians more that the thought of losing votes. We are not prepared to accept the Bill as it stands. We wish to tighten up the definitions in precisely the way that amendment No. 14 seeks to do.

**Mr. Corbyn:** Amendment No. 14 and several others go to the heart of the Bill. We are not talking about an end to all scientific exploration in the Antarctic, as the Minister and Conservative Members know. We are talking about an extension of those activities which will become part of prospecting activities and also about the damage to the environment already being done by a lack of control over many of the scientific experiments carried out in the Antarctic.

I have here an excellent report, produced by the Greenpeace Antarctic expedition of 1987-88, on the conditions that it found at each of the bases it visited in the Antarctic. I wish that amendment No. 14 had been in operation some years before, because the damage being caused by irresponsible expeditions, which leave behind fuel drums and rubbish, which incinerate waste instead of taking it home and which are not sufficiently monitored, calls into question the commitment of many of the signatory nations to the treaty to preserving the environment as it is, never mind to averting the dangers that will flow inextricably from allowing any prospecting and thus, at a further stage, exploration for minerals in the Antarctic.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** I have here an article from *The Observer* of 9 July which bears the legend:

"Rescue or rape for the last wilderness?"

It makes the precise point that my hon. Friend is making. It talks about Britain's abandoned base at Port Lockroy which had been broken into and from which coal had been stolen. It turned out that it was gentoo penguins which had stolen anthracite nuts to make their nests. The anthracite nuts did not hurt the gentoo penguins, but they might have taken something else that could have caused enormous damage to the penguin colony.

**Mr. Corbyn:** My hon. Friend makes an important and valuable point. No nation comes out of the Greenpeace report very well. That report contains examples of dangerous scrap metal, food waste and glass being left behind. On occasions, there has been incineration and if a large amount of plastic is included, dioxins are given off and pollution occurs. There is also at least one example of sewage being pumped raw into the sea from a base. Even when the sewage is chemically treated before being pumped out, the danger to the environment is still serious.

Tragically, we are not dealing with an unpolluted place, but with a place that has already suffered some pollution and exploitation. We should cast our minds back into the history of European habitation of the Antarctic. In 1775, Captain Cook returned, having announced his discovery of the land mass of the Antarctic, as far as it was known then. By 1800—only 25 years later—17 ships were killing whales and seals in the Antarctic and had killed 122,000 seals. Only 22 years later, during the Weddell expedition to the Antarctic, 1·2 million seals had been killed, the fur seal population had become almost extinct, and the elephant seal population was damaged. The whaling industry then went in and carried out its carnage. The Antarctic has already suffered the most appalling carnage.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) mentioned penguins. He was perfectly right to do so because the sealing companies that went to the Antarctic to exploit the fur seal and the elephant seal used to boil penguins alive because they found them combustible. They destroyed those animals to provide themselves with oil. The carnage of wildlife in that period was appalling, and the carnage would continue today if the wildlife was still there to be exploited in such large numbers and if such activities were not controlled.

**Mr. Banks:** I have just remembered a pathetic scene that I saw on television. Penguins were herded up a ramp and had to jump into a vat where they were being rendered down for oil. It was absolutely disgusting. The people who did that were the forerunner of the companies that the Bill would allow to run riot in the Antarctic. Having seen what was done in the past, and knowing what is done now, I am not prepared to let such companies into the Antarctic in the future.

**Mr. Corbyn:** My hon. Friend is perfectly right. Considerable damage was done to the environment in that period. When the whaling industry did its damage to the environment, it was only international pressure—not Government action—and pressure from ordinary people, like the many hon. Members who are concerned about such matters, that in the end forced the International Whaling Commission to put a ban on whaling. My hon. Friends have already pointed out the corruption of that system by so-called "scientific whaling", which even today threatens certain species of whale.

I wish that the House were being televised now. Many people outside the House would be horrified that the House was about to agree a badly drafted Bill which will allow not only further exploration but prospecting for minerals in the Antarctic. I firmly believe that there can be only one reason for looking for various minerals and hydrocarbons in the Antarctic, and that is to exploit them at a later date for commercial purposes. We shall be saying that in one area of the world, which we know has a fragile ecosystem and an environment fraught with danger, because we allow the exploitation of minerals, we are prepared to allow prospecting, with all its implicit dangers, to go ahead, too.

I hope that the Government will at least give us credit for tabling amendments seeking a proper environmental investigation before any further "scientific" explorations for minerals take place because I believe that the damage from such explorations will be enormous.

We are dealing with a dry continent and with a fragile place that has no human habitation on most of its land mass. My hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) said that ice remains there many thousands of years. A proper examination of that ice would allow us all to learn something about the history of this planet and from that, we could begin to look at some of the horrors of what we are doing to the planet. It is not a question of regarding every place on the planet as a potential place where the free market can let rip. We should look at the planet with a view to protecting it, because in so doing we are protecting our own lives and those of everybody and everything else.

The Bill is fundamentally and badly flawed. Although the Government say that they are concerned about protecting the environment, they are simply opening the way for its commercial exploitation. The Government continue to say that it is reasonable to allow people to look for minerals. In debates on later amendments and on Third Reading, we shall point out the fundamental change that the Bill would bring about.

The Antarctic treaty, which was willingly signed by a number of nations, went an awfully long way towards protecting the Antarctic. It made it a zone of peace. It stopped military overflying and the potential for nuclear testing. It stopped the area being used as a military base and allowed scientific exploration if the published results were circulated among all the signatory nations. That was an enormous step forward. However, I doubt whether all the information has been made available to all the signatory nations. Much of the scientific exploration there could rapidly become commercial exploration for minerals.

I am looking for an Antarctic protection Bill from the Government which would limit and control any signs of exploration, which would ensure that all the results were published and that the exploration did not relate merely to commercial purposes.

The crucial point of the amendment is that such information is supposed to be of a scientific nature. It is supposed to be published and circulated. There is supposed to be close co-operation between all the signatory nations. However, the Greenpeace survey of the Antarctic has suggested that that co-operation is not as close as it might be. The Bill simply allows those who have been granted a licence—from earlier debates, we know that they could be multinational companies or anybody—to maintain commercial secrecy about what they have discovered. Instead of the principle that the Antarctic should be a place of common heritage and common knowledge, it will become a place of commercial venture and commercial knowledge. Nobody can tell me that any oil company, mining company or anybody else will put in the money that is required for exploring the Antarctic for gold, coal, manganese or hydrocarbons, if they do not believe that they will ultimately be granted an exploration licence for the Antarctic.

I realise that some of my amendments have not been selected and therefore cannot be debated directly, but I hope that we can have a strict licensing regime with the genuine circulation and publication of all scientific and other information relating to the Antarctic. Above all, I should like a declaration such as the Australians have made, that we consider the Antarctic to be the common heritage of the whole world, not just a few nations or companies, and that it will be protected for ever.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth referred to what Sir Peter Scott said about these matters. He said that we should leave well alone and he is right. Any exploration in Antarctica will cause damage. Recently a ship carrying diesel fuel to a base in the Antarctic suffered a spillage. It was very difficult to find out what had happened. What would happen if there was a major accident involving an explosion, or spillage of chemicals—they are required in exploration work—or a seismic test explosion went wrong in a volcanic area? No one knows what would happen. Supplies could not be rushed in to deal with what might be an appalling catastrophe. Such an accident might be caused by the ignorance of Members of Parliament here, thousands of miles from Antarctica. It might be a result of our blind stupidity in allowing exploration to go ahead in the full knowledge of the great danger that that might pose to the continent.

I hope that the Government will be prepared to accept the amendment as part of an environmental protection regime for the Antarctic and as part of the turning point in our attitudes towards all wildernesses. We should learn what we can from Antarctica and see it for what it is. Similarly, we should learn what we can from the rain forests instead of chopping them down to supply a little hardwood to make garden seats. We should learn from Antarctica, and we might gain more than all the temporary wealth that might arise from exploring for gold, manganese, coal or oil.

This amendment goes to the heart of the Bill and I hope that the House will accept it.

9 pm

**Mr. Cryer:** I want to refer to amendments Nos. 34 and 36, because the criticisms by the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Griffiths) were unfair. The amendment moved by my hon. Friend (Mr. Hardy) seeks to exercise supervision and jurisdiction over the Secretary of State. My hon. Friend demonstrated his great interest and expertise in this subject when he moved the amendment.

The Minister seeks to give the House assurances today, but he may not hold his office much longer because there is about to be a reshuffle and he may be pushed on somewhere else during the kaleidoscope of plotting in which the Prime Minister is currently engaged. She wants to keep herself surrounded by friends and supporters so that she is not stabbed in the back before the next general election and replaced by the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine).

**Mr. Skinner:** That is a diplomatic illness.

**Mr. Cryer:** My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) describes that as a diplomatic illness, and it may arise as a result of the machinations in Cabinet. We cannot guarantee that the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs will still hold his office after the reshuffle, no matter how earnest and honest he considers his entreaties and assurances today.

Amendment No. 34 would add the words:

"and especially if there is any risk of environmental damage"

to the end of clause 7. That qualifies the directions which the Secretary of State may give to persons or licensees. That qualification is sensible, especially if there is a risk of environmental damage.

No doubt the Minister will cavil and object to some of the comments of Opposition Members to the effect that the Bill gives sufficient leeway for the multinationals to exploit the Antarctic which we want to keep as a wilderness. The Antarctic should be a preservation area so that the damage that has been wreaked by unchecked and uncontrolled multinationals elsewhere on our planet is not repeated in Antarctica.

**Mr. Skinner:** It should be a multinational-free zone.

**Mr. Cryer:** My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover is quite right.

Amendment No. 34 adds that qualification and ensures that the Secretary of State has that attitude at the forefront of his mind when giving directions.

We must also consider the powerful multinational companies which have representatives in this place and down the Corridor. I was once a member of a Cabinet sub-committee which dealt with the mining of manganese nodules. There was much concern about obtaining important minerals and there was a north-south dialogue in which the deprived countries claimed that the minerals should be shared more equally among the nations on our planet.

**Mr. Skinner:** Is this a Cabinet secret?

**Mr. Cryer:** It may well be.

During our discussions, a Member of the House of Lords who died several years ago said, "I saw Peter in the Corridor and Peter said to me, 'We are anxious about the decision over the mining of manganese nodules because we are uncertain about our investments'." The Peter concerned was Peter Carrington, who was chairman of Rio Tinto-Zinc. There was a direct input into the Cabinet sub-committee, but that was rejected by the other sub-committee members. None the less, there are influences at work in the corridors of power. We want to make sure that the Secretary of State is bound by legislation that he cannot edge round because people are getting hold of his elbow in the corridors of power and saying, "Look here, old boy, what about allowing a bit of excavation and exploration? It will be only preliminary, of course." Those people are ready to seize mineral rights and plunder them for profit, because that is the main motivation of the multinationals.

Clause 8(1) would allow the Secretary of State to

"appoint as inspectors to discharge such functions as may be prescribed"

people who appear to him to be appropriately qualified for the purpose. Amendment No. 36 says:

"'among whom shall be individuals nominated by either or both national or international organisations which have standing in the field of environmental protection.'."

That ensures that the Secretary of State's absolute position under the legislation is qualified. Surely that is not unreasonable. The Minister may say that this is United Kingdom legislation and ask whether it is reasonable for

*[Mr. Cryer]*

a Government to be subject to nominations by national or international organisations, but they are already subject to that sort of thing in a variety of ways.

No doubt the Minister is a supporter of the European Economic Community and the Government have to accept nominations from the EEC. They make nominations to the EEC and the present Commissioner, the former Member for Richmond, Yorks, Sir Leon Brittan, was nominated by the Prime Minister as a reward for services rendered. It is not uncommon for nominations to be made by other bodies to this country and by this country to other bodies. There is nothing extraordinary in saying that the Government should have to appoint among the inspectors and advisers people of standing in the world of environmental protection. The Government should not merely accept that—they should welcome it because it will ensure that whatever the view of the Minister, who may well be in favour of the clause——

**Mr. Skinner:** Here today and gone tomorrow.

**Mr. Cryer:** As my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover says, the Minister may be here today and gone tomorrow. The amendment would provide some certainty for the future and would realise the purpose of my hon. Friends by ensuring environmental protection.

**Mr. Hardy:** My hon. Friend may like to refer to other examples. We are not suggesting that people should come here from abroad, command enormous salaries and immediately become captains of large sections of British industry. The powers to do that exist. The Government appointed an American citizen to head coal and steel and Canadian citizens have been appointed to head other great national industries. By now some of them may be helping to run the National Health Service. We are talking not about that sort of example, but about the precedents have been well established by the present Administration.

**Mr. Cryer:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend. There is the important qualification that these persons must be nominated by national or international organisations with standing in the world of environmental protection. That will bind the Secretary of State so that he will have to have that sort of nomination in mind and make those appointments. It will ensure that there cannot be any back-door dealing, with the multinationals putting suitable people forward. That is the Government's record. They have been ruthless in appointing placemen and women to virtually every body in the country. They kicked out of the National Health Service people who were of any independent sort of mind and, of course, they booted out immediately anybody with a Labour pedigree and appointed their own hacks.

I have strong suspicions that when the advisory group is appointed it will contain the representatives of capital and the multinationals so that they can edge round the restrictions in the legislation.

**Mr. Skinner:** The Sultan of Brunei could make nominations.

**Mr. Cryer:** I am receiving some useful advice from my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It would be helpful if we had solo speeches rather than duets.

**Mr. Cryer:** I am receiving some helpful suggestions from my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover, who will bear with me when I say that the sad record of the Government is of appointing lickspittle sycophants to positions of importance, whereas they should be appointing people of independence. Anyone who shows any independence of mind is kicked out and replaced by some wooden-headed, blank-faced, blank-minded, incompetent sycophant, whose strings can then be pulled. One example is the management of British Rail, who have created the present conflict because of the determination of the Government.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** The same applies to the Cabinet.

**Mr. Cryer:** The Cabinet's record of complete subservience to the Prime Minister and its lack of any sign of independent thought makes it even more important that amendment No. 36 should be carried. *[Interruption.]* I hope that the hon. Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman), who as usual is trying to break the democratic rules of Parliament with continual disgraceful shouts and disdainful sneers from a sedentary position, will reconsider her antagonism and decide to vote for the amendment.

I support all the amendments, but amendments Nos. 34 and 36 suit me especially because they are modest, conformist improvements to the legislation. I suspect that the Minister will be determined to oppose them, but I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) will have at least one token vote on this set of amendments, because they are important. We too often complain about the actions of Ministers, but Ministers are given power by this legislative body. We should qualify and contain that power if we are concerned about this issue.

**Mr. Corbyn:** I am sure that it was a slip of the tongue by my hon. Friend, but many Opposition Members strongly and seriously oppose what the Bill is doing to a vital area of the world. There will be no token votes—they will be serious votes in favour of a scheme to protect the Antarctic rather than to pave the way for its commercial exploitation.

**Mr. Cryer:** My hon. Friend makes a good point, but he has misunderstood what I said earlier. I was not saying that it was a token vote in the sense of a vote being a token —I meant that we would probably not vote on every amendment. The amendment on which we vote will encapsulate all the amendments, including the ones on which we do not vote. Our vote will represent a token of support for all the amendments, even though we choose to vote only on, for instance, amendment No. 14. If my hon. Friends so desire, I shall be happy to vote on all the amendments. We shall have to see how things work out.

If, however, the Minister is reasonable and he says that he will accept the amendments, obviously a vote will not be necessary. There will not then be any accusations about the Government being an elective dictatorship and bringing in the rather seedy collection of estate agents and merchant bankers who constitute the Conservative majority here today to wend their way through the Lobby and trample on every decent amendment. My guess, however, is that they will do just that. We intend to ensure that all the amendments are treated with the seriousness they deserve, and we shall attempt to ensure that they qualify and control the Secretary of State's future activities.

**Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland):** The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) said that amendment No. 14 was a probing one to test the Government's real intention with regard to the Bill. Having listened to the analysis of amendment No. 36 given by the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), I could say the same of that amendment.

Amendment No. 36 should commend itself to the Government, although the Opposition parties would prefer no such Bill to be before the House. I cannot see anything wrong with amendment No. 36 as it would ensure that there was some confidence in the inspectors and observers to be appointed. The notes on manpower in the Bill show that the observers and inspectors will not be appointed for some years and are likely to be appointed

"on an ad hoc basis"

If the Bill reaches the statute book, those inspectors and observers will have an important job to do, and if their work met with international approval, their hands would be greatly strengthened.

9.15 pm

The Government have had a problem trying to sell the Bill because no Opposition Member believes that it will end at prospecting—that is the first step. One does not have boreholes at Sellafield or Dounreay unless, ultimately, one hopes to dispose of nuclear waste in them. Companies will have to invest considerable sums of money if they want to undertake any operation in Antarctica. Do the Government genuinely believe that they will be content to invest all that money purely for the purpose of prospecting? What activities does the Minister expect to be undertaken in Antarctica? Surely he accepts that companies would be unwilling to stop if they found that mineral wealth in the region could be exploited later.

It is easy to say that the Bill is just about prospecting, but prospecting involves considerable engineering work. The hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) has spoken of the report that has already been compiled on existing installations and operations in Antarctica. Those installations do not live up to the highest standards of cleanliness, tidiness and environmental integrity. If we are to embark on further major engineering operations, albeit prospecting operations, that involve fuel and mud it is clear that further damage could be done to the environment.

The Minister should recognise that prospecting itself could lead to environmental harm. For that reason, I believe that amendment No. 14, moved by the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson), is important, as it restricts such prospecting to "further scientific investigation" coupled with the requirement that it does

"not cause damage to the Antarctic environment or dependent or associated ecosystems."

That amendment focuses the concern that has been expressed by many Opposition Members. The Minister must give a convincing reply.

Amendment No. 23 deals with insurance. The loss and damage that should be covered must relate to environmental damage, not to the usual economic loss that is often associated with insurance claims. I hope that the Minister will take this opportunity to say what the Government have in mind for the conditions to be attached to licences with respect to insurance. I note that clause 3(5) suggests that any requirement on the licensee will be discretionary. Do the Government intend to have a stipulation on insurance? Under clause 3(5)(b) the licensee must insure himself

"to such extent as may be determined . . . under the licence".

What do the Government have in mind regarding the extent of that insurance? The wording is rather vague. The Bill almost gives the Government a blank cheque to do what they like. It is important to know the Government's intentions.

If we are talking about insurance, we are presupposing the possibility of some damage. For that reason, my party firmly believes that there should be no opportunity for such damage to take place and that is why we reject the drift of the Bill. We should be interested, however, to hear the Minister's detailed response to some of the points that I have made.

**Mr. Eggar:** We have had a long and interesting discussion on this group of amendments. I shall start by referring back to the purpose of the Bill which, for the first time, regulates prospecting activity by United Kingdom nationals and entities. In addition, for the first time, it excludes exploration and development by such companies. There has been, particularly from hon. Members without the good fortune to have served on the Committee, confusion between prospecting, which the Bill covers, and exploration and development, which it explicitly excludes.

I shall, if it is convenient for the House, go through the various points made by hon. Members. I can tell the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy), who is not in his place at the moment, that I shall certainly deal with the Government's response to the letters of Sir Peter Scott and Greenpeace. It may be more convenient for the House and more orderly if I do so on the next group of amendments.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) asked about the experience in Spitzbergen. It is true that there has been some mining in Spitzbergen for a number of decades. However, it was not prospecting, but development as defined under the terms of the covention. That development work has had some limited environmental impact but certainly has not caused the damage to the ecosystem to which the hon. Gentleman referred in his brief intervention.

The hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) asked a number of detailed questions. I shall try to deal with them now, and if the hon. Gentleman would like further clarification in writing, I shall be happy to give that. He asked about the size of any prospecting team. Size will be a key factor which the Secretary of State will have to take into account when he decides whether to give a licence.

The hon. Gentleman also asked about what he defined as seismic exploration. I am informed that, in practice nowadays, seismic exploration rarely uses explosives. The most frequently used technique is known as an air gun which is, effectively, a sound wave echo analysis. It may be of interest to the hon. Gentleman that explosives have already been used for scientific research under the Antarctic treaty system. I hope that I have been able to set his mind at rest. I assure the hon. Gentleman that no samples will be permitted which would be commercially valuable in themselves, so that method could not be used as a route to development through the back door. The

*[Mr. Eggar]*

precise definiton of "small-scale", which was the hon. Gentleman's point, will be decided during the process of issuing a licence.

The hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) raised the problem associated with existing scientific research and the despoliation of the environment which followed from that. He raised the issue of sewage. He should put this in perspective. He should imagine the sewage output of a colony of 100,000 gentoo penguins and compare that with the sewage ouput of, for example, a scientific research station of 10 individuals. He would then see that the two are relative and that a problem associated with sewage from the local inhabitants already exists—if one can describe penguins as inhabitants. It is true that the environmental effect of the issue of nutrients—if we can refer to penguin and human sewage in that way—is exactly the same. That is part of the regenerative cycle in Antarctica.

**Mr. Corbyn:** It is not a fair analogy to describe what 12 scientists in a cabin might be eating and excreting and to compare it with 100,000 penguins' diet, which consists exclusively of fish. Fish becomes part of a natural cycle, but humans eat a variety of foods. Pollution levels in rivers and seas around this country show that there is a serious problem. Some of that sewage is partly treated; some of it does not degrade or decompose; some of it lies around in still water for a long time.

A small number of humans and all the rubbish that they produce can cause a great deal more damage—*[Interruption.]* I am not sure whether everyone is listening to this important point. The Minister should address his mind to the problems of large volumes of rubbish and of the incineration of plastics which pollute the air. His point was rather silly.

**Mr. Eggar:** I had no idea that the hon. Gentleman was so sensitive. I was just trying to put his remarks into context. He made his other points in Committee too, where I took considerable trouble to try to answer them. I assure him that we shall raise a number of them in the October meeting. They are not covered by Bill: they are covered under the terms of the Antarctic treaty.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) discussed the definition of prospecting. That definition comes from article 1, paragraph 8, of the convention. It does not come from United Kingdom legislation. The purpose of the definition of prospecting in the Bill is to ensure that no entity in Antarctica will be able to licence any activity which will have any more effect on the environment than the sort of scientific research that is already going on and is covered by the Antarctic treaty.

The hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) referred to Opposition amendment No. 14. Perhaps it would help him if I explained why that amendment gives us some difficulty. The definition of prospecting in the Bill already reflects the definition in the convention. Scientific research within the meaning of the Antarctic treaty is expressly excluded by the convention. Defining prospecting activities in terms of scientific investigations, as his amendment does, would be incompatible with the convention and would cause serious confusion between scientific investigation carried out under the Antarctic treaty and prospecting activity carried out under the convention.

The qualification that the amendment would introduce, relating to damage to the Antarctic environment, is unnecessary. The avoidance of such damage in relation to all Antarctic mineral activity is the purpose of the convention, article 4 of which provides in detail for assessing possible environmental impact. Clause 3(3) requires that the Secretary of State does not issue licences other than in accordance with the international obligations of the United Kingdom.

Similar points may be made about amendment No. 23, although the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) spoke specifically about insurance. It is highly likely that any licensee would insure himself against liability for environmental damage, and it is also likely that any licence would include a condition requiring him to insure. I hope that that answers the hon. Gentleman's point.

The hon. Member for Wentworth spoke to amendment No. 34. There will be an international obligation on this country under articles 2 and 4 of the convention to avoid the risk of environmental damage in Antarctica. The whole purpose of the Bill is to ratify the convention, so the amendment is not necessary.

9.30 pm

**Mr. Dalyell:** If, for one reason or another, the convention is not ratified, what do the Government estimate will be the ecological damage to Antarctica, given the circumstances that would then prevail?

**Mr. Eggar:** Potentially, it is extremely serious. At present no prospecting is being carried out because of a voluntary moratorium, pending the timely entry into force of the convention. If it becomes clear that the convention will not come into force, it will be only a matter of time before one country or another agrees to prospecting being carried out in an unregulated way. The consequences for the environment in Antarctica would be extremely serious. That is why the convention is so desirable and why we are moving rapidly to ratify it.

**Ms. Primarolo:** Will the Minister give way?

**Mr. Eggar:** With respect, I am trying to deal with the points that have been made.

The hon. Member for Wentworth asked how the inspectors would be appointed. The Secretary of State and the Government are responsible for the appointment of inspectors. As the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland said, we intend to appoint inspectors in an ad hoc way. Clearly, the skills and experience required will vary depending on the type of prospecting activity to be inspected. The Secretary of State will take into account the skills that are necessary. I imagine that the qualifications or experience of environmental protection referred to in the amendment will be called for.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) also expressed some anxiety about that point. If hon. Gentlemen are unhappy about the appointments that may be made by the Secretary of State, I remind them that any other party is entitled to appoint people to inspect prospecting activity that is licensed by the Government. If that does not satisfy them, the Commission that is set up under the convention can also appoint inspectors. There is a three-tier system of appointment and even with the most vivid imagination no one could believe that all the inspectors would be flawed and would fail to take account of environmental protection.

With those remarks I hope that the hon. Member for Swansea, East will withdraw the amendment.

**Mr. Cryer:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We are considering a group of amendments and I understand that you will call at least the first one for a Division. Will the Division on amendment No. 36 be recorded in *Hansard* at the end of the debate, which would be convenient, or when it is put to the vote?

**Mr. Speaker:** If there is a Division it will be taken when the amendment is put to the vote. I have just taken the Chair and I am considering whether that action is appropriate.

**Mr. Corbyn** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is a Report stage, not a Committee. The hon. Member can speak only once.

**Mr. Corbyn:** With the leave of the House——

**Hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member does not have the leave of the House.

**Mr. Corbyn:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** What is the point of order?

**Mr. Corbyn:** It is simply this. The Minister did not answer the points put to him reasonably and legitimately, so I sought the leave of the House to find out more from him. The Minister gave way at one point when I asked about inspectors, and I wished to reply to what he said.

**Mr. Speaker:** If the House does not give the hon. Gentleman leave to speak again, I am afraid that I cannot give it to him.

*Question put*, That the amendment be made:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 73, Noes 194.

**Division No. 300]** **[9.34 pm**

AYES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beggs, Roy
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clelland, David
Cohen, Harry
Cryer, Bob
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Fyfe, Maria
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Home Robertson, John
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Illsley, Eric
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kennedy, Charles
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclennan, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mallon, Seamus
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morley, Elliott
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Parry, Robert
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Jo
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spearing, Nigel
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tony Banks and
Mr. Jeremy Corbyn.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*

Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo

Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waller, Gary
Walters, Sir Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alan Howarth and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

## Clause 3

### GRANT OF LICENCES

**Mr. Anderson:** I beg to move amendment No. 17, in page 2, line 45, leave out

'may, if he thinks fit',

and insert

'shall establish a British Antarctic Licensing Commission whose purpose shall be, in appropriate circumstances and subject to the provisions of this section, to'

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** With this we shall discuss the following amendments: No. 19, in page 3, line 1, leave out subsections (2), (3) and (4) and insert—

'(2A) The British Antarctic Licensing Commission shall be appointed by the Secretary of State and shall comprise five members, including at least one representative from each of International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, International Whaling Commission, and the Commission for the European Communities.

(3A) The Chairperson and two other members of the Commission shall be persons appearing to the Minister to have no financial or commercial interests as are likely to affect them as members independent of the mining industry.

(4A) An application for a license shall be accompanied by such fee (if any) as may be prescribed and an environmental impact statement.

(5A) An environmental impact statement comprises a document or series of documents providing for the purpose of assessing the likely impact upon the environment of the activity proposed to be carried out the information specified in (6A) below.

(6A) The specified information is—

(a) a description of the activities proposed, comprising information about the site and design and size or scale of the activity;

(b) the data necessary to identify and assess the main effects which that activity is likely to have on the environment;

(c) a description of the likely significant effects, direct and indirect, on the environment of the activity, explained by reference to its possible impact on—

human beings;
flora;
fauna;
soil;
water;
air;
climate;
the landscape;
the inter-action between any of the foregoing;
material assets;
the cultural heritage;

(d) where significant adverse effects are identified with respect to any of the foregoing, a description of the measures envisaged in order to avoid, reduce or remedy those effects; and

(e) a summary in non-technical language of the information specified above.

(7A) An environmental impact assessment may include, by way of explanation or amplification of any of the specified information, further information on any of the following matters—

(a) the physical characteristics of the proposed activity, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;

(b) the main characteristics of the prospecting activities proposed, including the nature and quality of the materials to be used;

(c) the estimated type and quantity of expected residues and emissions (including pollutants of water, air, or soil, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation) resulting from the proposed activity when in operation;

(d) (in outline) the main alternatives (if any) studied by the applicant, appellant or authority and an indication of the main reasons for choosing the activity proposed;

(e) the likely significant direct and indirect effects on the environment of the activity proposed which may result from—

- (i) the use of natural resources;
- (ii) the emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances, and the elimination of waste;
- (iii) the forecasting methods to assess any effects on the environment about which information is given under the subparagraph (e); and
- (iv) any difficulties, such as technical deficiencies or lack or know-how, encountered in compiling any specified information.

In paragraph (e), "effects" includes secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long term, permanent, temporary and negative effects.

(8A) Where further information is included in an environmental statement pursuant to (7) above, a non-technical summary of that information shall also be provided.

(9A) The British Antarctic Licensing Commission shall not grant a licence to any person unless it is satisfied

- (i) that the person is suitably qualified to hold a licence; and
- (ii) that the carrying on by that person of the authorised activities will be consistent with the international obligations of the United Kingdom.

(10) A licence shall be granted for a maximum period of two years and subject to such conditions as the British Antarctic Licensing Commission thinks fit.".'

No. 20, in page 3, line 5, after 'with', insert 'all'.

No. 27, in page 3, line 6, at end add

'and that such a licence shall not be granted unless the Secretary of State is completely satisfied that no pollution will result from its implementation'.

No. 22, in page 3, line 16, leave out 'such loss or', and insert 'any'.

No. 24, in page 3, line 17, after 'activities', insert

'such loss or other damage'.

No. 25, in page 3, line 17, leave out 'and'.

No. 29, in page 3, line 18, leave out 'providing for' and insert 'requiring'.

No. 26. in page 3, line, 19, at end insert 'and

(d) requiring the licensee, within twelve months from the grant of his license and prior to commencing any prospecting activities, to prepare, and from time to time modify, a statement setting out the manner in which he proposes to prevent damage to the environment or ecosystem of Antarctica arising out of the carring on by him of authorised activities; and

(e) requiring the licensee, before preparing or modifying a statement, to consult with the Commission and with the Nature Conservancy Council or such other body as the British Antarctic Licensing Commission shall consider appropriate.'.

No. 28, in page 3, line 19, at end add

'and

(d) and that a bond equal to twice the sum required for insurance purposes shall be deposited before a licence is granted and which shall be forfeited if there is any oil spillage or other significant pollution as a result of or during the exercise of that licence'.

No. 46, in page 3, line, 19, at end add—

'(d) any licensee must give a report each six months to the Inspectorate and the Environmental Protection Agency on the effects of the exploration and its environmental impact.'.

No. 47, in page 3, line 19, at end add—

'(e) the numbers of persons involved in the exploration shall be agreed with the Secretary of State and names involved submitted and agreed by him.'.

No. 48, in page 3, line 19, at end add—

'(f) all license applications must be reported to Parliament by the Secretary of State and his subsequent decisions.'.

No. 49, in page 3, line, 19, at end add—

'(g) the license shall specify the exact quantities of minerals that may be extracted for samples; all extracted minerals remain the property of a license commission appointed by the Secretary of State to oversee all licensees.'.

No. 50, in page 3, line 24, at end add—

'(7) No person found guilty of an offence under section 10 below shall be permitted to apply for a licence.'.

No. 30, in clause 4, page 3, line 30, after 'complied with' insert

'or is likely not to be complied with'.

No. 31, in clause 4, page 3, line 33, at end add

'and

(c) that evidence provided by individuals or organisations maintaining interest in these matters is such as to suggest that the exercise of the licence may or will have disadvantageous effect upon the environment.'

No. 45, in clause 4, page 3, line 36, at end add—

'(4) Before any licence is operated there shall be an opportunity for environmental protection groups to visit the site(s) and at any other time during the life of the licence.'.

No. 51, in clause 8, page 4, line 36, at end add—

'There shall be sufficient inspectors to ensure that each licence has a detailed inspection of its activities every six months in whatever part of the Antarctic it is sited.'.

**Mr. Anderson:** This is a crucial series of amendments. They are the key to providing safeguards in the Bill and a test of the Government's environmental intentions through the Bill and the convention.

We oppose the Bill in principle because circumstances have changed, but the Government have been inflexible and not prepared to move in tune with those changed circumstances. Although we voted in favour of the principle of the Bill on Second Reading, our prime motives since then have been to "green" the Bill, to put each clause through an environmental sieve and to provide as many environmental safeguards as possible. We also want, as far as possible, to remove the discretions available to the Minister.

The amendments relate to the licensing provisions. They are essential because, as the Minister confirmed in Committee, Britain is further down the legislative road towards implementing the convention than the other countries which intended to ratify it. The safeguards that we build into the Bill will therefore set a precedent for other countries to follow.

When the Minister winds up, perhaps he will confirm that that is so. As we are leading the field, it is all the more important that we get the Bill right, build in safeguards and not allow loopholes to remain which are ripe for exploitation by people with no concern for the Antarctic's unique ecosystem.

The purpose of the amendments is to establish the British Antarctic Licensing Commission and set out its terms of reference, which include an obligation on companies seeking licences to provide an environmental impact statement of their intentions before their licences can be considered. The concept of a licensing commission is not new, in either international or domestic law. The convention itself proposes a commission to regulate the exploration and exploitation of Antarctica. Under the Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984, for example, the Cable Authority is charged with allocating franchises on criteria which include standards of decency and impartiality. The British Antarctic Licensing Commission, or BALC, will be accountable to the Secretary of State, though its decisions are more likely to come under judicial scrutiny. Clearly it would be more practicable for the commission's decisions to be taken by way of judicial review than by the Secretary of State. We envisage the accumulation by case law of much more stringent environmental safeguards.

Other amendments relate to the commission's terms of reference. They are set out in extenso in amendment No. 19, but it is not my intention to describe them in detail. Suffice it to say that the amendment begins by setting out the commission's proposed membership. It stresses:

> "The Chairperson and two other members of the Commission shall be persons appearing . . . to have no financial or commercial interests . . ."

Right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House have stressed the extent to which people with commercial interests could easily intrude, particularly in respect of licence applications.

Amendment No. 19 goes on to stipulate:

> "An environmental impact statement comprises a document or series of documents providing for the purpose of assessing the likely impact upon the environment of the activity proposed to be carried out".

The information required for the environmental impact statement is also detailed, and the amendment describes certain discretionary activities.

Finally, amendment No. 19 states:

> "A licence shall be granted for a maximum period of two years and subject to such conditions as the British Antarctic Commission thinks fit."

It is important that the licence should not be held indefinitely. The suggested maximum of two years will concentrate the licensee's mind, and provide a requirement additional to that in clause 4, which empowers the Secretary of State to revoke or suspend a licence if he is not satisfied with the activities of the licensee.

Amendment No. 19 also sets out organisations which could suitably be represented on the licensing commission. They might include the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the International Whaling Commission, the Nature

*[Mr. Anderson]*

Conservancy Council, the Natural Environment Research Council, the Commission for the European Communities and the Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research.

We believe that the requirements set out in the amendment, although lengthy, are very reasonable and are standard environmental impact assessment criteria. The format has not been snatched from the air or devised by people whom Conservative Members might label eco-freaks. It has been drawn from the Government's own precedent—the statutory instrument, Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988. Those considerations for environmental impact assessments on new developments in the United Kingdom are a legal requirement.

We feel that the criteria developed in Britain are equally relevant internationally. Although the Government may be tardy in translating such criteria from the domestic to the international stage, we believe that that translation must inevitably come. In any case, the convention requires contracting states sponsoring prospectors to submit advance notification of prospecting, along with an environmental impact assessment, which must be circulated to all contracting parties.

In our judgment, this is not an onerous requirement, but rather a litmus test of the Government's commitment —so much trumpeted of late—to the environment. As I said earlier, our Government have taken the lead in terms of implementing the convention domestically. They now have the opportunity to set a worthy precedent for other Governments to follow.

**Mr. Hardy:** I shall try to make a shorter speech than I made on the previous set of amendments, but I think that it would be appropriate for me to make some comments, as amendments Nos. 27 to 31 are in my name.

My hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) said that these were the most crucial amendments before the House, as they—quite properly —sought improved safeguards for the Bill. I remind the House that, in the short time that has elapsed since the debate started a little after 7 pm, at least a dozen species on the planet have become extinct—species that may have lived on earth for a thousand years, or perhaps for as long as the ice has existed in Antarctica. That pace of extinction is normal on our planet.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** It is a pity that the process is not catching on the Conservative Benches.

**Mr. Hardy:** I am a little kinder than my hon. Friend; when the Conservatives are reduced to one Member, I should like him to be preserved as an endangered species.

**Mr. John Home Robertson** (East Lothian): We could keep him in a zoo.

**Mr. Hardy:** I have certain reservations about zoological gardens.

Britain has a reputation as the country where conservation was born. As my hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, East has reminded us, we are the lead Government in that regard. Surely it is reasonable to suggest that we give a new lead in seeking to retain the position that we once enjoyed.

We have been pretty cavalier with the environment in many parts of the world. I have referred to the tropical rain forests and the encroaching desert. I have only to look at parts of my own constituency to see what untrammelled commercialism can do, as 1,000 acres of land have become derelict and very little is being done.

*It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.*

*Ordered,*

That, at this day's sitting, the Antarctic Minerals Bill *[Lords]* may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. John M. Taylor.]*

*Question again proposed,* That the amendment be made.

**Mr. Hardy:** We have enough evidence in these islands of what can happen if greed is untrammelled, legislation is unsatisfactory and Government priorities are inadequate. We are fearful of what may happen in Antarctica. When he replied to the debate on the previous set of amendments, the Minister expressed some anxiety about what might happen if there were inadequate controls.

To ensure that we set an example as the lead Government, we have tabled amendments which would toughen environmental protection within the Bill. The five amendments in my name would require the Secretary of State to be completely satisfied that no environmental damage would follow the issue of a licence. My amendment seeks to remove the word "providing" and replace it with the word "requiring", which makes the restriction a little tighter. In my view, a bond is required to ensure that there will be sufficient resources to make good what damage is done and at the same time to build another hurdle against the force of greed.

Antarctica should remain an international reserve or wilderness area as we do not have enough of those. I have never visited Antarctica, but I once had the magnificent opportunity to fly over the North pole on an extremely clear and cloudless day. That gave me ample ground to intervene in the debate to say that, when we consider the environment of Antarctica, we should consider the topography and the landscape, which should not be cluttered with all the rubbish that may be produced even by scientific research which, as my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North said, is inadequately controlled.

I am also concerned about the retention of species. Most people are aware that there are penguins in Antarctica; the Minister will know that there are seven species of penguins there. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West has already referred to the gentoo penguin raiding the cold store of a vanished scientific station.

Altogether, 43 species of birds are seen regularly in Antarctica. Some of those birds range far more widely than the Southern ocean. I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe is not in his place, because he is a highly skilled ornithologist. Earlier today I asked him whether he had ever seen the wandering albatross, which is a bird of the Southern ocean, and he was fortunate enough to have seen one. It is a very large bird with a 11 ft wingspan. Even birds with 6 or 7 ft wingspans, such as the other members of the albatross family which are large and formidable creatures, are extremely vulnerable to loss of food reserves or the despoliation or poisoning of habitat.

**Mr. Corbyn:** Is my hon. Friend aware that there is a belief that "The Ancient Mariner", written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was inspired by Cook's voyage to the Antarctic and that one interpretation of the voyage of the ancient mariner is that we should protect the natural environment and not destroy what we do not know or understand?

**Mr. Hardy:** There is a line in that fine work of literature which says:

"Water, water, every where . . . nor any drop to drink."

We are not suggesting that water will disappear, even if it is privatised, but it may be unfit to drink. DDT and other pesticides are already found in Antarctic waters.

The degree of commercial exploitation on which some seem eager to embark could lead to the destruction of krill, which is the basic food supply of many of the species that inhabit Antarctica. The development of commercial exploitation in Antarctica will not merely disfigure the environment and make an area that should remain an outstanding international wilderness ugly and unpleasant, but that it will eventually destroy the food supplies and poison the environment of the four types of seal to be found there and the 43 species of birds based there, although they sometimes visit European areas.

The cape pigeon is one such bird. It was seen in the Netherlands not long ago. I am sure that it is a true pigeon, but my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe could comment on that. It is an interesting species. If it sees itself under threat or likely to be treated badly, it spits at those who present the threat. I wish that we had some cape pigeons in the House this evening.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** It sounds like the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Hardy:** If we had cape pigeons here, I would wish that the Prime Minister was here as well.

**Mr. Corbyn:** Does my hon. Friend accept that one of the problems of wildlife in the Antarctic when the first human beings arrived was that they had no fear of them? The penguins stood still while sailors walked up, one after another, and clubbed them to death in their thousands. The seals were treated in the same way, because they came across an enemy about which they had no notion.

**Mr. Hardy:** My hon. Friend makes a valid point. Many penguins today are not very suspicious, although, as he has explained, they have great cause to be. I remember taking some children to a zoological garden. It was many years ago, because I have been in the House for a long time. One boy asked me, "Sir, are penguins dangerous?" I said that they were not. I picked one up and the children handled it. They expected it to be oily and unpleasant, but it was quite attractive. That penguin should not have allowed any human to pick it up because we have treated that species barbarously. We have treated all the wildlife of our planet barbarously until relatively recently. The green movement that we have discerned in Britain relatively recently suggests that an increasing proportion of the population requires the higher standards that I hope are embodied in our amendment.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** My hon. Friend was referring to penguins in the Antarctic. I have an extract from *Time* magazine of 23 January which talks about the destruction of 1,000 Adele penguins through the construction of the French research base at Dumont-D'Urville. An airstrip is being built at Pointe Geologie. There is a picture of the earth movers and the penguins are standing there being destroyed. They obviously do not know what is confronting them. I wrote to the Minister with a number of questions about the destruction of the penguins at Pointe Geologie. I know that it is the responsibility not of the British Government, but of the French Government. However, it emphasises what my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth is saying.

**Mr. Hardy:** As my hon. Friend will be aware, from time to time we disagree with some of our French colleagues in the parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. I can think of a good reason, as can my hon. Friend, to pursue that aspect of French Antarctic policy at a relatively early stage, perhaps when we meet next in September. We could draw this matter to the attention of the French Government, especially since Mr. Mitterrand —rightly in this connection—holds up France as a model. Despite what my hon. Friend has said, I am sorry to say that the position of the French Government is a great deal more attractive and honourable than our own. Therefore, we should suggest to our French colleagues that their position would be improved by stopping the destruction of the Adele penguin.

I am worried about the seals. Although I said that there were four types of seal, the elephant seal is not strictly an Antarctic creature. The seals are vulnerable. Although their numbers may not have been reduced on the scale of the seals in the Mediterranean, where the numbers deteriorated fairly rapidly not many years ago and are now a matter of serious concern for European conservationists, a threat does exist, not merely because of disturbances to the environment, but because of the other problem in the Antarctic, which is the proper control of the resources of the marine heritage—the krill and the fish. If there is overfishing greedy eyes are certainly fixed on that marine resource—*[Interruption.]* It is no good hon. Members disputing that, because only a few years ago some experts demanded the annual harvest of thousands of tonnes of krill, which could not have been supported for more than a short period.

We are entitled to expect the Government to recognise that, as my hon. Friends have said, they are in a lead position in relation to the environment. We should not surrender that lead and watch Australia and France adopt entirely commendable positions while laying ourselves open to serious criticisms as a nation.

The amendments do not go anywhere near as far as some people might like. However, as was the case with the previous batch of amendments, I believe that they have merit and should command attention from this Administration, together with the acceptance that we must demonstrate that Britain will retain high standards, that we fully recognise the environmental inheritance that the Antarctic offers and that we will not, through inadequacies in our own legislation, provide a threat which future generations—and perhaps, in time, our own—will find grievously unacceptable and utterly inadequate.

**Mr. Julian Amery** (Brighton, Pavilion): I apologise for not having participated in much of the debate. I feel a good deal of sympathy with the views expressed by the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) and with the natural desire to keep the Antarctic in its virgin state for longer. I see that point. However, there are vast resources there that cannot easily be extracted. They are under the ice cap, but they could help millions of people, such as the millions of

*[Mr. Julian Amery]*

people in Africa and elsewhere, who are suffering from drought or hunger or war. We must strike a balance in this matter.

The whole object of the treaty is to make it possible to exploit the wealth that is in the Antarctic, although that it is difficult to do. My noble Friend Lord Shackleton—perhaps I should not call him my "Friend" because he is a Labour Peer, but I have worked with him for many years—Lord Buxton and others have left me in no doubt that extracting the wealth is an extremely difficult operation.

That wealth exists and we should not make it impossible to develop the resources of Antarctica in the interests of mankind as a whole, particularly when we consider what has happened in Ethiopia, Somalia or the Sudan. I intervene in this debate partly from filial piety. My father annexed great chunks of the Antarctic to the British empire. He did that because he thought that nothing could be done with it in those days, but he wanted to stake a claim in case an opportunity arose in time to develop the wealth in that part of the world.

10.15 pm

Less than 10 years ago, we had a conflict with Argentina over the Falklands. The Falklands are the nearest that I have ever been to the Antarctic. The Argentines and the Chileans also have claims on Antarctica, some of which overlap with ours. I have sometimes wondered, in the interests of Anglo-Latin American friendship in the south Atlantic, whether we might enlist the co-operation of Argentina, Chile and other countries in the gradual development of Antarctica and its resources as laid down in the treaty. The Falklands under British sovereignty could provide a base for doing just that, with their airfield and improved naval facilities. The Falklands are perhaps the nearest modern developed location to the Antarctic continent.

We should not forswear the possibility of co-operation with Latin American countries and others which have interests in the ultimate development of Antarctica, so long as that is well policed and organised under the Antarctic treaty. The resources of the Antarctic might be made available for the benefit of all mankind and perhaps specifically benefit this country and our citizens who participated in its development.

**Mr. Hardy:** If the right hon. Gentleman is taking the long view and saying that, in X number of centuries, we might need the reserves in Antarctica, perhaps I could agree in large measure with what he has said. However, our anxiety is that man's greed outstrips his common sense at the moment. Although the Exxon oil disaster off the Alaskan coast was some distance from civilisation, it was a great deal nearer the technical and physical resources necessary to contain the spillage. Even so, it had a dramatic impact on that part of our planet. If such an experience was repeated in the present state of man's capacity and knowledge in the Antarctic peninsula or in the Bellingshausen or Weddell seas, the damage might be colossal and we would not have sufficient resources close enough to such a disaster to respond to what would be a tragedy.

**Mr. Amery:** I do not suggest that we should wait centuries. It may be wise and possible to tackle the problem sooner. However, if we followed the hon. Gentleman's recipe, we would not exploit anything. The Californian, Latin American and South African goldfields would not have brought wealth to the local populations or to the world as a whole. We cannot ignore the need of people who are dying today in central Africa and sub-Saharan Africa simply to preserve a national or universal park for ever. As I understand it, the Antarctic treaty offers all the safeguards that are required for a reasonable and logical approach to the problem.

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): I abstained in the Division on the last amendment. I find myself somewhat out of tune with hon. Friends whose causes I normally support. I should like to explain to them and to the House why that is so. The convention is the best that we are likely to get—and heaven help us if we do not get it, because people could run amok.

I am greatly influenced by the good fortune of having been able to attend a conference on the Antarctic at Ditchley about a year ago. At that conference I listened not only to the Americans arguing strongly and with considerable information the case for such a convention, but also to the best of my recollection to the representations of the Germans and certainly—without doubt, because I checked my notes—to the representations of the Australians. It is a bit rich for Australian politicians now to say that they want to keep the Antarctic in pristine condition when we all know very well that the real influence was the victory in Tasmania of five Greens in a local election. That does not reflect great credit on Australian politics or on the Australian politicians of all hues who tried to appear as knights in shining armour.

I am concerned about certain problems. I have a strong recollection of the powerful argument advanced at Ditchley and Edinburgh by Dr. Steele, the distinguished Scottish-American director of the Woods Hole laboratory. He said that the problem of waste is very real. I agree with my hon. Friends that the shit of Gentos penguins is not so bad as human excrement or many of the things that will remain for years.

First, what will be done about waste? Secondly, I am somewhat put out—I put it no higher—to see my hon. Friends producing the Scott letter. I agree with them that there must be some answer, and when Sir Peter Scott writes such a letter there must be a fairly full reply. Equally, powerful colleagues of ours, of whom Eddie Shackleton is one, take the view that I and others put forward—and not, in many respects, the view of my hon. Friends. However, there are distinguished experts on both sides. I should like an answer to those questions.

**Mr. Corbyn:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) for setting out his views. I have an enormous respect for his work in exposing the Government's deviousness over the Falklands and on many other issues. I am sorry to say that I do not agree with him on this issue, but I have great regard for what he says. Essentially, his argument boils down to the fact that he and I agree on the need to preserve in its entirety the environment of the Antarctic. He believes that the convention which is on offer is the best way to protect that environment, because he thinks that it is achievable and can be done now. A few years ago, many of us might have agreed with that view, but things have moved on. We have seen the change of view by the Australian Government, who say that they now support the wilderness park idea that New Zealand promoted some time earlier.

The amendment proposes a licensing authority, which would be free from the commercial pressures, as far as that is possible, that we think are implicit in everything that the Government have so far put forward. My hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) said that amendments Nos. 17 and 19 were the important ones in the group—which they are. Amendment No. 17 provides for the setting up of a British Antarctic licensing commission. Amendment No. 19 goes through the details of that commission and the environmental impact surveys that it will be expected to undertake. As my hon. Friend pointed out, everything said on environmental impact surveys in the two pages of the amendment—it is one of the longest that I have seen—is taken from existing British Government legislation—the regulations contained in the Town and Country Planning Acts. Therefore, it is all eminently sensible and achievable.

We are saying that, before any exploitation, be it prospecting or what we believe will lead on to the exploitation of minerals in the Antarctic, an environmental impact assessment must be made. It must go into all the aspects involved, such as the type of activities proposed, information on the site, the size and scale of that activity and the data that will be necessary to identify the main effects, and then it must consider the possible effects of all the matters mentioned.

It is easy to say that what we are talking about is the search for minerals, but clearly many other matters arise from that. If there is mineral exploration in a particular ice-free or partially ice-free area of the Antarctic, inevitably that will also be the wintering ground for many birds and other wildlife. If there is any human habitation, that could drive the wildlife away—which, of itself, may upset the ecosystem.

For example, if shoals of fish are driven away, penguins may leave too, because there will be insufficient fish for them to eat. They may go somewhere else where there is insufficient food, so they, too, may start to decrease in numbers. That phenomenon is recognised in many other places.

There must be a serious examination of all the effects. We must not just examine the possibility of oil spillage from a ship going to the site, serious as that would be, but we must examine all the knock-on effects on the wildlife. It is for those reasons that we have put forward a detailed series of proposals. I would be disappointed if they were not accepted by the Government as a reasonable basis for the survey.

Equally important, we say that the members of the proposed licensing commission shall be people who do not have a commercial interest in what is going on in the Antarctic. We do not deny, and we never have, that we are prepared to support and recognise the use of the Antarctic as the basis for scientific research. Indeed, if it had not been used for such research, we would not know of the damage that we are already doing to the environment through the destruction of the ozone layer. We would not know much about the increase in carbon dioxide within the atmosphere, because we would not be able to take accurate samples of air that has been untouched for possibly 100,000 years. It is essential that it be pure research and that the information gained should be publicly and freely available.

As I said before, I am concerned about the fact that the Greenpeace survey of scientific sites in the Antarctic showed that considerable damage has already been done to the environment immediately around them, and that requires rectification. The Minister in Committee and again on the Floor of the House has promised to take up our concerns at the October meeting.

Another worry is what will be the cut-off point between scientific research, which will provide information which is freely available in the public domain, and mineral exploration which becomes a commercial benefit. I believe that the Bill crosses that Rubicon, which is why I and many others are so worried about it. The Bill paves the way for commercial exploration, the results of which would not be in the public domain but would be commercial secrets available to only those companies which had invested considerable sums of money in the search for that crucial information.

One cannot imagine that a company the size of Exxon, BP, Consolidated Gold Fields, Rio Tinto-Zinc or Lonrho—or any large mining exploration companies—would be prepared to invest the millions necessary to undertake the research in the Antarctic if they did not feel at the end of the day that they would get something out of it. That would be the purpose of going there. It might be a bit of a shock to Conservative Members, but none of the companies I have mentioned are charities. They are dedicated to making large sums of money out of the mining industry. They have no charitable intent. That is why the difference between publicly funded scientific research and privately financed exploration is so crucial. In that regard, the Bill is seriously defective.

10.30 pm

Together with amendments Nos. 17 and 19, I tabled other amendments, designed to strengthen the environmental protection agency that I envisage or the licensing commission that is envisaged by my hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, East. It is important that a number of criteria are laid down. It is important that such an organisation should report regularly on the effects of exploration an its environmental impact. That does not mean that those reports would be made at the end of the period of a licence—such a licence could run for several years—rather, that the effects of any exploration should be investigated and reported upon as it goes along.

We should be clear about who is in the Antarctic and what they are doing there. It is all very well for the Minister or for the Secretary of State to grant a licence to any one company to undertake exploration in the Antarctic. The company may or may not be reputable, but that remains to be seen. The company, however, may be the subject of a takeover and in the subsequent takeover battle the value of its prospecting licence could be brought to bear. The nature of the exploration could then change significantly, as could the character of the personnel. Amendment No. 47 asks that the numbers of personnel and their names be agreed with the Secretary of State.

Clause 10 deals with the penalties for people who infringe the conditions of the licence or damage the environment. If such damage is to be avoided and such persons are to be prevented from taking part in another exploration at a later date, there must be a register of those who initially go to the Antarctic. That is why amendment No. 47 asks that the Secretary agrees all the names of those who go to that region and that a register of them be kept.

*[Mr. Corbyn]*

If any of those people are found guilty of infringing the terms of the licence or of wilfully damaging the wildlife, flora or fauna, they could be prevented from going to the region again under another licence. That is an important consideration.

We also believe that the Secretary of State should report to the House all the licence applications that he has received and his decision on them. In that way those applications and the subsequent decisions would be in the public domain.

It is also important to specify the volume of minerals allowed to be extracted for sample purposes. As my hon. Friends have already said, scientific whaling is the grossest abuse of science. That whaling is commercial; it is a deliberate attempt to thwart the intentions of the International Whaling Commission that has finally banned such whaling. Whaling is continuing under the guise of science, and it is a cruel deception. I do not want to see something similar happen in the Antarctic.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** It is worth placing on record the efforts that have been made in this regard by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, as it shows that our attitude to the Bill and, in this respect, to the Government, is constructive. The Parliamentary Secretary has stood up to defend the interests of the world's whale population against the approach adopted by the Norwegians, the Icelanders and, in particular, the Japanese by their slaughter of the minke whale.

**Mr. Corbyn:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Whenever we pass conservation measures, such as those to stop the slaughter of whales, commerce finds a loophole. Exactly the same will happen if the ban on ivory sales is successful. In a short time, someone will say that it is necessary to slaughter some African elephants for scientific reasons, and that will rapidly become a basis for commerce.

The licence must state clearly what volume of minerals can be extracted under research conditions. Minerals that are extracted for sample purposes should not become the property of the commercial organisation that dug them out, but of the licence commission, so that there can be no commercial benefit in someone extracting excessive quantities, perhaps beyond the terms of the licence.

What I propose in amendment No. 50 may already be covered in the Bill or in regulations. I read the Bill carefully during the weekend and I did not see any such provision, so I tabled the amendment. It is obvious that, if the convention system is to work—some people believe that it can—and punishment is to be meted out to those who wilfully destroy the environment and go beyond the licence, they must be denied the opportunity to commit those crimes again.

Amendment No. 50 would not permit such people to apply for a licence under their own name. Amendment No. 47 proposes that the names of all such people should be submitted to the Secretary of State. There is, therefore, the possibility of strict control of what is happening to the environment.

Amendments Nos. 31 and 45 are similar. Non-governmental organisations must have a right of inspection. Without Greenpeace's work in the Antarctic and the North sea on nuclear dumping, for example, we would not know what is happening. It is under-resourced, but I pay tribute to its contribution to monitoring. It has shown that the damage that has already been done to the Antarctic environment would be a thousand times worse as a result of mineral exploration. It is therefore essential that non-governmental organisations should be able to visit sites.

My hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, East proposed a commission which is not commercially dominated. I would not have much confidence in an Antarctic environmental protection agency whose board members were representatives of all the major oil and mining companies in the world. They would quietly carve the Antarctic up between them. Such an agency has to include people with no commercial interest but with a deep scientific knowledge of the continent. Sir Peter Scott would make an excellent member of such a commission.

Non-governmental organisations must have the right to investigate and inquire into what is going on. Amendment No. 45 proposes:

"Before any licence is operated there shall be an opportunity for environmental protection groups to visit the site(s) and at any other time during the life of the licence.".

At present, if Greenpeace undertakes another expedition around the Antarctic to visit all the sites—I hope that it does—it does not have to be allowed to visit all of them or to go into all the detail necessary to write a report. It experienced some difficulty at some scientific sites that it visited during its last expedition in 1987-88.

Amendment No. 51, which is crucial too, refers to the number of inspectors who shall be appointed. Perhaps due to an oversight, the Minister did not reply to that point earlier; perhaps he will this time. Those of us who have been active in trade union matters for many years have experienced the factories inspectorate. It is not that we dislike it; it is just that we find it inadequate. There are never enough inspectors, and they do not come often enough. The employers often know when they are coming, in any case. We want a large number of independent inspectors who can visit not only the sites licensed by the national Governments on their territorial claims, but every other site throughout the continent. We want them to communicate what they find every six months. Their report will give an account of all activities in that time.

This may seem expensive and excessive, but the issue is so important that we need this degree and regularity of reporting. If we let commerce dominate the commission and the exploration that goes on, and let it own the information that it obtains, that will lead to ecological disaster. Unlike temperate climates, in which partial recovery from such disaster is possible, in the Antarctic there can be none.

In Antarctica one can see the petrified remains of a husky that Captain Robert Scott rather short-sightedly destroyed. Had he used dogs instead of ponies, he might have got to the south pole, probably before Amundsen, who relied entirely on dogs. Scott ended up towing his sledges himself. The dog is petrified in the ice for ever more because it was frozen suddenly. It is mummified, like an Egyptian mummy or like the bodies found in the northern deserts of Chile. So any serious spillage would not biologically degrade as it would in a more temperate clime —it would remain. Oil would freeze into the ice for ever more, just as any other pollutant would.

I hope that the Minister accepts that our amendments are designed to protect this fragile environment. We recognise the work done in the past by the British Antarctic survey, which I do not want to be involved in private enterprise. It should be entirely publicly funded and in the public domain. We applaud the work done by Greenpeace to draw to our attention the fragility of the Antarctic environment.

When Captain Cook first set eyes on the Antarctic, he realised what a special, fragile place it was. Tragically, he did not live long enough to be able to write enough about his discoveries, but all the signs from his letters and diaries are that he was appalled at what was done afterwards to the places that he discovered—in a European sense—in the name of commerce.

I hope that tonight we will decide to play our part in protecting the Antarctic and not to allow it to be divided up into national claims, and subdivided into commercial claims. I hope that we shall support the idea of a world environmental park, and eventually take the continent out of the hands of the treaty nations and make it part of a truly international park, owned for ever through the United Nations, and exploited never.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** It was appropriate that as my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) mentioned the "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner", the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) seized his cue and rose to make a speech. Conservative Members will know that the opening lines go:

"It is an ancient Mariner
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?'"

The right hon. Gentleman has a fine grey beard and a glittering eye. I am glad that he stopped us, because he has shown us that we were right to have said all along that the Bill is about exploitation—something that the Minister has been denying. The right hon. Gentleman made it clear that he thinks that we should extract the wealth of the Antarctic for the benefit of the world. That is not what we want to do. We do not accept that that is necessary. The Bill has no mechanisms that make it likely that the wealth that is exploited is used for the benefit of mankind. Multinational mining companies will go in there and make money for their shareholders.

10.45 pm

**Mr. Anderson:** My hon. Friend may have forgotten the debates in the other place, in which the Government spokesman let the cat out of the bag. He said that the objective of the Government was to get the largest possible share of the economic returns from the activities in the Antarctic.

**Mr. Banks:** It was always clear to us, but it is becoming manifestly clear to all, that whatever the Minister is saying, for whatever reason he is saying it, we are not being given the whole story. We cannot accept that this is only about exploring, not exploitation. The Bill talks about exploration, but that is only the thin end of a very obvious wedge. The Minister cannot expect us to accept his bland statements, which do not match what was said in another place, or by the right hon. Member for Pavilion. In his robust and honest way, the right hon. Gentleman stated what we know to be the philosophy behind the Bill. We are indebted to him.

The Bill has no mechanisms for making sure that if the mineral resources of the Antartic are properly explored —that is what we are moving towards with the Bill, which is merely the first step in the softly, softly approach to exploitation—mankind as a whole will benefit. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman is talking about the trickle effect, which the Prime Minister has mentioned—one allows the people at the top to make vast sums of money and, magically, it will trickle through to everyone. We know that that does not work.

Why should we exploit the resources of the Antarctic? As far as I can see, there is no shortage of the minerals that are in the Antarctic. They are in abundance everywhere, waiting to be exploited. Why do we need to move to virgin territory? The right hon. Gentleman said that minerals are difficult to get out, but mining technology is changing. Lessons have been learnt in Alaska by British Petroleum and other mining companies, so they have the expertise to get over many of the difficulties of extracting minerals from the Antarctic. Such expertise is increasing by the day. There is no economic reason for such exploitation, and it is not needed to benefit the world.

We know what would happen, and I suspect that the right hon. Gentleman knows it, too. If there is exploitation, there will be pollution. My hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth has already described in some detail the destruction of the wildlife in the area, with consequences that we are not competent to judge. We at least know from experience of events elsewhere that when human beings start exploiting, they pollute and destroy. There is no reason for us to believe that anything different will happen in the Antarctic, if there is the exploitation that the right hon. Member for Pavilion expects.

My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is not only not in his place now, but he is not with us on this Bill, which is a disappointment to Labour Members. As he said, we usually stand shoulder to shoulder on matters such as this. I still find it difficult to grasp his position on the Bill. I note that my hon. Friend comes timely upon his entrance. I can now say to him directly that I am disappointed that he is not with us. He said that the agreement is the best that we can get. He said, in effect, that there will be exploitation and that it is better that it should be regulated. That comes close to what the Minister is saying. Surely that is a counsel of despair—as we cannot stop it, let us regulate it. I think that we can stop it. We can take great heart from the position adopted by the Australian and French Governments, and by the Belgians. There is the possibility of establishing an international wilderness reserve because of what has been said in Australia and by President Mitterrand.

There has been rapid change since the Bill appeared in another place. There was a massive green vote in the Euro elections, and I do not believe that that was a vote for the Green party. Instead, it was a declaration by the electorate that the environment is at the top of the political agenda. The time is ripe for us to return to the drawing board. Let us reject the Bill and re-examine these matters.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Who, physically, is to keep out unwelcome intruders in the Antarctic?

**Mr. Banks:** That is something that can be developed. If an international wilderness reserve is declared in the Antarctic, under the supervision of the United Nations, for example, or a special environmental protection agency,

*[Mr. Banks]*

all the countries that have an interest in the Antarctic could fund the necessary policing to ensure that intruders are kept out and that the area is used for scientific research that is in the interests of mankind. We do not need exploitation by multinational mineral companies. Let us have scientific exploration in the name of true science, of real knowledge. We can learn from the past. Much that remains frozen in the permafrost would tell us a great deal about the early days of the planet. To destroy all that to extract base metals and oil, which exist in abundance elsewhere, would be destruction on the grand scale.

If there is a political will among the nations to preserve the Antarctic as an international wilderness reserve, the means can be found. That is what national or international politics are all about. I am surprised that my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow takes such a defeatist attitude. He is such a spirited attacker of the abuse that he sees in this country. It is strange that he is not prepared to defend the Antarctic in the robust way that he has tried to defend the rain forests of Brazil. I am surprised at my hon. Friend, but I am sure that we shall be able to talk him round.

The climate of opinion has changed since the Bill emerged in another place. The declaration at the G7 summit in Paris was the final piece of evidence that we needed. It was unique for such a group of countries to produce a statement in which the environment played such a major role. That is why we ask the Minister to examine the amendments and to meet our point.

If amendment No. 17 were accepted, it would establish a British Antarctic Licensing Commission——

**Mr. Corbyn:** It occurs to me that the Group of Seven's declaration was essentially one of setting enterprise loose on the remaining open spaces of the world so that it could destroy them. I accept, of course, that it states at the end that it is concerned about the environment. With the policies that most of the Seven are following, it should be concerned about it.

**Mr. Banks:** That is true, but at least the Seven have had to pay lip service to the environment. That is something that they have not done previously. It is for national Parliaments and public opinion to turn the lip service of G7 into political reality. World opinion on environmental matters is changing, and it is in that hopeful climate that we can move forward.

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): My hon. Friend makes an important point about the G7 statement. Although it acknowledges the need for environmental protection, it says that it should be scientifically well founded and economically well based, or words to that effect. Does my hon. Friend agree that the words "economically well based" could be dangerous? If it proves easier to exploit the resources in the Antarctic than in other land masses, the economic base becomes one of cost. There may be no economic base at all in protecting the environment; indeed, there may be an economic penalty. The G7 declaration could simply be dangerous lip service.

**Mr. Banks:** The matter becomes more complicated. We could be talking about the difference between short-term and long-term economic gain. There could be a great deal of long-term economic gain from leaving the resources unexploited because that would save all the horrendous problems of over-industrialisation and over-exploitation that are coming home to Europe and other parts of the world.

I am not so green as to believe that all are genuine in their sudden conversion. Once again it is a case of politicians, whether in Britain or elsewhere, understanding votes. They have recognised the sea change in world opinion that is pushing environmental matters to the top of the political agenda. It would be a very, very stupid politician—there are many of them around—who wilfully chose to ignore that public demand. I repeat that the climate is different from that which existed when the Bill first surfaced.

Amendment No. 19 is exceedingly long, but it tests the Government's sincerity. It proposes that an environmental impact statement be attached to any form of exploration in the Antarctic. The EEC has proposed that any form of environmental scheme should have an impact assessment attached to it. Even in this House, we have said that private Bills relating to dock work and the building of railways should have environmental impact asessments attached to them. That is in line with EEC proposals, and something which the Government will no doubt follow. It would be appropriate to apply that to the Antarctic.

I do not want to go into detail about the amendment. I hope that the Minister has read it. If he accepts it, that will show the House that what he has been saying is what lies behind the Bill, not what has been said in another place and by the right hon. Member for Pavilion. There is a dichotomy between what the Minister has said in Committee and today and what was said by the right hon. Member for Pavilion. I hope that the Minister will tell the House why his right hon. Friend is wrong. If he is not wrong, the Minister would be well advised to accept the amendment.

11 pm

**Mr. Eggar:** It may be for the convenience of the House if I first deal with the points made by Greenpeace. It states in its letter that the convention means that in the interim there will be no international supervision of prospecting activities. That is wrong while the moratorium survives in the period prior to the convention coming into force.

Greenpeace asks who will ensure that prospectors comply with the convention in the area of overlapping claims, which was mentioned by my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery). As I said in Committee, each of the three states will be able to ensure that their nationals, and anyone else in their claimed territories, comply with the convention—and each state will be able to inspect the other licensees' activities. Greenpeace asks also who will ensure that non-United Kingdom nationals will not be engaged in explorations in United-Kingdom claimed territory. Greenpeace has lost sight of the fact that the convention is specifically designed to prevent exploration until a decision is reached by consensus.

Greenpeace states that prospecting could be a hazardous undertaking. It is of course right—and that is precisely the reason why the convention has been negiotated and why we want to ratify it. Greenpeace makes the nonsensical assertion that United Kingdom implementing legislation will be only as good as the worst implementing legislation in another country. That is incorrect.

Finally, Greenpeace claims that we shall be unable to control events in our own Antarctic territory. To the contrary: the convention provides the means to do so in respect of mining.

**Mr. Corbyn:** Will the Minister give way?

**Mr. Eggar:** No. I am sorry, but I shall not give way. The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) made a brave speech, which showed that he has followed events in the Antarctic for a considerable number of years. Without wishing to offend any other right hon. or hon. Member, the hon. Member for Linlithgow knows most about Antarctica. He has studied the situation there and followed the negotiations on the convention over a long period of time.

The hon. Gentleman asked me, quite reasonably, to comment on Sir Peter Scott's letter to right hon. and hon. Members. He pointed out that the other son of that famous pair, his noble Friend Lord Shackleton made in another place a strong speech in support of the Bill. Sir Peter Scott's letter was similar to that which he wrote to *The Times*. A few days after it was published, Mr. Nigel Bonner, who at one time was deputy director of the British Antarctic survey, replied. It may assist the hon. Member for Linlithgow and other right hon. and hon. Members if I quote the critical paragraph of Mr. Bonner's letter:

"Without CRAMRA"—

the convention—

"and without a World Park, some governments may regard themselves as unrestricted in the search for minerals. Sir Peter and Australia may find that by refusing to support CRAMRA, they have deprived Antarctica of the very protection they wish it to receive."

That is the bald answer to Sir Peter Scott.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow asked also about rubbish disposal. I agree with him that there is a critical difference between rubbish disposal and sewage. I was trying to make the point that there is little to distinguish between the excrement of gentoo penguins and that of humans. Rubbish disposal relating to scientific discovery is a significant problem in Antarctica, and for that reason we and other parties to the Antarctic treaty have been working on an agreement to govern rubbish disposal there, which will be discussed at the meeting in Paris in October.

The hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn), whose questions I always try to answer, raised the issue of inspectors. The Government intend to appoint sufficient inspectors, and we shall have to examine the particular terms of the licence application to ensure that we have the right inspectors in each case. The Bill makes it clear that inspectors will be appointed on an ad hoc basis to deal with specific licence applications.

The hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) said, rightly, that Opposition amendment No. 19 goes to the core of the difference between the Opposition and the Government. There is no difference of principle between the Government and the Opposition: we both wish to ensure that the necessary environmental safeguards exist in Antarctica. The amendment, however, provides us with a number of difficulties.

First, the proposed procedures simply are not consistent with the convention. Secondly, and very critically, the adoption in British law of any such procedures at this stage would bind the hands of future negotiators in the commission who sought to elaborate on reasonable and acceptable environment impact assessment procedures. The hon. Gentleman, I think, recognises that those procedures are critical.

**Mr. Anderson:** Is the Minister saying, in terms, that any of the criteria set out in the amendment are unacceptable?

**Mr. Eggar:** What I am saying is that it is entirely wrong to seek to bind the negotiators in the way proposed in the amendment.

Other features of the amendment—which the hon. Gentleman himself has said is based on domestic legislation—are not likely to be appropriate: rules that apply in Swansea are not necessarily appropriate in Antarctica. Many elements in that amendment will, however, be covered. This brings us back to what was said in Committee should the need for flexibility—the need to consider specific approaches in detail rather than imposing an inflexible framework.

For those reasons, the Government are unable to accept the amendment, and others in the group whose intent is similar.

*Question put,* That the amendment be made:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 78, Noes 190.

**Division No. 301]** [11.07 pm

### AYES

Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clelland, David
Cryer, Bob
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Flannery, Martin
Fyfe, Maria
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Illsley, Eric
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclennan, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Mowlam, Marjorie
Nellist, Dave
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Richardson, Jo
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilson, Brian
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Elliot Morley and
Mr. Jeremy Corbyn.

### NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony

Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cartiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert

Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*

Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann

Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Maclean and
Mr John M. Taylor.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

## Clause 8

### APPOINTMENT OF INSPECTORS

*Amendment proposed:* No. 36, in page 4, line 36, at end add 'among whom shall be individuals nominated by either or both national or international organisations which have standing in the field of environmental protection.'.—*[Mr. Hardy.]*

*Question put,* That the amendment be made:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 66, Noes 189.

**Division No. 302]** **[11.19 pm**

AYES

Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clay, Bob
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cryer, Bob
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Flannery, Martin
Fyfe, Maria
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Haynes, Frank
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Illsley, Eric
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kennedy, Charles
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*

Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclennan, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Nellist, Dave
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Richardson, Jo
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilson, Brian
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Peter Hardy and
Mr. Elliot Morley.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy

Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair

Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle and
Mr. Tom Sackville.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

*Order for Third Reading read.*

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That the Bill be now read the Third time.—*[Mr. Eggar.]*

11.31 pm

**Mr. Anderson:** Although we are grateful to the Government for acceding to the request for a debate, we would not have had a debate in prime time if it had not been for the insistence of the Opposition. The Government had hoped that this important Bill would glide through on a sea of consensus. I hope that the Government now recognise that the debate has been a worthwhile exercise which has highlighted many of the key problems in this important area.

For me, the debate has been an education. It has revealed the deep reservoir of knowledge among my hon. Friends on this matter as on so many others. We accept that if there is to be prospecting there must be proper safeguards. As we have made clear throughout, our preferred option is the creation of a wilderness park, but because of the provisions in the Bill, that option is not available to the House.

We recognise that the climate of world and, indeed, domestic opinion has altered in respect of environmental questions. That is reflected particularly in the response of Australia. Hence, what seemed unattainable a few months ago, is now within reach. We were much moved by the evidence of people such as Sir Peter Scott who wrote to all hon. Members today.

The Government have not adjusted to the new circumstances. There is an Australian veto, and Australia is not alone. She has been joined by the French. I gave the Minister chapter and verse on that in Committee. Now we understand that the Belgians have joined the French in refusing to accede to the convention. As I have said, we would prefer a wilderness park and our policy would be to work with the Australians and others for an environmental protection convention.

In Committee we saw our role as basically to "green" the Bill as far as possible, to ensure greater control and supervision and stricter enforcement and to reduce as far as possible the discretion available to the Minister, who in his usual dulcet and soothing tones said, "Trust in me—it will all be all right on the night." We were not prepared to give the Minister the blank cheque that he sought.

One basic difference between the Opposition and the Government is that the Government have said throughout that we are discussing prospecting and that the Opposition must accept that this is a limited Bill. That is like the housemaid's argument that it is only a small baby. Our reaction was wholly sceptical. As we have said, if multinational companies are prepared to lay out substantial amounts of shareholders' funds on prospecting, it must be the first stage of a two or three-stage operation. As my hon. Friend for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) has said, they are not doing it as charities, but with the clear expectation that they will be able to move on to subsequent stages. There is what is known in our domestic planning context as a creeping commitment. It is rather a unique process for the Government to bring to the House tonight, but it is the first stage of what is clearly a multi-stage operation, with the second and third stages inevitably to follow. We therefore expressed scepticism about the Government's "softly, softly" approach.

I paraphrased earlier what Lord Glenarthur said on behalf of the Government in the other place. He said that, throughout the negotiations, the Government's motive had been to maximise the commercial advantages to British companies of the exploitation of the Antarctic. The Government's position was starkly revealed. All the Government's soothing arguments about concern for the environment must be seen in the context of that clear admission by their spokesman in the other place. We recognise, of course, that any loophole will be exploited and that the Government have taken a rather starry-eyed view. We are worried about the loopholes with respect to offshore companies and we have, therefore, proposed the use of inspectors, the establishment of a commission and the environmental impact survey.

We remain convinced that there has been a sea change in world opinion and, indeed, in domestic opinion in respect of green and environmental issues. However much the green tendency is derided by the Minister, who is supposedly responsible for green questions, the new combination of forces will probably make the Bill entirely non-operative because of the Australian veto. There is a new momentum generally on environmental issues and the Government should properly have come to the House, in the light of those changed and new circumstances, and revealed their contingency plans on the basis that, when the contracting parties meet in October, Australia will exercise its veto—followed by other countries such as France and Belgium. The Government cannot respond as though nothing has changed and they need not change with it. On basic issues, such as the future of the Antarctic, we believe that we have to choose and we, the Opposition, are confident that we have chosen correctly.

11.38 pm

**Mr. Peter Griffiths:** I presume that it is almost inevitable with such a Bill that much time is spent in criticising it for not covering some areas which it might have included or in suggesting that it is not as strong as it might have been in those areas that it does perceive to control. I suggest, however, that it is important to look at the Bill as it is written—the Bill that the House has been considering in Committee and in later stages. High-sounding phrases regarding the environment, whether in the Antarctic or anywhere else, will not bring any protection. What is necessary is for the Bill to provide for a sovereign Government to exercise their power over their corporate citizens in those areas where they have authority. That, in the long run, is the only way to achieve effective protection for the environment in any part of the world.

There is nothing in the Bill that will guarantee that the Antarctic will remain pure and unsullied for ever. It would be hypocritical for the House to pass a resolution that suggested that it was within our power and remit to insist upon that. Those of us who have looked at the Bill as the means of doing what is possible as early as possible have sought to ensure that the British Government will do their level best to protect the environment of those areas over which we have authority for the benefit of our people and that of all others.

The tenor of tonight's debate has meant that the Bill as a whole has not been considered, but those who re-read our debates will, given the context of the Bill, decide that it deserves the support of the House and general support, particularly of those who care about the environment.

11.40 pm

**Mr. Morley:** I know that it is late and that some people have asked why we have spent so much time discussing an issue that concerns a bunch of penguins. It is important, however, and it will not come before the house again for many years. It also concerns our global future, as the Antarctic represents the last unspoilt wilderness on this planet. It has a vital part to play in the complete ecology of our planet and it must continue to be protected in its entirety rather than be subjected to the risks that will come with being opened up for commercial exploitation.

Throughout the passage of the Bill the argument has been that it is just about prospecting and identifying what is there. If we pass the Bill and we agree to the convention on minerals, the door will be open for the commercial exploitation of the Antarctic—that is the inevitable outcome.

The basic argument is that the British Government should support the Bill and the convention as there are no alternative means of stopping the uncontrolled exploitation of Antarctica. There is a risk of such exploitation and it is important that it is controlled, but that does not mean that we should accept a convention on mineral exploitation. The same end could be achieved by arguing for a world wilderness park in the Antarctic under the control of the United Nations. That idea is not as far-fetched as some Conservative Members might think.

I remind the Minister that the United States, the Soviet Union, Belgium, South Africa, Japan, Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany do not currently recognise any sovereign claim to any part of the Antarctic. Thus, a group of powerful, influential nations do not recognise any claim to that continent. That is a good basis for moving towards the idea of a world wilderness park.

As long ago as 1948, the United States proposed a condominium of joint sovereignty. That idea was later supported by India and New Zealand, who argued that instead of a condominium of nations, the Antarctic should be subject to United Nations control. The idea of a world wilderness park under United Nations control is not new and it already has the basis of support.

Australia has argued that we should have a world wilderness park, and there is some dispute over whether France has taken the same line. I took the trouble to look up the French statements. On 20 June a joint statement was made by Mr. Hawke and President Mitterrand in which they called for the establishment of such a park. The French support the Australians, who have suggested the only viable means by which to defend the Antarctic's interests.

The convention on the exploitation of marine resources was welcome as it controlled, to some extent, the fisheries of the Antarctic. We can see how it works, however, and some of the weaknesses which I believe will emerge with any convention on mineral exploration. With regard to the convention on marine resources, for some species we need a ban on their being fished. One is the Antarctic cod, notothenia rossii, which has been fished to the verge of extinction. Although scientists agree on the need for a ban, under the convention, one was vetoed by Japan and Russia. That comes as no surprise in view of their record on whaling, but it demonstrates that, even when there is a convention, there are still problems with national needs and priorities.

A world park could be an exciting and viable venture. If the Government argued for it, and did not maintain their present stance, it would redound to their credit. In 1972, the idea of a world park was supported by the world conference of national parks. It was also supported by New Zealand in 1975. I realise that New Zealand has since changed its view, but I understand that there are signs that it could be persuaded to support Australia and France.

The north-south issue is involved here. An increasing number of the southern nations argue that they should have a share of Antarctica, which was carved up when many Third world countries were colonies of the richer northern countries. That is a further complication and another dimension when negotiating and policing such a treaty. It is also an argument for having a world park.

Organisations such as Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature—we have seen the letter from Sir Peter Scott—support the concept. In France recently, 200,000 people signed a petition which supports the concept of a world park. I suspect that a similar petition in Britain would easily command such support. We know that accidents are not preventable and of the terrible impact of the Exxon Valdez in Alaska.

An Argentine ship, the Bahia Paraiso, recently went aground in Antarctica. It caused immense damage. It spilt 250,000 gallons of diesel oil which was in drums and therefore less damaging than if it had been in a tanker which ruptured its tanks. Nevertheless, New Zealand conservationists who went to the scene of the accident said that the damage from the oil spill will be visible for 100 years because it takes oil up to 100 times longer to break down in Antarctica than in more temperate climates. Cath Wallace, New Zealand's convener of the Antarctica and southern oceans coalition, said that it was only a matter of time before a large oil spill seriously upset Antarctica's fragile ecology.

In Britain, forecasts of major damage were made by Mr. Bernard Moran of the British Antarctic survey in Cambridge. He said that, as traffic in the Antarctic increased, there was a growing risk of similar incidents. The more exploration and development of the Antarctic there is, the more likely it is that there will be accidents.

We have heard that the Group of Seven recently argued that action should be taken to reduce the greenhouse effect. Why, if the Government agree with the G7 nations that we should co-operate to reduce the greenhouse effect, do they also argue that we should open the Antarctic for exploration of its non-renewable resources? Would it not make more sense to argue that we should concentrate on renewable energy and other resources rather than open the Antarctic, which will be damaging and, even with the best will in the world, only a short-term solution to problems such as we have in Britain?

There is a statue in the Antarctic of Richard Byrd, one of America's greatest Antarctic explorers. On its base the legend reads:

> "I am hopeful that Antarctica in its symbolic robe of white will shine forth as a continent of peace as nations work together there in the cause of science."

That is what we want for the Antarctic. We do not want the thin end of the wedge to be introduced by allowing the multinational companies to exploit the place.

In the end, the convention will not protect the Antarctic. It will protect it only if one regards the exploitation of its minerals as inevitable. But it is not inevitable: there is another option. Things have changed

*[Mr. Morley]*

since the negotiations on the convention started. Large, influential countries are arguing for a world park. The convention may not be ratified, but we cannot argue that if there is no agreement there will be unrestricted exploration. I accept that that is a risk, but the treaty has been in place since 1959 and it has not been breached by a single nation exploring for minerals. So why cannot the moratorium of 1959 be maintained while we switch the discussion away from the convention towards the idea of a world park? That is a more imaginative and realistic prospect, and future generations would thank us for it, not for what we are doing tonight.

11.51 pm

**Mr. Hardy:** I want to endorse the approach adopted by my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley). Because of his speech, I need not address the House at great length.

These are the last kickings of colonialism. I am not suggesting that the northern nations should opt out. Speaking in the House during the Falklands war, I pointed out that South Georgia is as far from Buenos Aires as London is from Athens. This resource should not be left to the control or sovereignty of the southern states, either. As posterity will confirm, the only correct answer is to make the continent an international resource, recognising that the environment is far more important than any mineral resource.

The position adopted by Australia and France, which would readily be followed by a number of nations, is perfectly legitimate and logical. It is a matter of deep regret that the United Kingdom has once again forfeited its position as a world leader in environmental matters in favour of that of laggard.

As a result of this debate and the House's decision tonight, there will be a scramble to unlock the resources of the Antarctic and to maintain the profligate approach that humanity has adopted to the planet's resources. As my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe said, we could take a more conservationist line on energy and fuel. We could and should be far keener and more enthusiastic about recycling mineral resources; but so long as those resources can be easily found and profitably extracted, the often perfectly reasonable lust of commercial organisations to extract them as quickly and rapaciously as possible will prevail.

It must be the duty of politicians to inject other considerations into the decision-making process. I regret that the considerations that will be injected into the Antarctic debate will be unsatisfactory. In some ways I regret the Government's failure to accept the advice offered to them by my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe. They desperately need to win friends. As a party politician, I should rejoice when I see the Government forfeiting support and respect. If they carry on with the approach that the Bill embodies, they deserve to forfeit respect. They will be criticised for this measure not merely in our time but for many years to come.

11.54 pm

**Mr. Dalyell:** A marker should be put down on the urgent need for an international secretariat to look after the Antarctic, and to carry out the day-to-day work of the convention.

11.55 pm

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Most Labour Members remain opposed to the Bill. We tried, both in Committee and on Report, to improve it, but the Government have not been prepared to do anything to meet the fears that we expressed through our amendments.

The philosophy behind the Bill is clear. In effect, the Government have said that, because they cannot stop the move towards exploitation of mineral resources in the Antarctic, they should move to regulate such exploitation.

**Mr. Eggar** *indicated dissent.*

**Mr. Banks:** The Minister shakes his head, as he is entitled to do, but he knows that, although the Bill is supposed to be about exploration, we shall be talking about exploitation in the end. The Bill is an early warning and we are looking beyond it to what we know will shortly follow it.

If regulation is needed because nothing can be done to stop future exploitation, that attitude is, at best, a counsel of despair. We think that it is more. At worst, it is the green light for mineral exploitation, and for the multinationals to move into the Antarctic. The Government are saying that they are willing for the Antarctic to be exploited at some future date.

Despite being asked to do so several times, the Minister has not defined either exploration or exploitation, and there is no such definition in the Bill. As Labour Members have said, the Bill is the thin end of an obvious wedge. No company that has a commitment to its shareholders will become involved in exploration without the possibility of exploitation. We have made it clear that we are not against scientific investigation, as there is so much still to be learned. The Antarctic has to deliver up many secrets that will teach us both about the past and how to avoid some of the obvious mistakes that we might make in the future.

If the Bill were about scientific research and controlling and regulating such research, we would be far more enthusiastic about it. However, it is not. It is about multinational companies that will not be going in for scientific exploration for altruistic reasons. They will be doing it because they are looking for future exploitation. That is why we continue to oppose the Bill.

The Bill provides further proof that the greening of the Government is nothing more than a shallow sham. The Prime Minister recently made a speech in France, in which she said:

> "There are rights that you can't take back but there are people who talk about the right to social protection. This is not a right in itself. You don't have the right to a good environment, either."

That is a fine example for the green goddess to be setting the world. She went on to talk about what happens in an earthquake, a hurricane, a flood or a fire. Obviously we are talking not about natural calamities but of man-made calamities, which are the hidden part of the Bill. I believe that they will be revealed in due course.

The Government should follow the recently set examples of the Governments of Australia and France and the statements that are being made by the Belgian

Government about declaring the Antarctic an international wilderness reserve under the jurisdiction of the United Nations. My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) asked how we could enforce such a reserve. My hon. Friends and I say that that could best be done through the United Nations, and the setting up of a special environmental agency, which would be funded by the major industrial nations such as the United Kingdom. We are moving towards the time when the United Nations must set up an environmental protection force and an environmental disaster force. Ecological disaster worries us more now than at any other time.

The Antarctic is one of the last great unspoiled areas of the planet. It is significant in terms of the ecological balance of the world and it is still not fully understood. There are still many secrets for the Antarctic to yield. That is why we would support proper and genuine scientific research, but not exploration that is a thinly veiled disguise for future commercial exploitation. We must preserve and protect the Antarctic and prohibit all exploration leading to exploitation.

Everyone is so much more attuned to what is happening nowadays. We see all around us the consequences of past over-exploitation of the environment. Terms such as "the greenhouse effect" have crept into everyday language around the world. We are aware of polluted rivers and polluted seas. Rotting algae has been discovered in the Adriatic and it is putting tourists off swimming from the beaches. The authorities do not know how it got there, but they know that it is something to do with pollution. We must be aware of the great dangers that face the planet, which essentially have been created by our own activities. My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow talks about the destruction of the rain forests and rightly brings the issue to our attention day by day. There is acid rain. Cancers and brain damage are known to be caused by contact with lead. How much more evidence do we need in Britain that it is our past follies that have caused the litany of environmental disasters that now face us?

Yet we are contemplating moving in to one of the last great unspoiled areas of the world without knowing the consequences that will flow from such a decision. We oppose the Bill because we want to preserve the planet. The green party is to be found on the Opposition Benches. The only thing that is green about the Government are the empty Benches on their side of the House. It is—*[Interruption.]* I am glad that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) and some of his hon. Friends have woken up. I assumed that his somnambulant position was a form of political osmosis, which the hon. Gentleman had assumed in the hope that somehow information would seep through the green leather into his brain. I am glad that I have woken him up. I am saying that the Bill will add only to the great possibility of major environmental and ecological disasters. If that does not concern the hon. Member for Selly Oak, I do not know what does. That is why we oppose the Bill and that is why we shall vote against its Third Reading.

12.4 am

**Mr. Keith Speed** (Ashford): I was not moved to intervene in the consideration of the Bill, but having heard some of the speeches of Labour Members I shall make a short contribution. I cannot speak with great knowledge of the Antarctic—the furthest south I have been is to the Falklands—but I can speak with some knowledge of Longyearben in Spitsbergen, having been there just seven weeks ago. I suppose that in Labour Members' terms that place has been exploited. It is between 78 deg and 82 deg north.

About 1 million tonnes of coal is mined there annually, and not a pound of it at a profit. It is mined jointly, at a considerable loss, by the Norwegians who have one mine —the only one in Norway—with about 1,000 miners and the Soviet Union, which has the other mine with about 2,000 miners. They both make fantastic losses.

I saw both mines and their settlements and there was not the terrible pollution that we have heard about today. I was fortunate to fly around the thousands of square miles of Spitsbergen and the surrounding islands and saw the flora and fauna. There has been a mining operation there for many years, going right back to the Spitsbergen treaty of 1920. All the signatories have the right to carry out not only scientific investigation but the exploitation referred to today.

I yield to no one in saying that we do not wish to rape the Antarctic or any other area, but there must be a sense of balance. Those who have seen what is happening in Longyearben and Spitsbergen know that even after 40, 50 or 60 years of intensive exploitation through mining the consequences have not been those suggested in the hysterical speeches of Opposition Members. I do not believe that the Bill will cause anything like the catastrophe that they forecast.

Conservative Members are as concerned as anybody about the ecology of the south Atlantic and the Antarctic. I reject the Opposition's hysterical nonsense. They should go and see what has happened over 40 years of extensive mining, properly carried out on a basis of co-operation and partnership between Norway and the Soviet Union.

Opposition Members referred to the Bill's effect on wildlife. When we went to bed at night in the old miners' huts, we were warned to lock the doors because of the polar bears. That was good because it showed that the wildlife had not been affected by the 3,000 human beings working there. We do not do the ecology of the south Atlantic or the Antarctic any good by getting carried away on party-political green points, which in many cases are bogus. I hope that the House will support the Bill.

12.7 am

**Mr. Corbyn:** The hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed) was talking about the wrong pole. It is interesting that he went there not in winter but in summer, and he examined the flora and fauna from the windows of an aeroplane. I am sure that he has good sight and well understood everything going on beneath him.

We are about to pass a Bill—there is a large payroll vote hanging about—that admits that we cannot control multinational capital and its voracious desire to destroy the environment of the Antarctic through mining and exploitation. The heart of the Bill is, quite simply, the contention that, unless we sign the treaty by November, mineral exploitation will begin, with no restrictions or control. That is all the more reason to insist that the treaty meeting in November takes an enormous step forward instead of ratifying the convention and rubbishing the Australians.

*[Mr. Corbyn]*

The history of the Antarctic is of great interest. There has been ruthless exploitation of seals, whales, fish, penguins and many other creatures during the past 200 years. Other steps away from ruthless exploitation would be through the Antarctic treaty of 1959, ratified in 1961, which declared it a zone of peace, through the United Nations General Assembly motion of 1981 and through successive statements by large numbers of international bodies supporting the concept of a world park.

Is any part of the world to be fair game, at any time, for exploitation—regardless of the scientific information that it could otherwise yield or the necessity for that information—or shall we instead say, "No, we will not destroy our fragile environment. We will not destroy a continent. We shall not allow the multinationals to do so. Rather, the time has come to consider the sustainable rate at which the world's resources can be sensibly exploited."

The history of the past few hundred years shows, as my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) remarked earlier, that thousands of species have been wiped out. Some have been saved by international action, including certain species of whales—perhaps temporarily, perhaps permanently. However, smaller species of whales, such as the minke, are being destroyed. The lesson we should learn from that is not to rush in and exploit an environment without knowing or understanding the consequences.

My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is an articulate and passionate defender of the world's rain forests. To destroy them is to destroy a major source of oxygen and a major contributor to the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Research into rain forests has also revealed species of plant and animal life of which nothing was known previously, and herbs with medicinal effects that we cannot even begin to think about. Will the same happen in the Antarctic? I do not pretend that plant life will be found there, but it is a fragile place that can be seriously harmed by exploration.

In Committee, the Minister always drew a distinction, which I understand, between exploration and exploitation. However, as I said earlier, there has been a move from scientific research to commercial exploration. I do not believe that any of the companies involved in the Antarctic have any intention other than to return there in the future, armed with a licence and the legislation now before the House, which will allow them to extract the minerals they want. The damage done will be incalculable.

We argued the case against the Bill very strongly on Second Reading, in Committee, and on Report. I hope that the Bill will be defeated tonight, but I observe the payroll vote hanging around and growing very impatient. If the Bill is passed, the scene moves to the treaty meeting in November. The Australian and French Governments now say that they support the environmental park, and the Belgians are apparently about to express the same view. I understand that other Governments are likely to move in the same direction.

Will the Minister return from the November meeting and tell the House, "We couldn't put over our view, so we support the world park now"? Or will the Government heap a barrage of abuse on the Australians—and anyone else who takes the same stance—because they stand up against the multinational mining interests? My hope is that the Minister will instead propose a Bill to protect the Antarctic as an environmental park, to be used only for genuine scientific experiments and not those leading to exploitation—and will promise that Antarctica's sovereignty will be re-examined.

Some countries claim title to parts of the Antarctic, while others claim title to parts already claimed. And there are no claims at all to other parts. Is there not a classic case for arguing that Antarctica should be handed over to the United Nations so that it will become the property of the entire planet—rather than Britain trying to hand over to multinationals something that is not ours in the first place?

Britain has an important role to play in preserving and protecting the environment, and it should not pass legislation that will, bit by bit, stage by stage, lead to a great deal of environmental destruction. If we are serious about protecting our planet, we should refuse to allow the Bill to pass tonight.

12.14 am

**Mr. Home Robertson:** It is a sign of the times that the House is as well attended as it is for Third Reading of this important Bill——

**Mr. David Lightbown (Lords Commissioner to the Treasury):** Where have you been?

**Mr. Home Robertson:** I have been in my place listening carefully to the debate on this important piece of legislation since it began. But I do not wish to detain the House for more than a couple of minutes.

The Minister assured the House that the purpose of the Bill is simply to control scientific exploration of the "wilderness continent" of Antarctica. I am afraid that he has been let down on several occasions by two of his Back-Bench colleagues—first the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) and then the hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed)—who have acknowledged the intention in a number of people's minds that such exploration should move towards commercial exploitation of the continent. Hon. Members on both sides of the House recognise that that could cause terrible long-term damage to an area that must be protected.

I am particularly concerned because I am acutely aware that one of my constituency's most famous sons—John Muir, who left the little town of Dunbar 100 years ago to settle in the United States of America—founded the national park movement in North America. He realised, a century ago, the vital importance of protecting the wilderness areas of that continent. How alarmed he would be now at the suggestion that Antarctica—the last continental wilderness—may be under threat.

I only hope that this and other Governments will acknowledge the importance of the area—even at this late stage—and will take steps to protect it not only against unnecessary and avoidable exploration, but against exploitation, too.

12.16 am

**Mr. Eggar:** The House is united on the need to protect the environment in Antarctica—the debate has been about how best to achieve that aim. The Government firmly believe that the antarctic minerals convention—with the Bill, which is based on that convention—is the best means of protecting the Antarctic environment. It is the best means because it is the only practical means and because it ensures, by international agreement, a level of safeguards and controls unparalleled in any legislation on similar activity anywhere else in the world.

On Second Reading and in Committee, I explained that the Bill is the opposite of the miners' charter that some people—particularly Back Benchers—have portrayed it to be. The Bill bans any activities in the pursuit of mineral resources in the Antarctic which might cause more damage than scientific research—and scientific research is already specifically permitted under the Antarctic treaty system. Furthermore, the whole House—and, indeed, the whole country—recognise that it is invaluable to the international community.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), in a brief intervention, raised the question of the appointment of a secretariat. As he knows, we fully appreciate the need for an Antarctic treaty secretariat. We believe that it could do much to assist in the Antarctic generally, and we hope that progress will be made on that critical issue at the Paris meeting in October.

The Bill is the vehicle for Britain's ratification of the convention. We consider it vital that we play our part to bring that convention into force, not just because we believe that it is a remarkable international achievement—as, indeed, it is—and not just because we think that it offers the best chance of preventing possible disastrous exploitation of Antarctic mineral resources, but because unless it is implemented in a timely manner the voluntary moratorium on Antarctic minerals activity will definitely be put at risk. The hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) recognised that.

A fragile consensus—a consensus with no legally binding force—is all that currently inhibits mineral activity in the Antarctic. That consensus is conditional. If it ever became clear that the convention was unlikely to come into force, it would be only a matter of time before one of the parties decided that the conditions on which it had agreed to the moratorium no longer applied and that the moratorium was no longer valid. We already know that at least one country had engaged in prospecting activity under the guise of scientific research. We simply cannot run that risk.

Without the Bill and the convention, there is a real risk of a mining free-for-all, of heightened tension and possibly conflict, and of the collapse of the Antarctic treaty system which has served so well to keep Antarctica peaceful and stable for more than 30 years.

**Mr. Morley** *rose*——

**Mr. Eggar:** It has been implied that to suggest that such risks existed is merely scaremongering, but that is not the view of the other Antarctic parties. However slight the risks may appear to Opposition Members, the Government are not prepared consciously and deliberately to incur those risks.

The Bill gives the Secretary of State a certain amount of flexibility and discretion in some areas. The Opposition argue that allowing the Secretary of State such discretion would make him too vulnerable to commercial pressures. I may say that I have more confidence in the impartiality of our Secretary of State than the Opposition, by implication, have in any future Labour incumbent, should there ever be one. That flexibility and discretion are essential for the Secretary of State to respond to different situations, new technology, new environmental concerns, changing perceptions and new rules and regulations which the commission established under the convention will inevitably devise.

It is not a question of "trust me", as the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) put it. It is essential that further rules applicable to mineral activity be agreed internationally. That is the purpose of the commission. We must be able to ensure that we in the United Kingdom can comply with the commission's new rules.

In Committee there was an attempt to insist on environmental impact assessment procedures drawn from local government legislation, but laws which are appropriate for Aldershot may not necessarily be appropriate for the Antarctic. The commission will have to decide standards and procedures within the strict requirements of the convention. I can assure the House that once the commission has been established, however, the Government will press for suitably tough environmental impact assessment procedures to apply to all prospecting activity. The Secretary of State will then come to the House with regulations to put those procedures into United Kingdom law.

The subject of inspection was discussed at length. I can give the House an assurance that the Government entirely accept the need for rigorous, independent and efficient inspection procedures.

The hon. Member for Swansea, East also stressed the importance of making publicly available all information resulting from prospecting activity. I am happy to tell the House that all information about prospecting activity which would be of environmental significance and without commercial value will be put in the public domain. We shall bring forward regulations to that effect.

I can also assure the House that we shall work within the commission for measures to avoid the duplication of prospecting activity, thus cutting the risk of further impact on the environment. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), as usual, is making sedentary interventions. As he has not been following the procedures in Committee, he is not aware that the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) made a specific request and I am commenting on it so as to assure him that we have paid attention to the point that he raised.

The Government care passionately about what happens to the ecology and environment of the Antarctic. At the next Paris meeting of the Antarctic treaty consultative parties in October, we shall be pressing for a range of new protection measures for the Antarctic, such as better safeguards to prevent marine accidents and tighter rules on waste disposal. We want to build up a network of regulations to ensure the safety of the Antarctic. The convention is one element of that network. The other proposals that I have mentioned can operate in parallel, but they cannot be a substitute for the convention—and for the convention to become effective, the Bill must be passed.

*Question put*, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 171, Noes 65.

**Division No. 303]** **[12.25 am**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony

Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Sir Hal
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory.

## NOES

Anderson, Donald
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Foster, Derek
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Hardy, Peter
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morley, Elliott
Mowlam, Marjorie
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Richardson, Jo
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ray Powell and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Bill read the Third time, and passed.*

# Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland)

12.36 am

**The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. Ian Stewart):** I beg to move,

That the draft Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, which was laid before this House on 15th June, be approved.

The purpose of the order is to reform the law relating to the investigation and detection of crime, and to revise the law on evidence. In both structure and content, it is closely in line with the provisions already enacted and being successfully operated in England and Wales through the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984—or PACE as it is known—which was largely based on recommendations in the report from the Royal Commission on criminal procedure and the criminal law revision committee's 11th report.

In view of the broad affinity of the general criminal law in the two jurisdictions, those recommendations were also valid for Northern Ireland. We are therefore now introducing measures similar to those already adopted in England and Wales.

The detail of the order was covered in the explanatory document published together with the draft order last July, and a period of consultation followed. Therefore, I shall describe the content of the order only in general terms and simply highlight some of its more important provisions and draw attention to changes that have been made since the proposal was first published.

The powers currently available for stop and search are fragmented and inappropriate to meet the demands of modern policing. Accordingly, article 3 introduces new powers which will allow the police to stop and search persons and vehicles on reasonable suspicion for stolen goods, offensive weapons, and other dangerous articles. Those powers are accompanied by a range of safeguards to ensure that they are used fairly and responsibly, and with due regard to the rights of individuals who come into contact with the police.

Part III of the order deals with powers and procedures under which the police may enter and search premises and seize and retain property. The basic procedure is set out in article 10 under which the police may apply to a justice of the peace for a warrant to search for material which is relevant evidence of an offence. However, the police will not be able to use that procedure for certain categories of material held in confidence, which are to be given special protection. In those circumstances, the police must apply to a county court judge.

Those procedures are fully in line with those that apply under PACE, except that for Northern Ireland there is an additional ground on which the police may base an application for a search warrant rather than a production order and that is to protect, for example, sources of sensitive information in cases of serious fraud. Of course, that does not mean that the police will always obtain a warrant, because the decision whether one is granted will remain entirely a matter for the courts.

Part IV of the order again follows PACE by restructuring and clarifying the law on arrest. The most important change is that the more serious common law offences such as kidnapping, false imprisonment and conspiracy to defraud will now become arrestable offences as they are already in England and Wales.

Having outlined the new police powers that the order will introduce, I should now like to describe the arrangements set out in parts V and VI of the order which will regulate the detention and safeguard the rights of suspects in custody. The basis of the new system for the detention of suspects has three important elements. First, a number of police stations which can provide adequate interview and cellular accommodation for suspects must be designated by the chief constable. Secondly, at each designated station a custody officer must be appointed who will have independent responsibility for the welfare of suspects and the protection of their rights. Thirdly, the police will be required to take any suspect to one of the designated stations if he is likely to be detained in their custody for longer than six hours. This means that the suspect will come under the immediate protection of the custody officer and will have an opportunity to exercise the rights available to persons detained by the police.

The system itself operates on the necessity principle. In other words, the need for a suspect's detention must be independently reviewed at regular intervals by a senior police officer who at each stage must be satisfied that the grounds for detention continue to apply. In serious cases and where the suspect is detained without charge, he may be detained for 36 hours only on the authorisation of the police. If further detention is necessary, it must be authorised by a magistrates court at which the suspect will be entitled to legal representation. No one may be held in police custody on any authorisation for longer than 96 hours.

By placing a considerable responsibility on the police and on the courts to ensure that no one is detained for longer than is absolutely necessary, the new arrangements will provide a much more effective means of regulating the detention of suspects and of securing their rights. Part VI of the order deals with the questioning and treatment of persons in custody and gives a suspect rights to have someone informed of his arrest and to consult a solicitor privately. Any delay with regard to these matters must be authorised by a senior police officer, and even then for a period not exceeding 36 hours and only in cases involving a serious arrestable offence.

Article 60 provides for the tape recording of interviews with suspects. Trials will soon be carried out in Northern Ireland, and when they have been evaluated, the arrangements will be brought into operation as soon as practicable. Articles 62 and 63 incorporate the existing provisions from the Criminal Justice Act 1988 under which the police in Northern Ireland can take body samples. The main difference between these provisions and those which apply in England and Wales is that for Northern Ireland a swab taken from a suspect's mouth has been defined as a non-intimate sample and, accordingly, may be taken without consent. These powers have been available to the police for almost a year and the courts in Northern Ireland have found DNA evidence of value in cases already brought to trial.

Part VIII of the order provides for the issue of codes of practice, drafts of which I hope to publish shortly. These codes will complement the order by providing detailed rules and guidance to the police on the exercise of their powers, and will supplement the statutory safeguards both to the public and to suspects in custody.

*[Mr. Ian Stewart]*

Parts VIII and IX of the order deal with evidence. This is an extremely technical area of the law, but the overall purpose is simple. It is to clarify the nature of what may be admitted as evidence in court and to ensure the fairness of proceedings. The courts will be required to exclude any confession obtained by oppression or under circumstances that would adversely affect its reliability. It may also exclude evidence that would adversely affect the fairness of proceedings.

Article 81, relating to evidence through live television links, has been amended to cover initially only child witnesses and those in fear within Northern Ireland, but we have included powers to allow for extension in due course of live television evidence to such witnesses from Great Britain and outside the United Kingdom.

In part X, article 82 places a responsibility on the police authority, in consultation with the chief constable, to make appropriate arrangements for obtaining the views of the community on policing. This is particularly important in Northern Ireland, where it is vital to promote a wider understanding of the role of the police and to assist the police in appreciating the needs of the community. In order to enable their efforts to succeed, I hope that all responsible public representatives in Northern Ireland will give their support to this process.

Finally, I should point out that article 86 was added following publication of the proposal in order to enable a system of ordinary postal service of summons to be introduced for cases before magistrates courts in Northern Ireland, as already happens in England and Wales.

This wide-ranging order represents a considerable step forward in our efforts to tackle serious crime. Members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary do a most impressive job in difficult conditions, for which they deserve our respect and gratitude. These new powers will enable them to enforce the law more effectively, to bring offenders to justice and to protect the community that they serve. But with new powers comes added responsibility, and it will be important for the police to use their new powers properly and only as and when necessary. The most important factor in effective policing is the relationship between the police and the community. If the public can be assured that the police will act responsibly and impartially in the exercise of their powers, that will enhance the ability of the police to protect the whole community, to understand its needs and to uphold the rule of law.

I believe that the order strikes a fair and proper balance between police powers and the rights of the individual, and I commend it to the House.

12.45 am

**Mr. Kevin McNamara** (Kingston upon Hull, North): I apologise to the Minister and to the House for not being in the Chamber for the first minute of the Minister's dissertation.

The order has been largely inspired by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, but there are significant differences between the order and the Act, both in the content and in the manner in which the order has been introduced. Whatever one thinks of the merits of the 1984 Act, it was preceded by a long investigation, by a royal commission, and it responded to a clear need. In Northern Ireland there has been some concern that the order has not been shown to be necessary, and from what the Minister has said tonight, that appears to be the case.

The case for new legislation has not been adequately made. It is merely assumed that because similar legislation has been adopted in Great Britain it must also be necessary in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland statutory provisions should take into account local conditions, and not simply be copies of legislation which may be inappropriate or unnecessary in the particular context of Northern Ireland. That principle is implicit both in the specific institutional arrangements for the government of Northern Ireland and in the legislative procedures through which Northern Ireland legislation is adopted.

When one compares the situation in Northern Ireland with that on the mainland, two major differences are immediately apparent. On the one hand, Northern Ireland has not experienced the substantial increase in crime over which the Conservative Government have presided elsewhere, and neither has the problem of the declining effectiveness of the police force become apparent. In the statistics published in the RUC Chief Constable's reports, the figures for indictable offences reported since 1981 do not show a strong thrusting upward trend, but fluctuations around a weak upward trend. By contrast, a strong upward trend is apparent in the detection rate, and that must be welcomed.

The Government have argued in the past that one cannot take a statistical approach to the problem. That may be so, but it is equally unwise to assume that the strengthening of police powers automatically leads to an improvement in crime statistics. The success of a police force depends, among other factors, on the degree of public confidence in it. Given the political situation in Northern Ireland, the Royal Ulster Constabulary enjoys remarkable success in dealing with non-paramilitary crime. We should acknowledge and understand that and be careful not misguidedly to make the job of the police more difficult by giving them excessive powers which might reduce public confidence. I believe that greater effort is needed to justify the Government's legislation.

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): If I have followed the hon. Gentleman's line of thought correctly, he seems to be under the impression that the Police and Criminal Evidence Act in the United Kingdom is somehow boosting the police powers and restricting the powers of the individual citizen accused. In practice, that is the very opposite of what is happening in Britain, where the Act is proving to be a substantial protection for the individual person accused. In those circumstances, I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome the new measure for Northern Ireland.

**Mr. McNamara:** The hon. and learned Gentleman did not listen to what I said. I said that the Government had not made out the case for the order in Northern Ireland because the crime figures and the conviction success of the RUC, particularly on non-paramilitary crime, did not merit the powers given in other parts of the United Kingdom. The RUC is far more successful than other United Kingdom police forces. In any society one must be jealous of extending the powers of the police unless the case to do so is adequately made.

Many people in Northern Ireland will conclude that the Government made up their mind to pursue this course whether or not there was evidence to warrant it. Those of us who took part in the consultation phase will certainly have our suspicions as the order before us now is virtually identical to the draft presented more than a year ago. I commend the RUC and the police authority for setting out to establish the type of consultative system for community policy that was suggested by the Labour party. That system goes significantly further than the minimalist position set out in article 82 of the order.

In the recently published review of the Anglo-Irish Agreement there is a commitment in paragraph 9 to look at the harmonisation of criminal law in the two parts of Ireland. Perhaps the Minister will tell the House to what extent the order has been framed with that objective in mind.

We are concerned about the order and we shall look carefully at the way in which it is operated. We are particularly concerned about the differences between the order and the corresponding Act for England and Wales. Those differences are to be found, inter alia, in the procedures for DNA profiling, in the use of television links for witnesses and in access to special procedure material. The order perpetuates a substantial difference between Northern Ireland and Great Britain in respect of DNA profiling, which was introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 1988. The provisions for obtaining DNA samples in articles 53, 63 and 64 represent a somewhat disturbing departure from practice under PACE. Although we welcome technological developments in the fight against crime, confidence in the criminal justice system requires that such new technology should, initially, be viewed critically in order to enjoy eventual public credibility.

We are therefore concerned that mouth samples should be defined as non-intimate and therefore obtainable without consent. Several questions arise from this. There are serious questions about what constitutes an effective and useful mouth sample. If this is simply a question of taking a swab from between the lip and lower gum, as the former Minister of State suggested in the House in 1988, it is clear that the scientific community is divided over the validity of the claim that such a useful sample can be taken. If a scientific controversy exists, it would be over-optimistic to expect the general public to endorse the use of such methods.

In the continuing correspondence that I have had with the Secretary of State, he has made several claims that the Northern Ireland forensic science laboratory has been able to provide DNA profiles from mouth swabs. If that is the case, I hope that we shall see the early publication of those findings in a reputable scientific journal. The danger is that, without peer examination, DNA testing could fall into disrepute, depriving the RUC of a valuable instrument of detection.

The alternative scientific opinion is that, for a mouth sample to provide sufficient material for DNA profiling, it must take the form of scraping the inside of the mouth with a blunt instrument and not, as has been suggested by the former Minister of State, merely by a swab between the lip and the gum. Such a procedure would be extremely difficult to carry out in the absence of consent. Again the methods could fall into public disrepute. At the same time, police officers could find themselves at risk physically and at risk of being the objects of legal action for compensation as a result of injuries that would almost inevitably result from forcibly taking a swab by such means. I know that the standing advisory commission on human rights expressed similar anxieties about this problem in its 14th report.

A further element of worry concerns the destruction of samples and records of those who are not convicted. Article 64 compels the destruction of samples and fingerprints after the person to whom they relate has been cleared or has had proceedings against him dropped. That is unnecessary with DNA samples, as the testing process effectively destroys the samples as a matter of course, but this provision is seriously weakened by the fact that the information gained by such methods does not have to be destroyed. Information on people who have not been convicted in any court may be held on file as though they were convicted criminals. Such a procedure is unjust, and the standing advisory commission recommends that a statutory duty to destroy such records should be included in the order. We supported that view and regret that it contains no such provision.

When this matter was discussed in the other place, the Minister said, when questioned:

> "I want to give . . . an assurance that our practice will be to destroy both samples and DNA profiles . . . We should prefer to keep the legislative provisions in line with those applicable to the rest of the United Kingdom"—

but not, of course, in the case of intimate mouth swabs—

> "and to achieve the objective by administrative means." —[*Official Report, House of Lords,* 22 July 1989; Vol. 499, c. 1659-60.]

What administrative means have been taken to ensure that such profiles have been destroyed when a person has not been convicted in any court? What regulations apply to the keeping of profiles while awaiting an action in court? Will the regulations appear in the code which is shortly to be published?

Another worrying difference between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom in the order is the use of live television links for witnesses. We recognise that there are circumstances in which the use of such facilities is desirable, particularly for children under the age of 14 —there have been some horrendous cases recently in which it has been necessary to protect the child from having to relive recent experiences under the eyes of the perpetrators of foul crimes—but we are deeply suspicious of the other provisions in the order. The inclusion of another ground for giving evidence by television is designed to allow witnesses, who would otherwise not do so because of fear, to present their testimony in court. I believe that that is a dangerous extension of the use of television. It seems blatantly obvious that Northern Ireland is being used as a testing ground for this innovation. Whatever the merits of such a development, if such exist, the use of Northern Ireland for legal experimentation of this kind is offensive to many people in the Province.

I do not believe that this extension of televising witnesses is a positive innovation. So long as the adversarial system of justice prevails, witnesses have to be subject to effective examination and cross-examination. Witness demeanour under questioning has long been recognised as a vital part of the evidence, as many judicial summings-up have made clear. A television performance cannot provide the authenticity of the court room—no studio link can equal the ordeal of the witness box.

There is also a serious problem of logic in the Government's case. If the witness is intimidated by spectators or by the defendant, the presiding judge has the

*[Mr. McNamara]*

right to clear the court. Overtly threatening behaviour in court is also likely to constitute a criminal offence in its own right, as well as being contempt of court. It is accepted by all, I think, that potential witnesses have been intimidated in the past, especially by paramilitary organisations. The problem, however, is one of guaranteeing the security of the witness before and after the trial. It is difficult to see how the use of television can overcome this problem.

It is also to be noted that article 81 differs from the article in the original proposal in so far as it gives a power to the Secretary of State to enable this latter category of witness to make use of television links. It is not clear whether the article is designed to allow the Secretary of State to intervene in individual cases and in individual trials, as he did on the right to silence in the Winchester case, or whether it is a general rule-making power. In either case, it is unacceptable. If such matters are to be introduced, they should be left to be decided by the courts.

The power being given to the Secretary of State is astounding. It seems—unless the Minister corrects this when he winds up—that the Secretary of State

> "may by order *(a)* direct that this Article shall apply—(i) to a witness falling within head (i) or (ii) of paragraph 1*(b)* who is in Great Britain or (ii) to any witness who is outside the United Kingdom".

That gives enormous scope. Does it mean outside the whole area in which the Queen's writ runs? What sort of protection will there be, for example for a defendent and defendant's counsel, to enable them to know the nature of the proceedings by which a witness is being examined by television? How can we be certain that in some far distant land, a witness will not be rehearsed by someone, out of the range of camera, in the sort of answers to be given to the questions being put to him or her? This is a serious and dangerous extension. I am surprised that members of the legal profession have not expressed more concern about it, but the House at least should examine it carefully.

In other matters the police can show that serving notice of their intention to seek a production order would seriously prejudice an investigation. In England, they have the alternative of applying to a court for a search warrant. In England and Wales, the search warrant applies only to the investigation in hand, but in Northern Ireland, there is another dangerous extension. We are being asked to extend the scope of this power so that it covers other investigations. As that would potentially cover investigations that have not even commenced, it seems an all-embracing power, better suited to a repressive than to a reforming Government.

We have still not had a convincing response from the Government about why this great extension of the police power of discovery of documents should be necessary in Northern Ireland, but not in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Finally, the codes of practice promised by the draft order must be dealt with. It is obvious that the key to the implementation of the order lies in the codes of practice. So I am disappointed that, apart from the one dealing with the taking of samples, they have not yet been published in so far as they are to apply to Northern Ireland. Given that the order is not a simple copy of the 1984 Act, one cannot assume that the respective codes of practice will be the same.

The codes of practice, whatever their as yet unknown contents, are somewhat undermined by the reliance on the RUC as their sole enforcer, since violations will be disciplinary matters dealt with by the chief constable, or by those acting for him. Although I do not doubt the determination of the RUC to police itself effectively, enforcement of the codes must not only be rigorous, but must be seen to be so.

The damage done to confidence in the RUC by the Stalker affair remains to remind us strongly and harshly of this principle. Given the status of the RUC, people whose rights are violated under the terms of the codes have no personal redress. Although RUC officers may be punished, the victim cannot directly obtain redress for a mere breach of the codes. Therefore, although the codes may be effective managerial instruments within the force, the citizen does not see them in that light.

It is not enough to say that the code of practice may be used as evidence in civil actions. They should also be statutory. This would help to overcome one of the major problems that has been apparent in the operation of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which deals with England and Wales. There has been widespread criticism that the sections of the legislation relating to the rights of suspects has not been sufficiently respected and that the judicial interpretation of the Act as to the status of the code has somewhat watered down the safeguards. By giving statutory effect to the codes of practice, the Government would give a clear sign that the extension of the powers of the police is to be paralleled by the protection of the rights of the citizen—rights that were laid down in the Act.

In this respect, there is another difference between Northern Ireland and England and Wales. In England and Wales, suspects arrested under emergency legislation are covered by the codes of practice. In Northern Ireland, that will not be the case. In cases of serious terrorism and crime in Great Britain, interviews will be recorded, and the defence will have access to the tape recordings. In Northern Ireland this will not be the case. With even a minor infringement of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act in the Province, tape recordings will not be available to the defence, while in a major drugs case, in which there might be just as much horror and wealth, with as many frightening matters, the tape recording will be accessible to the defence. That is a serious deficiency.

The Government's reason for this is that it might be possible for someone to gain access to the tape recording and tease out of it some information that might be of value to the terrorist. I understand that, but if terrorists are as skilful and well trained as we are told they are, in their own de-briefing by their associates, whether it takes place before or after conviction, the evidence of where that information to the security forces came from will be as evident to them as it would be in a tape recording. Even if that were not the case, it should have been possible for the Government to find some method by which application could be made to the courts for deletion of the parts of the recording that have specific signs of the source of the intelligence that led to the arrest and questioning. That is a fundamental weakness in the way in which serious terrorist crime is tackled in Northern Ireland.

What status will the codes of practice have in the operation of the independent police complaints commission for Northern Ireland? Will the commission be able to use the codes of practice as a measure to determine whether a complaint is justified? Is it to be the mean or will they be able to go beyond it in carrying out their duties?

The position of the individual police officer must also be considered. What safeguards will be enshrined in statutory provisions to ensure that police officers are themselves fairly treated under the terms of the codes? Given the fact that the RUC, like many large organisations, has not been free of industrial relations difficulties, the need to ensure a commitment to the codes on the part of each officer also requires that safeguards be introduced for the officers themselves. For both the sake of the individual police officer and for public confidence in the police, it is essential that complaints are dealt with openly, effectively and rapidly.

In terms of safeguards for both suspects and police officers, I welcome the introduction of the provision requiring the tape-recording of interviews, as far as it goes. However, we have already pointed out some of the difficulties that may arise in that case. The visual recording of interviews is not included; nor are suspects arrested under the emergency legislation. We know that closed-circuit television already exists in interrogation centres, but that system has its failings. There is only a monitoring, not a recording, of what goes on. There are inevitably times when the screens will not be monitored, and that is what may have happened in the disturbing Gillen case. It is important, therefore, to have an adequate video recording of what takes place. That is not an expensive measure, but I believe that it will present the Government with a great opportunity to remove all the credibility from periodic complaints about the ill-treatment of suspects in custody. The complaints are sometimes founded on fact, but often they are not, and they are often used by the paramilitary forces to discredit the police and their work.

The Minister will be aware that there is a continuing and wide-ranging debate in Northern Ireland on human rights, and it is one that I welcome. One of the positive aspects of the order is that it provides for statutory rights where none previously existed, and we welcome that. I am sure that the Minister will agree, however, that we should be giving more attention to providing statutory protection for human rights in Northern Ireland. We shall not have time to go into that debate tonight, but I am sure that it is one to which hon. Members will wish to return again and again in the near future.

1.11 am

**Mr. Ian Gow** (Eastbourne): There is agreement between my right hon. Friend the Minister of State and the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) about one matter, and that is the importance of the order.

I begin my remarks by reminding the House of an astonishing paradox. Not one Member of this place representing a constituency in Great Britain would have tolerated for one moment a measure of this importance, comprising 90 articles and seven schedules, being passed into law with only one and a half hours of debate in the House and one and a half hours in another place.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North, the shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, made some fair comments about the order, and it would have been right in normal circumstances for his reservations to be tested by the tabling of amendments to proposed legislation. The Minister would have had the opportunity to reply to the speeches of Opposition Members and of his hon. Friends. I protest to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State about legislation in this form for one part of the United Kingdom which none of us would accept for our own constituents if it applied to them.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his predecessor have agreed in the House on many occasions that they do not like legislation in this form. They agree with the criticism of it, yet nothing is done. We go on year after year denying to the representatives of the people of Northern Ireland and to Members of this place the normal legislative procedures that we accept without reservation when they apply to Great Britain.

My right hon. Friend the Minister of State was correct when he said that the largest part of the order is based upon the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. I welcomed that Act, as did almost all my right hon. and hon. Friends. Although the Act has been operative for only a short time, I believe that the central principle enshrined in it has been beneficial in England and Wales. The provisions in that Act have proved sensible in giving additional powers to the police and in giving additional protection to the innocent. Why has there been a delay in introducing this legislation to that part of the United Kingdom known as Northern Ireland?

I find myself in respectful disagreement with the shadow Secretary of State. It is one of those astonishing paradoxes that, if we leave aside the evil of terrorism, on the basis of non-terrorist crime Northern Ireland is the most law-abiding part of the United Kingdom. It might be said that, therefore, that the case for legislation for Northern Ireland similar to that for England and Wales is not so strong because it is more law-abiding. I advance that argument only to dismiss it. Although the levels of non-terrorist crime in Northern Ireland are lower than in any other part of the kingdom, even there crime is still a serious problem. The provisions in the order will assist the police and will protect the innocent citizens in Northern Ireland.

I warmly approve of the contents of the order and congratulate my right hon. Friend on his speech. I hope, however, that he will take seriously the criticism about this means of legislating.

1.16 am

**Mr. William Ross** (Londonderry East): I listened with considerable interest when the Opposition spokesman the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) put a case for leaving the law in Northern Ireland as it stands, on the basis that, apart from terrorism, we are a law-abiding society. To follow that case to its logical conclusion would mean dividing the United Kingdom into blocs—those that were law-abiding and those that were not—with different laws for different places. That is the practice in Northern Ireland, but it cannot be defended, because, so far as is possible, the law should be the same throughout the United Kingdom.

As has already been pointed out, the order covers some 90 pages, so it might appear to any disinterested and impartial observer that this important matter is being dealt with in a rather cavalier fashion. International crime is increasing and there are particular problems with crimes such as serious fraud. The appearance of a certain person in court in Northern Ireland earlier this year arising out of

*[Mr. William Ross]*

the De Lorean affair should convince anyone that there needs to be an updating of the law, especially in respect of serious fraud.

There is a gap that needs to be filled, and insofar as the order strengthens the law it should be welcomed by every law-abiding citizen. There is a necessity periodically to reform and update the law in Northern Ireland and throughout the United Kingdom. It cannot be left for ever as it stands. We have only to look at the list of repeals to realise that many go back more than 100 years. It is therefore appropriate that we should consider these matters rather more frequently.

There are various differences in the law. One is in respect of the powers of entry, search and seizure and the additional protection given to the source of information. That is one of the parts of the order where there is a different attitude even to what we describe as ordinary crime in Northern Ireland. Terrorism has permeated that society to such an extent that there are certain dangers which are not evident to the same extent on this side of the Irish sea. Sources of information, for example, are particularly vulnerable if identified, and must be protected. I personally welcome the extra protection that the order provides.

A problem arises in respect of the timescale for implementing such changes. The Minister said that the Police and Criminal Evidence Act became law in 1984, whereas the provisions before the House will not take effect until next year—six years after the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. That is six years too long. Every sensible, law-abiding citizen, and every right hon. and hon. Member, wants to see the guilty persecuted or prosecuted—personally, I do not mind which, though I think that they should be clobbered. But the guilty have been getting away with it for six years, which is unacceptable in any society.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 could easily have included Northern Ireland, and it should have done so—especially if there are to be other differences between Northern Ireland and British Law. How much wiser and better informed right hon. and hon. Members would be if points of relevance to Northern Ireland had been argued in Committee and on the Floor of the House during the passage of that legislation. That Bill offered a golden opportunity to increase understanding among right hon. and hon. Members of conditions in the Province, but it was deliberately passed up by the present Administration for reasons of their own.

If the order is to be effective and to have beneficial consequences, it is essential to ensure sufficient manpower. I understand that the police have one or two reservations about that aspect. One assumes that there will be a need for a custody sergeant in every police station, who will perform a very important function. I am curious to know whether the number of sergeants in the Royal Ulster Constabulary will be increased by 60 for that purpose, or whether the duties of custody sergeant will be lumped together with the responsibilities of existing station sergeants. We should like a categorical assurance that any increase in manpower will be funded by central Government. There may also be downstream consequences in respect of the constables on duty at stations where suspects are held. That aspect, too, should be clarified.

There may be difficulties in relation to officers holding the rank of inspector and above. They are deeply involved in the preparation of cases, all the way down the line. They will need additional training and to be fully informed of the consequences of the order. Time and money will have to be spent on the re-education and retraining of senior officers, but no extra manpower or money has been made available for that purpose.

Paragraph 7 on page 4 of the "Explanatory Document" points out

"it is important that the resources and training of the police are sufficient".

Will that apparent commitment be fulfilled?

As to television evidence, this is one of those rare occasions when I find myself agreeing with the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North. I cannot understand how an individual can be cross-examined at the far end of a television camera in the Irish Republic, Canada, Australia, or France. I should like an explanation of how that arrangement will work in practice. This is another apparent instance of a spillover of terrorist involvement. Will the individual appear on a television screen in court, to be identified by the evil, wicked people against whom he is giving evidence, or by their friends? If so, he will immediately be in mortal danger, and the fact that he is only an image on a television screen will not help him.

I do not share the misgivings expressed about the collection of DNA material. Innocent people will have nothing to fear from providing that which will clear them, and the material will be sought only when the police have material with which it can be compared.

I am sorry that we have such a short time in which to discuss the matter, for much more needs to be said—and can be said. Finally, can the Minister tell us how the public views on policing will be obtained? I have thought about that already—would it not have to be through the various police liaison committees that already exist?

1.25 am

**Mr. Seamus Mallon** (Newry and Armagh): I am very much aware that other hon. Members wish to participate. Suffice it to say that I share the view that legislation such as this is rushed through in such a way that hon. Members must abandon the substantive elements of what they wished to say and proceed to the broader points.

Some hon. Members have asked why the legislation should apply in the north of Ireland: was there not a case for a rather different approach? The Government's explanatory document gives the reasons, and I think that they are worth examining. The document states:

"The protection and safeguarding of suspects' rights under all circumstances is particularly important in Northern Ireland, where allegations have been made in the past . . . Accordingly . . . it would be of considerable benefit to both the police and the public if arrangemens governing the questioning and treatment of persons in custody were more clearly defined and placed on a statutory footing."

I welcome the reference to a statutory footing, which we never see again in the legislation. I also welcome the information that it is to apply to all suspects' rights—which is immediately contradicted, not only in the legislation but in the explanatory document. Before we even open the order, we see the inherent contradiction based on a statement made in the Government's own explanatory note. That is typical of their position on the issue.

One paragraph in the document is headed "Parity with England and Wales".

It tells us why the Government want such parity:

> "The Government firmly believes that everyone in the United Kingdom should be equally protected under the law".

Giving five instances, it tells us why, and shows us how, those in the North of Ireland will not be protected on equal terms under the law to people in England and Wales.

The Government cannot be allowed to have it both ways. Either there are special circumstances in the north of Ireland requiring a special type of legislation in relation even to the criminal law, or there are no such circumstances and there should be full parity. That is the dilemma in which the legislation puts us—and the rather silly position in which the explanatory document, on close reading, puts the Government. It is no position on which to base a criminal law that will be with us for a long time.

The most fundamental weakness is this: where the protection of the codes of conduct is most needed—in relation to the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 and the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984—it simply does not apply. Yet we are told:

> "the protection and safeguarding of suspects' rights under all circumstances"

is particularly important.

On DNA testing, we are told that we are to have parity with England and Wales. I make no virtue of parity because I am not making a case for it, but when a Government state that all people in the United Kingdom must be treated equally and that parity is sought, it should apply and there should be no contradictions in succeeding sections.

One could ask what makes ordinary crime in Northern Ireland so different from ordinary crime in England, Scotland and Wales that we must have four or five substantial differences in the same piece of legislation. What is the difference between a person who robs a shop in Northern Ireland and a person who robs a shop in Birmingham? I believe that there is no difference. Those anomalies and contradictions show that we are running into danger. We had hoped that the ordinary criminal law that applies to people who are not involved in terrorism would blur the edges of the harsh, repressive legislation in the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Provisions Act. Unfortunately, it has gone the other way.

There is almost a hidden curriculum in the Police and Criminal Evidence Order. Rather than softening the edges of the emergency legislation, the emergency legislation is encroaching on the ordinary criminal law. In this piece of legislation, as in many others, bets are hedged because of the parallels between the criminal law and the emergency legislation. That is dangerous to confidence in the law. One could ask why are there differences in the application of DNA testing. Why are there differences in the law relating to the seizure of materials under the Prevention of Terrorism Act? If a person is held under that legislation here, he has the protection of the codes of conduct, but if he is 20 miles away across a piece of water he does not have that protection. Surely that is not parity, sense or justice. We have to examine the hidden curriculum as well as the detailed elements within the legislation.

I am aware that others are waiting to speak, so I shall dispense with many of the points that I would have made had we been dealing with normal legislation. We must be careful that the leakage between the two sections of law is monitored very closely. It is not bringing us back to normal; it is removing the normalisation of the ordinary criminal law. That inexorable movement towards emergency law becoming part of the criminal law must worry anyone who studies the legislation.

Finally, I must mention a point made by the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross). How does one instigate and implement statutory consultation with something or someone called "people"? That is stated in the explanatory document and in the legislation. I wait with great interest to be told how one can have statutory consultation with people. They are not defined as those who are elected or those who carry out a certain function, but are simply people. Such a woolly, imprecise definition has caught the eye of people in the north of Ireland because they have seen for a long time that what the Government mean by "people" are those who happen to agree with them on any specific issue at any moment.

1.34 am

**Mr. Alex Carlile** (Montgomery): Like one or two other hon. Members here tonight, I was a member of the Standing Committee on the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. My feeling tonight is more than merely a rather uncomfortable one of deja vu. I agree very much with what was said by the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow). I remind him of the additional point that the Standing Committee had 59 sittings—the record number, I believe, held by any Standing Committee for any Bill passed by the House—quite apart from the discussions that took place on the Floor of the House. No hon. Member for Northern Ireland was a member of that Committee and Northern Ireland issues were not discussed in any detail. It is astonishing that in the middle of the night we should be having a debate as short as one and a half hours to deal with matters of such substance.

Having watched the progress of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 over the past five years, I welcome the introduction of at least some of its provisions into Northern Ireland. Although judicial application of the code on the detention, treatment and questioning of prisoners has been inconsistent, by and large it has been of benefit to the innocent and can rarely be said to have helped the guilty to escape conviction. That is a beneficial advance.

However, I agree with hon. Members from Northern Ireland that there is no sound basis for distinguishing between people who are being detained and questioned under the emergency provisions and those detained and questioned for ordinary crimes. They are all entitled to the same treatment. We do not set out to apply different standards to the way in which they are asked questions by the police.

I want to deal with two specific issues, both of which were mentioned in some detail earlier in the debate. The first relates to mouth swabs. I ask the Minister a simple question. Why is the mouth an intimate orifice in Liverpool, but not in Belfast? Why is the same person not subjected to the forcible removal of a sample from his mouth in Liverpool, but is subjected to it in Belfast? It is completely illogical. If the Government's real wish, as it

*[Mr. Alex Carlile]*

appears to be, is to legislate to permit the taking of intimate samples by force, they should say so and allow the matter to be debated honestly.

Clearly, the Government have decided to allow in Northern Ireland only the taking of an intimate sample by force. I would go further and ask the Minister whether the Government have considered the effect of article 3 of the European convention on human rights in this context. Is it not the case that the United Kingdom Government run a severe risk of forcible searches of an intimate orifice, such as the mouth, being regarded as degrading treatment by the European Court of Human Rights and, therefore, contrary to article 3? I hope that the Minister will tell the House that that point has been considered and what advice he has received.

Why do the Government feel that they need a provision to allow the forcible taking of oral swabs, as proposed in the order, at all? Do they not think that article 62(10) is sufficient? If a person is asked to give an intimate sample, as defined by the order and under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, and refuses, the court can draw an inference of guilt from that very refusal. That is something that we have been practising in the courts of England and Wales since the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 received the Royal Assent and came into effect. Why is it not good enough simply to have the same provision in Northern Ireland?

The forcible taking of oral swabs is a hostage to fortune. It will be difficult for the police to operate. There will be accusations of unnecessary violence in the taking of samples and police officers will be injured in taking those samples while, in evidential terms, the Government will probably gain next to nothing.

My second detailed point relates to video links, a matter that has already been discussed by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara). There is a substantial difference between the permissible video-link evidence in England and Wales, and what is proposed in this order. In England and Wales the video link can be used only for the evidence of children under 14 in certain specified cases and—although I have not heard of a case in which it has been used as yet—in certain circumstances if a witness is outside the jurisdiction.

What seems to be envisaged now for Northern Ireland is that any witness who feels afraid may give his or her evidence by video link. But what is the test of fear to be? It is not even phrased as "well-founded fear". It seems an entirely subjective test. Judges will be entitled to allow evidence to be given by video even if a witness has genuine but ill-founded fear.

The immediacy of the court room is important. It is helpful to judges and to juries, where there is a jury, to see the witness's demeanour and reaction to questioning—the way in which the witness deals with the questions, and the pauses before an answer is given—but it simply will not be possible to have that immediacy if video links are used widely. Of course they are justified for children because of other emotional considerations, but it is important that we resist them where they are not necessary. We must remember that adult witnesses may be giving evidence of the minutiae of a case. It is difficult to deal with plans, documents, computer data and so on when one is asking questions via a television camera of someone who may be remote.

In addition, I suspect that the use of video links, as envisaged in the order, would encourage the self-interested so-called "accomplice" or "supergrass", who may feel that he can gain personal advantage by giving false evidence and who will feel secure in doing so if the residual provisions of the order are brought into effect and he can give that evidence using a changed identity from a television studio in some distant part of the world. These provisions will not necessarily mean that the evidence will be more reliable. Indeed, there may be a significant temptation for the witness to give even less reliable evidence, but to seem more credible.

In the practicable circumstances of a court, it is not always as easy as some imagine to detect, even of a witness who is actually standing in the court, whether he is telling the truth or he is telling lies. It will be very much more difficult to detect the lies of someone who is merely a face on a television monitor, giving evidence in the comfort and security of a studio many miles away.

Therefore, although I welcome the introduction of many of the protections—I agree with what was said earlier by the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) in an intervention—I invite the Government to look closely at the two issues that I have raised. They may be the issues that will give rise to the controversies and the litigation by which this order will be judged.

1.44 am

**Ms. Marjorie Mowlam** (Redcar): Several specific points have been made in this debate. In view of the time, I shall not repeat them, but it is important to emphasise the underlying assumptions on which they were based. They were based on the need to balance giving the police necessary powers and protecting civil liberties—a balance that was referred to by many hon. Members this evening.

The Minister emphasised that the new powers must be used impartially and responsibly to protect civil liberties. In relation to Northern Ireland, that dimension is very important, particularly as concerns have been voiced about the operation of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in England and Wales, in that in some senses it favours the police. That would be a specific problem in Northern Ireland because it is very important to keep the balance between the police and the public to ensure that they work closely together. The hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) stressed that, as PACE affects Northern Ireland, it is non-emergency legislation and is general criminal law. It is therefore very important that the balance between police powers and civil liberties is seen to be kept.

In that context, I wish to concentrate on a point that has not been emphasised so far. One of the important features of PACE is that it guarantees a suspect's right of access to legal advice. The Minister has already outlined the circumstances in which there would be a delay in access to a lawyer. He referred also to the nature of the limited range of serious arrestable offences when access would be allowed only on the authority of a superintendent. The guarantee of a suspect's right of access to legal advice is clearly a great improvement on the pre-PACE legislation, and we welcome that. An important point in relation to PACE as it affects Northern Ireland is that the guarantee of legal advice is only of value if it is implemented.

The guarantee of legal advice in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 was implemented through the setting up of 24-hour duty solicitor schemes under which anyone suspected, arrested and taken to a police station could obtain advice from the police duty solicitor. The important point about PACE in England and Wales is that part of the 1984 Act required—and "required" is an important word—the Law Society to establish police duty solicitor schemes.

Section 54 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 affecting England and Wales sets up legal advice, and another section establishes legal aid for persons at police stations. The Northern Ireland PACE establishes access to legal advice in section 59. It would be useful if the Minister could explain why legal aid for persons at police stations is missing from PACE Northern Ireland. Without that provision, we face the problem that the principle of legal advice is in the legislation but no mechanism with which to achieve it. Perhaps the Minister can explain in relation to that crucial and fundamental aspect of PACE how we can have the principle on the face of the legislation, but have no mechanism to achieve it.

Clearly there are difficulties in Northern Ireland and I do not want to under-estimate them. There are problems with the Law Society in Northern Ireland because it is not organised on a regional basis, as it is on the mainland. Smaller local associations would make it difficult to liaise. The demographic and geographic factors militate against a statutory scheme. However, there must be some kind of scheme or people may be entitled to legal advice but unable to get it.

I understand that there are only two experimental schemes working in that respect at present—one in Belfast and the other in Craigavon; no doubt, hon. Members will correct me if I am wrong. There is no basis for a statutory scheme to operate on. It would be useful if the Minister could tell us what stage consultations on a statutory scheme have reached. It would be useful if he could clarify at the same time whether the statutory scheme would apply to people who go voluntarily to a police station as well as to those who have been arrested.

I agreed with the comments made by the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) about the need to clarify the definition of a designated centre. I understand that the RUC has not yet decided which police stations should be designated. The hon. Member for Londonderry, East suggested that every police station would be a designated station. That is not made clear in the explanation to the order. It would be useful to know that.

Solicitors in Northern Ireland may resist a duty solicitor scheme on the grounds that they have spent years building up a client base in a difficult environment and are not prepared to share it with a duty solicitor. It is crucial for the Minister to clarify that or there may be no chance to plan and inform people of the changes necessary to make the fundamental principle of PACE work.

Since PACE was introduced in England and Wales, it has increased threefold the demand for legal advice services. I hope that the Minister has taken that into account and is planning for the increased demand for legal advice services. If he has not, then clearly the structure of advice available will not work effectively in Northern Ireland. We need to know the scale of the preparations that the Minister has made. There is also the matter of finance. As we know, many solicitors in England and Wales find legal advice financially unattractive. It would be useful to know what provision the Minister has made to make that problem less crucial in Northern Ireland.

That is an important matter, because if one puts alongside inadequate legal advice the provisions about the right to silence, one finds that advice at the police station becomes even more important for a suspect. I am sure that the Minister is aware that solicitors on the mainland may well offer advice by telephone. That is a special problem in Northern Ireland, where a solicitor may need to go to a police station to advise a client specifically about the implications in court of the right to silence.

Perhaps the Minister will outline the practical implications of omitting section 60 of PACE in England and Wales from the Northern Ireland legislation. Without legal aid for people at police stations, suspects may well find it impossible to get legal advice, without which PACE in Northern Ireland is of limited value. If suspects are denied that fundamental right, and the right to remain silent, we are in a serious situation. As I said earlier, the protection of civil liberties and the granting of necessary powers do not need to be mutually exclusive. If the fundamental principle of PACE Northern Ireland is not implemented by this legislation, at best it is legislation of limited value and at worst it is meaningless. That point must be addressed.

We wholeheartedly support the need for proper, sensible policing practices and the police must be supported in that respect. As it stands, the legislation will potentially damage rather than enhance the principle and prospect of bringing the police and the public closer together.

1.53 am

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** In the time that is available I shall endeavour to respond to as many as possible of the points made in the debate. Some hon. Members have asked specific and technical questions of some detail and I shall respond in writing if I do not have time fully to reply to them now.

**Mr. William Ross:** Not for the first time, the Minister is following a long catalogue of Ministers who have stood at the Dispatch Box during the years that I have been here and said, "I will write to the hon. Gentleman." When they do, they simply respond to the point that the recipient of the letter has made, even though the interest in the subject goes much wider. When the Minister sends a letter will he cover all the unanswered points made by all those who took part in the debate?

**Mr. Stewart:** That is an interesting comment and I shall consider it when reading the *Official Report* of the debate.

I was glad to hear the general welcome from the Opposition, from my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), from the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) and from other hon. Members for the order.

I have been asked about the time that the order has taken. Although the Police and Criminal Evidence Act was enacted in 1984, it was not until 1986 that it was fully introduced in practice. We followed that with a careful examination of the way in which the PACE proposals would fit into the legal system of Northern Ireland which,

*[Mr. Stewart]*

although closely comparable with that of England and Wales, is not precisely the same and, therefore, had to be considered in detail. Then a year ago we published the draft order, with the explanatory document. We felt that it was right to allow proper time for consultation, especially as a number of technical questions of the sort asked tonight were raised. Then, without further delay, we introduced the order. I have asked the RUC, through the police authority, to implement the provisions of the order with effect from the beginning of next year, which I am assured will be possible. In the interim, we shall be publishing the draft code. There will be time for consultation on that, so that the formal code can be issued before the matter is fully implemented next year.

The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) mentioned resources. The introduction of PACE was taken into account in the setting of the finances for the Royal Ulster Constabulary in the current financial year, and the necessary training of the personnel involved, which for general purposes covers most of those in the RUC and those with specific responsibilities, will take place in the later months of the year. Those who are involved, such as custody officers and inspectors, will, under the terms of the order, have new responsibilities. Up to now, they have had responsibilities of a different sort under the existing arrangements. More formal and specific responsibilities are being laid upon them, but they are not necessarily extra. That is a change very much for the better. After being so fragmented, the provisions are now more organised and formal. Inspectors, sergeants and ordinary members of the RUC believe that it will be a more effective system and one which they will be glad and ready to operate.

The hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) said that the balance was important. I am glad that she picked up that point, because it is necessary to see the order not only as setting out the formal powers of the police to be used in the circumstances that have been described, but to ensure that the rights of a suspect and of the individual are fully recognised.

We will, of course, want to monitor the progress of the provisions. I assure the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara), who made a number of specific points, and other hon. Members who have spoken, that we will certainly want to see how, in practice, the measures in the order are implemented.

I agree with the hon. Member for Redcar that there should be proper access to a lawyer for a suspect who wants it, although they do not all wish to have such access, by any means. Many of them believe that they can do better on their own. However, for those who wish to have access to a lawyer, the number of solicitors readily available in Northern Ireland is much greater than was the case in England and Wales when PACE was introduced. I shall consider carefully the points that the hon. Member for Redcar made about that. It is not that Northern Ireland does not need a statutory scheme and that England and Wales do. In England and Wales there were special difficulties and, without legal aid provisions, there was a problem regarding ready access to a pool of solicitors. For that reason special provisions were made.

The hon. Member for Redcar also asked about the designation of police stations. I would expect one station in each division to be designated, perhaps more. The number of designated stations has not been settled at this stage, but obviously they must be available in all areas of the Province.

A number of hon. Members drew attention to the differences between the provisions of PACE for England and Wales and those of the order. The hon. Members for Kingston upon Hull, North and for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon), among others, touched on that. The overwhelming body of the order is almost exactly parallel to the legislation for England and Wales, apart from such technical matters as are required to adjust for the differences between the two jurisdictions.

There is room for a difference of opinion as to whether the televising of evidence from witnesses should be extended to those who may be in fear of intimidation. I accept that Opposition Members have doubts about that, and it will be for the courts and the judges to decide. We will try to ensure that, as far as possible, court room conditions are replicated.

**Mr. McNamara:** The Minister said that it will be for the courts to decide about the televising of evidence, but the order says that the regulations will be made by the Secretary of State. Who will do it—the Secretary of State or the courts?

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** The hon. Gentleman is referring to the extension of the televising arrangements to those outside Northern Ireland and those outside the United Kingdom. Those provisions are still some way off and there are no current proposals for their implementation.

I was referring to the extension of the televising of evidence—it was described as a dangerous extension—to those witnesses in fear. Unfortunately, intimidation in Northern Ireland is a prevalent factor that must be taken into account. We have engaged in widespread consultation and it is the clear view of the Government that it is right to make that extension in the case of Northern Ireland.

Other differences that have been mentioned are simply developments on the processes embodied in PACE. The hon. Member for Londonderry, East welcomed the extended power under part III of the order. That is an improvement on the position in England and Wales. The fact that reasons will not have to be given if they prejudice not only the particular investigation but other investigations offers a protection to the forces of law as suspects will not be alerted in ways that may make the proceedings in that or other cases difficult to follow up. Such developments represent an advance.

A different change relates to mouth swabs. The order describes them as non-intimate, whereas in the original PACE legislation they were described as intimate and therefore to be done only with the permission of the suspect. The main reason for the difference is that there has been significant improvement in DNA techniques since PACE. It is now possible to take swabs from the mouth, which can be of value for DNA purposes, without any great intrusion on the individual. They can be taken simply between the lip and the gum. It does not require force. The samples can be valuable, in comparison with other DNA evidence, as part of the case against suspects who may be guilty, or in establishing someone's innocence. That is an important part of the purpose behind the technique.

**Mr. Roy Beggs** (Antrim, East): Is the Minister saying indirectly that the same legislation will be introduced in England and Wales?

**Mr. Stewart:** The hon. Gentleman will have to ask my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary about that. When we considered the DNA provisions in the order for our purposes in the light of present scientific knowledge, we concluded that mouth swabs did not involve scraping or unwarranted intrusion into intimate orifices of the body and could be done simply and in a matter of seconds from between the lip and the gum and prove of value.

I do not have responsibility for these provisions in England and Wales, and I do not know when they will next be reviewed, but the same provisions may have been made in the original legislation——

*It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion,* MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted Business).*

*Question agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the draft Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, which was laid before this House on 15th June, be approved.

## Clergy (Ordination)

2.6 am

**Mr. Michael Alison (Second Church Estates Commissioner, Representing Church Commissioners):** I beg to move,

That the Clergy (Ordination) Measure, passed by the General Synod of the Church of England, be presented to Her Majesty for her Royal Assent in the form in which the said Measure was laid before Parliament.

This is one of those occasions when the House is called upon to manifest the characteristics of a monastic order, rising to attend to spiritual exercises in the small hours. I congratulate the many colleagues here who have risen to the occasion. I am quite certain that they will receive a reward, although from a loftier source than the Patronage Secretary and the Whips.

The scope of the Measure is, in its narrow sense, quite limited and not very complicated, although the drafting of these Measures always looks a bit bewildering. Nor in any material sense is it very far-reaching. It will impinge directly on a comparatively small number of people, as I hope to show, but it has profound and much more far-reaching non-material implications, in that it deals with issues related to the nature and indissolubility of marriage ties. These are matters which are likely to be of considerable interest to millions of families and individuals, including many non-Anglicans.

In 1986, the latest year for which there are statistics, of the 348,000 registered marriages in England and Wales, well over half were solemnised in religious ceremonies, and one third of them were in Church of England ceremonies. A majority of the public thus still regard marriage as having important religious implications. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]

I shall explain the strict scope of the Measure before I consider wider and more controversial matters. Under existing canon law, there is an absolute bar against a man seeking ordination as a clergyman of the Church of England if he is married but has a previous spouse still living from an earlier marriage or if the partner to whom he is married has a previous partner living from an earlier marriage.

I stress that the issue is not one of divorce alone. Divorce on its own is no bar in principle to a man seeking ordination as a clergyman in the Church of England, although in practice the circumstances of his divorce will be carefully scrutinised by selectors before he is recommended for ordination. It is only remarriage after divorce in the circumstances which I have described—of a previous spouse surviving—which activates the total bar to ordination.

The reason derives from the fundamental teaching of the New Testament, not only about divorce but about remarriage following divorce. The barrier I have referred to is at present absolute. It is provided for in section 9 of the Clergy (Ordination and Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1964, and neither a diocesan bishop nor either archbishop has any discretion to set it aside.

What is proposed in the Measure before the House is not that the absolute barrier of the earlier section 9 be abrogated or rescinded, but that under certain defined circumstances its full rigour should be capable of being waived or suspended, and that, at the final and sole discretion of one of the two archbishops, some exceptions to the rule should be allowed. This is a freehand summary

*[Mr. Michael Alison]*

of what is provided for in section 1 of the measure. To present it in this way is not, I assure the House, a resort to weasel words or to mere casuistry or sophistry. This is not a back-door way of quietly plundering the old prohibition, while leaving it overtly intact.

If I may draw upon an analogy to make the point: it did not detract from, or impair the operation of, the law relating to capital punishment, in a bygone age when that penalty was still on the statute book, if the Home Secretary of the day recommended a reprieve in a particular instance, and Her Majesty exercised the royal prerogative of mercy. Indeed, if anything, the occasional reprieve served only to emphasise the mainstream rigour of the law.

Nothing more far-reaching is being sought in the case of this Measure than a discretion for mercy, while leaving the hard core disqualification firmly on the statute book. The Archbishop of Canterbury has estimated that four or five cases per diocese may seek the dispensation—say, 240 altogether—and by no means all that number would secure it.

There are some individual cases in respect of which it would be the merest and crudest legalism not to be able to waive the absolute barrier against ordination. The Bishop of Guildford in another place cited one such case in which the potential candidate for ordination married a divorcee 15 years ago. His wife's first marriage was never consummated. When she had wanted the marriage dissolved, the lawyers advised her that it might be more straightforward to obtain a divorce than to seek a decree of nullity, so she took their advice and obtained a divorce. The man concerned is now married to a divorcee and automatically disbarred by law from consideration for ordination. Had his wife been advised differently by her lawyers she might have obtained a decree of nullity and her present husband would have faced no impediment to ordination.

Having considered this case, many right hon. and hon. Members attending this debate may feel that the case for allowing occasional exceptions to a solidly entrenched rule is almost self-evidently made, and that the Measure should be allowed to go through without hindrance. Alas, not all cases are as easy and straightforward as that.

**Mr. Peter L. Pike** (Burnley): What would happen if the person whom the lady was marrying was already an ordained minister?

**Mr. Alison:** There would be no moral turpitude in the marriage between the ordained clergyman and the lady concerned, and there would be no basis for any ecclesiastical proceedings against him.

The objections arising from more complicated cases are, as right hon. and hon. Members will find, forcefully and succinctly set out in paragraph 5 of the Ecclesiastical Committee's report, the so-called red book, which right hon. and hon. Members will already have seen. The last of the listed objections in paragraph 5(iv) on page 3 relates to the absence from the Measure of criteria specifying the basis on which the discretion will be exercised. This has been satisfactorily dealt with, technically at least, by the provision, among the papers available in the Vote Office, of the Archbishop of Canterbury's statement about the criteria that the archbishops will use in exercising their occasional dispensation. In considering these criteria, an individual who successfully secures the archbishops' dispensation is not thereby guaranteed automatic access to ordination. He merely ensures access to the normal selection procedure, and he may fall at that hurdle.

The third of the four objections, contrasting the dispensation to divorced lay people on remarriage in church with that proposed for divorced ordinands, looks at first sight a little far-fetched, in that like is not being compared with like. As the Archbishop of Canterbury pointed out in another place, the difficulty about divorced lay people being remarried in church is that each wedding service is meant to be a testimony to, and a proclamation of, the Christian doctrine of the indissolubility of, and the life-long commitment involved in, marriage, so that a second wedding proclamation, involving a divorcee, constitutes a glaring contradiction.

However, this Measure is concerned with ordination and not marriage, and the same contradiction is not implicit in the proposal to make exceptions for ordinands that are not strictly authorised for lay people seeking remarriage. However, at a deeper level, the third objection in the red book underpins and illuminates two objections, which address themselves to the necessity to give clear signals and to maintain standards, not excluding ideal standards.

Vital landmarks in our social life nationally are today in danger of being swept away by the swirling secular currents of casually contracted marriages and easy divorce. The objectors argue that the Church of England should stand against these currents, at whatever cost. It is almost as severe a contradiction as remarriage in church by divorced lay people when the incumbent solemnising the marriage of a young couple bids them pledge themselves to a view of, and a commitment to, a life-long partnership that he himself has already abrogated. That is why I confess that, had I been a member of the General Synod in 1987 when this Measure was voted on, I would have voted against it, on the grounds that the times were not propitious for sending out this signal about marriage, however meritorious the signal might be in itself. As I shall explain, I do not persist in that opposition now.

One further difficulty inherent in the Measure, which was considered at length by the Ecclesiastical Committee, is the manifest imbalance in the treatment at present applying to lay ordinands and that applying to ordained clergymen. For ordinands, there is the present absolute barrier against remarried divorcés being ordained which I have described. For a clergyman, divorce and remarriage do not in themselves and in principle constitute grounds for his being removed from his office or his living. He can be so removed by existing disciplinary procedures, but for that to occur there has to be some moral turpitude in his case in the divorce proceedings. Where divorce is secured on the modern ground of the irretrievable breakdown of the marriage, no moral turpitude need, by definition, occur.

The lot of the existing clergy is undoubtedly easier than the lot of the prospective clergy. The conclusion to be drawn from this imbalance will depend upon one's predispositions. Some will argue that the imbalance in favour of the existing clergy helps to make the case for occasional dispensation for prospective clergy. Others will argue that the real need is for a measure to make more rigorous procedures available to disbar existing clergy who have marriage breakdowns.

The General Synod of the Church of England, after an extended and agonising debate on the issue, decided by a substantial majority that the course of occasional dispensation rather than enhanced rigour against existing clergy was the most acceptable way forward.

**Mr. Ian Gow** (Eastbourne): Is my right hon. Friend able to confirm to the House that at the time of the clergy ordination Measure of 1964 those who were then the Archbishops of Canterbury and York were in favour of the measure, and that there has been a dramatic change of mind on the part of the two right reverend prelates who presently hold the two offices?

**Mr. Alison:** I shall remind my hon. Friend of the course of history since then. There was the report by the Bishop of Lichfield's committee, which was subsequent to the 1964 Measure, on the nature of marriage and the problems arising for the Church of England on whether remarriage should be allowed in church, and on the imbalance between ordinands and clergy, which I have described. I think that the report of the Lichfield committee was the key factor in changing the attitudes of the present leadership of the Church of England.

I hope that in presenting and expounding the case for the Measure I have not shown myself insensitive or unsympathetic to the misgivings expressed by the Ecclesiastical Committee and elsewhere by the minority who objected to the Measure. As I said earlier, I was potentially among its number. I now have no hesitation in fully commending the Measure to the House. I hope that the House will have concluded that the arguments for and against it are finely balanced, especially where an absolute bar would involve sheer legalism. That is reflected in the Ecclesiastical Committee's close vote.

At a deeper constitutional level, I suggest that the House has no proper or justifiable grounds whatever for preventing the Measure from going forward for Royal Assent. The concordat between Church and State, which governs our proceedings and which is based on the Church of England Assembly Powers Act 1919, fully delegates responsibility for deciding domestic Church issues, such as the basis for ordaining its clergy, to the Church of England and its domestic machinery.

**The Minister for Local Government (Mr. John Gummer):** When Parliament so delegated its powers to the Church—I take my right hon. Friend's view strongly on this issue—did it not provide that, on matters as delicate and important as those that come before us, a two-thirds majority was necessary? Is it not true that in this instance the Church did not give an opportunity for a two-thirds majority? Indeed, there was not a two-thirds majority in the House of Laity, which this place should be concerned about. Is it not true that the very people who decided whether there should be a two-thirds majority were those who were proposing this measure in the first place? Could it not be argued that this House has an important role in insisting that the protection of the minority, which it put upon the Church, should be followed and cared for on a matter so serious and important?

**Mr. Alison:** My right hon. Friend makes an important point. In the interests of brevity, perhaps all I should say is that the General Synod considered thoroughly and in great detail whether the Measure qualified for the two-thirds majority provision that applies to matters of fundamental doctrine and concluded, through its proper machinery, that it was not called for. The chairman of the Ecclesiastical Committee, Lord Bridge—a distinguished Law Lord—on reading the constitution of the General Synod, concluded that it had properly decided that an absolute majority, not a two-thirds majority, was right.

**Mr. Ray Whitney** (Wycombe): Does my right hon. Friend agree that that was not the conclusion reached by the noble Lord Denning, who took the view that there should be a two-thirds majority?

**Mr. Alison:** That is true. I have heard some comments that Lord Denning, in his speech in another place commending the opposite view, was not at his most pristine, forceful and exemplary best——

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman** (Lancaster): Did my right hon. Friend actually hear Lord Denning?

**Mr. Alison:** I carefully read what he had said.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** I had the privilege of attending that House of Lords debate.

**Mr. Alison:** I very much wish that the mere audio experience of words were sufficient to make a deep impression upon the conscious mind. If that were so, dulcet tones would always win arguments. However, that is not always the reality in debate. Lord Denning's speech was not of exemplary clarity and conviction.

The concordat between Church and state fully delegates responsibility for deciding these matters to the General Synod. As the Ecclesiastical Committee makes plain in paragraph 6 of its report, no wider implications arise which bear upon

"the constitutional rights of all Her Majesty's subjects."

My hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham), in his speech in the Ecclesiastical Committee, summed up the position succinctly. He said:

> "There are many Measures where it is absolutely right and in accordance with the constitutional rights of all Her Majesty's subjects (as section 3(3) says) that we should seek to have changed or sent back. Stipends of clergymen, rights of dismissal, pensions: all those are basic secular questions where our duty is clear, if the Church oversteps the reasonable grounds of equity. But this Measure is concerned solely with a matter of theology and I do not think it is my job to decide it is inexpedient to proceed."

**Mr. Conal Gregory** (York): My right hon. Friend has referred several times to the Ecclesiastical Committee of which I believe he was a member during the examination of this Measure. The voting was extremely close—10:9. Will he advise the House on why he did not participate in that final decision, which would then have balanced the voting?

**Mr. Alison:** If my hon. Friend had followed the earlier part of my speech, he would have heard me say that, had I been a member of the General Synod in 1987 when it voted definitively on this matter, I would have voted against it. I also hold the view that the argument is very finely balanced and that the Church of England, in a matter of theology and doctrine, has an absolute right, through the powers that we have deliberately delegated to it, to reach through its proper procedures a conclusion by a majority. Provided that the interests of none of Her Majesty's subjects is in any way threatened, it is reasonable for the Church of England to expect that Royal Assent will follow.

*[Mr. Alison]*

My own position was fully expressed in the words uttered by my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton in the Ecclesiastical Committee. After literally years of deliberation, the Church of England has passed the Measure—which received a substantial majority in all its houses—to us, and it is our duty to pass it, without impediment, to Her Majesty for Royal Assent.

2.30 am

**Mr. Frank Field** (Birkenhead): It was worth waiting until 10 minutes past 2 o'clock this morning to hear the right hon. Member for Selby (Mr. Alison) introduce the motion, because he showed a depth of humour that I did not think he possessed. If the right hon. Gentleman commended the Measure without any hesitation on his part, I only hope that I would be defended by him, if he thought that I was guilty.

When the right hon. Gentleman said that we are in a way debating our beliefs about marriage, a number of Conservative Members gave a very loud "Hear, hear!" Before we all become too self-righteous, I remind the House of one of its recent decisions. It reformed the divorce laws to make divorce possible after a period of marriage shorter than the term of the average hire purchase agreement. Before we ask the Church of England to set standards, we should consider our own conduct.

The most powerful argument to be made in this debate was forcefully put in an intervention in the Ecclesiastical Committee by my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike). Is it not unfair that priests who enjoy a freehold tenure can be divorced and remarry without losing their posts, whereas lay people who divorce and remarry are barred from ordination? If the argument were just about fairness, that imbalance should weigh heavily with the House.

I am reminded of a comment by Aneurin Bevan—if he did not make it, he would have done so had he thought of it—after Neville Chamberlain had introduced one of his many measures. Aneurin Bevan commented that listening to the Prime Minister was like a trip round Woolworth's—everything was in its place, and nothing was priced over sixpence. If one takes the view that in life everything has its place and nothing costs more than sixpence, my hon. Friend's intervention will carry weight. If one accepts that sometimes life is messy, and that in this instance, the freehold system should be defended because it is in itself important even though it is sometimes abused, one will not adopt the Woolworth view of life.

I hope that we shall not hear the argument this evening that the House has no right to intervene. My right hon. Friend—I call him that because in these matters, he is—almost made that point in his concluding remarks. He explained the balance of the arguments, commended the measure to the House, and said that it has no right to interfere. The House has every right to interfere until such time as it decides that certain matters need not come here from the General Synod for approval.

I hope that we shall not hear the disestablishment argument tonight. I voted against all the privatisation legislation that has come before the House and I shall continue to do so. I am against national institutions such as the Church of England being handed over to the sect. We have a right to intervene, to judge and to weigh up—hence our debate tonight.

Let me underline a point made earlier in an intervention. On all major matters involving policy in the Church a two-thirds majority is required, but those gaining a ruling for such a majority must make an appeal to the people promoting the Measure: those who wish it to go through will decide whether a two-thirds majority is necessary. If we were debating not the Church but a building society, would we be happy for those who were changing—or rigging—the rules to decide that a simple majority was all that was required, rather than a two-thirds majority? I think not. Had there been a two-thirds majority in every House of Synod, we would hear much of that point in tonight's debate.

Let me take the argument a step further, and ask how the measure will work in practice. We have duties in respect of our constituents. We should consider how Church authorities have already behaved to the House, through its Ecclesiastical Committee, before the Measure had gone through. The voting was fine: the hon. Member for York (Mr. Gregory) reminded us that it went through on a majority of one, the Second Church Estates Commissioner not having voted on that occasion.

Whether or not we agreed with that decision, we in Committee wanted to know what were the rules governing who should be given such exemption. Then, too, we were given a taste of the humour that was dominant throughout the right hon. Gentleman's introductory remarks tonight: he compared the position with that of someone allowed not to be hanged. We suggested that there should not merely be an agreement between the archbishops, because archbishops change—and they could change the rules after they had come into force. We wished to see the rules in the form of regulation when the Measure was introduced, but we have not seen them in that form tonight.

The archbishops issued a note full of high-sounding phrases, but offering little guidance on who would get through and who would not. How will the rules work? When the Measure first came before the Ecclesiastical Committee, we were told that probably a couple of people would come forward for ordination. Then we started to get the letters—and then the archbishop told us that there were already nearly 200 on the stocks who might come forward. At least one bishop was so confident that we would rubber-stamp the measure that he sent someone through for ordination who could not possibly be ordained under the current law.

Let us make a comparison with the way in which the deserted wives of clergymen have been treated, and the assurances that they and their parishes have been given when acts of adultery have occurred. I am currently in correspondence with a clergy wife who was assured—as were the parish and the parochial church council—that the man would never again be given a living in the Church of England because of the way in which he had deserted his wife and four children and broken up another marriage. In one sense the bishops and archbishops have kept their word. He has not been offered another living; he has already had two. I suggest that once the move gets under way flexibility will be introduced. I see some of my hon. Friends here tonight. I have received many letters about the Measure, but not one from a deserted divorced clergy wife recommending the measure. I have had many from wives who have married divorced clergy.

**Mr. George Howarth** (Knowsley, North): My hon. Friend would not, would he?

**Mr. Field:** My hon. Friend says that I would not, but given the size of my postbag, people could have written to say that they disagreed with me. Many people write to me saying that they disagree with my line. Why should this Measure be the exception?

Before we discuss the rights of the wife of a person who wishes to be ordained, I hope that the House will have some respect for the rights and status of the woman who has been deserted by that person. Let me take the argument a stage further. This was not the whole Measure that went before Synod. The whole Measure was to change the Church's teaching on marriage. It stated that members of the laity who were divorced could be remarried in church. The Church, mindful of the fact that it should not give the laity rights that it denied to the clergy, decided that in those circumstances it would be proper for those who have been divorced and remarried and wish to be ordained to be able to do so.

The major part of the Measure which failed to get through Synod and has not been presented to us was that people who had divorced and remarried could get married in church. But the tail end of the Measure, which we are discussing tonight, was presented to Synod again and is now before the House. Far from the Synod not wishing the clergy to be inferior to the laity, we are now being asked to approve a Measure whereby some clergy would be in a superior position to the laity.

Another argument presented to me in letters is that good men with a wealth of experience about broken marriages to bring to the Church are putting themselves forward and the Church is short of manpower. If the Church is so worried about a shortage of manpower, why does it not accept that a large number of women wish to be priests and are not divorced and remarried? That would not require the overthrow of any doctrine. Why can the Church not bring that measure before us, if its reasoning is that such people have a vocation? If the Church is short of vocations, we should change one part of the rules which have always existed.

The right hon. Member for Selby introduced the Measure with extraordinary skill and great charity. The intervention by the hon. Member for York demonstrated his torn feelings about the issue. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman's loyalty to the Church in presenting the Measure to us will not blind the House to the faults of the case that he presented. Should anyone say that if we do not pass the Measure tonight, we shall have a great constitutional crisis on our hands and the Church will call for disestablishment, I ask hon. Members to pause before they laugh. Would anyone really say that if we do not pass the Measure tonight the archbishops and bishops will go to the country on a programme that, because we were not mindful to pass a Measure to allow some divorced males who have remarried or married divorced women entry to the priesthood, we should allow disestablishment? The case would be laughed out of court.

We all know that no Government would find time for disestablishment. It would make trying to abolish the Greater London council appear a mere tea party because with disestablishment would come disendowment and those great constitutional issues would be taken on the Floor of the House. No Government would give up a year of parliamentary time to get that measure through, and certainly not because we had decided early this morning that we were not happy, on balance, to pass a Measure that would allow some divorced people to become priests in the Church of England. I rest my case on a balance of arguments and I hope that the House will not approve the Measure.

2.45 am

**Sir John Stanley** (Tonbridge and Malling): First, I wish to thank my right hon. Friend the Second Church Estates Commissioner for the sensitive and balanced way in which he moved this difficult motion. I found his opening remarks illuminating and helpful. I regard the Measure as modest and sensible, and a proper way to take account of the wide range of individual circumstances involved in considering whether individuals are appropriate for ordination.

The safeguards announced by the Archbishop of Canterbury are real and proper. There is no question but that this is an exceptional power which will be used in exceptional circumstances. As my right hon. Friend the Estates Commissioner has made clear, the safeguards are enshrined in the fact that the dispensation is in the hands only of one or the other of the two archbishops.

It is also a compassionate Measure. It is in the experience of every hon. Member that in issues of divorce there are often cases in which one party is wholly blameless for the breakdown of a marriage. It is wrong, unreasonable and unduly harsh that such blameless persons should for the rest of their lives, if they subsequently remarry, be denied the opportunity of presenting themselves for ordination.

I wish to cite one case in my own constituency. The hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) will be interested to know that it is the case of a woman who is currently undergoing training as a deacon but who, under the present rules, will not be eligible for ordination at the conclusion of her training. She asked for her name not to be disclosed, for understandable reasons, but she has given me permission to quote from her letter to me and it is instructive.

She wrote:

> "The reason for my not being ordained into Holy Orders, as I believe god has called me to be, is that I have re-married. In 1964, when I was nineteen I married, but the marriage lasted four months and was an horrific episode in my life. I was treated badly, beaten and left. A month later I discovered I was pregnant and nearly 7 months later gave birth to twins who did not survive the first day of their life. That marriage after many traumas was dissolved and I remarried my present husband in 1967. I am still married to him and have a lovely family. I have been a Christian since I was 8 and a church member apart for the few years in my late teens . . . In 1990 I will be at present only allowed to be licensed to be a Lay Minister and not ordained Deacon because of that teenage marriage that lasted only four months."

It is in such cases that it is reasonable and proper for individuals to be able to offer themselves for ordination. I believe that it is right that in individual cases account should be taken of the circumstances which precipated the divorce and that the positive factors about individuals presenting themselves for ordination should also be taken into account, regardless of whether they have been divorced and subsequently remarried. For those reasons, I support the measure.

2.49 am

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): When this matter came before the Ecclesiastical Committee of which I was a member, I started from the premise that I would oppose it for two reasons—first, because I had understood that remarriage after divorce was not countenanced in New Testament theology and should therefore clearly be proscribed for those who wished to be leaders of the Church, and secondly because of my experience as a member of a family in which this had been the theological issue which had most affected our view of family life. My parents were not allowed to marry in church because my father had been married before, and I had watched the only brother of mine who had been married go through a divorce. It troubled me greatly that this was a subject where theology had ultimately to win the argument against some of the arguments for compassion, but the principle had been held.

So I listened and, when it came to our conference with the Archbishops of York and Canterbury, I questioned the archbishops with some vigour about how they could justify, theologically, the case that they were asking us to adopt. They and their colleagues led me to believe that in theology the case is at least arguably justifiable. I say that not as a theologian or somebody who can be certain of what the Christian teaching would be, but as somebody who was driven for guidance to read the text in the New Testament, in the Gospels and in the Epistle to Timothy in particular, which deal with those matters. Although there is clear teaching about the responsibilities of leaders in the Church and about marriage, it would appear from those who interpret these matters and who are far more adept and able to do so than I am, that there can be a proper interpretation of the scriptures which suggests that permission both to remarry after divorce and to do so even if one is ordained as a minister of the Church, is theologically acceptable.

**Mr. Gummer:** If what the hon. Gentleman says is true —and, indeed, it is a position that some theologians uphold—would not the natural result be for the Church of England to seek to change its rules on marriage, not just for clergymen but for lay people? Is not the problem with this Measure that when the Church tried to do that, it had to have a two-thirds majority, and as it did not get a two-thirds majority it therefore withdrew the part dealing with the laity and left this tag-end? It then said that it did not need a two-thirds majority for that. When the Church —members of the Synod—appealed, they found that the group which was to decide whether the two-thirds majority was necessary or not was the very group presenting this Measure.

Surely the real issue facing us all is that in the sad case quoted to us by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley), we are looking for a proper change in the Church's view and, in my view, for a better system of nullity—but not for this Measure, which must be damaging because it asks people to be allowed to be ordained but says that when they teach the Church's doctrine on marriage they have to teach that their own marriage is simply living in sin.

**Mr. Hughes:** I was intending to deal with that point later, but I will do so now. I believe that it would have been far preferable for the Church to bring before Parliament the question of the remarriage of divorced people in Church before bringing this Measure. That is one of the unsatisfactory elements of the Measure. It will permit a more liberal regime to appear to apply to priests than to lay people in the Church. Divorced people who ask a priest if they can be married and are told that they cannot will find it somewhat odd, to say the least, if they discover that the priest who told them that they were not allowed to be married became a priest after having been divorced and having remarried. I accept that that is not satisfactory. Having weighed that argument with others that I will relate briefly in a moment, I still believe that the balance of view that we should reach in justice and in charity as politicians, and as people concerned with the standards of the Church, should persuade us to support the Measure.

**Mr. Andrew Rowe** (Mid-Kent): The hon. Gentleman is in danger of being led down a cul-de-sac by my right hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer). This not a question of where clergymen remarry. Many people—myself included—have remarried after a divorce. I was blessed in a church in a service that left it abundantly clear to the entire congregation that my wife and I had failed before and were asking God's blessing to succeed in future. That is far more germane to the question of whether the clergy or the laity can remarry in church.

**Mr. Hughes:** I will deal with that point in a moment as it is also an appropriate point.

We must decide whether the proposal is right according to theology, morals or ethics. We must also consider whether Members of Parliament have a right to intervene in this matter.

For as long as Parliament has the responsibility to approve matters that are put to us, we can, if we wish, disagree with the Church. I take that view even though I believe that the Church should be self-governing and should not have to come to Parliament. However, Church matters such as this come to Parliament under the present rules, constitution and practice. Clearly we have the right to say no to the proposal from the Church even though it is an internal Church matter.

What is the balance? I believe that the persuasive arguments against the proposal are theological arguments. But the Church and the theologians who advised us did not believe that they were determinative. I do not believe that those of us who have considered the matter would regard the theology as determinative either.

There is an argument that the Church should set clear standards and signals. However, I believe that that argument to oppose the Measure is impossible to sustain. If the present position continues, we say that someone who has been married and divorced and then remarries cannot become a priest, but someone who has lived with someone, or two people, three people or seven people can become a priest. Someone who has murdered can become a priest. Yet we reserve a bar to ordination uniquely for those people who have married, divorced and remarried. We do that irrespective of whether their previous marriage was a Christian marriage and irrespective of whether either or both parties were Christians when they were married or divorced.

We consider the previous marriage to be an absolute barrier to ordination even though it may have been a mistake, as in the example given by the right hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley). Even if the marriage was clearly wrong and had failed, and even if someone found a vocation calling him to the priesthood in a blessed second marriage, the bar to ordination would apply. It is anomalous to preserve this unique bar and not to apply to ordained clergy the principles that we apply to people hoping to be ordained. A priest can be divorced and then remarry without any automatic threat to his role as a priest.

The most persuasive argument of all is that, if the theology is not persuasive and clear, and if justice is abundantly in favour of the Measure and strongly against preserving the anomaly of denying a group of people the fulfilment of their vocation, one other matter becomes abundantly clear. That matter relates to the mission of the Church and I hope that it is also the duty of the House. It is to realise that the Church must be able to forgive as well as to teach, that it has a duty, even to those in authority or who seek authority, to say that they are capable of error and capable of forgiveness and grace.

That is the fundamental issue which determines for me and for many others that justice and theology must come down in favour of the overriding principle that the Church should be capable—if it is thought right at the highest level and on the best advice—of saying that it can put aside and forgive a mistaken marriage. It should be able to say that it regards that as no absolute bar to someone who wishes to become an ordained member of the Church.

I hope that people will realise that this is a sensitive matter which does not easily allow the conclusion that it must be wrong to allow people who have been divorced and have remarried to become priests. It is not so simple as that, and I hope that we shall give to those people and to the Church the benefit of our necessary doubt.

3.1 am

**Sir John Stokes** (Halesowen and Stourbridge): This is obviously a difficult matter for the House, but having listened to the debate, I have to say that the House has distinguished itself. On such non-partisan matters we express the wisdom of a great many lay people in England.

I should like to add a few general points to those that have been made. England, unfortunately, has an immensely high divorce rate. About one third of marriages end in that way and that is the background against which we are discussing the Measure. There is also the question of the standards that the nation expects of its clergy. It is possible that hon. Members, who are more down to earth than some other people, expect a somewhat higher standard from our clergy than does the Synod. I have been a member of the Synod for four years, and I think that hon. Members represent the man and woman in the pew rather more accurately than does the Synod.

What worries me about the Measure is that if it is passed it will send out from the House a wrong or at least a confusing signal to people in England who look to the Church and the clergy to set high standards at this difficult time in our social life. I am also troubled by another matter which has not so far been discussed. I refer to the Measures that have come to the House from the Synod in recent years. They are all extremist, liberal Measures, and in time they may utterly destroy the fabric of the Church of England.

First, as many hon. Members may remember, we had the virtual destruction of the Book of Common Prayer on which the Church is based and its replacement by the alternative service book. That was done by the Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure 1974. We were assured then that the prayer book would not disappear, but it is disappearing very fast. Then we had the revolutionary proposal to ordain women as priests and because of that the Church is in danger of splitting in two.

Now we have this Measure. Later, this Measure may be followed by one to introduce so-called non-sexist language in the alternative service book and other books of the Church which would upset the vast majority of Church people and only please a fanatical minority of feminists. In the turbid debate about those depressed women, I ask what the Cabinet feels about them—but there we are.

In view of the disruptive Measures, which I believe will be put before us, we must study each one carefully. All of us have sympathy for clergy and others with marital troubles. The difficulty is that, once one starts to relax standards, there is no knowing where one will end up. I believe that in this country there is a mood against the permissiveness of the 1960s and 1970s and, in my experience, young people especially are looking to the Church for a lead. What sort of a lead does this Measure provide? If the Synod does not feel able to give a better lead than this, hon. Members, with all modesty, should decide not to pass the Measure and to maintain Christian standards in their entirety.

3.5 am

**Ms. Jo Richardson** (Barking): I have listened with the utmost care to the debate and have been impressed by what has been said by hon. Members on both sides of the House, although I am supporting the Measure. I have been impressed because I am not a member of the General Synod or of the Ecclesiastical Committee—I do not suppose that I ever will be—and I am sometimes confused by the language that is used. I shall therefore make my contribution in the simplest possible lay language.

I want to make two points. First, as has been said, the General Synod of the Church of England has deliberated and—as the right hon. Member for Selby, (Mr. Alison) said—agonised for a long time about this and many other matters. I understand the point that was made—that it is part of a package but it is before us, and we must make a decision.

The General Synod is the parliament of the Church of England. Its members are experienced, dedicated and distinguished theologians, which I and many right hon. and hon. Members in the House are not. The Synod came to its conclusion and supported the Measure, albeit, I accept, not by a two-thirds majority. It had a two-thirds majority in the House of Bishops and in the House of Clergy, but a majority of only 59 per cent. in the House of Laity, which has been a cause of some concern. It is to me, however, a substantial majority by any standards.

I do not believe that it should be the role of this Parliament—the Parliament of the people—however deeply some individuals may feel about the issue, to overturn the expressed view of the parliament of the Church of England. It is true that we are not disestablished, and I am not in any sense arguing for disestablishment, but our role is to consider the Measure. However, I believe that, once the Synod has come to a conclusion, both Houses of Parliament—the House of Lords and the House of Commons—should acquiesce in that decision and let it pass. We would be wrong to use our

*[Ms. Jo Richardson]*

superior powers—superior in the sense that we have the power to destroy this Measure—and to use our heavy hand to frustrate the Measure.

My second point relates to the principle of the Measure, which I believe enacts a basic social justice. I have read the ecclesiastical report and I have read the Lords *Hansard* as well as some other documents that I have been able to find. I understand that the objection of many right hon. and hon. Members is based on the idea that marriage is something that cannot be dissolved, and that therefore remarriage is a sin. Those who have been divorced or are now married to a partner who has been divorced are considered to have committed a sin by remarrying.

My hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) has said that that argument does not apply to priests. As I understand it, a priest is not barred from marrying or remarrying a divorced person and then sanctifying the marriage of other people. Tonight, however, we are deliberating on whether people who are not priests but who wish to be ordained should have that same privilege.

The Measure specifically relates to giving a few mature people who have valuable and much-needed skills and wisdom to offer, but who have been divorced and whose partner is still alive, or who is now married to a divorcee, to be ordained. Such people can be ordained only after each case has been considered by the diocesan bishop and reported to the archbishop. The person who wants to be ordained does not have an easy passage. To allow that person to be ordained would not mean that the floodgates would be opened. It would mean that there would be a tiny chink in the dyke through which might flow some good people with wisdom. The Church would benefit if it allowed that chink to be opened.

I do not believe that the Measure threatens the sanctity of marriage. Many people have a break in their marriage because of the death of their spouse. We do not say that they should not be allowed to remarry. We accept that that death is a sad occasion and often we are pleased when friends or relatives remarry some years later and find happiness with a second partner.

Many others suffer a break in marriage because, after trying hard, they find that it is not a marriage. They have to seek a divorce for the sake of their life and that of their partner, and the happiness of their children.

The House may know that I take a close interest in domestic violence and the problems associated with it. Over the years, I have been in contact with women who have been the subject of violence. Hon. Members may speak about the ease with which one can seek a divorce, but I beg them to believe that it is not easy. Women who sue for divorce after a violent marriage and who have fled the home do not do so lightly. Many return to the marital home after they have been beaten up because they want to keep the family together. If they seek a divorce, then make a clean break and remarry and their new partner wants to be ordained, should that person be prevented from doing so? That is what would happen.

**Mr. Frank Field:** The House is with my hon. Friend, but what of the person who does the beating?

**Ms. Richardson:** Good question. I always wonder, "What of the person who does the beating?"

**Mr. Field:** I intervened because there were two sides to the marriage that was being described—the person who was being beaten and the person who was doing the beating. My hon. Friend followed the line of the person who finally leaves that intolerable situation, and asked whether the person she marries should be disqualified from being a priest. I am suggesting that we know from divorced clergy wives who are given assurances that their husbands will not be given livings again that they are given more than one living. How can we be sure that it is not the beater, rather than the person who has been beaten, who is presented for ordination?

**Ms. Richardson:** I would have thought that my hon. Friend would trust the wisdom of the people who consider who is to be ordained. I do. As I said earlier, ordination for such people is not automatic.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** The hon. Lady has said that the rigour with which the Church considers these applications is even greater than the rigour with which it considers people who remain priests but who have failed in their priesthood. The matter has to go to the bishop and then to the archbishop. Only when the application has been personally sanctioned will it be approved. Presumably a beater will not get through that system.

**Ms. Richardson:** That is the obvious point. I am a little surprised that my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) should rest his case so heavily on a letter that he may have had from a person who feels disadvantaged in the way he has described, because I do not think that such a person would get through such a complicated procedure.

Most ordinary people do not divorce lightly. It is a difficult and traumatic experience. We are not talking about the small fraction of the population, whom we read of in highly publicised stories, who marry, divorce and marry again, apparently on a whim. That is not what it is like for most people. Nor are we talking about all divorced people. It is worth quoting what the Archbishop of Canterbury said in one of his speeches to the joint conference of the Ecclesiastical Committee and the Legislative Committe:

> "On the number of candidates coming up, I have made inquiries diocese by diocese about this position. There are about 16 deaconesses who cannot become deacons because they married a divorced partner. Apart from this I am reliably informed that the total numbers—mark that—the total numbers known to bishops and their Directors of Ordinands, of people offering themselves who are caught by the present rules, are 183 men and 57 women, a total of 240. This amounts to just over four men per diocese and one woman."

I thought, when I first heard about the Measure, that umpteen people were waiting to be ordained. I now find that there are very few. It would be reprehensible if the House decided not to pass this very modest Measure.

I have always thought that the Church is about forgiveness and love, not about taking it out on people. It seems that, in some cases, people have had it taken out of them because they have been divorced or because they are married to a divorcee. I hope that Parliament will not frustrate what that other parliament, the General Synod of the Church of England, wants to pass. I hope that my hon. Friends and other hon. Members will join me in the Lobby in support of it.

3.19 am

**Mr. Michael Latham** (Rutland and Melton): It is an honour to follow the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) and to take part briefly in this debate. The fact that the Benches are so full at this time of night shows the importance that hon. Members attach to the issue and the strength of feeling about it. That is all the more reason why it should have been debated at a reasonable time.

The subject has perplexed and attracted the attention of the House for well over a century. If hon. Members read the speeches made in 1857 on the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, they will see that similar arguments were offered then about the sanctity of marriage. Mr. Gladstone, for example, whose speech covered 32 columns in *Hansard*—the second speech that he had made in a week on the subject—said:

> "Sir, I shall enter into the theological argument under protest. It is impossible to conduct it in this House as it should be conducted . . . That is a matter for the assembly of divines or a synod of theologians; it is not a discussion which can be entered into by a popular assembly."—[*Official Report* 31 July 1857; Vol. 147, c. 836.]

Being Mr. Gladstone, he then went on at considerable length to deal with the arguments for and against divorce, with what the Greek word "porneia" meant, and so on.

Many of my hon. Friends are troubled by this Measure. One of the most recent books published on this subject was written in 1984 by two distinguished evangelical theologians. The bibliography—it is described as selective—on the subject of divorce alone runs to 19 pages. This is a matter on which our Lord said relatively little and on which biblical interpretations differ. For instance, in the Old Testament, there were circumstances in which divorce was mandatory. They are to be found in Deuteronomy and elsewhere. Distinguished theologians have arrived at many different perceptions of the issue.

The Church of England holds the most rigorous position of all churches. After the Reformation, the Protestant churches tended to allow divorce and remarriage on the grounds of adultery, whereas the Catholic church forbade divorce, but permitted dispensations. Uniquely, the Church of England offered neither the Protestant concessions nor the Catholic dispensations. As a result, a large number of people who had the money promoted private Acts in the House for divorce. That was why the Act of 1857 was passed—to allow more general divorce. Exactly the same issues were anguished over at the time and all sorts of different perceptions were advanced. They are all to be found in Owen Chadwick's "The Victorian Church". The bishops in the House of Lords put forward all sorts of contradictory views on the rules and on the biblical teaching about divorce.

There is no black and white in this matter. Theologians, bishops, divines and churches differ on it. In the eastern Orthodox Church, second marriages are permitted in church and there are specific services for them. These are complicated matters on which Christian people can and do honourably disagree. As several hon. Members have said, they also affect real people seeking the grace of ordination, who have written to and been to see their Members of Parliament about the problem. The House has absolute rights over the matter, but if we decide to turn down the Measure, those people will be lawfully denied the grace of ordination that they seek—the right to test their vocation against ordination, which could be extended to them only by the Archbishop of Canterbury or of York, and in no other circumstances.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Alison) was good enough to quote me, I should make my position clear. Of course the House has the legal right to reject any Measure of the General Synod of the Church of England, and on occasion it has done so. When the Conservative party was in opposition, my right hon. and learned Friend the present Attorney-General, whom I welcome to the debate, was largely instrumental in correctly persuading the House to reject a Measure on a basically secular matter wherein the Synod and the Ecclesiastical Committee had not noticed that the clergy were given inadequate rights of appeal. The House did its duty and rejected that Measure, and it was right to do so.

This matter, however, is entirely theological and, although our rights continue, I ask my hon. Friends the following question: is it personally right for us? Do we have the ability or the skill to set our theological judgment above that of the Archbishops of Canterbury and of York?

**Mr. Hugo Summerson** (Walthamstow): Yes.

**Mr. Latham:** Many others of my hon. Friends may think in the same way and, if so, they will vote in that way. I am simply saying that, if the bishops and archbishops of the Church of England, and the clergy—both of whose houses were substantially in favour of this Measure, and by well over two thirds—have debated and prayed to know the mind of Christ as they see it, then I will not set my theological judgment against theirs.

3.25 am

**Mr. George Howarth** (Knowsley, North): I came here tonight to fulfil an obligation to a constituent and had not planned to speak. However, after listening to the speeches, I felt that I had to make one or two points if I were to fulfil my obligation properly.

On most issues, I share common ground with my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), and I hold him in great affection, but I found his arguments tonight uncharacteristically confusing. He said that, as the Measure is not the whole loaf, rather than vote for half of it, we should let it fall by the wayside. Later, he argued in principle against the Measure.

We heard the authentic voice of 19th century England as it survives into the 20th century—that of the hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Sir J. Stokes). His view typified the undercurrent of feeling among Tory Members which made me feel that it was necessary to intervene—that the Church of England is all about cream teas on the village green, and tut-tutting about goings on.

The Church of England has moved into the real world in recent years, and has addressed central issues. We are talking about real lives and real people and about those whose vocation may be tested by other means. They should not be tested purely on the basis of marital history. There are other more important tests. In many cases, real people have suffered anguish over the years while they have waited for the Measure to go through the procedures of the Church, and come to the House. It has now gone through those procedures, and it would be intolerable if Parliament were not to accept what the Church has considered carefully and decided was the right thing to do. The House should support the Measure.

3.28 am

**Mr. William Powell** (Corby): As the son of a clergyman who administered to congregations for 58 years, I know that he would find the suggestion that he has not existed in the real world extremely difficult to comprehend. The Church has administered to people of England for centuries, and not just in the past year or two.

It is with considerable regret that I must disagree with the conclusions reached by my hon. Friend and my constituent, the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham). For reasons that have been substantially argued by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), I must ask the House to join us in the No Lobby tonight.

A point that has not been underlined as it should is that this is the worst piece of legislation that has been introduced in the six years that I have been a Member of Parliament. It is so loose and general that it is a legislative disgrace. Even the members of the Ecclesiastical Committee who voted with the majority were less than enthusiastic about the quality of the legislation. There was an almost universal view that it should be accompanied by a statutory code of conduct, or at the least a draft statutory code setting out how it would be administered should be made available to Parliament before it came to a decision. As the hon. Member for Birkenhead said, a wide discretion is laid down in the Measure, and initially one or two individuals will be let through. It is extremely likely that every one of the 244 individuals currently in the pipeline —more are joining it all the time—will in due course be ordained.

The Church of England faces a crisis in the number of its ordained Ministers. A generation ago, there were about 20,000 beneficed clergymen. There are now about 10,000, and about 10 per cent. of ordained Mininsters, taking priests and deacons together, are women. That is how important the ordination of women has become in terms of the Church's ordained manpower. *The Times* predicted last week that within 15 or 20 years the number of ordained clergymen will decline to about 5,000. It has become of paramount importance to all the bishops of the Church of England to try to increase the number of candidates available for ordination. I suspect that the hon. Member for Birkenhead was spot on when he told us how the discretion was likely to operate in practice, on the basis of what has happened in the past. More than anything else, this is part of the numbers game that is played by increasingly desperate leaders of the Church of England as they trawl to try to find more and more people from a smaller and smaller pool to fill the vacancies that are appearing.

We all know from our constituency experience that there are long vacancies between incumbencies in small parishes and in large. These vacancies cause considerable damage to the fabric of church life within the parishes.

I must say that I consider the quality of this legislation to be a disgrace. The House would be entirely right in rejecting it because there is no code of conduct setting out how the Measure will be administered in practice. Without a code of conduct, we should not agree to the proposed legislation.

3.33 am

**Mr. Alison:** Even at this late hour, the sands of time continue to run out. I hope that I shall be allowed to reply to the debate, which must end in three or four minutes, by making two quick points. First, I must tell my hon. Friend the Member for Gorby (Mr. Powell) that the details of how the archbishops propose to exercise their discretion and the instructions that they are proposing to issue in the diocese have been made available in the Vote Office and can be scrutinised. My hon. Friend may not have succeeded in procuring a copy of the relevant document.

Some right hon. and hon. Members, including my right hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government in an intervention, expressed continuing anxiety about whether the General Synod properly reached its majority conclusions without having recourse to the two-thirds majority voting procedure. I shall explain briefly the technicalities underlying the decision that a two-thirds decision was not applicable. Among other things, article 8 of the constitution of the General Synod applies

> "to a Measure or Canon providing for permanent changes in the services of Baptism or Holy Communion or in the Ordinal"—

that is, measures relating to ordination.

> "A special procedure applies"

where there are permanent changes, and in those circumstances an article 8 measure, so-called, must have a two-thirds majority in each house of the General Synod at final approval.

In June 1986, immediately before the so-called revision stage in the full General Synod, more than 25 members petitioned that the Measure be designated as article 8 business—that is, statutorily requiring a two-thirds majority vote.

As required by the constitution—article 8(2)—the matter was considered by the two archbishops, the so-called prolocutors together with the chairman and vice-chairman of the House of Laity. They ruled that the Measure was not article 8 business and that it did not require a two-thirds majority on the ground that, in their opinion, the Measure

> "is not providing for a permanent change in the Ordinal."

That decision was constitutionally properly reached and was accepted in the Synod. Lord Bridge, the chairman of the Ecclesiastical Committee, endorsed that decision. It was therefore right that the Church of England General Synod reached its conclusion without a two-thirds majority. I remind hon. Members that the voting in the House of Laity, the nearest group corresponding to us, was 125 in favour and 77 against.

*It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion* MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted Business).*

*The House divided:* Ayes 45, Noes 51.

**Division No. 304]** **[3.36 am**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hardy, Peter
Harris, David
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*

Mitchell, Sir David
Nellist, Dave
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Richardson, Jo
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Skinner, Dennis
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael

Thurnham, Peter
Waller, Gary
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Michael Latham and
Mr. Andrew Rowe.

NOES

Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bowis, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jessel, Toby
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*

Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lord, Michael
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Miller, Sir Hal
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Speed, Keith
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stevens, Lewis
Stokes, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Watts, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alistair Burt and
Mr. William Powell.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

## PETITION

## NHS Reform

3.47 am

**Mr. Allen McKay** (Barnsley, West and Penistone): I wish to present a petition on behalf of the people of Mapplewell, Darton and north Gawber, who are themselves acting for those who are patients at the health centre in Mapplewell. The petition is signed by some 1,700 people, who ask the House to consider their views. They are, to say the least, extremely concerned and distressed about the Government's proposals for the National Health Service, particularly as they affect general practitioner services. On their behalf, I ask the House to accept the petition.

*To lie upon the Table.*

## Homeless Young People (London)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

3.48 am

**Mr. Dave Nellist** (Coventry, South-East): Fifteen years ago, in my formative years as a young Socialist, one of the books that had a major effect on me was George Orwell's "Down and Out in Paris and London". In it Orwell describes the "spike", the place of last refuge for the homeless in the 1930s.

Today, in 1989—50 years after Orwell, after 10 years of Maggie's Britain and in the sixth or seventh consecutive year of successful economic growth, according to the Chancellor—the "spike" has been replaced by the "cardboard city" at Waterloo. There and elsewhere in the capital, surveys suggest that more than 3,000 people—a figure that has doubled in the past 18 months—are sleeping rough. Abject poverty among Rolls-Royces and five-star hotels makes a mockery of the words of the Secretary of State for Social Security on 11 May this year:

> "It is clear that people at all income levels now have substantially more money to spend in real terms than they did in the 1970s . . . not only are those with lower incomes not getting poorer, they are substantially better off than they have ever been before".

It is true that one section of society has benefited massively recently. Boardroom directors have received an average pay rise of 27 per cent.—faster than at any time this century. Among a dozen examples of the "I'm all right, Sir Jack" society is Sir David Scholey of the firm S. G. Warburg, who has just had a rise of take-home pay of 328 per cent.

In contrast, child benefit has been frozen and benefits for 16 and 17-year-olds axed completely, while the benefit rate for 18 to 24-year-olds is even less than the YTS rate, and at £27·50 is £7·50 less than the benefit received by those aged 25 and over. That impoverishes young people trying to live independently who, out of a pittance in benefit, have to pay water rates and 20 per cent. of general rates.

Those changes and others arrived in April 1988 and hammered millions of working-class people. They are the main contributing factors to the rise in young homeless people. Many families in Coventry lost £20 or more in housing benefit.

Under the old supplementary benefit system, young people were paid benefit in advance and therefore were able to pay for board-and-lodging accommodation immediately. In April 1988, that was changed to benefit paid fortnightly in arrears. It is impossible for many young people to get together the hundreds of pounds of advance rent and bond or surety required by many landlords. Their homelessness is directly Government-inspired.

Ten months ago, in September 1988, all 16 and 17-year-olds not on a YTS scheme lost all entitlement to income support. In the first three months of withdrawal of benefits—to conscript youngsters to the slave labour YTS scheme—only 1,269 discretionary severe hardship payments were accepted throughout the country, 215 of them in the London area. Thousands received nothing. A typical case was a 17-year-old Coventry lad, Terry Flowers, whom I mentioned in the House on December 5 last year, who, two months before his 18th birthday at Christmas 1988, was refused all benefit, although he had no chance of a

*[Mr. Dave Nellist]*

YTS place in competition with 16-year-olds who had two full years to give. He had no money for eight weeks and was advised by the DSS to try the Salvation Army.

In desperation, many youngsters come to London, hoping for work. After a few weeks they have little option other than begging, prostitution or both. They get little help from the harassed DSS officials. In 1979 there was an average of 50 cases per DSS worker; now, the figure is more than 80. In some London offices, it is no wonder that the annual staff turnover is more than 100 per cent.

Last Tuesday, the National Children's Home released a major piece of research by the NCH-run "young runaways" project. The director of social work at the NCH is Tom White, the former director of Coventry's social services. That report showed, in measured words, that

> "there is remarkably little accommodation and support made available to vulnerable young homeless people by Housing Authorities in Great Britain today . . . The safety net for young vulnerable people, embodied in the homelessness legislation is, apparently, no longer intact."

Eighty-five per cent. of housing authorities responded to that survey, which was conducted in the summer of 1987.

Young people at risk of sexual or financial exploitation, like hundreds now being prosecuted throughout London for vagrancy, are specified in homelessness legislation guidelines as eligible for housing. Yet one in five housing authorities said that a girl under 18 open to sexual and financial exploitation was not vulnerable, and half the authorities would not deem as vulnerable a young homeless care leaver, a young homeless person with no parents and no support, or a young homeless person under a probation order. Many of them explained that the shortage of council housing for homeless families meant that, no matter what the risk, young, single homeless people did not get a look in.

The NCH report concludes that 10 years ago, most young single people in housing need had a range of options, but today there is almost a complete absence of permanent and decent low-cost accommodation. Recent laws, such as the Housing Act 1988 and the Local Government Housing Bill, coupled with the draconian effects of the poll tax, will exacerbate that position. The report castigates the Government's social security cuts, especially as they affect young people. In that it backs up last year's Barnardo's report and more recent reports such as "Farewell to Welfare" by the West Midlands Welfare Rights Agency.

In September 1987, the Children's Society estimated the number of young people who go missing each year. It wrote in a report:

> "Young people on the streets with nowhere to sleep, especially in the West End of London or other inner city areas, are clearly vulnerable and at risk. Many have left home because of family tensions aggravated by overcrowded housing, poverty, unemployment, or physical or sexual abuse. They are usually lonely, frightened, cold and penniless and often exposed to sexual exploitation, petty crimes and drug misuse. In 1986, the Children's Society contacted all the chief police officers in the United Kingdom to try to estimate the size of the problem of missing and runaway children and young people. The nearest estimate, based on responses from half the police forces, was that 75,000-85,000 young people go missing every year . . . Many will survive by sleeping rough in alleyways, doorways or abandoned cars".

As if that was not enough, we learn from leaks in *The Times* today of further financial harassment of the young homeless by a Government plan to restrict the payment of housing benefit to people living in their home area. The Department of Environment plan will discourage people from flocking to the big cities and is already causing difficulties and differences within the Cabinet, we hear. The Treasury is keen on the move, as it would reduce the rising bed-and-breakfast costs faced by councils putting up homeless families. Not surprisingly, it has the backing of the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Prime Minister, who see it as a way of reducing the growing number of the homeless in London itself.

Added to that financial harassment, there is the existing physical harassment against homeless young people through sections 3 and 4 of the Vagrancy Act 1824. It is one of the most archaic and arcane pieces of legislation still on the statute book. It speaks of the "idle and disorderly", of "rogues and vagabonds" and of "incorrigible rogues". According to Lionel Rose's book, section 4 was aimed at

> "the suspect characters the law could not pin specific crimes on but who were apparently up to no good".

He gives as examples:

> "'Every suspected person or reputed thief' frequenting dock areas or public highways 'with intent to commit a felony'; and those who 'wandered abroad' (that is, slept out) without visible means of subsistence and unable to give a good account of themselves."

Rose goes on to explain:

> "The Act continued the principle from earlier statutes of presuming the guilt of Section 4 defendants from their conduct, and the onus was on them to explain themselves; this runs counter to the general presumption of innocence in British criminal prosecution."

The Act has since been variously described as

> "simply a measure of repression"

and "purely coercive." That is certainly its role today. thousands of youngsters attracted to the big cities like London in a desperate search for work, or forced to leave home because of the breakdown of relationships with parents, are now found homeless. Estimates were given today in the Lords of 150,000 homeless teenagers in this so-called modern, affluent country, with one third of that number—a staggering 50,000—in London itself, without decent, clean, permanent and cheap accommodation—without, in fact, a home.

One example of that was a girl of 17 interviewed on the BBC television programme "On the Record" on 19 February 1989. Her name was Ris Williams. She spoke of leaving home a year and a half ago when she was coming up for 16, how she had been in care for about a year and how she had tried to go back to her mother's, stayed for two or three weeks, but left again having been abused by her father. She had been on the street ever since, begging because her benefit was stopped in December; and, because it was illegal, she had been nicked for it loads of times and got a £10 fine. She had to beg the money to pay off the fine and then got nicked begging the money to pay off the fine. She said:

> "it's just catch 22—a vicious circle."

The available statistics on prosecutions under sections 3 and 4 of the 1824 Act seem very low. The latest figures relate to 1987, despite my parliamentary questions in the past three months seeking more recent statistics. The figures show that, in 1987, 466 people in England and Wales were prosecuted for begging, of which 416—that is, 89 per cent.—were in London alone. The figure for those prosecuted for sleeping out in England and Wales was 14.

I believe that the closest magistrates court to the House of Commons is at Horseferry road, a few hundred yards away. In 1987, 55 people were prosecuted for there begging and 53 were found guilty. That was in the year before the social security changes. The figure for Horseferry road magistrates court was about one conviction a week. When I spoke as recently as five or six hours ago to barristers and solicitors who have worked recently at Horseferry road, they talked about an explosion of that offence from one a week to it not being unusual for four or five youngsters to be seen in a single morning, and to be fined £10 or a day in custody—which, in many cases, they are deemed to have served overnight in the police cells.

Their hunger has led to begging, but their crime is not begging; it is poverty. The escalating problem of young people wanting work and ending up sleeping rough and of the mentally ill or alcoholic being hounded by 19th-century coercive and repressive legislation is a disgrace.

The cost of a solicitor from the Crown prosecution service is almost £15 per hour. Use of a private solicitor costs between £85 and £150 for half a day. Does the Minister think it a good use of taxpayers' money for the Metropolitan police to arrest, detain and process such youngsters and for the Crown prosecution service to prosecute them? How much a year is it costing? Would it not be better to use that money to provide decent accommodation and decent benefits?

At the beginning of the 1980s, the Labour Member of Parliament Jock Stallard tried to introduce a Bill to abolish the begging and sleeping-out provisions of the Vagrancy Act. With the increasing scandal of its escalating use, the time is right, perhaps in the next Session, for a further attempt to be made. I believe that to that should be added the abolition of the restrictions preventing young people from registering on local authority housing lists and, indeed, for priority to be given to 16 to 18-year-olds.

There should also be provision for the control of the bed-and-breakfast hotels that are used by DSS claimants in order to prevent the profiteering of multiple occupation; for the immediate payment of board and lodging allowances, instead of payment in arrears as at present; for decent benefits for young people, without the disparity between the under-25s and the over-25s; for those benefits to be paid at two-thirds of average earnings to allow people to live, not barely exist; and for a crash building programme, which I believe should include the municipalisation of corporately owned property.

The scandal of homelessness should be one of the easiest problems to solve. It requires planning and, in my view, public ownership and the planning of the economy, not the Government's use of market forces. Market forces create the Nicholas Hoogstratens of this world, for whom rising property values, especially in London, of 16 per cent. per year in the past eight years, have meant that the capital value of property, when sold and investested, is far more valuable than rents, especially with the abysmally low social benefits on which countless people cannot afford to pay those rents.

Socialist planning could bring the 3 million unemployed, together with the building and construction industry, into public partnership, through public ownership. It could reverse the past 10 years of decline, which have left us with more than 1 million homes in Britain unfit for human habitation and a further 500,000 without basic amenities such as toilets or hot water. It could reverse the 70 per cent. rise in housing waiting lists, which now stand at over 1·25 million and it could reverse the three quarters fall in council house building.

It could also reverse the perverse slide of thousands of young people within a couple of miles of this Chamber, for whom the Catch 22 of no job means no home, and no permanent address means no job, who are drifting into crime, prostitution and drug abuse, who are being arrested, charged and sentenced under Dickensian poor laws, and who are building up a string of convictions which makes the chance of a prospective employer looking favourably upon them virtually impossible.

Those are the casualties of this Tory Government's slashing of benefits and of beneficial public spending. They are the victims of capitalism at its most obscene.

4.3 am

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North) *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Does the hon. Gentleman have the agreement of the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) and of the Minister to intervene?

**Mr. Corbyn:** I do, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) for allowing me a few minutes of his debate, for succeeding in getting this debate and for putting on the record our concern about homelessness in London and about the way in which the Vagrancy Act 1824 is being used.

It is highly appropriate that we should be considering the Vagrancy Act 1824, because it was introduced in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars to criminalise homeless people—who were often thrown off land by illegal enclosures—who had moved to urban areas seeking work and a place to live. The Act gave the law enforcement authorities of the time enormous powers. That force and power is being used today against poor young people who, through no fault of their own, have nowhere to live. Anyone who travels around London or who lives in London—as I do—will believe that the situation is distressing and appalling.

Every day at Finsbury Park tube station, near where I live, there are many young people who busk and beg. They ask for the price of a cup of tea or for help to find bed-and-breakfast accommodation. I see many young people in those circumstances at my weekly constituency surgeries. They are very distressed that they cannot find anywhere to live in London. My hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East said that there are 50,000 homeless young people in London. I imagine that that figure is correct, if a little on the conservative side.

A combination of factors have led to this appalling situation. For example, over the past 10 years, there has been a net loss of 31,000 council-owned properties in London. Secondly, the rent in the private sector for a one-bedroomed flat in London is on average £65 a week, although in many inner parts of London the rents are much higher. In my constituency, it is barely possible to find a shared bedsit for less than £50 a week. Those figures are correct and the prices are rising very quickly.

Very few London borough housing authorities can house single young people. They must give priority to the elderly, who are deemed to be extremely vulnerable—as indeed they are. They must also give priority to single

*[Mr. Corbyn]*

parents who are also deemed to be vulnerable. My hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East referred to the problem with vulnerability which is a serious defect in the housing and homeless persons legislation. My hon. Friend referred to the research carried out by the National Children's Home, which has its head office in my constituency. We would all agree that the NCH is a reputable organisation which has done much work for the homeless.

The NCH research shows that over a fifth of the responding housing authorities said that a girl under 18 open to sexual and financial exploitation was not vulnerable. Half the responding housing authorities said that they would not deem as vulnerable a young person with no parents and no support. One in eight authorities said that they would. Over two fifths of responding authorities said that they would not consider as vulnerable a young person with serious family or relationship problems, while one fifth said that they would. There is a large area of discretion. From my experience as a councillor and now as a Member of Parliament in London for the past 15 years, the definitions in the homeless persons legislation have increasingly been drawn more narrowly, largely because of the inability of local authorities to build or buy on the open market. I deplore that.

Ten years ago, it was possible to get young people into hard-to-let accommodation. That is now impossible, and they are sleeping on the streets and are begging. In some parts of the country they are sad victims of the poll tax and of unemployment. They are also victims of broken homes and the lack of affordable housing in this capital city. Their tragedy is that they are criminalised through the use of the Vagrancy Act 1824; they are arrested, held in custody and subseqently fined. They are not criminals, they are victims.

The Government should repeal the Vagrancy Act 1824, as they repealed the sus laws after a strong campaign. They must recognise that the lives of young people are often blighted by their initial experience of moving to London —that magnetic urban area where they think that they can find work and somewhere to live. Even if they can get a job, they cannot find anywhere to live. If they cannot find anywhere to live, they often cannot find a job because they cannot quote an address. All the agencies dealing with the young, single and vulnerable report that they are at breaking point. The staff and the doors are at breaking point. The whole system is collapsing. We need action to resolve this crisis.

4.9 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg):** The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) has raised an important issue, and in reply I intend to concentrate primarily on those issues for which the Home Office has the lead responsibility—the provisions of the Vagrancy Act 1824. It would be helpful if I first set out what the Act seeks to achieve.

Section 3 of the Act makes it an offence to be an unlicensed pedlar, a common prostitute behaving in a riotous or indecent manner or a beggar. The penalty on summary conviction is a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

Section 4 of the Act makes it an offence for a person to be fortune-telling with intent to deceive, sleeping rough, indecently exposing himself, gathering alms by exposing wounds or deformities, collecting for charity under false pretences, found on private property for an unlawful purpose, or violently resisting arrest for an offence under section 3. For these offences, the penalty on summary conviction is a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

The whole Act has been subject to scrutiny in the recent past. In 1976, a Home Office working party examined the whole issue of vagrancy and street offences. It recommended the abolition of two offences—street trading without a licence and being a common prostitute behaving in a riotous or indecent manner—but it recommended the retention of a begging offence based on persistence, because beggars can be a nuisance—and, of course, some people may feel intimidated by them—and because they are not necessarily as destitute as they may claim, so that there may be an element of falsehood in their demands.

Similarly, the Select Committee on Home Affairs recommended in its third report in 1981 that the begging offence in the section of the Vagrancy Act to which I referred should be retained, at least for the time being. The Committee felt that the existence of the offence may well have helped to keep the problem of persistent begging within manageable proportions, but it expressed the hope that the wider availability of suitable accommodation would enable both the begging offence and the offence of sleeping rough under section 4 of the Act to be repealed within the foreseeable future.

Enforcing the Act is not an easy task for the police. The law itself is quite plain. It is an offence to sleep rough or to beg. It is also an offence to obstruct the highway, to be publicly drunk or to use illegal drugs, and the presence of any large group of people, some of whom are the worse for drink or drugs, may pose a threat to the peace. So the police cannot simply ignore these people and walk away.

Undoubtedly, the police apply the law sensibly. I am a little perplexed by the difference between the figures given by the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East and figures that I have in front of me. I shall look further at the matter, because the discrepancy is considerable and I have difficulty in reconciling the figures. The figures that I have are confined to the Metropolitan police area. I am told that, in 1988, the Metropolitan police arrested only 15 people for begging and none at all for sleeping rough. They may have dealt with many more who went unrecorded, but generally their policy is to arrest only when there is some element of threatening or intimidating behaviour. I accept that the figures that I have given are not compatible with those given by the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East. One of us must be wrong.

**Mr. Nellist:** My figures came form the Home Office annual statistics and were for 1987. My notes have now gone to the *Official Report*, but from memory there were 416 arrests under section 3 in the Metropolitan police area. It seems incredible, especially in view of the social security cuts, for the figure to fall as low as the figure that the Minister has given for the London area in 1988.

**Mr. Hogg:** The hon. Gentleman has said that the figures that he gave were for 1987. I accept his point that it is difficult to reconcile my figures with those given by the hon. Gentleman. It is plain that I must look at the matter again, because we cannot both be right. I shall write to the hon. Gentleman with my conclusions.

Whenever they can, the Metropolitan police put young people in touch with social services departments and voluntary agencies that may be able to help them, and they keep closely in touch with those agencies. They are also taking part in some projects that are being run by voluntary agencies to help homeless youngsters.

When we consider the broader question of young people and housing, we need to recognise that the youngsters who sleep rough in central London do so for a variety of reasons. No doubt many of them have missed their opportunities throughout life. Perhaps they have come from a broken family, have left school without the basic skills to equip themselves for work or perhaps they lack the self-discipline required to find and hold down a job. They may be unaware of the opportunities that exist for skills training and for financial support through the social security system. But if we are also honest with ourselves, we will recognise that there are others who are perfectly capable of finding work but who prefer for a variety of reasons to live rough.

The Government believe that, in general, the best place for young people to live is at home with their relatives —and 85 per cent. do so. At the same time, we accept that there are some 16 and 17-year-olds who, for a good reason, need to live independently and require extra help to do so. The range of benefits available means that those young people who genuinely cannot live at home have the wherewithal to find alternative accommodation, either as a private tenant or in board and lodging.

All 16 and 17-year-olds are guaranteed the offer of a place on the youth training scheme. Trainees are entitled both to the basic YTS allowance of £29·50 in the first year and £35 per week in the second, and housing benefit on top if they are living away.

From this month, those young people's entitlement to housing benefit is being increased so as to offset some of the everyday expenses, particularly travelling costs, associated with taking up a YTS place. Sixteen and 17-year-olds who are in work will also receive that extra help through housing benefit.

Also from this month, payments made by local authorities to help young people leaving care will be ignored when calculating income support and housing benefit. Young people who have no living parent or guardian, or who are in local housing authority care, or who are in danger of physical or sexual abuse at home receive income support, and associated housing benefit, during the period between leaving school and finding either a job or a YTS place. The Government have also decided that those eligible for that temporary income support entitlement will also include those youngsters whose relationship with their parents has irretrievably broken down.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services has the power to direct that, in cases of unavoidably "severe hardship", income support will be made available to any young person who would not otherwise be eligible. All such claims are considered on their individual merits—between September 1988 and the end of March 1989, 65 per cent. of all such applications were accepted. Homeless young people who need to resort to night shelters will be automatically considered for a "severe hardship" direction.

Unsubstantiated estimates are that 2,000 young people sleep rough in London every night. Some of those youngsters could be accommodated in the hostel or resettlement unit places that the Government have provided in recent years. There are 4,000 emergency beds in London alone, but it is unfortunately the case that some of those who sleep rough are simply not prepared to use them as a step towards permanent accommodation.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has given a high priority to remedying the problem of homelessness in England and Wales. More than £38 million in additional resources has recently been made available to those London boroughs with the most severe difficulties over homelessness.

That is expected to lead to the creation of well over 400 new hostel places and the reinstatement of more than 2,000 local authority and housing association dwellings. Last year, the Housing Corporation committed some £120 million to homelessness schemes administered by housing associations in and around London. It is an unfortunate fact that some of those local authorities in London which are most critical of central Government are also the least competent to manage their own housing stock. At the last count—April 1988—there were about 23,000 empty council houses in London, 9,000 of them empty for more than a year.

Right-to-buy receipts are not being fully exploited to bring back empty property into use. Too much time is being wasted by town councils before re-letting vacant flats and houses. In its recent study of homelessness, the Audit Commission estimated that, if the average re-let period for a council house could be reduced by six weeks in London, and three weeks elsewhere, an average of 17,700 empty dwellings would be released.

I am afraid, too, that London's rent arrears are unacceptably high. Nine inner-London boroughs—all-Labour controlled—plus Liverpool city council account together for nearly 40 per cent. of the total municipal rent arrears——

*The Motion having been made after Ten o'clock on Monday evening, and the debate having continued for half an hour,* MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

*Adjourned at eighteen minutes past Four o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Tuesday 18 July 1989*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY (BECKTON) BILL

*(By Order)*

*Lords amendments agreed to.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## EMPLOYMENT

### Strikes

1. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to legislate on the subject of strike action in the public sector; and if he will make a statement.

15. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will seek to withdraw trade union immunities from strike action in monopoly public services.

**The Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Norman Fowler):** In the light of recent disputes the Government are reviewing the law on industrial action. We will bring forward any proposals in due course.

**Mr. Riddick:** I welcome the review. May I suggest, however, that a possible way forward would be to remove the legal immunities enjoyed by trade unions during strike action, particularly in public service monopolies? Does my right hon. Friend agree that the decision by the National Union of Railwaymen to continue its strike after the other two rail unions had accepted British Rail's offer is almost unbelievable and utterly disgraceful? Does it not show that the NUR does not give a damn about the travelling public?

**Mr. Fowler:** I agree entirely with what my hon. Friend says about the decision itself—it was a deplorable decision, and one which caused hardship to many people. I can only hope that the NUR will think again about its policy. As for the review, we shall obviously consider the whole position and, as I have said, bring forward proposals in due course.

**Mr. Bowis:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that far too many strikes take place in the public as opposed to the private sector? Does he also agree that there are far too many monopolies in the public sector? While any strike is to be deplored, the effects of strikes in the monopoly public services go far beyond the people directly involved in the industrial action, hitting those who cannot use alternative provision, either because there is no such provision or because they cannot afford it. Should not my right hon. Friend take action to protect the vulnerable in our society?

**Mr. Fowler:** As I have said, we are reviewing the legal position. As an immediate step, I think that the NUR should accept the tribunal award, as have the other unions concerned. I do not believe that the public will understand if one of the unions keeps the strike going. We want an end to the dispute and so do the public—and so, I believe, do most railwaymen.

**Mr. Grocott:** Will the Secretary of State take this opportunity to condemn people in well-paid jobs, including Ministers, who are always attacking those in low-paid jobs for taking industrial action to improve their standard of living?

**Mr. Fowler:** No one is attacking anyone at this point. *[Interruption.]* We are saying that the NUR should follow the example of the other two unions and accept the tribunal award. It would come well from the Opposition —particularly the Opposition spokesman, the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher)—to condemn industrial action which is causing unnecessary hardship to many thousands of people.

**Mr. Cryer:** Does the Secretary of State not realise that the same sort of attack was made on the trade union movement in pre-war Fascist Germany? As the Prime Minister who appointed the right hon. Gentleman—and who may well be shifting him—supports trade unions in Poland, will he tell her that trade unions in this country should also have rights, which should not be confined to Poland? Why should not the NUR make its own decision after the weeks and months of deception on the part of British Rail management, which has betrayed agreements and continually gone behind the union's back, especially in the courts?

**Mr. Fowler:** I believe that the vast majority of people want the NUR to accept the tribunal's decision. The other two unions involved in the dispute have accepted it, and it is incomprehensible that the NUR has taken its present position.

The purpose of industrial relations legislation is to protect the public, and every poll carried out shows that our trade union legislation is supported by the vast majority.

**Mr. Devlin:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that since 1979 there have been three times as many strikes in the public sector as in the private sector? Does that not make the case for further privatisation and also for the further regulation of public sector unions, whose strike action inevitably hits the most vulnerable people?

**Mr. Fowler:** No decision has yet been taken on privatisation. I repeat that the immediate action that can be taken now is for the NUR to call off the industrial action and accept the tribunal's award, which has already been accepted by the two other unions.

**Mr. Wallace:** Does the Secretary of State believe in the basic right of an employee to withdraw his or her labour?

**Mr. Fowler:** There is, of course, a right to strike, but I think that the hon. Gentleman and also the public would expect us to look at strikes in the public services. We are not alone in doing that. Other European countries are having similar problems. I have already said that we shall review the position, and that is what we shall do. When we have reached conclusions, we shall announce them.

**Mr. Jacques Arnold:** Will my right hon. Friend accept from me that my constituents in Kent are fed up with strikes in the public services and with the posturing of national union officers? Is it not a fact that the losers are not only the public but public servants in the south-east and that we should be far better served by regional pay and local negotiations?

**Mr. Fowler:** That is obviously one of the issues in the dispute, but I think that what the public and the railwaymen want is an end to the dispute. Apparently, only the NUR executive wants the dispute to continue. I very much hope that the Labour party will make it clear this afternoon that it, too, wants the industrial action to be called off.

**Mr. Meacher:** Will the right hon. Gentleman acknowledge and make clear that a ban on public sector strikes—something which the Government talked about during the dispute—is a daft idea? It did not work during the second word war, it was specifically rejected by the Government in 1981, it is not operated in other European countries and it is simply an invitation to provocation by management. Does the right hon. Gentleman not realise that if he seriously wants to safeguard essential services, as we all do, he would do far better if, rather than withdrawing fundamental democratic rights, he sought to improve the arbitrary and inept mismanagement that we have seen so often in the public sector in recent years?

**Mr. Fowler:** As I have made clear, we are reviewing the law on industrial relations. We shall make our proposals known after the review. The whole House will have noted that the hon. Member for Oldham, West has taken his line straight from the NUR executive. He has offered not one word of condemnation of the industrial action. The fact is that however damaging or irresponsible any industrial action is, the hon. Gentleman will always support it.

### Employment Training

2. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received concerning the eligibility requirements for employment training.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Patrick Nicholls):** Representations are received from time to time. The eligibility conditions for employment training are sufficiently widely drawn to help those who are most disadvantaged in the labour market.

**Mr. Janner:** Is it correct that the Department of Employment has given instructions to employment service managers that the number of people to be admitted to or referred for employment training must be increased by 50 per cent? If that is true, does it not mean that people will be put on employment training who are totally unsuitable for it and that this is yet another of the Government's efforts to fiddle the unemployment figures?

**Mr. Nicholls:** No, the employment training programme is the most successful programme so far to train the adult unemployed to get themselves back into the world of work. The programme is supported by a great number of Labour-controlled authorities. There is no question of its being compulsory or of trying to force people to train. The Government are anxious that anyone who has it in him to benefit from the sort of training available should do so.

**Mr. Simon Coombs:** Does my hon. Friend recognise that in some parts of the country the number of people available for employment training is diminishing rapidly? Will he therefore examine carefully the need for a flexible policy to ensure that the additional cost per head is allowed for in Government budgeting for the future of the scheme?

**Mr. Nicholls:** My hon. Friend is entirely right to draw attention to the consequences for employment training of the declining unemployment rate. He may have wondered why the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) did not remind the House that the percentage fall in unemployment in his constituency for the year ending June 1989 was 19·2 per cent. We accept that funding arrangements have to be kept under review.

### Labour Statistics

3. **Mr. Maples:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are employed in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Fowler:** In March 1989 the work force in employment in the United Kingdom was 26,685,000. This represents an increase of nearly 600,000 since March 1988 and is the highest level of employment ever in this country.

**Mr Maples:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that the increase in the general level of employment in Britain has resulted in a fall in the level of unemployment in my constituency of more than 20 per cent. in the past 12 months? What is the level of unemployment in Greater London and how many vacancies are registered there?

**Mr Fowler:** Greater London has an unemployment rate of about 5 per cent. In Greater London generally, unemployment has fallen by more than 24 per cent. in the year to June 1989. Overall, there are now 226,000 vacancies in jobcentres around the country and we estimate that there are 600,000 vacancies in the economy generally. In Greater London there are about 25,000 vacancies in jobcentres and more than 100,000 in the economy. There is therefore no reason why unemployment should not continue to fall, provided that pay settlements are reasonable and strikes are avoided.

**Mr. James Lamond:** Why does not the Secretary of State give us the other side of the picture? For example, more than 15,000 people have lost jobs in the textile industry this year alone. There is never a statement from the Dispatch Box, like the one boasting of the Honda investment, about the closure by Courtaulds in the north-west.

**Mr. Fowler:** Obviously, there are areas where unemployment has been more difficult and has risen in contrast with other areas. The hon. Gentleman will know that the rate of employment in the north-west has reduced at a faster rate than most other areas of the country.

## Employment Training

4. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many officials of the Manpower Services Commission are directly involved in the supervision of employment training; and what is the average number of schemes and participants for which each such officer is responsible.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Around 1,500 staff in the Training Agency's area offices are involved in the administration of employment training. These staff are engaged in a range of duties, including checking claims and authorising payments, monitoring schemes and general office duties. Taking into account these different functions, on average there is about one member of staff per training agent or manager, or one member of staff per 130 trainees.

**Mr. Hardy:** That scarcely suggests that there are sufficient resources to provide a proper response when there are grounds for serious concern about any particular scheme, as is the case with one scheme in the metropolitan borough of Rotherham, about which my hon. Friends and I have been in correspondence with the Minister.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I do not accept that the figures show any such thing. I can only repeat the offer that I made to the hon. Gentleman as long ago as May—that if he and his hon. Friends wish to see me to discuss a particular scheme I shall be more than happy to do so. Certainly his views would not be shared by his own metropolitan borough council—a Labour-controlled council which is involved in employment training as a training manager and provides 175 places.

**Mr. Baldry:** Does not employment training provide high-quality training for those in the work force or the potential work force who might otherwise find it difficult to obtain skills training? It is not the case that 18 per cent. of those on employment training have literacy or numeracy difficulties, 11 per cent. come from ethnic minorities, 12 per cent. have physical disabilities and 50 per cent. come from inner cities? Those groups need to be targeted to bring them into the labour force. Instead of carping, the Labour party should be applauding these initiatives.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My hon. Friend has it exactly. At a time when unemployment is coming down dramatically—in the constituency of the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy), for example, it has fallen by 27·7 per cent. in the past year—those still unemployed find it harder to get back to work. The whole climate of employment training and the various waivers of eligibility criteria are designed to ensure that those most in need of help obtain the help that they need.

## Trade Unions

5. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many official meetings he has had with trades union leaders since assuming his present office.

**The Minister of State, Department of Employment Mr. John Cope):** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular meetings with trade union leaders, as do all other Employment Ministers.

**Mr. Adley:** I welcome that answer, but does my right hon. Friend not agree that there is a slight incongruity in his reply and the fact that Ministers at the Department of Transport with responsibility for British Rail have not met the unions for a year? Does my right hon. Friend agree that the intransigence of the National Union of Railwaymen, which we have seen in the past few hours holding the jobs of other workers to ransom, is one reason why there is an urgent need to restructure the trade unions in the railways and replace three trade unions with one? Does my right hon. Friend see any role for his officials in trying to bring that process forward?

**Mr. Cope:** As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, the way out of the present difficulty is for the NUR to accept the 8·8 per cent. offer arising from the tribunal's decision. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service is, of course, always available to help both sides in any dispute and it, rather than my officials, is the proper body to approach.

**Mr. Wilson:** If the Minister gets around to meeting trade union leaders, will he place on the agenda the plight of 16 and 17-year-olds? Does he realise that one of the risks of meeting trade union leaders is that the bogus unemployment statistics that Ministers use so freely may be challenged? Does he accept that according to statistics supplied by the House of Commons Library, fully one quarter of the alleged drop in unemployment in Scotland between April 1988 and April 1989 is accounted for by the simple device of removing all 16 and 17-year-olds from the unemployment register? More than 18,000 Scottish unemployed 16 and 17-year-olds were claiming benefit in April 1988. In April 1989, there were none. Does the Minister regard that as a success for Government policy or for statistical sleight of hand?

**Mr. Cope:** No trade union leaders whom we have met recently have raised that matter. There are plenty of youth training scheme places available in all areas, including the hon. Gentleman's own area. That is the most important point. All the statistics are published and made available on a proper international basis.

## Secondary Industrial Action

6. **Sir Michael Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many complaints about secondary picketing or secondary action have been received by the trade union commissioner; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** I understand that no applications for assistance have so far been made to the commissioner in connection with secondary action or picketing.

**Sir Michael Shaw:** I welcome that reply, but does my right hon. Friend not agree that the Government's action in changing the law has been received well and has been of real benefit not only to all those engaged in industry, but to the general public?

**Mr. Cope:** Yes, I think that it has been an exceptionally beneficial measure, which we introduced among other trade union reforms. It would be exceptionally damaging if it were reversed, as the Labour party intends.

**Mr. Madden:** Will the Minister confirm that there have been no complaints about secondary picketing arising from the dispute at Ever-Sure Textiles in Sheffield, where the workers—predominantly women—are in the fifth week of a strike and trying to persuade management to grant trade union recognition? Does he understand that the women concerned, who when in work receive £61 for a 38-hour week, are anxious to obtain trade union recognition and to improve wages and conditions of employment? Will he urge the management of Ever-Sure Textiles to get back to the ACAS talks so that this unhappy dispute can be resolved quickly?

**Mr. Cope:** I do not intend to intervene in the dispute. No applications for assistance about secondary action in the case the hon. Gentleman mentioned or in others, have been received by the commissioner.

### Strikes

7. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many days were lost through strikes in the first quarter of the current year and in the same period of 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Fowler:** In the first quarter of this year, 175,000 working days were lost through strikes. During the first quarter of 1979, in the period of the last Labour Government, the number of working days lost through strikes was 6,724,000.

**Mr. Colvin:** What is all this talk about a summer of discontent? On the basis of those figures, the position during Labour's winter of discontent was 40 times worse than the present situation. Does my right hon. Friend acknowledge that industrial disputes in the public sector are three times more likely than in the private sector and that if we want industrial peace in public transport, whether among railway workers or air traffic controllers, we should either ban strikes or privatise the industries, or both?

**Mr. Fowler:** I have already said that privatisation is a longer-term issue. We are reviewing industrial relations law and will make our announcements in due course. I think that most hon. Members want an end to the current dispute and want the NUR to accept the offer that is now being made.

**Mr. John P. Smith:** Does the Minister recognise that the primary reason for the reduction in strikes since 1979 was mass unemployment—topping 3 million—and the decimation of whole tracts of the industrial sector? Does he recognise that much of the legislation passed during that time has been irrelevant, which is why we now have an upsurge in strikes?

**Mr. Fowler:** I do not accept that. Every opinion poll has shown that the public value the changes in the law that have been introduced since 1979. I know few people who want to return to the kind of conditions that we had before 1979. The only exception is the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher).

**Mr. Roger King:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that one of the great changes that has occurred since 1979 is that working people and management have worked much more closely together in providing pay and conditions based on productivity and an understanding that unless they produce the right goods at the right price their jobs and future prosperity are at risk?

**Mr. Fowler:** That is right. Over the past year, there has been a record increase in the number of jobs created. One of the lessons learnt from the 1970s was that industrial action and strikes not only lost jobs but exported our jobs overseas. I do not think that anyone wants to return to that situation. That is why it is so eccentric of the Labour party to put forward proposals to extend secondary action and secondary picketing.

**Mr. Fatchett:** Does not the Secretary of State realise that later figures for this year show a substantial increase in the number of days lost through industrial action? How does he explain that increase? Is it because of the Government's failure to handle inflation? Is it because senior management are paying themselves up to a 200 per cent. wage increase? Is it because the present Secretary of State believes that he has a personal career interest in generating conflict in industry?

**Mr. Fowler:** I make it absolutely clear where we and the Government stand. We want to see an end not only to this dispute but to other industrial disputes. The public certainly want the railway dispute to end, as do most railwaymen. The most indicative part of the debate this afternoon has been the way in which the Opposition Front Bench avoided every opportunity of condemning industrial action and of urging the NUR to follow the example of the other two unions, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Transport Salaried Staffs Association, and to accept the tribunal's arbitration decision. The public will draw their own conclusions about the Opposition's attitude.

**Mr. Gow:** Is it my right hon. Friend's view that today's strike and any future strike called by the NUR are unjustified and unjustifiable? Is it his view that it is in the best interests of every member of the NUR, of every employee of British Rail, of British Rail and of the travelling public that this strike should cease at once?

**Mr. Fowler:** Yes, that is entirely my view, and it is also the view of the overwhelming majority of the public and of all the travelling public. I think that the message that should go out is that this strike should be called off. It is against the public interest, and the sooner it is called off, the better it will be for everyone concerned.

### Employment Training

8. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has about the number of employment training placements in the Greater London region.

**Mr. Nicholls:** We estimate that more than 12,100 people on employment training in the London region are on placements with employers or projects on any one day.

**Ms. Ruddock:** Is the Minister aware that his figures conceal the fact that there has been a cut in places which greatly exceeds the cut in the level of unemployment in Greater London. Is he trying to run down the Deptford skill centre? If not, how does he explain the fact that the number of students on the plumbing course has gone down from nine to four, that no tool kits are provided and that there is no instructor? Could it possibly be because the skill centre is based on prime development land? Does this not make a complete nonsense of the £14 billion employment training advertising campaign that the Government are promoting?

**Mr. Nicholls:** No, it does not. If the hon. Lady looked at the success of employment training, she would see that it has been very substantial. That success is apparently shared in by her London borough, because at the time of the original contracting for places to provide employment training, her local Labour-controlled authority expressed an interest in the scheme. It is quite obvious that, when the unemployment figures are falling, there may be a reduction in training places. The point is that this scheme provides places for those who want to be trained. That is something in which the hon. Lady should take delight and not denigrate.

**Mr. Ian Bruce:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the Government have got their figures wrong in terms of employment training simply because, in their wildest dreams, they could not have expected unemployment to come down as quickly as it has? Will he confirm that many private employers are now providing a great deal more training as an incentive for people to join their companies, and that this is to be welcomed—indeed, it should be welcomed by both sides of the House?

**Mr. Nicholls:** My hon. Friend is exactly right. We never predicted the extent to which the unemployment figures would fall. The fall has been even larger than the Labour party said it would achieve with policies that have failed in the past. The important thing about the programme is that it is working and that it has the increasing commitment of the employer community. It has shown that it can get unemployed people back to work, and it has the support of local authorities throughout the country, many of them Labour controlled. The only place where the scheme is constantly denigrated is in the House, by Opposition Members.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** The whole House will have noted that the Under-Secretary of State has totally failed to answer the original supplementary question. Let me repeat it for his benefit. Will he comment on the quality of a scheme where trainees are supposedly on a plumbing course but there is no instructor and no tool kit? Is this not typical of employment training? Why does he not respond to that? Secondly, will he respond to the question about whether the Government intend to run down the Deptford skill centre—the number of instructors at the end of August will be two thirds what it is now—because, as planning permission has already been granted on that site, it is worth far more as a piece of real estate than it is as a place for skills training?

**Mr. Nicholls:** It should be obvious from everything that I have said that the Government are totally committed to having a training programme which is of a proper quality. If the hon. Gentleman has a particular case where he believes that those high standards of training have fallen down, there is no reason why he cannot bring it to my, or my right hon. Friend's attention, and we will look at it. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman tries to pretend, by coming to the Dispatch Box with case details which we do not have, that that says something about the quality of the programme, but all it does is say something about the quality of Labour's opposition to the employment figures coming down.

## Quota Exemptions

9. **Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what guidelines are issued to his Department's staff regarding the distribution of quota exemption permits to employers.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee):** Instructions to disablement resettlement officers require them to consider the availability of suitably registered disabled people, and the degree of commitment shown by employers towards meeting their obligations under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944.

**Mr Ashley:** Does the Minister recognise that more than three quarters of firms do not fulfil their quota obligation to ensure that disabled people make up 3 per cent. of their work force? Is he aware that more than half of those firms receive a permit from the Department to enable them to evade their responsibilities to disabled people? Does the Minister accept that the Department is showering firms with permits as though they were confetti—18,500 of them —making a mockery of the quota system? The Minister should advocate granting permits only in exceptional circumstances when there are no disabled people available to do the job, which is not so today, with two thirds of disabled people looking for jobs.

**Mr. Lee:** The right hon. Gentleman will know that we are examining the quota system as part of our wider review. The first draft of the review document is with Ministers now. The right hon. Gentleman said that we had been showering permits on firms. In fact, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, the numbers have been constant for some years.

**Mr. Evennett:** Will my hon. Friend examine ways in which the public sector can increase the number of disabled people who are employed?

**Mr. Lee:** We are always doing just what my hon. Friend suggests and I also stress that the Government have spent substantial amounts of money on help for the disabled —about £220 million in mainstream employment terms and a further £128 million on specific programmes in 1988-89.

**Mr. Wareing:** Would it not make more sense if, instead of making threats about abolishing the quota system, the Minister made a positive attempt to ensure that the system worked? For example, when will the number of disablement resettlement officers be restored to its 1979 level? Should not the Minister be keen to help disabled people rather than trying to ruin the existing system which is being destroyed by his Government's policies through the Department's allocation of permits?

**Mr. Lee:** As I have said, the Government are spending a substantial amount in trying to help disabled people in a host of ways. I resent the hon. Gentleman's claim that we are threatening the quota system. That is far from the truth. I am saying only that the quota system is being examined sensibly as part of our overall review. In addition, I draw the hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that the Public Accounts Committee questioned the quota system and pointed out that it was costing £1·4 million to administer.

**Mr. Sayeed:** Does my hon. Friend agree that surveys show that disabled people give loyal, capable and consistent service? Will his Department point out to employers just how valuable disabled people are and encourage them to employ more, voluntarily?

**Mr. Lee:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We believe in a policy of promoting the employment of disabled people by good practice rather than by legislation and with the increasing tightening of the labour market there are greater opportunities than ever before for the employment of disabled people.

### Employment Training

11. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is now the number of organisations who are contracted to provide places under employment training.

**Mr. Nicholls:** There are 1,307 organisations which are contracted with the Training Agency to provide training as training managers. A further 180 organisations are contracted to provide assessment as training agents.

**Mr. Wallace:** In a written answer to the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) on 6 July, the Minister said that of the 23 large company employment training schemes, almost half had fewer than 50 per cent. of the maximum number of places allowed taken up. Apparently, the drop-out rate has been accelerating. Given that employment training is the only scheme available for the long-term unemployed and as someone who therefore wants that scheme to work, may I ask the Minister whether he accepts that those figures are unsatisfactory? What assessment has he made of what has gone wrong and what does he propose to do about it?

**Mr. Nicholls:** For someone who expresses his commitment to employment training, the hon. Gentleman makes a highly selective use of the information given in parliamentary answers. The hon. Gentleman should look at the total number of placements provided by employers as training managers at both national and area level. If he examines the employer placements provided by many major national companies he will find that there are more than 14,000 places available in training managerships and a great many employment placements with major employers who are not training managers.

**Mr. Loyden:** Does the Minister agree that the reason for the drop outs and the low take-up is that, with few exceptions, the employment training scheme is a sham? Evidence shows that in many areas many of the schemes are closing down because the places are not being taken up.

**Mr. Nicholls:** No. That is just about as far from the truth as it could possibly be. The training programme has the support not only of Conservative-controlled authorities, but of many Labour-controlled authorities. It is that cross-party and cross-community support that helps to make the scheme so successful. The shame of the Liverpool city council, as the hon. Gentleman will know, is that it went further than merely not joining in; it actually tried to boycott the employment training programme. That says something about the real commitment of Left-wing councils to doing something positive to help those who need help.

### Tourism

12. **Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he intends announcing the outcome of, and decisions arising from, his Department's review of tourism initiated in July 1988.

**Mr. Lee:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 6 July to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) at column *278*.

**Mr. Raffan:** By asking the British Tourist Authority to devolve greater authority to its overseas regions, does my hon. Friend risk the possibility of more uniform and so less effective promotion of Wales overseas?

**Mr. Lee:** Not at all. As a result of the findings of our review, we are asking the BTA to put more of its marketing effort and more of its personnel abroad at the sharp end. The problem at present, in our view, is that its staff is concentrated very much in this country. Of a total complement of 460 staff, only 170 are overseas.

**Mr. Cryer:** In the review, has the Minister ensured that people working in the tourist industry have the right to join trade unions, and that the trade unions are given the opportunity to recruit in the tourist industry to ensure decent wages and working conditions in an industry which is notorious for the lack of either? Does he agree with his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister that, if trade unions are good enough for Poland, they are good enough for our workers?

**Mr. Lee:** I get a little upset when hon. Gentlemen, such as the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), knock the wage levels in the tourist industry. The truth is that the remuneration packages in the industry are increasing all the time. It is being increasingly seen as an attractive industry to join. I remind the hon. Gentleman that no other industry is creating jobs at the rate of nearly 1,000 net new jobs a week.

**Mr. Key:** Does my hon. Friend accept that the Government's record of steady and modest support for the tourist industry is one of great success on which they should be congratulated? Will he, however, have a word with the chairman of English Heritage to press on him the importance of a speedy decision on the future of Stonehenge?

**Mr. Lee:** On my hon. Friend's latter point, either I will have a word with the chairman of English Heritage or I will ask my successor to do so.

### Employment Training

13. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has about the number of ET placements in the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

**Mr. Nicholls:** We estimate that more than 19,100 people on employment training in the Yorkshire and Humberside region are on placements with employers or projects on any one day.

**Mrs. Mahon:** Can I bring the Minister back to the quality of some of those placements and tell him of the experience of my constituent, Michael Pickles, who answered an advertisement in the *Graduate Post* for a qualification in higher management? He spent four months doing nothing and, when he complained, he found out that the course was for a BTech diploma that he could have obtained with 60 hours of correspondence learning. He has complained to the Minister's Department. Many of the post graduate courses are, in fact, rubbish.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I would give a fraction more credibility to the hon. Lady's account if she had raised it with me in correspondence. If she wants to do so now, I shall be more than happy to look into the matter. Mercifully, the hon. Lady's attitude is not shared by all those responsible local authorities in her locality. I have no doubt that she will be pleased to record that the local authority careers service is a training agent for Calderdale, but perhaps she would have disparaging things to say about it as well.

### Strikes

14. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the ratio of strikes in the public sector to those in the private sector; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** In 1988 the average number of working days lost per employee through strikes in the public sector was just under three times the average for the private sector.

**Mr. Davis:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that that reflects the public's perception when they see strikes on television because those strikes are invariably in the public sector, not in the Marks and Spencer or Sainsbury of the private sector? Does my right hon. Friend further agree that we should address that issue at its fundamental point and deal with the fact that it is the state sector monopolies that are causing the strikes and set about returning many of them to a competitive private sector role at an even faster rate than we are doing?

**Mr. Cope:** I entirely agree with my hon. Friend in principle. As he knows, studies are in progress on the privatisation of British Rail. However, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said earlier, that is obviously a longer-term issue than the present dispute.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Engagements

Q2. **Mr. Ward:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 July.

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. I also attended the ceremony to mark the arrival of his Highness the President of the United Arab Emirates. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I shall be attending a state banquet at Buckingham palace.

**Mr. Ward:** Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating the borough of Poole on the award of a European flag for clean beaches and bathing waters? Will she remind those people who are leaving these shores for polluted beaches elsewhere in Europe that the Environment Commissioner of the EEC has complimented this country and has said that no other country in Europe has a greater awareness of environmental problems?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I gladly join my hon. Friend in congratulating the borough of Poole. I also thank the dockers of Poole for returning to work. I note the contrast with many less desirable resorts overseas. I am glad that the European Commissioner has at last congratulated my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment on the way in which this country is vigorously tackling its environmental problems, in contrast to the way in which the Labour Government failed to tackle them when they were in power. Under the EC directive, which we are now following, we have enabled the water authorities to spend £100 million per year to comply with that directive. Britain is the only European Community country with a programme to ensure full compliance in the 1990s.

**Mr. Kinnock:** Will the Prime Minister tell us why, after 10 years of her Government, it is necessary to trawl Holland, Germany, Denmark, Australia, Barbados and other countries in a desperate search for trained teachers?

**The Prime Minister:** Perhaps because we have a bigger proportion of teachers to pupils than was ever the case under the Labour Government—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinnock:** The Prime Minister must be the only mother or grandmother in the land who does not realise that there is a great and growing shortage of primary school teachers and of teachers of science, maths and languages in secondary schools. She must also be unaware that her policies are making matters even worse. How can the right hon. Lady and her Ministers inflict on other people's children problems that they would never accept for their own children?

**The Prime Minister:** I tell the right hon. Gentleman again that we have a bigger proportion of teachers to pupils than was ever the case, or was ever thought of, under the Labour Government. Classes have got smaller and we have a better curriculum and, yes, we have flexible pay to enable us to attract more maths, science and physics teachers, in whom I am particularly interested.

**Mr. Bowis:** Will my right hon. Friend find time to make it clear that in the view of the Government, it can never be right to use industrial action against the old, sick and young—*[Interruption.]*—as is now happening because of the NALGO dispute? Will she also make it clear that it can never be right to be silent on such an issue, as right hon. and hon. Members on the Opposition Front Bench are silent?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I totally agree with my hon. Friend. The Opposition talk about compassion, but some of the unions do not practise it when it comes to the point. I also notice that in the railway strike, two of the unions went through the proper procedures, one to independent arbitration, and accepted the results of that arbitration and their members are prepared and ready to go back to work. The third union, under the militants on its executive, did not. The question is which unions do Opposition

Members support—those who follow the procedure or those who do not and who are prepared to put the public to great inconvenience?

Q3. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 July 1989.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Bradley:** In the light of the comments by the Junior Health Minister, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, that the current financial crisis in the National Health Service shows that the figures are meaningless and misleading, may I ask the Prime Minister urgently to review the agenda for South Manchester health authority's meeting this coming Thursday, which proposes £1·2 million worth of cuts, the shedding of 100 health care posts and the option of compulsory redundancies? Will the right hon. Lady give assurances to the people of Manchester that extra resources will be made immediately available to meet the health needs of the mentally ill and the elderly of south Manchester?

**The Prime Minister:** Having allocated enormous extra sums to the NHS, the service is not in crisis. The hon. Gentleman will be aware that for every £1 that Labour spent on the NHS per year, we are spending £3 per year. We have made available £2 billion by way of additional funding, which was announced at the time of the Autumn Statement, and since then £204 million has been made available to cover costs arising from doctors' and nurses' pay awards, plus £40 million of additional funding. That is a massive amount of extra funding because under the Conservatives the economy is successful and can afford it.

As to the situation at the Withington hospital, about which the hon. Gentleman asked me, a 24-bed ward containing 21 patients has been temporarily closed, but the patients will continue to be cared for. Between 15 and 17 of them will be moved to other places within that unit. The remainder may be discharged, but only if the doctors are satisfied—*[Interruption.]* I have been asked the question. Opposition Members may not like them, but I have the answers—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Prime Minister.

**The Prime Minister:** The remainder will be discharged if the doctors are satisfied that their treatment has been satisfactorily completed and that the necessary support services are on hand for their aftercare.

## Labour Statistics

Q4. **Sir Michael Shaw:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement about the fall in unemployment since June 1987.

**The Prime Minister:** Since June 1987, the level of unemployment, seasonally adjusted, in the United Kingdom has fallen by 1,047,900 to 6·3 per cent. The number of people in work is an all-time record at 26,685,000.

**Sir Michael Shaw:** I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. Is she aware that her statement shows that in the months ahead, the firm economic policies that have been pursued by the Government will not only provide reduced inflation, but will do so at no cost to the greater opportunities for employment that now exist?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I agree with my hon. Friend. Our overriding priority now is to bring down inflation. That will ensure that we can maintain prosperity and continue to create more jobs because inflation in the long run is the enemy of more jobs. This is totally different from the policy of Opposition Members, who I understand are on record as wanting a less deflationary emphasis throughout the economy, which of course would lead to more inflation, which is a policy to which they are used.

**Mr. Turner:** Was it the Prime Minister's decision or that of her Secretary of State for Employment to instruct Training Agency managers not to give information on filled employment training places to Members of Parliament? What is there to hide? Is that not an infringement of the rights and responsibilities of Members of Parliament?

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friend's policy is to give as much information as he possibly can, particularly on training, where the Government's policies have been an outstanding success.

**Mr. William Powell:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that unemployment in my constituency has fallen from 8,000 to 1,812 at the latest count? Is she further aware that the main cause for that is the Government's policies? Will she ensure that the good work continues so that unemployment is eliminated completely?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. My hon. Friend's constituency has a particularly good record. It had to diversify when a major plant was closed. The average unemployment figure for the European Community as a whole is 9·3 per cent. whereas for this country it is 6·3 per cent.

Q.5. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Prime Minister is she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Bennett:** Would the Prime Minister be pleased if, after an 8·8 per cent. pay rise, her gross weekly wage came to only £105?

**The Prime Minister:** Do I understand that the hon. Gentleman is backing the National Union of Railwaymen in continuing its strikes? *[Interruption.]* Oh, yes. Now we have the answer and it is what we thought. Labour Members do not back the unions that followed the established procedures, went to independent arbitration and accepted the result. They back the NUR which did not follow the established procedures and refused to accept independent arbitration because it would rather inconvenience the consumer and the travelling public. As always, Labour Members are in hock to the unions.

Q.6. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Irvine:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that as the volume and importance of European Community legislation increases, so the importance increases of this

House giving it proper and adequate scrutiny and adapting its procedures to enable it to do so? In particular, does she agree on the importance of enabling the House to debate European Community legislation before it reaches the Council of Ministers?

**The Prime Minister:** I recognise my hon. Friend's concern and that of many hon. Members on both sides, that a great deal of legislation is coming from the European Community in connection with the Single European Act. I share my hon. Friend's concern that it should be properly scrutinised by the House. Parliament is central to our activities in a way that it is not in some Community countries. My right hon. Friend the Lord President recently gave evidence to the Select Committee on Procedure and is discussing with the Chairman of the Select Committee on European Legislation possible improvements to the present system. My hon. Friend's remarks accord with what I should like to see happen.

**Miss Lestor:** As of yesterday afternoon we, too, became a grandmother—*[Interruption.]* Would the Prime Minister join me in paying tribute to the team at St. George's hospital, Tooting which assisted in that rather premature birth, particularly to the doctor who delivered the baby? Ten years after the Prime Minister came to power that doctor, had worked from Saturday morning until the delivery at 5 pm on Monday.

**The Prime Minister:** First, I gladly congratulate the new grandparents. I am sure that the birth has given them great joy and will continue to do so. I have visited St. George's hospital, Tooting following an accident, and while there I saw the new emergency department. We are naturally anxious to reduce the number of hours that medical staff have to work and we are negotiating to that end. In fact, the average number of hours being worked is less than it used to be, so there has already been some improvement.

## Points of Order

3.30 pm

**Mr. Harry Ewing** (Falkirk, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. During Prime Minister's Questions, I have become increasingly worried about the Government's practice of stationing a Government Whip at your right hand. The hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) stands at your right hand, Mr. Speaker, and nods approval at everything that the Prime Minister says. If he were wearing a wig, it would look as though you were nodding approval. I know your views, Mr. Speaker, so I think that you should deal with this matter.

**Mr. Speaker:** I take instructions from no one.

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether you have seen the advertisement in *The House Magazine* in which an hon. Member offers himself for hire as a consultant. It states:

> "Hard working Back Bench Tory MP of 10 years standing seeks consultancy in order to widen his range of activities. Please contact Richard Alexander at the House of Commons".

You will no doubt wish to deprecate such a practice, Mr. Speaker. It is not the way that a Member of Parliament should conduct himself. Will you, from your Chair today, deprecate that practice?

**Mr. Joseph Ashton** (Bassetlaw): Further to the point of order——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. No, that is not a matter for me. If any hon. Member wishes to widen his experience, he has a perfect opportunity to do so through the Industry and Parliament Trust.

**Mr. Ashton:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to draw your attention to the fact that in the 1970s I wrote an article in *Labour Weekly* stating that a tiny number of Members of Parliament were available for hire. The House had me up before the Privileges Committee and I was severely censured for contempt of the House, even though it was proved at a later date that three Members had offered their services for hire. I received no pardon or apology. It appears that if a Member writes an article such as mine, he is up before the Privileges Committee for contempt, but when it is proved later, he gets no recompense.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett** (Pembroke): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it on the same matter?

**Mr. Bennett:** It is further to the point of order raised by the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours).

**Mr. Speaker:** All right, I will take it.

**Mr. Bennett:** You may have noticed an advertisement in *The House Magazine* two weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, offering £8,000 for a secretary to work a 40-hour week, the advertiser having previously offered £6,000 and failed. Applicants were asked to contact "Simon". As Simon is the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), will he now explain why a member of a party that believes in putting up pay should offer such low pay for a secretary?

**Mr. Speaker:** I believe that we should move on to the debate on teacher shortages, but before doing so there is a Ten-Minute rule motion.

## Waterloo to City Line (Privatisation)

3.34 pm

**Mr. Ian Taylor** (Esher): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to privatise the Waterloo to City Line.

On behalf of my constituents, I regret today's absurd disruption of British Rail by the National Union of Railwaymen which may overshadow the specific matter which this Bill addresses. I shall not attempt to comment further on the strike. Later, I shall make critical comments about the management of British Rail. I am not now trying to raise the issue of long-term restructuring of British Rail. The intention of my Bill is to draw the attention of the House—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman should have a fair hearing.

**Mr. Taylor:** The intention of the Bill is to draw the attention of the House to the plight of a particular group of commuters, including many of my constituents, for whom travelling on a certain stretch of British Rail line is a daily, as opposed to an occasional, misery. I refer to the estimated 19,000 people who travel every working day from Waterloo to Bank stations on British Rail's underground Waterloo to City line, which is commonly and appropriately known by those who use it as "the Drain". As one of my constituents said, the passengers sometimes travel in conditions which would not be tolerated for animals by the RSPCA.

The Drain provides a vital rail link, carrying as it does those who have journeyed to Waterloo from all over the south-east to reach their places of work in the City. As this country's financial district has assumed ever-growing importance, so too has the Drain. Since the big bang, the number of passengers arriving at Bank station daily has risen by nearly 5,000. Yet the decline in service over the same period gives little credibility to British Rail's forward planners. *[Interruption.]*

For those lucky enough not to be familiar with the Drain, I shall give some details to the House. The line was built in 1898. The current rolling stock is only the second generation to operate on this route. It is of pre-war design and has been in use for nearly 50 years.

British Rail admits that the problems of running safely a railway with equipment dating back to the last war or beyond can temporarily overwhelm its capacity to cope. It says "temporarily", but in March this year peak hour services were cancelled for three weeks, when two of the four trains were out of action. When the service does work —between the constant delays, restrictions and cancellations—the trains run every four to six minutes and the journey time takes five minutes. Platform overcrowding at peak times is dangerous and leads to the necessary placing of large warning notices. The line has also variously suffered from flooding, fire, staff shortages and other mechanical problems. One of my constituents has written complaining that the Drain is an accident waiting to happen.

As the director of British Rail's Network SouthEast said in a letter to me only last week:

"We are only too conscious of our failure to provide an acceptable quality of service on this line in recent months."

However, the problem has not arisen merely in recent months; it goes back years. For British Rail, the line is both embarrassing and an embarrassment. However, British Rail intends to seek investment authority from the Secretary of State this summer for new equipment compatible with London Underground's Central line. Why not before? Because, British Rail claims, it is impossible within the constraints of a uniform fare structure in central London to earn an acceptable rate of financial return on the necessary investment, and it is only the use of cost-benefit criteria which permits the proposed application to proceed.

It might help British Rail's analysis if tickets were checked and collected. At Bank station yesterday, the two automatic ticket machines demanded "exact money only" for the single-fare 60p ticket. I purchased mine, but several others around me gave up. My ticket was never collected, and I retain it as a souvenir of British Rail's inefficiency. *[Interruption.]*

The deputy chairman of the London Regional Passengers Committee urged me in a letter to *The Times* recently to put pressure on the Treasury to allow British Rail's latest submission for capital expenditure for the Drain to go ahead. But I have little confidence that British Rail is the right organisation to control the investment or to manage the line. It is time that attitudes to, and management and ownership of, the line changed. Major new investment is needed and a strategic plan for the line is required urgently.

For example, can a new station be built at Blackfriars, midway along the line, so that it joins up with the British Rail station and the Circle and District lines? Can the line be extended to link up with the separate underground line between Moorgate station and Finsbury Park? How can the line cope effectively with Channel tunnel passengers arriving at Waterloo in increasing numbers from 1993? How will the line's use contribute to helping the east London transport study, whose conclusions are awaited?

The problems of privatisation of this line cannot be under-estimated. *[Interruption]* The onus lies on those who stand to benefit from the modernisation and extension of the line—the banks and City institutions whose staff use it, the docklands developers who are worried about access from various points in the docklands and the City of London corporation, which is interested in acting as a sponsor and has told me that it might consider acting also as a financial investor.

I challenge these groups to put to British Rail a proposal that it cannot refuse, even if it means British Rail handing over the line for a nominal sum. *[Interruption.]* British Rail must go further than being

"quite willing to discuss further outside participation in the line"—

as if a bit more advertising is all that is necessary. Those who use the Drain call it "tarting up" in acknowledgment of the name of the advertiser on the outside of the train.

After all, if the line has proper investment, is extended despite technical problems and becomes reliable for the commuter, British Rail may attract more people into Waterloo, increasing its revenue. British Rail must not give the impression of operating the delaying tactics that some accuse it of doing in working with the private sector in respect of contracts for the Folkestone line, which will become an issue later this year.

This is a great opportunity. How it is structured is for others to decide. I hope that this enabling Bill will provoke an urgent debate and solutions. It is highly significant that there has been a constant barrage from Labour Benches to

*[Mr. Taylor]*

what I have been saying. That shows a lack of concern for the commuters. Some 19,000 commuters travel from Waterloo to Bank every day. The Labour party cares not a jot for them, which is why the Labour party supports the NUR and its disruption of the services today. My Bill goes some way to alleviating the position of the weary commuter who is trying to earn his and the nation's bread. If that happens, and if the City institutions and others respond, my Bill will have been part of a worthy cause. I urge the House to support it.

3.43 pm

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West) *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the hon. Gentleman wish to oppose the Bill?

**Mr. Banks:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do.

It is easy for the hon. Member for Esher (Mr. Taylor) to make cheap attacks on the railway workers. I remind him that the sort of wages that railway workers get are hardly likely to attract Conservative Members to seek a job on the railways. Conservative Members, particularly those who have a number of well-rewarded consultancy posts, should bear that in mind. I know that the hon. Gentleman gets a fairly sizeable chunk of his income from such positions. He is fairly open about it.

He is to be congratulated on moving the motion, and we are glad to have him with us. Judging by the list of outside jobs that he has, I am surprised that he has the time to be here. The list makes it clear that he should have declared some of the positions, because he will get some special benefit if the Bill were to be passed. He is involved in a number of consultancies which are involved in transportation work. At least he could offer his hon. Friend the Member for Newark (Mr. Alexander) some good advice, because he clearly did not have to advertise in *The House Magazine* to obtain all those consultancies.

The hon. Gentleman said that the Drain, as it is called —the Waterloo and City line—is in a fairly bad state, and I agree. But we do not need any lectures from him or from any other Conservative Member about the appalling lack of investment not only in the Waterloo and City line but in British Rail and London Transport generally in recent years, certainly since 1979. We want to see more investment in the Waterloo and City line and in London Transport generally.

For those who travel around London, travelling on public transport is dirtier and more crowded and expensive than on any other urban transportation system in Europe. That is not mere coincidence; nor is the fact that we spend less on capital investment and less on revenue support on our urban transportation system than any other comparable European city. The problems are the direct result of the Government's policies.

The rolling stock on the Drain dates back to 1940. With the exception of the Isle of Wight, it is the oldest fleet of British Rail rolling stock still operating. The additional safety precautions installed after the Moorgate accident, which ensured that trains approached the terminus at Bank slowly, together with increasing train failures, mean a more restricted service than used to be the case, and service suspensions are happening all too frequently. We agree that that is the case, but the answer is not privatisation; it is more investment.

The hon. Gentleman must know that Network SouthEast is actively developing proposals to renew the trains and the signalling equipment to a common specification to that provided by London Underground's new tube stock. That would avoid the costs and problems associated with commissioning a special build of rolling stock to a unique profile, and make the provision of spares and maintenance easier. However, it ties the time scale for re-equipping the line to that for the new trains being designed for the Central line, and British Rail intends to seek financial authority from the Secretary of State for Transport this summer with delivery of new trains planned for the summer of 1992.

When the hon. Gentleman voiced his constituents' complaints, he did not once plead with the Secretary of State to hasten that investment on the Drain. That is the way to deal with the problems of his constituents who use the Waterloo and City line, not an attempt by the Arthur Daley tendency of the Tory party to get its sticky hands on some more public assets.

If the line were privatised, it would effectively be taken out of London Underground's central zone 1 tariff, and there would be premium fares, because many fairly well-heeled people and business people use that line. They probably could afford to pay the new fares that a private owner would demand, but many low-paid City workers such as clerks and cleaners also use that line, and they would be forced on to the Northern line because they would not be able to afford those new fares. I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman, with all his consultancies and all his experience, did not ask his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for some more investment on the Northern line.

The hon. Gentleman is completely wrong. He has chosen this occasion for some fairly cheap publicity at the expense of over-worked and underpaid railway workers and commuters exploited by the Government, who have failed to invest properly in our public transport system. I want my right hon. and hon. Friends to vote for the Drain to stay in public ownership, so that the only thing that will go down the drain will be the hon. Gentleman's ten-minute Bill.

*Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 19 (Motions for leave to bring in Bills and nomination of Select Committees at commencement of public business):*

*The House divided:* Ayes 141, Noes 169.

**Division No. 305]** **[3.40 pm**

**AYES**

Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dunn, Bob
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*

Evennett, David
Favell, Tony
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Hague, William
Hannam, John
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Miller, Sir Hal
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley

Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walden, George
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes
Mr. Michael Brown and
Mr. Roger Knapman.

## NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bidwell, Sydney

Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann

Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice

Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mullin, Chris
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Sillars, Jim
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Dennis Skinner and
Mr. Harry Ewing.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

## Points of Order

4.1 pm

**Mr. Edward Leigh** (Gainsborough and Horncastle): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask for your assistance? As I understand our Standing Orders, if an hon. Member wishes to use them to request an emergency debate, he should have done so by now. In view of today's grave events, could you intimate whether you would be minded to grant an emergency debate if a leading Opposition spokesman were to make a request for such a debate? Important though teacher shortages are, this issue is even more important. We have heard nothing yet about the Opposition's views. The country needs to know. Should an Opposition Member rise to his feet now and request a debate, could you please intimate whether, in view of the importance of the subject, you would be minded to grant that request?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman knows that requests for emergency debates under Standing Order No. 20 must be received before noon in my office.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think you will confirm that if the Minister who is responsible for these matters and who is sitting in his place wanted to make a statement on the strike, he is capable of making it. We do not need Conservative Members—the moonlighters, the representatives of the goose-stepping tendency—to tell railway men and women how much money they should be getting. If he has anything to say, the man who went to be educated beyond his intelligence should go to the Dispatch Box and tell us.

**Mr. Speaker:** I confirm to the House——

**Mr. Harry Ewing** (Falkirk, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewing:** It is a different point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have already heard the hon. Member on one point of order today.

**Mr. Ewing:** This is very important.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is a day on which the hon. Gentleman's own side has chosen the subject for debate. No fewer than 18 hon. Members wish to participate in it.

**Mr. Ewing:** As I say, Mr. Speaker, it is a very important point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall hear the hon. Member if he insists, but I hope that it is a genuine point of order.

**Mr. Ewing:** I am grateful to you for listening to me, Mr. Speaker, because I insist. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] I should explain that when I raised my original point of order I did so for your benefit. As soon as one Government Whip disappeared from your right hand, he was replaced by another Government Whip, the Scottish Whip. My concern is that Government Whips are now rehearsing for the television cameras. Every time that you are in focus, one of the Government Whips will be standing at your right hand nodding approval. If it continues, by the time the television cameras are here in November, one of the Government Whips will be sitting on your knee. That is the last thing that I should like to see. I hope that you will deal with the problem.

**Mr. Patrick McLoughlin** (Derbyshire, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not see why you should apologise because a Government Whip supports the Government. It is quite obvious that the Opposition Whips, who can stand behind your Chair, do not support those on the Opposition Front Bench.

**Mr. Speaker:** We had better get on.

# Opposition Day

[17TH ALLOTTED DAY]

## Teacher Shortages

**Mr. Speaker:** No fewer than 18 hon. Members wish to participate in this debate, so I appeal for short speeches. Before I call the Opposition Front Bench spokesman to move the motion, I must announce to the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister.

4.5 pm

**Mr. Jack Straw** (Blackburn): I beg to move,

> That this House condemns Her Majesty's Government for its education policies which have produced the worst teacher shortage crisis since the early seventies; and calls upon the Secretary of State to introduce an emergency programme of measures designed to halt the drain of teachers by improving their morale and rewarding them better, in order to guarantee that no child is without permanent properly qualified teaching this September.

A popular, well-supported London secondary school loses eight heads of department this week. Three of those people—among the best paid in teaching—are taking jobs outside education, because the money and the conditions are better. One is to run a market stall with her husband.

At a south London primary school, the head and all the teaching staff but one have resigned. Only a deputy head has been recruited. In Tower Hamlets, 500 Bangladeshi children have no school. Barking and Dagenham are considering the closure of 16 nursery schools to release teachers for children of primary age who otherwise would be sent home. Islington has already warned that there may be part-time teaching in September. ILEA is short of 638 primary teachers and 100 nursery teachers.

This afternoon, in the House, the Prime Minister boasted that a bigger proportion of teachers to pupils exists today than hitherto. In many schools, the proportion of teachers to pupils is none, and there may be no teachers in those schools in September.

Nor are the problems remotely confined to Labour London, as Ministers no doubt would wish. According to a survey by *The Times Educational Supplement* last week, Conservative-controlled Essex has 260 primary and 330 secondary vacancies—an increase of 150 in the past year. In the Prime Minister's Barnet, the authority has had to launch a major recruitment campaign in Australia and Ireland advertising 25 vacancies in primary schools and 56 in secondary schools. Hampshire, Kent, Bromley, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset and many other local authorities all report problems worse than last year.

Labour's own survey of 91 of the 104 local education authorities in England and Wales was among the most comprehensive yet. It showed that two thirds of local authorities faced serious concern about shortages—a figure compounded by the *Daily Telegraph* Gallup poll on 29 May, which reported that one third of teachers were trying to leave and the percentage among the best qualified teachers with the greatest experience—those with 20 years' experience or more—is 40 per cent.

The evidence of a more major teaching crisis than at any time since the early 1970s when the Prime Minister was Secretary of State for Education is overwhelming, and is undeniable to all except those who are responsible for the crisis—Ministers. Their response is simply to deny what everyone knows to exist.

The Secretary of State's deputy, the Minister of State, this morning accused me of scaremongering, and described teacher shortages as a myth. She told an incredulous audience at the annual conference of the National Association of Head Teachers:

> "We really need to nail this myth that teaching has difficulty in securing recruits and in retaining them when it does secure them."

In so far as the Minister thinks that there may be the odd local difficulty, or the odd blip, the fault lies with the local authorities. On 4 July she told the House of Commons:

> "It is wrong to say that the responsibility for the planning and recruitment of teacher numbers lies with the Government; the local education authorities are the managers of the education service".—[*Official Report*, 4 July 1989; Vol. 156, c. 145.]

She was ignoring her responsibility for the funding of the service and for the pay and morale of teachers.

The message from the Secretary of State may be more oleaginous, but it is essentially the same. In April, he told the Select Committee on Education:

> "I am determined that the action we shall take will ensure that we have the teachers that we need, and I am confident that it will."

But the confidence of Ministers is pure bluff.

Still less than they care do they know. Behind their claims is a black hole of ignorance and self-delusion. There is one basic piece of information needed to make a judgment on whether schools may be short of teachers in September and that is the number of teachers who have handed in their resignations to run from that date. Resignations to run from September have to be in by 31 May. Three weeks after that deadline, I asked the Secretary of State a simple question: how many teachers had submitted their resignation by 31 May? The answer was extraordinary. The Secretary of State said:

> "The information is not available . . . The latest data are for the year ending March 1987."—[*Official Report*, 29 June 1989; Vol. 155, c. 536.]

He then gave me the figures.

There are 2,565 staff in the Secretary of State's Department. There are 39 people in his press office. There are just 104 local education authorities. I suggested to the Secretary of State that he put just a few of those staff to the telephone. The Secretary of State obviously thinks that teacher shortages in other people's schools are a laughing matter. No wonder he wants to keep himself in ignorance.

**Mr. James Pawsey** (Rugby and Kenilworth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it right for the hon. Gentleman to give us the stuff we are hearing this afternoon—[HON. MEMBERS: "Yes."]—when we have heard it all on the radio this morning? He did not have the courtesy to come to the House in the first place, but delivered his speech first on radio. *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The whole House knows that I am not responsible for what is said in the Chamber, provided that it is in order.

**Mr. Straw** *rose*——

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman** (Lancaster): Does the hon. Gentleman not regret the fact that, since Labour came to office in Lancashire, the number of administrative

*[Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman]*

staff in the education department at county hall has gone steadily up, whereas the number of teachers at the chalk face has gone steadily down?

**Mr. Straw:** Yes, I regret that. I regret that there have been so many impositions by central Government and so many circulars that Lancashire county council has had to increase the number of administrative staff. I also regret the fact that the Secretary of State has cut the capital building programme for Lancashire county council and that its rate support grant has been cut, so that the council has had no alternative but to cut the number of teachers.

The bluff and apparent ignorance of Ministers is now compounded by their surreptitious actions. They are afraid to admit to a crisis today, but they are desperate to avoid a worse one in September. Thus, the newspapers have been fed regularly with unattributable stories of ministerial action. On 7 July, *The Times Educational Supplement* wrote:

> "Education Ministers have spent months seeking help from modern language experts to help tackle a growing teacher shortage which they publicly deny exists."

On 3 July, *The Independent* reported:

> "Baker may recruit teachers in Hong Kong."

Scarcely a day passes without a report of another local authority having to send scavengers across Europe to Holland, Denmark or West Germany, on a near-fruitless hunt to entice their teachers to the United Kingdom to teach in an education service with the worst conditions and the worst pay in Europe. It will not be West Germany's best who come here, but West Germany's rejects.

Ministers have only themselves to blame for the crisis. They have been warned by local authorities, teachers' unions, parents and the Opposition, not least in the debate on teacher shortages on 2 May. What makes Ministers all the more culpable is that this crisis should never have happened. There is no absolute shortage of teachers in the United Kingdom. There are teachers everywhere except in our schools. For every teacher teaching, there is another, properly qualified, who is doing something else.

Why is there such famine among plenty, so great as to threaten the education of many children in September? Why do one in three new teachers fail to go into teaching the next year? Why do one in four of those who go into teaching leave within five years? The answer is simple: it is to do with morale and money. Without the high dedication of the teaching profession, the education system would have collapsed months ago, but Ministers trade on that dedication and disingenuously confuse it with morale. The Secretary of State told the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts:

> "I think, by definition, that someone who is dedicated has a high morale".

The right hon. Gentleman knows that they are quite separate considerations, because his interim advisory committee and his inspectors have told him so. His specially appointed committee said:

> "We continue to be impressed by teachers' commitment and high professional standards; but morale appears to have been as low as we judged it last year".

In his report, the senior chief inspector of education has said that it is

> "of great importance . . . that teachers are not used as convenient scapegoats for all society's problems."

Too many teachers feel that their profession and its work are misjudged and seriously undervalued. No one has more sedulously fostered that misjudgment of teachers, that undervaluing of teachers, than Ministers. The early speeches in 1986 by the Secretary of State were full of sly attacks on the profession, such as his insinuation in August 1986 that teachers were contributing to a "yob society". A report in *Today* in August 1986 said:

> "Education Secretary Kenneth Baker has attacked the poor quality of teaching in state schools . . . In some schools nearly one in three classes are taken by teachers who are not trained in the subject, he says."

That proportion has got worse since then, not better, as the latest secondary schools staffing survey shows. It has got worse not least because of the cheap and easy denigration of the teaching profession—so easily rolled off the tongue to get a cheap cheer before any Conservative party audience.

Morale has been damaged, too, by the manner in which the needs of the maintained sector have been mocked by the meretricious policies of the Secretary of State. Private school fees, of up to £5,000 per child, are paid by the state under the assisted places scheme, whereas the Inner London education authority, like other local authorities, is rate-capped when it spends less than half that sum on its pupils.

The Department of Education and Science estimates that there is a £3 billion backlog of repairs in maintained schools. Her Majesty's inspectorate says that one quarter of children are educated in buildings whose condition is so bad that it affects their schooling, yet the cash on capital repairs in many counties has been cut. More public money —£10 million—has been devoted to a single city technology college in Nottingham than to the capital repairs and improvements in all the 1,175 maintained schools in Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire and Bedfordshire put together.

There is a school down the road from my constituency, Crawshawbooth in the Rossendale valley, where one class has 45 children in it and another has 50. The Secretary of State knows about this, because I wrote to him after I visited that school in April. Its needs and the needs of hundreds of other such schools are ignored, while the budgets for assisted places and for CTCs are increased handsomely. In some areas, the Secretary of State has cynically and deliberately refused to agree to urgent repairs unless the school concerned becomes a city technology college.

That is the truth of what has happened to the Bacon's school in Southwark, where the Secretary of State and the CTC trust have effectively blackmailed the governors and the diocesan board into making the school a city technology college with the offer of £10 million of taxpayers' cash if it becomes a CTC, whereas the Secretary of State refused to agree to £2 million if it remained a maintained school.

The Secretary of State may tell us, as he usually does, how well endowed his schools now are. Perhaps he will explain why so many schools now have to raise funds, not for extras but for essentials.

**Mr. Jeff Rooker** (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Before my hon. Friend moves on from the subject of CTCs, will he reflect on one of the visits that he made earlier in the year to the Sylvan high school in Croydon—in your constituency, Mr. Speaker—which has been wrecked by the local authority's proposals for a CTC? Teachers are leaving in droves, 97 per cent. of the parents have voted against and the Secretary of State still will not make a decision before the end of the school term. The parents will not know about the future of the school for the whole of the school holiday. What they do know is that there will not be the teachers to teach the children come September.

**Mr. Straw:** I confirm what my hon. Friend has said. In pursuit of a shoddy partisan policy, the Secretary of State has wilfully presided over the disintegration of what was a good school, backed by its parents.

The Secretary of State will tell us, as the Prime Minister tried to, that everything is lovely and that schools have resources like they never had before, but these days schools have to raise funds not for extras, but for essentials.

The headmistress of Balfour infant schools, Patters lane, Rochester in Kent, wrote recently to parents to seek support for an activities day. We read from her letter that the funds raised were not for extras. The money raised is to be used

"to purchase some large items of school equipment which we need to help us deliver the English and Science National Curriculum to the children."

Flag days, sponsored activities, commercial advertising inside schools in Kent and charges for school lockers have had to fill the gaps—the gaping holes—left by the Government's neglect of the education service.

Let me warn the Secretary of State, if he needs warning, that the Education Reform Act 1988 contains 450 new powers of central state control, but powers mean duties on the Secretary of State and on the Government. The Government and the Law Officers had better beware that if there is an inadequate teaching force to deliver the national curriculum, Ministers, not local authorities, will face court action by parents for a breach of their ministerial duties and responsibilities to the children of this land.

**Mr. Harry Greenway** (Ealing, North): What is the hon. Gentleman suggesting?

**Mr. Straw:** The hon. Gentleman might like to put that question to the Secretary of State and to ask whether he has already warned his colleagues of the possibility of legal action if there are no teachers in schools. My understanding is that he has.

**Mr. Kenneth Hind** (Lancashire, West): The hon. Gentleman has answered my hon. friend the Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellet-Bowman) about Lancashire, where he and I both represent constituencies. This is an Oposition debate on teacher shortages. Conservative Members want to know what the hon. Member proposes to deal with the shortages. *[Laughter.]* Opposition Members laugh. They tell the public that they can do a better job than my right hon. Friend——

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Hind:** Let them tell the people and Conservative Members what they would do about it.

**Mr. Straw:** I will tell the hon. Gentleman that when he has understood the extent of the damage done by the education policies for which he has voted.

**Mr Harry Greenway:** Answer the question.

**Mr. Straw:** I shall. The hon. Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) asks in whom people have confidence. He should bear in mind the results of the county council elections in Lancashire, where, especially in his constituency, the Conservative party got a pasting. On that result, he would not be in the House for a second longer.

**Mr. Tony Baldry** (Banbury): The hon. Gentleman is in some difficulty with that line. The only thing we know about Labour party policy is what appeared in the policy review. *The Times Educational Supplement* described Labour policy as having a Conservative look. The truth of the matter is that every policy set out there is a mimic of policies introduced in the Education Reform Act 1988. A considerable amount of the froth that the hon. Gentleman is putting forward today is intended to disguise the fact that, in all the education initiatives of the past five or six years, the Conservative initiatives have set the pace.

**Mr. Straw:** The hon. Gentleman has not even read Labour's policy review or the response in *The Times Educational Supplement*, which was far more——

**Mr. Baldry:** I have it here.

**Mr. Straw:** No. The hon. Gentleman is looking at the wrong piece. He has been quoting from the news report; he should read the editorial that appeared the week we produced our document, which compared and contrasted our policies and those of the Government. One difference is that Labour Members' children attend state schools—[HON. MEMBERS: "So do ours."] I am talking not about the labourers but about the men and women in the Cabinet, all but one of whom have sent their children to private schools and who care little and know less about the condition of state schools.

In addition to the mocking of the education system by the Secretary of State, we have what the education editor of *The Independent* described yesterday as "system overload". There is one budget—*[Interruption.]*

**Ms. Hilary Armstrong** (Durham, North-West): Oh, shut up.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** You shut up.

**Mr. Straw:** There is one budget—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Perhaps it would not be a bad idea if Back Benchers on both sides of the House did shut up.

**Mr. Straw:** There is one budget that has been subject to no constraint by the Secretary of State—the budget for his publicity, which has increased by 3,000 per cent. since 1980. Schools are knee-deep in glossy pamphlets and ring files all signifying the further half-baked hasty changes that they are expected to implement in too little time and with too little money. Local management of schools, the national curriculum, school governors, open admissions and opting out are just part of the burden; in London, considerable additional uncertainty has been created by the break-up of the Inner London education authority.

The Government's Interim Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions said in its latest report that it believed

"pay to be a critical factor in morale, and in motivation."

The committee was constrained before its work began by a pre-ordained cash limit on its recommendations, which led its members to doubt that the proposals that they could make within that straitjacket would

*[Mr. Straw]*

"secure the requisite degree of motivation among the generality of teachers at this crucial time."

No doubt the Secretary of State will tell us that the crisis has been got up by his opponents—by the press. It has, indeed, been got up by the press—not just by *The Guardian* and *The Independent* but by the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail*. On Monday last, the *Sun* ran a so-called "special" on the crisis hitting our classrooms, with stories —far from untypical—of teachers who have doubled their salaries on leaving the profession. The *Daily Mail* said, rightly, that the pay rise that teachers were given earlier this year was less than the rate of inflation, and that, it said, "just isn't good enough". That view was expressed again in an editorial this morning.

Teachers' starting pay—especially for those in London and the south-east—is far from generous, but the gap grows after five and 10 years.

**Mr. Pawsey:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Straw:** No. I have given way enough.

The interim advisory committee pointed out last year that, after 10 years, the average good honours graduate teacher could expect a real-terms pay increase of only 56 per cent., whereas outside teaching the same person could expect a salary rise of twice that, or 110 per cent.

It will take some years following the departure of this Government before all the damage they have done to the education system can be repaired. "Children First", Labour's detailed policy document on education, spells out proposals for reforming teacher training, for providing new teachers with much greater support and in-service training, for a proper career structure for teaching assistants——

**Mr. Pawsey:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Straw:** I have given way enough.

We set out proposals for a general teachers' council.

**Mr. Pawsey:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Straw:** No.

But a crisis requires crisis measures. First, the city technology colleges programme must be halted and the millions of pounds of public money——

**Mr. Pawsey:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way on this point——

**Hon. Members:** Sit down.

**Mr. Straw:** I have given way enough; I will not give way.

The city technology colleges programme must be halted and the millions of pounds of public money earmarked for CTCs must be directed to the immediate needs of state schools.

Secondly, an emergency programme to recruit and retain teachers must be introduced. That must mean an improved and nationally funded system of housing allowances for teachers in high-cost areas. It must also mean proper allowances for child care throughout the country to enable women—and some men—to go back to teaching when they have young children.

We need an interim pay increase across the country for all teachers, which I understand the Council of Local Educational Authorities is to consider tomorrow and for which Conservative-controlled Essex county council has already called. Thirdly, free collective bargaining should be restored as soon as possible.

**Mr. Pawsey:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Straw:** No, I will not. I am coming to the end of my speech.

Meanwhile, fourthly, there should be an absolute guarantee by the Secretary of State and the Treasury that no preconditions will be imposed—no cash limit—on the recommendations of the interim advisory committee.

Some of us know the anxiety caused to parents and children by the shortage of teachers, when parents cannot be told, just four days before term ends, who is to teach their child next term or even whether that child will have full-time schooling. The Secretary of State seeks to deny that there is a crisis. If there is no crisis, will the Secretary of State guarantee that, next term, no child will be without adequate, properly qualified, permanent teaching? There will be crisis enough in those children's lives if he cannot make that guarantee.

According to the newspapers, every Cabinet Minister is now looking to his future, but for this Secretary of State we should look to his past. The man who invented the poll tax and who suggested water privatisation is now hoping to clear off—cut and run—once again, to leave another Minister to sort out his mess, while Britain's children suffer from it.

Three years ago, in August 1986, just shortly after his appointment, the Secretary of State told *Woman's Own* magazine:

"of course, I can make it better—if I can't, I might as well throw in the towel and resign".

It has not got better; it has got much worse. As one head teacher put it to me earlier this week, "It's far worse than when the strikes were on; there is now a real sense of hopelessness." Only for one group has it got better—the private schools. The Secretary of State has made himself the recruiting sergeant for the private schools. What makes his smug insufferable complacency all the worse is that he is ready to see the schooling of other people's children disrupted and put at risk in a way that he would never accept for his children.

In many schools, in many areas, the situation is now desperate. Britain's parents do not want to hear soft soap from the Secretary of State; they want action—an emergency programme of the kind that I have described. Britain's children deserve no less.

4.32 pm

**The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker):** I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

"congratulates Her Majesty's Government for its coherent and energetic programme to tackle teacher shortages, notably licensed teachers and articled teachers; welcomes the increase in the number of initial teacher training places; notes the substantial improvement in teachers' pay in the lifetime of this Government which contrasts with the modest increase under the last Labour Government; and urges local education authorities to use the flexibility available to them to recruit and retain a sufficient and well-qualified number of teachers."

This is yet another debate on the important matter of teacher supply. The House is now used to exchanges across the Dispatch Boxes between the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and myself. I must say that I shall miss him when he is moved to other responsibilities on the

Labour Front Bench. It is about time that the Labour Front Bench was reshuffled so that it could have an education spokesman with original and constructive ideas.

This is the second time in recent weeks that we have debated this matter. It is one that merits further debate and it also requires proper action. In our previous debate I set out the action that the Government were taking and which I propose to take. Obviously, Opposition Members have ears, but they hear not—they did not hear what I said on 2 May. Obviously, Opposition Members have eyes, but they see not—they did not read in *Hansard* what I said on 2 May. However, over the weekend I took the trouble to read the speech of the hon. Member for Blackburn in the 2 May debate. I spent 20 minutes reading it, and it was a completely wasted 20 minutes. The speech was negative. There were no new proposals in it, as there have been no real new proposals this afternoon.

Let me make it clear that teacher supply is a serious issue. We must get the teachers we need for our schools. We need good teachers, well qualified with the teaching skills to engage, excite and stimulate their pupils. I do not employ teachers.

**Mr. Hind:** Will my right hon. Friend give way?

**Mr. Baker:** If I could just get further launched into my speech, I shall be glad to give way to my hon. Friend, because he intervened in the speech of the hon. Member for Blackburn to make the point that that speech lacked originality and ideas.

Local education authorities and schools have responsibility for employing teachers. The Secretary of State's role is to ensure that sufficient numbers of qualified teachers come forward for recruitment by the LEAs and schools.

On 2 May I spelled out all the measures that the Government have taken in the past three or four years. They amount to a formidable list. If we had not taken the action that we took three years ago, the position would be infinitely worse today. For example, we have introduced bursaries. The hon. Member for Blackburn used to sneer about this, but he is not sneering now. The bursaries for maths, physics, chemistry and technology teachers have arrested the decline in applications for those posts. When I extended the bursaries to chemistry teachers earlier this year, the decline was arrested and applications to become chemistry teachers are up 13 per cent. compared with the same period last year. Of course, that is not sufficient and there will still be a shortage of chemistry teachers, but the bursaries have none the less arrested the decline.

In addition, I have increased the number of initial teacher training places by 2,000. I made that announcement only a fortnight or so ago. I have also announced an education support grant of £4 million over two years to make teacher recruitment packages attractive——

**Mr. Rhodri Morgan** (Cardiff, West) *rose*——

**Mr. Baker:** I should like to get a little further into my speech, but I will give way to the hon. Gentleman in a moment. *[Interruption.]* Yes, I shall give way because I enjoy debate.

The question of teacher supply is vital. It is crucial. It is not helped by defeatism and talk of crisis. All that the hon. Member for Blackburn does is to seek to spread gloom and doom. He talks up the issue. If he is not careful he will turn a difficult situation into a crisis and I am sure that that is not what he wants. I do not believe for a moment that he objects to the various measures that I have announced or to the other measures that we have taken in the past three years. The hon. Gentleman owes the House a more effective way of putting forward his own ideas for dealing with the problem of teacher supply.

**Ms. Harriet Harman** (Peckham) *rose*——

**Mr. Baker:** I will give way to the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan), who rose earlier.

**Mr. Morgan:** I am grateful to the Secretary of State for allowing me to comment on one of the claims that he has just made. He says that he has increased by 2,000 the number of teaching places available. If that is so, will he explain why, winging its way to University college, Cardiff today, as I understand it, is a letter rejecting its bid to be allowed to preserve initial teacher training there in spite of the fact that it is consistently over-subscribed and that this year it had to close its application list at Christmas because of the number of students wishing to join even though it had a death sentence hanging over it?

What guidance has the Secretary of State given to the Universities Funding Council about which institutions are to be given the 2,000 extra places? Can he explain how a place as popular as University college, Cardiff, which could make a major contribution to solving the teacher supply crisis, has been cut off and will be stone dead in a year's time?

**Mr. Baker:** I have increased the number of teacher training places by a net figure of 2,000. Within that 2,000 are some adjustments as regards teacher subjects. Some subjects are being expanded, such as those in the technology and science area, and others have to be reduced. I will check the exact figures and the position of University college, Cardiff, and perhaps return to that matter later.

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): Closure?

**Mr. Baker:** Some courses are reduced, but overall there has been an increase of 2,000 teacher training places. We have to make adjustments because there is a surplus of teachers for some subjects and school courses and it would be absurd to continue to train people if there are surplus teachers in those subjects. We must be concerned about the areas in which there are shortages.

I shall now report to the House about where we stand today and give the overall position. I turn first to the pupil-teacher ratio, which the hon. Member for Blackburn mentioned and which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister also referred to at Question Time today when she scored yet another bull's-eye against the Leader of the Opposition. There are more teachers relative to pupils now than ever before. The overall pupil-teacher ratio is at its lowest ever, at 17:1. When we came into office—when the last Labour Government finished their period of office—the ratio was 19:1. This is having its effect on provision in schools. I remind the House that resources per pupil have increased in real terms by 37 per cent. since we took responsibility for education in 1979 when we came into office. That is good news and I am sure that hon. Members of all parties will welcome it.

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey) *rose*——

**Mr. Baker:** I hope that the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I do not give way for a moment.

From the way in which the matter is presented by the hon. Member for Blackburn—and, I am sad to say, by some union leaders—one would think that nobody wanted to become a teacher. The plain fact is that about 27,000 people become teachers each year. That number of people find it a satisfying and rewarding profession.

**Mr. Harry Greenway** *rose*——

**Mr. Baker:** I intend to give way as much as possible during my remarks.

**Mr. Hind:** My right hon. Friend will agree that what we have been offered by Opposition Members, in contrast to his own positive planning, are the banalities of a recruitment drive. Housing allowances are not a new idea. The concept of nursery allowances has been around for some time. As for no cash limits on teacher's pay, we have no idea how much the Opposition would spend or how they would target the money to produce recruits and better quality teachers.

**Mr. Baker:** That is true. The hon. Member for Blackburn has produced a vapid document containing his proposals for education policy, but he has not made the mistake of attempting to cost it because he knows that hidden in the document, along with various statements that have been made by his hon. Friends since it was published, are some extremely expensive commitments. Although the hon. Gentleman has not costed it, we are beginning to do so.

**Mr. Straw** *rose*——

**Mr. Baker:** I was pointing out that 27,000 people entered the teaching profession each year.

**Ms. Harman** *rose*——

**Mr. Baker:** I promise to give way to the hon. Lady later, perhaps when my remarks come closer to London.

There was a survey in *The Financial Times* last week of the attitudes of university and polytechnic students towards various professions. The most popular profession was the media, but after that came teaching, well before the law, medicine and financial services. So there is a great deal of interest and commitment among people wishing to go into teaching.

The figures for recruitment to initial teacher training courses were particularly good in 1988, with the recruitment of young people into initial teacher training up by 5 per cent. over the 1987 level. Nearly 20,200 students entered initial teacher training last year, 1,000 more than in 1987.

In the primary sector, the figures for recruitment to initial teacher training have been notably good. Nearly 11,400 students were recruited to primary courses last year. That was 9 per cent. above the target that we had set. I am glad to tell the House that this year applications by young people to go into initial teacher training this September and October are 11 per cent. up on last year. That represents 5,500 more. On the secondary side, applications are up by just over 1 per cent., and on the primary side, they are up by 15 per cent. That is good news which will be welcomed by hon. Members in all parts of the House.

**Mr. Straw:** As things are so good, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman to offer a guarantee to every parent that, come September, all children in Britain will have adequate and sufficient properly qualified teaching—yes or no?

**Mr. Baker:** My responsibility under education law is to ensure that there is a flow and good supply of well qualified teachers so that LEAs and governors can recruit and employ them. I am dischaging that responsibility under the legislation to ensure that the schools are staffed to supply the national curriculum. I have taken measures in respct of initial teacher training and in-service training to ensure that teacher training recruitment levels are higher than they have been for the last three years.

**Ms. Harman** *rose*——

**Mr. Baker:** The hon. Member for Blackburn said on radio this morning, and repeated at the Dispatch Box, that there was no absolute shortage of teachers. That is the beginning of wisdom for him. It is only the beginning, and we live in hope.

**Ms. Harman** *rose*——

**Mr. Baker:** I will give way to the hon. Lady in due course. At the moment I am dealing with the hon. Member for Blackburn, who was right to say that there was no shortage of teachers. Apart from making it attractive for young people to go into initial teacher training, we must also make it attractive for the many trained teachers—the 300,000 to 400,000 who have been trained as teachers, and particularly married women re-entrants—to return to the profession. In the last three years there has been a steady increase each year. This year, about 15,500 former teachers will be returning to teaching.

**Mr. Straw** *rose*——

**Mr. Baker:** I hope that the hon. Gentleman will forgive me for not giving way to him again immediately. I must allow a few hon. Members other than himself to intervene. Indeed, I probably owe it to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) to allow her to intervene first.

**Ms. Harman:** Parents in Southwark will be shocked at the complacency with which the right hon. Gentleman appears to be treating the situation. Will he take this opportunity to guarantee to parents in Southwark that there will be sufficient teachers for all children intending to start school in September to have teachers in their classrooms, and that we shall not see next term what we have seen this term—junior school children being sent home for up to two days per week because there are not enough teachers? Will the right hon. Gentleman give that guarantee to parents in Southwark who are desperately concerned about this issue?

**Mr. Baker:** The hon. Lady should criticise ILEA for its complacency in inner London—*[Interruption.]*—and I will explain why. ILEA has responsibility for the recruitment of teachers in Southwark, as in other parts of inner London. Only in the last three months has ILEA produced a teacher recruitment package. ILEA has been in existence for 25 years. Only now has it produced a package covering, for example, creches—to which the hon. Member for Blackburn referred—and making it easier for married women to return to teaching with better training.

It makes it easier for them by giving them greater credit for the number of years they have been away looking after their families.

ILEA has got around to doing that only in the last three months, and as a result I have some good news for the hon. Member for Peckham about teacher shortages in London. I have been chided in the past by the hon. Member for Blackburn about vacancies and particularly about resignations. He has always claimed that the vacancy figures for teachers, which are published each January, do not give the latest position because the resignations relate to the end of May.

The figures that we produce each January show that the number of vacancies in January this year in the primary sector for the country as a whole were just over 3,100 vacant posts nationwide. That is out of a total of 171,000 primary teachers, which means that the vacancy rate is under 2 per cent. It varies enormously. Even in London there were authorities with low numbers of vacant primary posts—for example, Bromley, Harrow, Kingston, Richmond and Sutton—whereas in London as a whole there were vacancies for 1,300 out of 24,600 teachers, and the problem is more grave in the east end of London.

In the secondary sector—I am dealing with January; I will come to May shortly—the number of vacancies rose by 400 between 1988 and 1989 to 2,400, but that is out of a total of 192,000 posts, the vacancies representing 1·3 per cent. of total teaching posts. That is not an alarming proportion. Again, the problems were far greater in London than elsewhere.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that Blackburn runs its affairs so badly that DHSS recipients and the unemployed come crowding into Morecambe, crowding out the schools there, so that my right hon. Friend's constituents and mine are deprived of the chance of going to the schools that their parents attended?

**Mr. Baker:** There is further evidence why Blackburn is so bad.

I wish to deal with the question of vacancies, because the hon. Member for Blackburn has attacked me about vacancies and resignations, remembering that resignations come later in the year. Vacancies were not at alarming proportions in January, as I have pointed out. What has happened since?

The hon. Member for Blackburn made great play of the resignations position, and quoted from a reply that I gave showing that the Department's figures for resignations are two years out of date. That is correct, because the figures are provided by LEAs late in the day. The hon. Gentleman wrote asking if I would ask my officials to telephone the LEAs to discover the resignation position. Ever willing to be helpful to Jack, I asked my officials to telephone several LEAs, particularly in London. They found that several authorities were unable to say what the position on resignations was. They had not collated the figures but said that they would send the figures to us.

**Ms. Harman:** Tory authorities.

**Mr. Baker:** No, some were Labour authorities. The position was largely as expected in the other LEAs. In some the position was no worse than last year and in others it was worse. The picture was patchy.

We had figures from eight out of the 10 ILEA divisions. Last year there were 1,908 resignations and at the end of May this year there were 1,439. That was a reduction of nearly a quarter. A figure of about 1,400 resignations is unacceptably high, but I say to the hon. Member for Peckham that it is up to ILEA to put forward its package. The package that it has now put forward is beginning to attract more teachers to ILEA appointments.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** A few moments ago the Secretary of State said that he accepted his responsibility under statute to ensure a good supply of teachers throughout his term of office. He has been in office for three years and the Government have been in office for 10 years. On his own admission, at the beginning of this year there were 5,400 vacancies. How is it that the Secretary of State has not been able to carry out his responsibilities?

**Mr. Baker:** In a teaching force of some 404,000, to have about 5,500 vacancies on any particular day is not a problem out of all proportion. A proportion of vacancies of about 1·3 per cent. in any large administration is a containable problem. We have put in hand a range of proposals which are attracting a record number of young people into the profession.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** Will my right hon. Friend put on the record—this should be borne in mind, considering what the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) said—that whatever teachers could earn outside teaching, they are now better paid in real terms than ever and much better than when the Government came to office 10 years ago? Will he also correct the hon. Gentleman's persistent claim that the Government have cut spending on education as a percentage of GNP, when in reality it has risen from 11 per cent. to 12 per cent.? It is about time that the hon. Gentleman learned the truth.

**Mr. Baker:** The figures on teachers' pay speak for themselves. Since we have been in office teachers' real pay has increased by about 30 per cent. When Labour was in office it increased by 6 per cent. The Labour party cannot possibly claim to be the friend of teachers.

The position in Tower Hamlets has been mentioned by the hon. Member for Blackburn and in many newspapers. I recognise that there is a problem and I want to do what I can to help. Recently I met a delegation fron ILEA led by the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), and my hon. Friend the Minister of State has held discussions with the London boroughs. I understand that 200 or 300 children are out of school because of a lack of teachers. Some dozen to 15 teachers are needed to teach 300 pupils. That is alongside the Tower Hamlets teaching force of about 1,500. The problem is not incapable of solution. ILEA can take measures to make good the deficit. It should have been taking such measures for some time, but it has been slow off the mark.

This is not a question of money. ILEA has the funds to pay for extra allowances for teachers and to put together attractive financial packages to attract more people to London. I am told that, according to the latest figures, ILEA is not likely to spend its entire budget this year. It is not short of funds.

**Mr. Straw:** ILEA will cease to exist from 1 April 1990. Does the Secretary of State offer the same guarantee to all the successor London borough authorities, that they will not be short of money?

**Mr. Baker:** The hon. Gentleman will have to wait for the rate support grant settlement, particularly for inner London.

In our talks with the new London borough education authorities, which are predominantly Labour-controlled, we have been impressed by their dynamic approach towards planning for education and teacher shortages. They have already developed their own schemes, which include attractive packages for teachers. Help with housing is particularly attractive. In the past, ILEA was distainful towards the London boroughs and was not prepared to talk to them about council housing and other such assistance for staff. Now the individual boroughs are putting together teacher recruitment packages involving council estates and housing support. That will be helpful.

The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney is not in his place. I do not criticise him for that, because he takes a great interest in this. I wish to assure Tower Hamlets that I want to do what I can to help. The TASC unit in my Department deals with the promotion of teaching as a career and meets with ILEA to find solutions. Although it is late in the day, there is still time to tackle the problems of inner London. I shall do what I can to help. The Department will be willing, in partnership with Tower Hamlets or any other east end London boroughs, to support teacher recruitment campaigns and to advertise the new packages that have been devised.

Another measure will be of help to teachers in London. The hon. Member for Blackburn has been disdainful and attacked the introduction of licensed teachers in September. That scheme aims to attract people from other careers to come into teaching. I hope that the original criticism of that scheme by the hon. Gentleman and by the unions has now abated. It has been widely accepted not only by Conservative but by Labour authorities as a way of attracting more people into teaching. It means that people who have experience of higher education can be trained on the job. In addition, the articled teachers scheme will be introduced next year. I wish that the hon. Gentleman would welcome those schemes.

In recent years about 1,000 teachers from overseas have come each year to take up posts in our schools, throughout the country but principally in London. Their skills and expertise are welcome. In September, we shall be the first country in Europe to implement an EC directive requiring member states to recognise each other's teaching qualifications. Teachers from overseas will be able to gain qualified teacher status here on application. Some authorities have already begun to recruit in other EC countries. I was surprised at the hon. Gentleman's attitude to recruitment in Europe. He talked about sending "scavengers across Europe" and made an unwarranted attack on German teachers. A month ago the Labour party posed as the European party, yet it attacks the quality of teaching in our partner countries. Its first test in moving closer to 1992 has resulted in a disgraceful, shallow attack.

**Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow)** *rose*——

**Mr. Baker:** I ask the hon. Gentleman to forgive me, but I have given way many times.

From September we shall accept overseas qualifications of teachers from the Common Market and they will be given qualified teacher status.

We have some overseas trained teachers from outside the EC. It is a characteristic of many Australian and New Zealand teachers that they come to teach in inner London. They complain that although they are qualified back home, they are not qualified here. There have been protracted debates about qualified teacher status for them and I have considered how we can improve their position. Our proposal for the new scheme was originally that, provided they were qualified, licensed teachers would receive qualified teacher status if they underwent training for a year. In the light of our responses to the draft proposals I am happy to announce today that I plan to go further and allow LEAs and schools exceptionally to recommend experienced overseas trained teachers to become qualified in this country after only one term. That will be especially attractive to young Australian and New Zealand teachers.

I welcome this opportunity to outline once again the actions that I am taking to tackle the problem of teacher shortages. I hope that the House recognises that there has been a substantial increase in the numbers of young people going into teacher training. No profession receives as much in-service training as the teaching profession—about £300 million per year.

The hon. Member for Blackburn suggested that the Government had not put forward new ideas, whereas in fact during the past two or three years we have put forward a whole range of proposals. It is the hon. Gentleman who has failed to put forward any new ideas, and he has certainly given us none today. He merely asked for an interim pay award, but even that was not his idea—it was suggested by the National Union of Teachers. Like the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), the hon. Member for Blackburn has become a spokesman for the NUT. By the hon. Gentleman's own definition, an interim pay award would not help the problem of teacher shortages. Any analysis of the problem clearly shows that it varies from one part of the country to another.

The hon. Gentleman did not quote the article in *The Times Educational Supplement* which said that there were no teacher shortages in areas such as North Yorkshire, Hereford and Worcester, the city of Liverpool and Walsall, which in particular has no shortage of maths teachers. We all recognise that there are shortages in the home counties and in London, but the hon. Gentleman did not put forward any ideas to deal with that.

The hon. Gentleman's response to our proposals has been simply to attack them. He attacked the plans for licensed teachers and articled teachers and wanted us to abandon them.

**Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central):** No.

**Mr. Baker:** I am glad that the hon. Member for Blackburn has, at last, accepted the idea of licensed teachers—*[Interruption.]* His silence, I hope, conveys consent. As least the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) supports our proposals.

Over the years, the hon. Member for Blackburn has adopted a policy of plagiarism of Government policies. He has followed a policy of destruction. Does he believe that that will improve the morale of the teaching profession? What are his proposals to improve the morale of the teaching profession, which he claims so concerns him? He wants to abolish the remaining grammar schools, grant-maintained schools and city technology colleges and to weaken the national curriculum. How will that improve teachers' morale? The hon. Gentleman has come up with a series of gimmicks—that is his stock in trade—the purpose of which is the exploitation of anxiety. Only the Government's proposals can deal with the problem.

5.2 pm

**Mr. Martin Flannery** (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Having listened to the Secretary of State many times, I know that the outstanding quality that he brings to our debates is his belief that no matter what is wrong, nothing is wrong. He speaks as though everything is wonderful in the best of all worlds. He pretends to have a grip of his subject and says that everything is all right. In fact, a large section of the press—not just the National Union of Teachers or the Opposition Front Bench—profoundly disagrees with him. Today's editorial in *The Guardian* said:

> "Our crippling, intensifying teacher shortage takes centre stage in the Commons today."

The right hon. Gentleman claims that there is no such shortage, yet he failed to answer the question of what will happen in September. He has given no guarantee that sufficient teachers will stand in front of the classes. *The Guardian* continued:

> "These problems are exacerbated by the increased competition from industry for graduates, the erosion of teachers' pay compared to other graduates, and the manifest decline in the morale of the profession."

The Minister of State is on record as saying that there is no low morale. Only a fortnight ago the Secretary of State, under questioning, also said that. Surely he is aware that, with one exception, every group that appeared before the Select Committee referred to the reasons for low morale in the profession and treated it as a fundamental problem. Only the group from the Department of Education and Science said that there is no low morale. The DES leading figure said that he had not noticed any low morale, and that view was endorsed by the Secretary of State.

Although endless warnings have been given to the Government, they have taken not the slightest notice. They are whistling in the dark and trying to bolster their courage by pretending that there is no problem. At the behest of the Opposition, the Select Committee decided to carry out research into the reason for teacher shortages. We had hoped to publish the report by the end of the Session but, unfortunately, that is not possible. Certain people do not want the report published that quickly. The Opposition want it published because it will confirm the serious problem of teacher shortages. Every member of the Select Committee is well aware of the problem.

Every time that the Secretary of State or his Ministers say that nothing is wrong, they get a great clap on the back from their young Turks—many of whom will be missing after the next election—because they are grovellers. Indeed, I see that three of them are sitting behind the Minister today. They never say a critical word to the Secretary of State, so nobody takes any notice of them anyway. All they do is grovel.

Many questions must be answered. Who created the teacher shortage? It is the fault of the Government, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State before him. For years they have been launching vicious attacks on the teaching profession. They have demeaned it and said that all sorts of things are wrong with it. The many quotes over the years are on the record. The Secretary of State refuses to admit that anything is wrong and that morale is low. Is he not aware that morale is low because he has demeaned the profession? Students, some of whom may want to become teachers, read in the press of his constant demeaning of the profession. Does the right hon. Gentleman think that, following such attacks, those students will want to enter the profession?

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Flannery:** The Secretary of State gave way many times, and on two occasions to the same person. The hon. Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) has fled the Chamber now that she has intervened twice. There is only a short time available and many hon. Members wish to speak—*[Interruption.]* Where has the hon. Lady gone? I do not know. She seems able to intervene on the Secretary of State, but I am not so successful.

All the interested organisations agree that there is a crisis. We visited Warwick university, whose education department said that there was a major and developing crisis—a view endorsed by the university's students. The education department of Manchester polytechnic, all the teachers' unions—even the Professional Association of Teachers, which is tame enough—said that. The general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said that the problem of teacher shortages was a developing catastrophe. He was pulled up for saying such a naughty thing, but he repeated it anyway. Such statements from all the leading organisations make it clear that there will be a serious problem of teacher shortage next September.

In the primary sector, any number of teachers who have taught for many years are miserable and terrified by the number of documents and the bureaucracy. Under the new Education Reform Act 1988, which is an educational disaster for this country, our teachers are being made to teach subjects which they have not taught for a long time. They receive glossy documents from their local education authority which is made to send them out by the Secretary of State, who takes the authorities to task for not taking certain action. However, he knows that the Government have rate-capped the local authorities so that they do not have enough money to carry out the work.

The teaching profession is grossly overworked, under-paid and undervalued. The attack which is being launched against teachers to ensure that they are not paid properly and to deny them negotiating rights stems from the top of the Government. Meanwhile, the Baker city technology colleges, which were to be paid for privately, are not being funded in that way: 80 per cent. of the money for them comes from the public purse.

**Mr. Bruce Grocott** (The Wrekin): Is my hon. Friend aware that Ministers are totally out of touch with their own Conservative councillors? When a quite stunning and outrageous proposal for a city technology college in Telford was recently made, to the amazement of everyone in the town who knew nothing about it, the reaction of the all-party county council was reported in the *Shropshire Star*. The report stated:

> "County Councillors of all political colours today united to denounce the way plans for a city technology college at Telford were sprung on the county."

An all-party resolution was passed, stating:

> "no decision be made before the potential serious implications for education in Shropshire have been fully considered."

*[Mr. Bruce Grocott]*

Does my hon. Friend agree that, even if the Government do not agree with us, it is time they started to listen to their own councillors?

**Mr. Flannery:** I agree with my hon. Friend. There has been an all-round attack on comprehensive schools, which have brought more and better results in education than ever before in the history of this country. The Government hate that fact and have introduced the technology colleges which siphon off money from the state system and channel it to selected pupils. As was mentioned, the assisted places scheme takes about £70 million a year, and that amount is rising massively. That money is being taken from the state sector. The Government intend to build up the private sector which their children use and take money from our children. They are good at doing that.

As has been said, the Secretary of State has about 400 new powers which he uses as a diktat and lays down to the profession. Members of the teaching profession act as any reasonable professionals would after years of sustained attack, by voting with their feet and leaving the profession. The Secretary of State will find not teachers in Australia or Barbados, but from among the 400,000 teachers in the so-called pool of inactive teachers, which he has created in the profession.

It is utter nonsense for the Government to say that the teacher-pupil relationship is wonderful. No one believes that for a moment. The Government could make the position worse by sacking more teachers, but instead they tyrannise and demean them. The Education Reform Act is being severely questioned because of the lack of teachers, which is not admitted.

When a problem exists, the high road to its resolution is the recognition that it exists. The Government and the Secretary of State act as if there is no problem. If they do not act to set it right, they will have the educational state system round their necks. They will be on the fringes of a grave problem with which we shall be grappling long after the Secretary of State and the Government have gone. The Secretary of State should be sacked for what he has done to state education; and when he goes, he should take the Government with him.

5.14 pm

**Mr. Andrew MacKay** (Berkshire, East): That was a sadly confused speech. If the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) believes that teachers are grossly underpaid now, what position were they in when the Labour Government, of which he was a prominent and senior Back Bencher, were in power? Teachers' pay increased in real terms by only 6 per cent. under the last Labour Government. We are all well aware that it has increased by nearly 30 per cent. in real terms this time round. That is an indictment of the bad economic policy of the Government which he continually supported when he went through the Lobby night after night.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett** (Pembroke) *rose*——

**Mr. MacKay:** I shall not give way because one matter on which I agree with the hon. Member for Hillsborough, is that many people want to speak. We have had many interventions and I wish to get on with my speech so that as many Members as possible may make contributions.

This has been a disappointing debate, mainly because of the silly motion in the name of the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and others. It has not answered any of the questions and is grossly overstated. The hon. Member for Blackburn has missed a good oportunity this afternoon to get to the heart of the problem which is worrying many of his constituents: teacher shortages and potential teacher shortages in areas in which house prices are very high.

I fundamentally disagree with Opposition Members who say that teachers' pay is low in this country, per se. That is not so; teachers' pay is fair and reasonable in most parts of the country. It is low where it is quite impossible for teachers to purchase a house. It is a regional problem. I shall illustrate the problems which we have in Thames valley, where a small, modest, family house fetches more than £100,000 and a single, one-bedroomed flat fetches be tween £75,000 and £80,000. One clearly needs to be on a high salary, and to have saved a considerable sum, to be able to purchase such a property and service the mortgage on it. There is no incentive for any man or woman in the teaching profession to move from other regions of the country to the south-east because they cannot afford to buy a house there.

The problem is exactly the same for nurses, postmen, medical secretaries and ancillary workers. Teachers and nurses receive the same job satisfaction no matter which school they teach in or hospital they nurse in. Therefore, if they have a choice of teaching or nursing in the north of England where, on their salary, they can own a home and also afford a holiday and one or two other luxuries, they will do that. With the high cost of housing in the south-east, they can ill afford a house or flat in the first place and, certainly, can ill afford any luxuries such as holidays. The problem is particularly bad in primary schools in my constituency. In the primary schools in my constituency which I regularly visit, I find no male teachers. The schools are almost entirely staffed by ex-housewives returning to work after their children have grown up. Their husbands are on a considerable salary so their joint salary enables the couple to take out a mortgage to buy a house.

I pay tribute to those ladies, who are excellent teachers, but I think that the House would agree that it would be much healthier for a school to have both male and female teachers in its common room and a good mix of ages as well as sexes. That would be in the schools' interests, but we should be concerned about a shortage of male teachers particularly in primary, but also in secondary, schools.

There are many multinational companies in my constituency and many companies that have units, offices and plants throughout the country. A director, salesman or secretary is paid differently in the Thames valley than in Carrickfergus or Hartlepool because of the different level of house prices. We have to grasp this problem and solve it, but how do we do that? I was interested to hear the suggestion—repeated by the hon. Member for Blackburn, so it appears now to be Labour party policy—that if we ever had the misfortune to have a Labour Government again, they would introduce a nationally funded housing allowance for teachers. If housing allowance means supplying teachers with rented accommodation or council housing, that would be unsatisfactory because teachers, like nurses and everybody else, have a considerable desire to be part of the property-owning democracy. We shall not attract teachers to the south-east if they own a house in the north and are offered only a council house in the south.

**Mr. Andrew Smith** (Oxford, East): He did not say that.

**Mr. MacKay:** If the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) is assuring us, as a Front Bench spokesman, that the hon. Member for Blackburn did not say that, we must assume that this nationally funded housing allowance will be a mortgage subsidy to help to pay for the cost of the house.

This is an interesting policy. I represent a relatively prosperous constituency in the south-east, and I would not sleep easy if I knew that the constituents of the hon. Members for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) and for Antrim, East (Mr. Beggs) were subsidising, through their taxes, education in my constituency. This is the one difficulty about regional pay in the public sector. Is it right and proper, where there is a need for higher salaries and mortgage subsidies in the public sector in the more prosperous areas, for these to be paid out of national taxation? If so, it means that people in the poorer parts of the country on lower salaries will fund my prosperous constituents. I hope that Labour Members would also not sleep easy if they thought that that way forward was to be taken.

Another way forward is to say that people should pay higher rates or a higher community charge in these areas. This has slightly more appeal. In areas with high house prices, it is reasonable to pay a higher rate or community charge so that teachers, nurses, postmen and other such people can get higher rates of pay. If we do not do that, we shall have second-rate schools in the south-east, compared with the regions. We already have inferior hospitals because wards are being closed and expensive equipment is not being used because we cannot get the nurses in the south-east for the same reason—they find it more agreeable to be nurses in hospitals in the regions, where they can buy their own homes.

Another way is better still—to ensure that there is not this great divide in house prices between the south-east and the rest of the country. I have been gratified, since I spoke on this subject some 18 months ago, to see the difference reduced, although it has gone nowhere near far enough. You will be aware, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in Sandwell in West Bromwich, one can still buy a house much more cheaply than in Bracknell, Ascot or Sunningdale. However, the move is in the right direction. While I feel deeply for those of my constituents who bought their houses when prices were at the top, before they started to fall, and who now have to service a high mortgage, I know that others of my constituents are breathing a sigh of relief because at last there is a possibility that their children will be able to own their own homes. Therefore, I welcome the fact that in my constituency prices have fallen by 20 per cent. in the past six months. That is one of the best pieces of news that we have had for a long time.

However, more private sector firms must be persuaded to move out of the south-east and into the regions, where houses are less expensive, there is a plentiful supply of labour, more skills in the labour force and cheaper office and factory spaces.

I was laughed at by my hon. Friends when, two and a half years ago, I said that in my constituency I was encouraging companies to get out. There were gasps about that, but I wanted it because our economy is overheated, we have negative unemployment, skill shortages, congestion on the roads, problems in the hospitals and the potential problems in the schools that I have just mentioned. For these companies to be at their most prosperous and efficient, they should not necessarily be operating out of the south-east, because there their unit labour costs are high and they are not competing properly in the world markets. I am delighted to say that a number of them—British Aerospace, Racal, Ferranti, BMW and others—are moving out of the constituency.

Far from unemployment being created as a result of this move, plenty of people are waiting to offer jobs to those who are made redundant. If there were a better balance between private sector industries in the north and south, house prices in the south-east would come more into line with those in the rest of the country. There would then be less of a problem with regional pay differences in the public sector.

This is a problem that my hon. Friend the Minister and her colleagues in the Departments of Health, Social Security and Trade and Industry will have to tackle. There are no easy solutions in the way suggested by the hon. Member for Blackburn. It is offensive to put the burden of increasing regional pay on those in the worst-off regions, so that they have to subsidise the pay increases of people in the best-off regions. I am loth to go down the road that I half suggested, of an increase in the community charge, but there must be some acknowledgement that it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract teachers to our part of the world. If that is not acknowledged and dealt with, I fear that the children of my constituents will get a worse education than the equivalent children in Wales, the midlands, the north, Northern Ireland, Scotland and elsewhere. As a Member representing the Thames valley, I could not stand by and let that happen.

5.28 pm

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): If one had had no other evidence, listening to the Secretary of State, one would have been persuaded that there was no problem. He said that the problem was not alarming, but was "containable". He was extraordinarily selective about statistics. The pupil-teacher ratio has come down, that is true, but is it acceptable that it should go up if teachers are deployed elsewhere? He said that 27,000 teachers had entered the profession, but was silent about how many had left. He gave no estimate of the shortage of vacancies now, despite having promised them, although at last he gave us the figures of vacancies in January—5,400. With the pupil-teacher ratio of 17:1, that means that 100,000 pupils had no teacher last January. It is probable that today the numbers are more.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** Rubbish.

**Mr. Hughes:** That is not rubbish. It is true that these figures relate to ILEA, which is one of the worst authorities, but the probability is that in September, not on resignations but on vacancies, 7,000 children will not be taught. If that is not a crisis, and if after three years in office the Secretary of State is not willing to admit that it is, we have indeed heard a complacent speech.

*[Mr. Hughes]*

So complacent is the Secretary of State that *The Independent* was driven to put the education editor's viewpoint column on the front page yesterday. He said:

> "Morale among teachers is so low that, according to one opinion poll, one in three is considering leaving the profession."

Dealing with a point made by the Secretary of State and the hon. Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay), he said:

> "Teachers' pay, which has fallen far behind comparable professional groups during the past 14 years and has clearly not risen in line with market demands, is the key to the problem."

Pay has gone up, but pay in the private sector has gone up much more. The reality is that people who might return to teaching or stay in teaching do not do so because they can do far better for themselves and for their families elsewhere.

Perhaps the most commonly held view of all, repeated in the article, is:

> "Mr. Baker's handling of teacher supply is not an aberration. It is symptomatic of his wider approach. Mr. Baker is strong on conception, weak on execution. He has a good eye for short-term publicity advantage, a poor one for underlying problems."

It says something about the working of the Department of Education and Science that the first time that it thought about discovering the up-to-date position was in May 1989. It was not until there were abundant signs of a crisis, not just in inner-city Labour-controlled authorities but in Tory-controlled authorities as well, that it bothered to ring round to find out just how severe the problem is.

We have heard many statistics and I do not propose to adduce many more, but the reality is that many primary and secondary schools lose teachers not just to jobs outside teaching but to higher-paid jobs in other authorities. Some authorities are desperately pinching teachers, leaving others short of people at the last minute when they cannot recruit replacements.

**Mr. David Evennett** (Erith and Crayford): I and my hon. Friends have listened with great interest to the picture that the hon. Gentleman has painted with the help of *The Independent*, but how would he deal with the problem that he has outlined?

**Mr. Hughes:** I shall deal with that, but first I should say that, if the Government have no ideas, they should not be the Government. The only new idea from the Secretary of State today, which I welcome and which the Minister of State will confirm that I was speaking with her about only this morning, was in relation to teachers from Australia and New Zealand and qualified teacher status. That was the only new idea, other than saying that the Department would help local authorities to recruit teachers. If it has not been doing that for the past 10 years, there is something wrong with it.

The consequences of the problem are practical, severe and immediate. The hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) intervened earlier. Many parents in boroughs such as ours in Southwark view with great alarm the prospect of what will happen to them and their children when the new term begins.

Those parents know that existing staff will come under additional pressure as they have to take on additional responsibilities. Some of them may receive a merit award, but many of them will not. Putting more stress on the teachers who are there, many of whom already cover to prevent classes from being sent home, means that they have the problems of looking after the classes of other teachers at the same time as the Secretary of State is requiring them to take on further responsibilities under the national curriculum by way of assessment and so on. I predict today that the number of teacher vacancies in primary and secondary schools will be greater at the end of this year than it is now.

Many authorities are desperately turning to new graduates to fill empty places. Many schools are now believed to be taking a far greater number of teachers in their probationary year than before. That is short-sighted, because a new teaching recruit will not benefit from the good supervision that will make him or her a committed teacher, able to remain in the profession. As the Minister will know, I was critical of that issue last year. If probationary teachers do not remain in the profession, we lose the very people whom we should be encouraging to remain. They should be given the support that they need and the pressure on them should be reduced.

A war is being waged against supply teachers who have traditionally filled the gaps in the teacher service. If local authorities continue to pay supply teachers only for the hours that they work rather than by the day, their supply will dry up and matters will be far worse.

My hon. Friend the Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) wants to point out that in Wales—I realise that this is not wholly the Secretary of State's responsibility—the problem is predictably acute. The Labour party is not blameless. More than 1,000 supply teachers in West Glamorgan have had their salaries cut by 36 per cent. in the past year, a reduction of £5,000 per annum, from point 11 to point 4 on the scale, and that has given rise to protests. Of those supply teachers, 92 per cent. are women. The problem is compounded because not only are they on low pay but they are being discriminated against. I hope that the Labour party will not say that everything in their garden is rosy.

Many schools have relied on temporary staff and, over many years, many of those in London have come from Australia and New Zealand. They come here to gain overseas experience. The Minister will confirm that a New Zealand teacher who attended a debate upstairs confirmed that she was leaving teaching because the salary of £105 per week was not sufficient to support her. It is welcome news that such teachers will at last be paid more, but the Secretary of State should have thought of that many months ago.

Perhaps what is most resented by many teachers is the suggestion that they are now enjoying a number of special offers and attractions. In reality, most of them are not. It is all very well having new incentives by way of one-off payments or help with the house to catch new recruits or having incentives to bring back into teaching those who had left to do something else, but the biggest group of teachers are those who have stayed. They are the ones whom we need to hang on to, and many of them resent the special tricks to attract others. We need to spend money on upgrading the status and pay of all teachers in order to recruit and retain those whom we need in our schools.

**Mr. Bob Dunn** (Dartford): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Hughes:** I shall, although the hon. Gentleman has only just come in.

**Mr. Dunn:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. I apologise profusely for not listening to the start of the hon. Gentleman's speech, but he has made some interesting points. Is he, like me, in favour of regional pay and local bargaining? I represent a constituency in the south-east and I fully understand the difficulty of attracting and retaining staff there, a problem which does not exist to the same extent north of Birmingham.

**Mr. Hughes:** I am not in favour of regional pay, because if the teaching profession is to be properly structured, teachers should be adequately remunerated not only when they enter it but in mid-career. Until people in public service are valued and adequately remunerated, we shall continue losing them to the private sector, whether or not there is regional pay. If more money is paid to teachers in the south-east, their salaries would still be below those paid in the private sector. Of course it depends on the market, but, region by region, those working in the public sector are paid substantially less than those in the private sector. The fundamental problem will not begin to be addressed until those in the public sector—above all, teachers—receive an adequate basic remuneration.

Today, on what might be the Secretary of State's last opportunity to prove that he has any ideas of substance, he must have come to the House aware that the Select Committee's report, which we already know is exceedingly critical, is waiting in the wings. It argues for a substantial increase in funding, asserts that the teacher shortage is likely to have been underestimated, and acknowledges that teachers deserve salary increases and mid-career incentives. The evidence given to the Select Committee is known to the Secretary of State; it is irresponsible of him to deny its existence and not respond to it today. It places the education of many children at direct risk in September.

All that the Secretary of State does is meet with the unions.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** No, he meets the unions.

**Mr. Hughes:** The right hon. Gentleman, as I heard him explain on the radio this morning, meets with the unions and puts off democratic negotiations being re-established for another year. Although the Secretary of State argues that only one union pressed for an interim settlement, it is not enough to say that there cannot be such an arrangement. There should be an interim settlement, and there could be. If the right hon. Gentleman carries sufficient authority with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he should be able to persuade his right hon. Friend to provide the necessary money.

It is crucial that, in areas of obvious and acute shortage, additional money should be made available in the form of special merit awards.

**Mr. Bennett:** The hon. Gentleman means regional pay.

**Mr. Hughes:** No, I do not. It may be that there are shortages in central Birmingham, as in central London, or in other areas of the north-west and north-east, but there may be no shortages in adjacent areas, as the Secretary of State's figures tend to confirm. He cited the example of Liverpool, which does not have a shortage, although nearby areas obviously do.

The teachers' tune is an old one, but they sing it every day. It is that, unless they are properly remunerated from the start of their careers to the end of them, many will not be able to afford to stay in the profession. Unless we reward properly those whom we charge with the responsibility for our children's education at the most important time of their lives, we shall be failing in our responsibility as a nation. That is the failure of the Government after 10 years, and the failure of the Secretary of State after three years in office. They have only now begun to wake up to the problem, but still do not believe that it is anything other than containable or that it is anything to be alarmed about. That response is nothing but a disgrace.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd):** Order. Unless right hon. and hon. Members make briefer speeches, many others will be very disappointed by 7 o'clock.

5.43 pm

**Mr. Mark Wolfson** (Sevenoaks): I welcome the acceptance by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State early in his speech that teacher supply is a serious matter. Earlier this year, I did not receive a similar response from other Ministers, and I am glad that the position has changed. Teacher shortage is not a new problem but one that has existed for many years, especially in respect of science, mathematics, technology and, in recent years, modern languages. However, problems are there to be overcome—and Ministers as well as the Government collectively are charged with that responsibility.

In 1988, 1·5 per cent. of all primary posts and 1 per cent. of all secondary posts were unfilled. That was an improvement on 1987, but those figures for actual vacancies do not include hidden shortages, where subjects are taught by teachers who have inadequate qualifications or who work in a temporary or part-time capacity when the job should preferably be filled permanently by a teacher in a full-time post.

The latest available statistics are unsatisfactorily out of date. The figures that I obtained are for 1984, and suggest that 13 per cent. of mathematics and 18 per cent. of physics teaching posts were filled by teachers having no higher education qualifications in those subjects.

I now turn to the example of Kent, in which I obviously have a particular interest, and for which I have up-to-date figures. Kent education committee's trawl of vacancies at the end of June revealed that 150 primary posts and 250 secondary posts were unfilled. Interviews are continuing and appointments are still being made, but that state of affairs, which is similar to that of last year, is still serious. I do not call it a crisis, but it is serious.

Of those vacancies, 34 are in mathematics, 39 in science, and 27 in modern languages. Such figures might be expected because there are shortages nationally of teachers in those subjects. More disturbing is that there are also 38 vacancies in English and 29 in physical education, which many people think are not shortage areas.

The situation in Kent is not as bad as it is in Essex, and it is comparable to that of one year ago, but I emphasise that it is still serious. I hope that that point is fully appreciated. The situation in Kent bears exactly on the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire,

*[Mr. Mark Wolfson]*

East (Mr. MacKay). House prices and other factors that bear on the cost of living create particular problems in the south-east and London.

The number of candidates interviewed for unfilled posts is markedly down. Sometimes they number only one or two for each vacancy at all levels—from the most junior to headships. It may be argued that this demonstrates that there are good career prospects for teachers, but it also reveals that education authorities have a limited choice of candidates for any particular vacancy.

Kent has taken several steps. It provides a range of mortgage packages and is flexible on removal allowances. It also provides creche facilities. Those initiatives are constructive and helpful but, against an overall shortage in certain subjects, such benefits represent only a short-term attraction, as surrounding education authorities rapidly offer the same incentives. My hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East made the point that salaries outside the profession, in commerce and industry, have a direct bearing on the shortage.

The recruitment of licensed or articled teachers would help. It is beyond belief that this practical step to attract people from outside the profession was vehemently opposed by the Opposition and by the trade unions. I am delighted that a different view now appears to prevail, —a practical view and one that can benefit our children. Licensed and articled teachers are not, however, a panacea; they may deal with only 5 or 10 per cent. of the identified shortfall.

Improved pay is necessary, and, at the right time, the restoration of the pay negotiating machinery—to which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is committed —will be helpful. Above all, teachers need to regain the standing of their own profession, and to an extent that is in their own hands. I am not critical of most of the profession; I hold teachers in high regard, considering that they perform a difficult and enormously worthwhile job, often in trying circumstances. Nevertheless, they have done appalling damage to their standing through strike action.

Perhaps most important is the need to give education authorities the opportunity to arrange for regional pay to reflect the different costs of living in various parts of the country. That is what the private sector does, and I think that the public sector must, increasingly, do the same.

5.51 pm

**Mr. Gerry Steinberg** (City of Durham): I could weep over what is happening to the teaching profession. I was a member of that profession for more than 20 years, and I only wish that the Government realised what they are doing to it, and have been doing to it for the past 10 years. Morale is at its lowest ebb; teachers are disillusioned and dejected. No doubt they will feel even more depressed in the morning, when they read what has been said today by the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State and other Conservative Members.

Why are teachers in this state? They have been rubbished by the Government to such an extent that they feel they are no longer in a worthwhile profession. Their pay is extremely low compared with that of others in the private sector, and pay, of course, is an important aspect of anyone's life. Dedication is all very well, but teachers who are not paid enough to eat and live properly cannot be expected to exist on dedication.

Moreover, teachers' work load has increased considerably over the past few years, and—especially in view of the enforcement of the Education Reform Act 1988—is still increasing daily. They are, however, receiving no further remuneration or other help.

We constantly hear the claptrap uttered by the Secretary of State and his officials. They claim that morale is high and that the problems are being exaggerated, but they are the only people to do so. Whom have they been talking to? Do they ever go into schools and talk to the teachers? Whichever schools I visit and whichever teachers I consult, I always hear the same story of low morale, deep depression and extreme anger at what the Government are doing. The Secretary of State would have to be a contortionist to do some of the things that teachers have told me to tell him to do.

Teachers are indeed dedicated, but dedication must not be mistaken for high morale. Clearly the Secretary of State does not understand, or rather, he refuses to do so. More and more teachers are leaving the profession, and that bastion of Socialism *The Daily Telegraph* tells us that nearly a third of those in the profession want to get out. That, of course, makes the current shortage even more serious. Between 35 and 40 per cent. of those who begin training do not enter the profession, and it is entirely unacceptable that 20 to 25 per cent. of those working for a postgraduate certificate of education do not even begin teaching.

The introduction of the national curriculum, which has received few extra resources, has led to more shortages —which, incidentally, will jeopardise the Secretary of State's dream of its success. As well as the general teacher shortage, there are glaring specific shortages in subjects such as maths, science, foreign languages, English, business studies and information technology. There are also regional shortages, particularly in London. The lack of teachers has meant no education at all for some, and partial education for others.

The shortage is having a knock-on effect on the recruitment of educational psychologists, who must be recruited solely from the teaching profession. If the implementation of the Education Act 1981 is to continue successfully, and if the 1988 Act is to function to the benefit of those with special educational needs, we must attract suitably qualified teachers into the psychology service. Recruitment is already low, for exactly the same reasons as the low recruitment in the teaching profession —poor pay and an increased work load.

The Government do not wish to accept that there is a major problem, because they know that if they did they would have to provide increased resources. The Secretary of State is being deliberately complacent, claiming that the problems of low morale and shortages have been exaggerated. If he really believes that, he should quit, because he obviously cannot see beyond the nose on his face. But the Secretary of State is not daft: we all know that. He knows the position as well as anyone. If he admits the truth, he will have to spend more money—and we all know what the Prime Minister would think of that, and the likely effect on the right hon. Gentleman's future career.

As a member of the Select Committee on Education, which has been considering teacher shortages, I regret the recent leaks in the press. I hope, however, that certain Conservative Members will not use them as an excuse to ensure that a report is not published very soon. Such a report, giving the facts about the shortage, would be politically sensitive and damning to the Government, but if that excuse is used it will be a disgrace—and the country will know very well why it has happened.

If the Government deny that low morale and staff shortages are causing major problems in the education system, they are alone in doing so. Their views are being rejected, not only by the National Union of Teachers and the National Association of Head Masters/Union of Women Teachers, but by organisations that support them, such as the Secondary Heads Association, the National Union of Head Teachers and even the HMIs.

Virtually every local education authority is facing teacher shortages. The problem is getting worse. Why is that so? More pupils are entering schools but the number of graduates who are leaving universities and polytechnics is declining. [HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish."] Oh, yes, they are. The market for graduates is highly competitive. We should be tempting them into the teaching profession, but their salaries are far too low and their salary increases are well below the rate of inflation. How, therefore, can we expect graduates to enter the teaching profession? It cannot hope to compete. We cannot wait until there is a Labour Government. Action must be taken now.

What action ought we to take? A national monitoring body should be established, consisting of Government representatives and also of representatives of local authorities, teachers' organisations, parents, business interests and the community. Its task would be to advise on teacher supply and demand and also on initial and in-service training, taking into account developments in education—for example, the national curriculum. Action must be taken now to tackle the immediate shortages. The only readily available supply of teachers is the pool of inactive teachers. They should be encouraged to return to the profession. Many of them left it because of family commitments.

Local education authorities should be asked to provide creche, nursery and extended day-care facilities. Up-to-date refresher courses ought to be provided. Flexible hours should be introduced, which might involve job sharing. The only difficulty is that local authorities have not been provided with the resources to introduce these facilities. That is a central Government responsibility. They must provide the resources.

Conservative Members have referred to the introduction of regional pay awards. We reject that suggestion. The introduction of regional pay differentials would only lead to the shortages being shifted around. The flexibility to deal with teacher shortages already exists. They can be overcome by means of incentive allowances.

Initial teacher training will continue to be the main route into teaching. The first priority is to make a career in teaching sufficiently attractive to recruit a large number of graduates. That must involve a significant increase in teachers' pay and improvements in their career prospects, perhaps by means of changes to the incentive allowance structure. However, the local education authorities have not been provided with the money to bring about those changes. Central Government must provide the resources.

New routes into the profession must be opened up. We must provide for mid-career changes. However, we reject the Secretary of State's proposal for licensed teachers. That would lead to a dilution of the profession. I accept that more graduates could be recruited locally. Family ties and other responsibilities mean that they are unlikely to be able to uproot themselves for a year in order to go to university, having been provided with a grant.

However, their practical teaching experience could be gained in a local school, which could be combined with regular release to a local college for professional training. They could be paid an unqualified teacher's salary. Their professional training would lead to a qualification that was equivalent to the postgraduate certificate of education. Their in-school practical experience could be supervised by a teacher in the classroom who would be with them all the time. They would be in addition to, not an alternative to, the school's normal complement of teachers.

Teachers' negotiating rights must be re-established in line with the International Labour Organisation's conventions, if a start is to be made on improving morale in the teaching profession. Teaching as a profession must be made more attractive by ensuring that adequate resources and equipment are available and also by ensuring that there is an attractive, high-quality environment. Only the Government can provide the money to pay for it. While the Government refuse to analyse the scale of the problem, they cannot hope to tackle it. Anything they do is likely to be inadequate.

Unless the Government listen to what is said in the debate and take notice, teacher shortages will remain and will increase. Teaching morale will grow even worse and state education will deteriorate. I hope that the Secretary of State does not want that to happen, but sometimes I wonder. I hope that the Secretary of State for Education and Science is moved from education in the reshuffle and that he will be given the chairmanship of the Tory party, where he will do to the Tory party what he has done to education.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Before I call the next speaker, it may be convenient if I were to say that the winding-up speeches will begin at 6.35. If hon. Members were to speak for 10 minutes each, I should be able to call three of them. If they spoke for less than 10 minutes, I might be able to call even more.

6.5 pm

**Mr. James Pawsey** (Rugby and Kenilworth): I was disappointed by the speech of the hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg). It lacked his usual constructive and positive approach. He seemed to talk down an honourable profession and to overstate his case. However, I agreed with him that most teachers are dedicated. That is entirely right.

The arguments of the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) reminded me of a bra for a teenager—small, unformed and with very little point. The real reason for this second debate on teacher shortages is that the first time around the Opposition made no impact at all. They are now coming back for a second bite at the cherry, but I suspect that they will be no luckier than they were last time. Their choice of subject tells us more about their lack of imagination in choosing subjects for Supply days than anything else.

I found it particularly significant that the hon. Member for Blackburn refused to give way on the question of teachers' pay. I give him the opportunity now, if he wishes

*[Mr. James Pawsey]*

to intervene, to tell the House precisely what are his party's intentions on teachers' pay. Would he increase teachers' pay by 10 per cent., 15 per cent. or 20 per cent.? As this is an Opposition Supply day, I feel that they have a duty to the House to answer that question. The teachers of this country are waiting to hear what the hon. Gentleman means when he talks about teachers' pay. If he wishes to intervene, I shall willingly give way.

**Mr. Straw:** I am glad to know that the hon. Gentleman expects there to be a Labour Government following the defeat of the present Government. [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] The answer is that the decisions that we make then will depend on the economic mess that has been left by the present Government. Support for the Conservative party by teachers has fallen to an all-time low of 14 per cent. On education, Labour has a 10 per cent. lead among teachers, parents and others. They know that Labour has a far better approach to education than the Conservatives.

**Mr. Pawsey:** I suspect that when the teachers of this country read that answer they will realise that the hon. Gentleman was unable to come up with a positive figure on teachers' pay. When invited to do so, he positively refused to give a specific figure. The teachers will draw their own conclusions.

There is a slight difference between the two debates. When we last discussed the subject we took into account only teachers' pay. The debate has been broadened today to take into account teachers' morale. There is some evidence of disquiet. When we debated the matter 11 weeks ago I remember saying that the overwhelming majority of teachers are committed to their profession and to the young people in their charge and that their remuneration should be commensurate with their responsibilities. I agree with the hon. Member for City of Durham about that.

I have been saying for some years that the teaching profession plays a substantial part in the education, moulding and development of our young people. Their role is second only to that of parents, but I do not believe that their importance is fully recognised by society. Responsibility for violence and indiscipline can often be traced back to the home and school. We are now reaping the benefit of the free expression and empathy teaching of the 1960s and 1970s.

The strikes and disruption of two and more years ago seriously undermined the status of the teaching profession, a point that was well made by my hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson). The standing of teachers has been much reduced, particularly when on television parents could see members of the profession shambling through the streets, carrying placards which, frankly, were illiterate, taking industrial action organised by the trade unions. Parents were not impressed by teachers leaving classes and taking time off which resulted in schools being closed and pupils sent home.

Understandably, the reputation of the profession suffered, the esteem in which teachers were held has fallen, and with it their morale. One hopes that that is in the past and, as I said earlier, the majority of teachers are committed to their profession and to the children in their charge. Again I ask my right hon. Friend to persuade the Treasury to be more generous with a pay settlement this year than in the recent past.

I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to the amendment in his name and in the names of his ministerial colleagues. It is significant that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer put his name to that amendment. I hope that he understands and appreciates the need to increase the funding available for teachers. There is another reason why the Treasury should loosen the purse strings. Teachers are no longer able to negotiate pay or conditions. That option has been removed, so a pay settlement should be more generous. We should show teachers that they have not lost through the abolition of Burnham—rather they should be seen to have gained.

In regard to numbers of teachers, the pupil-teacher ratio of 17:1 is the best ever and there have been improvements in class size, with the number of pupils taught in classes of 31 or more having fallen by an average of more than 10 per cent. Having said that, local education authorities are increasingly able to help themselves. My own local education authority of Warwickshire is doing a great deal to keep in touch with inactive teachers and seeking to bring back to the profession those women who left it to have families. That point was made by my right hon. Friend in his opening speech. However, those returning to the profession need more support and training. When the Minister of State replies to the debate, she may wish to refer to that specific point.

Clearly, there is a substantial reservoir of teacher talent in society which should be brought back into the schools where it can do most good. But it is important to get teacher numbers into perspective. We should remember that last year only 1·5 per cent. of all primary posts and 1 per cent. of all secondary posts were unfilled. That is fewer than in 1987. I was interested that the Universities Funding Council said earlier this year:

> "It is pleasing to note that in 1988, after a slight dip in 1987, the figure for qualified students known to have obtained a teaching post in the United Kingdom returned to its normal level (75·1 per cent.): this was despite the increase in output."

The Opposition believe that they have discovered an issue out of which they might make some cheap political advantage. Not for the first time, they are wrong—they were wrong last time and they are wrong again today.

6.13 pm

**Mr. Win Griffiths** (Bridgend): Having heard the Secretary of State's speech, once more we can give him 10 out of 10 for complacency, but when it came to recognising the nature of the problem, he attempted to brush it aside as something of little or no consequence. According to the Secretary of State, if there was a problem, the ultimate responsibility lay with the local education authorities. He told us grandly that he trained the teachers and it was up to the local authorities to employ them. Rather like the way in which the Secretary of State for Employment has reduced unemployment artificially, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would dearly love to take mortgage calculations out of the retail price index, the Secretary of State for Education and Science is fiddling with the problem.

The problem first became serious in London, but there is plenty of evidence that it is spreading to other local authority areas. In Oxfordshire and Devon, local education authorities are experiencing serious shortages, although hon. Members might think that those places would have sufficient attraction for teachers. The city of Birmingham has more than 600 vacancies in September —350 in the primary sector and 264 in the secondary sector, of which more than 40 are for English. Those places probably will not be filled in September. There is a great likelihood that the problem in Tower Hamlets and Southwark, where pupils are not getting full-time education, will spread to other parts of the country.

The problem is not simply particular areas suffering teacher shortages; it is much more widespread in certain subjects. The Secretary of State boasted that it was his duty to provide training for teachers and that there were more teachers entering training than ever before. But he did not tell us that, in certain subjects, the DES targets in 1988 were well below the requirement for the subjects in which the shortages were most serious. For example, in mathematics there was a 27 per cent. shortage of students entering the PGCE course. In physics, the figure was 23 per cent., in chemistry 42 per cent., in craft, design and technology 22 per cent., and in modern languages 14 per cent. There may be more graduates entering teacher training but in certain critical subjects the DES targets are not being met, and, by definition, the existing problem is bound to become worse.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Figures from the Royal Society of Chemistry suggest that in July 1987 there were 669 applications and in July 1989 there were only 540. The Royal Society of Chemistry has every reason to be extremely concerned.

**Mr. Griffiths:** I thank my hon. Friend for those figures, which underline exactly what I have been saying about the failure of the DES to get teachers into training in certain critical subjects.

That is not the end of the story. More graduates and more students are taking the BEd route into teacher training, but a large number of them are not completing the courses. There is a 25 per cent. drop-out rate for the BEd. Thankfully it is lower for the PGCE—only 10 per cent.—but there is a drop-out rate. The Secretary of State expressed no concern about that and boldly trumpeted the fact that more men and women were entering teacher training of one sort or another. When those teachers are trained, one third of them in the first year do not go into teaching, so that is a further dampening of the glowing reports on those going into training by the Secretary of State. Let us not divert ourselves from the fact that, whatever figures the Department of Education and Science comes up with, the problem is getting worse.

The Secretary of State did not have a great deal to say either about pay in the profession. We need to examine that point specifically. After all, his Interim Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions said in its last report, when it had been given a limit of £385 million:

> "we have found the £385 million limit on the Committee's recommendations for 1989-90 to be gravely constraining."

The committee realised the problem and knew then that the limit would cause problems in arriving at a settlement.

In its report last year, the Committee told the Secretary of State:

> "We can do no more than urge the Secretary of State to consider further how much he is prepared to make available to secure the willing co-operation of all teachers."

Conservative Members should not be asking us how much we shall pay the teachers. We are not able to pay them now. It is their own Secretary of State who has that role and duty, and he is the person who should be asked how much he is prepared to pay teachers in the coming year.

**The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold):** He has already done it.

**Mr. Griffiths:** Although the Minister says that the Secretary of State has already done it, I have heard no global figure or promise of a percentage. If there are such figures, I should be interested to learn of them afterwards.

We are told in glowing terms that teachers have received a 30 per cent. increase in real terms in the past few years. As my hon. Friend the Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg) pointed out, it is not how much teachers have received, but the comparison with other graduates that counts. The *Financial Times* recently carried out a survey, dividing the professions and industry into 11 different sectors. In 1988, the starting pay for the public services, which included teachers, was at the bottom of the scale. At the end of the first year, it was still at the bottom, as it was at the end of the third year. At the end of the fifth year, graduates in the public service had, on average, managed to pull themselves up to eighth place in the league.

As for the development of salaries, a graduate in teaching after five years would expect his salary to be 40 per cent. higher, whereas a graduate outside teaching would expect his salary to be 70 per cent. higher. After 10 years, the salary of a graduate in teaching would be 56 per cent. higher, whereas a graduate outside teaching would have more than doubled his salary. Pay is critical and fundamental for such reasons.

The interim advisory committee said in its last report:

> "We continue to be impressed by teachers' commitment and their high professional standards; but morale appears to be low as we judged it to be last year. We believe pay to be a critical factor in morale."

The committee spelled out its views clearly, and I hope that the Secretary of State will respond.

I want to refer to my own local education authority, the county of Mid Glamorgan, and the problem of teacher shortages in the context of the introduction of the national curriculum. Although the Secretary of State has announced several initiatives which should make some small impression on the problem, there will still be significant problems in Wales in, for example, the introduction of the teaching of the Welsh language. My own local authority is well known in Wales as one of the foremost promoters of bilingual education. It found, in a survey of its schools, that almost 500 teachers were unable to teach Welsh, but many of them were willing to undertake training so that they could teach the language. However, the amount provided by the Welsh Office for in-service training for Welsh language teaching in the county of Mid Glamorgan was about one quarter of what the county hoped to receive. Obviously, there is a need for an increased commitment of resources for the challenges to be met.

**The Minister of State, Welsh Office (Mr. Wyn Roberts)** We are spending some £233,000 this year on in-service teacher training in the Welsh language. We shall be spending a total of £1·2 million over the next three years.

**Mr. Griffiths:** I thank the Minister for that intervention. However, he will be aware that he provided me with those figures in a written answer only the other day. Despite the £233,000, and despite the £1·2 million over the next three years, there will be barely enough to touch the real problem. That problem is repeated throughout education in England and Wales. The resources do not meet the problems.

A survey of science teaching in Mid Glamorgan secondary schools showed that that one county alone needed about 80 more teachers. If that figure were repeated across the United Kingdom—the position in Mid Glamorgan is likely to be better than in most other places, because the problem of teacher shortages is not as severe in Wales—one would see that the Government are not providing sufficient resources to deal with the problem. I hope that the Minister of State will outline clearly what she considers the nature of the problem to be and how the Government's resources will deal with it.

6.27 pm

**Mr. David Evennett** (Erith and Crayford): I am always delighted to follow the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths), with whom I serve on the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts; but, together with his hon. Friends the Members for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg) and for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), who also serve on the Select Committee, his analysis is wrong and his solutions, precious few though they are, are also wrong. I also want to correct the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), who said that the Select Committee was about to publish a report. The report has not yet been agreed, so he can believe it to be critical only as a result of press speculation, not fact. Until the report has been agreed by the members of the Select Committee, it cannot be critical.

We can all agree that there is a problem of teacher supply. The reasons for that are many and varied and the blame cannot be put at any one door. The Opposition motion and the support for it are far too negative and simplistic. We know that there is a shortage of teachers in certain parts of Greater London and we know that there are shortages in certain key subjects. But emotive words such as "crisis" are not only untrue, but do not help. We are not numerically short of teachers. If one considers the number in the pool of inactive teachers, we would have no problem if we could bring them back into the profession. We should be exploring the possibilities of job sharing or part-time work. We should consider packages to encourage people to move into teaching shortage areas.

The reasons for the shortages are many and varied. We have discussed them at great length in the Select Committee and in the Chamber today. Morale, pay, career structure, professionalism, the constant re-organisation of schools in the 1970s and the decline in the value that the public give to education and the education service all play a part. The Government, especially my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, are to be congratulated on several important innovations during my right hon. Friend's term of office. He has put education back in the centre of national life. He has stressed its importance and brought about radical reforms to enhance education provision.

**Mr. Robert Key** (Salisbury): Hallelujah.

**Mr. Evennett:** The national curriculum, local management at schools, opting-out proposals and CTCs are all important in improving the relevance of education, thereby enhancing the status of teachers. Such reforms should be welcomed, but Labour does not do so—it merely condemns and criticises.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State disbanded the Burnham system, an outdated and unworkable piece of machinery for determining teachers' salaries. Now he proposes new ideas to deal with the annual salary awards of teachers. A better negotiating machinery will enhance the status of teachers. The innovative proposals to increase the number of teachers by the articled and licensed teacher routes are to be welcomed. They offer opportunities for well-qualified people to go into the profession and ensure that there is more on-the-job training in schools rather than in the ivory towers of the colleges.

Merely increasing salaries will not encourage more people to be teachers. We must ensure that we get the right people for our children, for the taxpayer and the ratepayer, and for the future of the country. Children are our future and teachers have an important and special role to play. Most teachers do a good job in difficult circumstances, and Conservative Members praise them, but the profession and the trade unions must change some of their attitudes. More money is needed—not across the board, but selectively. I should like to highlight the position of the middle-range teachers, who have been in the profession for 10 to 15 years and who are aged between 35 and 45 and underpaid.

We need to consider housing for teachers in Greater London, where house prices are astronomical and a disincentive to teacher mobility. Teachers cannot move into Greater London and the home counties for promotion because they cannot afford to buy a house. When determining teachers' salaries, more emphasis should be placed on market forces with greater regional differences to take account of the different regional costs of living. Only then will there be greater staff mobility and an influx of people into the teaching profession. Local management of schools will be of great value, as will the other Government-sponsored reforms which are designed to increase value for money in education and provide a better quality education service. Better schools with better educational emphasis would generate more and better teachers and a vocation to teach could again be in vogue.

This has been an interesting debate. We have heard little from the Opposition about what they would do if they ever returned to power. They have no idea what to do, other than just throwing money at a particular problem. Putting in money across the board will not solve the problems in the shortage areas. Other measures are needed, and Conservative Members have made constructive suggestions.

There is a problem, and more action is needed—we all accept that. The Government are aware of the problem and are actively working to reduce the shortages. Teaching remains a fine career, which interests many young people, and also many older people. We have a duty to encourage more entrants to go into the profession and to ensure that they are well rewarded and have a good career structure. Much has been done, but there is more to be done, especially in the shortage subjects and in the home counties and Greater London. We look for a partnership of trade unions, teachers, Government and local education authorities to solve the problem. I believe that we can and will solve it.

6.35 pm

**Mr. Derek Fatchett** (Leeds, Central): We have made substantial progress since the last debate on this subject on 2 May. In that debate, almost all the Conservative Members who spoke tried to argue that there was not a problem of teacher supply and teacher shortage. The ground has shifted substantially since then. The hon. Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) made a number of references to the problems of teacher supply and shortage in his constituency. The hon. Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) made a telling contribution about the problems facing the Kent local education authority. He said that he noticed the differences between the earlier comments by Ministers and their comments now, and that point struck home. The hon. Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) said that there was now a problem of teacher supply and shortage.

The consensus is growing, and it is now so strong that we have taken the Secretary of State with us, although not all the way. Perhaps, if I were writing his end-of-term report, I would say that he had made some improvement in terms of understanding the problems of teacher supply and shortage. He admitted that there was a problem. He defined it as a regional problem and limited it to London and the home counties. He was right, but he told only half the tale. There is a more substantial problem, of which the right hon. Gentleman is fully aware and about which his Department provided great detail in its evidence to the Select Committee on teacher supply and teacher shortage.

It is worth reminding ourselves of the likely shortages by the mid-1990s, according to the Government's current projections. They predict shortages of 1,000 teachers out of a total demand for 20,000 in mathematics; 1,500 and 2,000 respectively out of a total demand for 11,000 teachers each in physics and chemistry; 6,000 out of a total demand for 22,000 in technology; 2,500 out of a total demand for 19,000 in modern languages; and 2,000 out of a total demand for 7,000 in music. It is not just a regional problem; it is also very much a subject problem, and the Secretary of State was wrong not to refer to that.

The Secretary of State was wrong also not to draw the attention of the House and the country—although parents already recognise this, as I am sure do teachers—to the substantial hidden shortages in terms of the delivery of the school curriculum. The most recent available figures are for 1984. The Department of Education and Science seems to be reluctant to collect figures on teacher supply and teacher shortage. According to the Department's evidence to the Select Committee, 13 per cent. of timetabled tuition in mathematics and 18 per cent. in physics were provided by teachers with no higher education qualification in those subjects. There is not only a regional shortage but a hidden subject shortage.

**Mr. Harry Cohen** (Leyton): The Secretary of State said that east London is a particularly bad area for teacher shortages, and it has been confirmed by parents in my own constituency that there will be a big shortage. Does my hon. Friend agree that, apart from one small pilot project in Newham to get ethnic minority teachers, the Secretary of State has outlined no action to tackle that problem in east London?

**Mr. Fatchett:** My hon. Friend makes a telling point from his own experience. Perhaps I can refer back to it later in my speech.

Conservative Members have given a number of explanations of why we have a problem. The hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) made a speech that was unusually disloyal to the Government. Presumably it had not been vetted—for the first time ever—by the Whips. He said that he would like the Treasury to loosen the purse strings on teachers'pay. He is not alone in saying that. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman gets most of his political ideas from the *Daily Mail*—that would come as no great surprise to those of us who have watched his intellectual development over the years.

He will have noticed, no doubt, that there have recently been two articles on the subject in the *Daily Mail*. Last Tuesday, 11 July, its education correspondent made the important point that this year's pay rise will be less than the current rate of inflation. He added:

> "That simply is not good enough."

Today, a *Daily Mail* editorial says that a recent survey showed that many young graduates are drawn towards teaching as a career and concludes:

> "it is only the poor pay that puts them off."

The Government say that there have been increases in real pay for teachers since they came to office, and that that makes teaching more attractive as a profession but, as hon. Members on both sides of the House have said, it is the comparison with other graduate professions that is crucial. The growth of average earnings in other graduate professions is better than the growth of average earnings in teaching.

I shall illustrate that point with some figures. During the 10 years that the Government have been in office, average real earnings for teachers have increased at an annual rate of 3·9 per cent. We should compare that with the figure for accountancy—which must be dear to many Conservative Members—which is 4·1 per cent. For the financial, insurance and taxation sector, the figure is 6·4 per cent., for computer programmers it is 4 per cent. and for medical practitioners it is 4·8 per cent. Despite all the Government's claims about teachers' pay, it has grown more slowly than the comparable all-graduate professions that I have referred to.

**Mr. George Walden** (Buckingham) *rose*——

**Mr. Fatchett:** I will not give way, because of the shortage of time. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will appreciate that.

The Government's argument on teachers' pay does not hold up. As the *Daily Mail* and many hon. Members have said, there is clearly a need to look again at teachers' pay.

There has been substantial reference to low morale in the teaching profession. The Secretary of State says that the Labour party does not like to make proposals on how to deal with the crisis of teacher shortage and supply. Let me offer him three or four points about morale that would have a very positive impact on teacher supply.

First, it is important for the Government, and any future Government, to restore to teachers the right to bargain over their pay and conditions. The loss of that right was a deep blow to morale in the teaching profession, and the longer the Government go on imposing their own pay increases on teachers, the further morale will collapse.

Secondly, is it not the case that, when the Government introduced the Education Reform Act 1988, and when the

*[Mr. Fatchett]*

Secretary of State has talked about his reform of education, until recently, he has never thought it necessary to take the teachers, their professionalism and their experience with him in the process of change? Throughout, the Secretary of State has denigrated the teachers' contribution and their professionalism and tried to impose change without taking them with him.

Perhaps I visit more schools than the Secretary of State —that would not be a great achievement—but when I visited a secondary school in north Yorkshire the other day, the head teacher told me that the school's science teachers were training and offering advice, out of school and without pay, to primary teachers in feeder schools so that they had some feel for, knowledge of and involvement in the development of primary science and the national curriculum.

**Mr. Key:** Well done.

**Mr. Fatchett:** Yes, it is well done by those teachers, but how often are they criticised by Conservative Members, and how often is their commitment recognised by the Government? If the process of change under the Education Reform Act 1988 had taken teachers with the Government and with the reforms, we would have had a very different situation in relation to morale.

Thirdly, there are roughly 400,000 people in the pool of inactive, qualified teachers, yet we rarely hear any proposal from the Secretary of State or Conservative Members to try to attract them back into teaching. Why does he not find out more about that pool of inactive teachers and their child care needs, so that they can go back into the teaching profession? Why do the Government not provide more refresher courses so that some of those teachers can go back into the classroom, do the job that they trained for and make the contribution that they want to make?

The Government seem to have written off totally those inactive teachers, but they are an important pool of expertise and it is about time that the Government came forward with proposals for them.

One of the most notable elements of the debate was the Secretary of State's refusal to answer the question put to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw). It was a simple, important and potent question for parents throughout the country. Will the Secretary of State give parents a guarantee that no child will be without a teacher, and so be sent home from school, this autumn? Will he give that guarantee? The Secretary of State refused to answer that question. He can fiddle with his papers now in embarrassment, but he knows that the answer is that he does not have the ability or the policies to deliver the duties that are placed upon him in the Education Reform Act 1988. Nor does he have the ability or the policies to deliver the moral responsibility placed upon him to ensure that all our children have equal access to education.

During the debate, every Conservative Member, in lines presumably provided by the Department of Education and Science, said that responsibility lies with the Labour Opposition, as they called the debate. I remind the Government that they have been in office for 10 years, and that they are the cause of the problem. The time will come, very shortly, when the Conservative party is out of office. Meanwhile, the Government have to stand up to their responsibilities. While they fail to stand up to those responsibilities, the education of thousands of children is being endangered and the standard of their education is being reduced. It is time that the Government stood up to those responsibilities and made sure that there is a real guarantee to parents and children that there will be teachers in our classrooms this September.

6.49 pm

**The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold):** I have listened with care to the remarks of hon. Members on both sides of the House. I have accepted some of the points made by my hon. Friends and I congratulate them on making some sensible suggestions. I was saddened by the remarks of the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), whose very tone served only to exacerbate the problem by reinforcing the views repeatedly expressed by the media and by Opposition Members about low teacher morale. One almost has the feeling that Opposition Members want that to continue—[HON. MEMBERS: "It is true."]—although I know that that cannot be true because many Opposition Members have the interests of children at heart.

Opposition Members should listen more often to speeches such as that made by my hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett). Instead of repeatedly endorsing low morale and referring to difficulties in teacher supply and so on, my hon. Friend rightly paid tribute to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the way in which, during his three years in office, he has raised the level of public interest in education to such an extent that teachers now begin to feel that they are appreciated as members of our society because of the job that they are doing in schools and for children.

Teachers also have much to achieve by implementing the national curriculum. In that regard, I was surprised to hear the hon. Member for Hillsborough attacking the national curriculum, which, after all, was a direct response to the long-standing debate about the standards of education in this country, that had been going on since 1977, when a Prime Minister of the hon. Gentleman's own political persuasion raised the subject.

**Mr. Flannery:** I did not make any formal attack on the national curriculum—I attacked the Secretary of State, and, indeed, the Minister, because they will not give us enough teachers to deliver the national curriculum.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** I am glad that the hon. Member for Hillsborough is a late convert to the idea of the national curriculum.

My hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) made a thoughtful speech. He started by saying that he was disappointed—rightly so, in my view—at the level of this debate. He rightly identified the serious problems which arises from high housing costs in some parts of the country. Ministers are fully aware of that problem. We take the point that it has a bearing not only on teachers but on all those who work in areas which have experienced astronomical increases in house prices over the past few years. I share my hon. Friend's view that it is a good thing that house prices in badly affected areas are now beginning to fall.

My hon. Friend also made the valid point that it is important to be able to attract men as well as women into our primary schools. We need the right balance of good men and women teachers in our primary and secondary schools and Ministers have some sympathy with the view that we should consider how to tackle the regional differences.

In parenthesis, I want to ask a question, to which I am sure I shall get an answer. The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) referred to Labour's policy of a national housing allowance for teachers. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East, I have a little difficulty with, and certainly distaste for, the idea that taxpayers should subsidise such a policy. Perhaps the hon. Member for Blackburn will take this opportunity to tell us what Labour's national housing allowance means, how it will be applied and to whom and how much he would expect it to cost. That information would be most interesting.

**Mr. Straw:** I am delighted to accept the Minister's invitation. Almost every Conservative Member who spoke in the debate referred to the problems caused by high housing costs in some parts of the country. The answer to that problem is not regional pay—it is to deal with the high cost of housing through a nationally funded allowance which would vary from area to area according to variations in housing costs.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** I am afraid that the worst fears of my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East have been realised. Not only do we not know how much the allowance would cost—we know that it is to be nationally funded and we must therefore assume that it will be financed from the taxpayer's pocket.

The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) was concerned about the Inner London education authority and the cost of teachers. Similar problems apply in many other high-cost housing areas. The hon. Gentleman welcomed my right hon. Friend's initiative to enable teachers from New Zealand and Australia to gain qualified teacher status after one term. As the hon. Gentleman knows, we discussed that this morning. It is an unfortunate condemnation of ILEA's policies that the young woman concerned is contemplating leaving its employ because she is not being paid as a qualified teacher although qualified teacher status has been granted to her by the Department of Education and Science. I should like an explanation from ILEA of its policies on employing teachers.

In my view, we need to take a hard look at the way in which some local authorities operate a ring-fence, no-redundancy policy, which means that good, well-qualified new teachers cannot find jobs. In the north, for example, some teachers trained in the secondary shortage subjects about which we have heard so much, and who have already received our £1,300 bursary, cannot find jobs locally. I am told that other authorities will not employ probationary teachers. People are being turned away from teaching because local education authorities are not interested in using their services.

In other parts of the country, early retirement is virtually an open door——

**Mr. Straw:** Will the Minister give way?

**Mrs. Rumbold:** No, I have too much to say.

The policy on early retirement is a crazy policy at a time when some schools and authorities cannot recruit teachers to take the place of those whom they are letting go. The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey will agree with me that it is extremely important that we should address ourselves to that problem.

It has also been suggested that under the present system teachers from overseas have to be paid as instructors, and at a lower rate, pending the successful outcome of their application for qualified teacher status. That is simply not true—under the present regime, and under the new licensed teacher regime starting in September, those people can be paid as qualified teachers. If London authorities have a real problem in that regard, the solution now lies in their hands.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) for his thoughtful speech and I was interested to hear of his support for our licensed and articled teachers policy, about which we heard nothing from the Opposition.

The hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg) made a sad little speech largely based on inaccurate information. He claims, for example, that we have fewer graduates now than in 1979. In fact, we now have 200,000 more students coming into higher education than in 1979. The hon. Gentleman must be amazingly out of step to say such things.

I am delighted to support the excellent speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey), who made the very good point that local education authorities can be active in helping teacher recruitment. My hon. Friend said that the extra money granted by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in the education support grant should be used to help recruit people back into teaching.

**Mr. Straw** *rose in his place, and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

*Question,* That the Question be now put, *put and agreed to.*

*Question put accordingly,* That the original words stand part of the Question:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 220, Noes 302.

**Division No. 306]** **[6.59 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair

Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin

McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David

Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie.

## NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony

Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*

Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory
and
Mr. John D. Taylor.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

*Question*, That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments):—*

*The House divided:* Ayes 271, Noes 215.

**Division No. 307]** **[7.14 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Amess, David
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baldry, Tony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark

Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim

Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Stephen Dorrell and
Mr. Sydney Chapman.

### NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*

Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland

Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*

Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare

Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

MR. SPEAKER *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That this House congratulates Her Majesty's Government for its coherent and energetic programme to tackle teacher shortages, notably licensed teachers and articled teachers; welcomes the increase in the number of initial teacher training places; notes the substantial improvement in teachers' pay in the lifetime of this Government which contrasts with the modest increase under the last Labour Government; and urges local education authorities to use the flexibility available to them to recruit and retain a sufficient and well-qualified number of teachers.

# King's Cross Railways Bill

*Motion made, and Question proposed,*

That the Promoters of the King's Cross Railways Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time and committed (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read and committed);

That all Petitions relating to the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill, together with any minutes of evidence taken before the Committee on the Bill, shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

7.26 pm

**Sir George Young** (Ealing, Acton): The House will recall that the purpose of the Bill is to give powers to British Rail and London Underground to carry out works at King's Cross. The House debated its provisions for five hours on Second Reading.

The works include the expansion of the stations at King's Cross and St. Pancras to handle more and longer trains, connecting lines to allow spare capacity at St. Pancras to be used, and expansion of the underground station to deal with the increased number of passengers who use that station each day.

Key elements of the proposals are the provision of secondary exits from underground platforms and the relief of congestion in the ticket hall which will improve safety by making emergency evacuation of the station considerably easier.

A major element of the scheme is the new low-level station proposed for international trains via the Channel tunnel and for cross-London Thameslink trains. Increased capacity on the Thameslink route is an important part of the initiatives included in the Central London rail study and are designed to relieve overcrowding on London's underground system and to encourage the use of public transport to relieve road congestion.

The international terminal is designed to allow trains to run beyond London, to the midlands, the north of England and Scotland. It will also provide good

*[Sir George Young]*

connections between international trains and regular InterCity services to the north and to local British Rail and underground services.

The House gave a substantial endorsement to the principles of the Bill on Second Reading, the majority being 211 to 41. Detailed scrutiny of the Bill is already well under way in Committee, under the distinguished chairmanship of my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton). The Committee has sat for about 40 hours and today completed its ninth day. Two witnesses today finished giving their evidence, for the British Rail Board and for London Underground, on policy. In addition to the nine sitting days, the Committee spent a full day on a site visit.

It must be right to allow the Bill to proceed, and in particular that the Committee's considerations of the matter should be concluded. Much effort has been put in by petitioners and by the promoters in preparing evidence for the Committee, and with the progress that has been made, it must be right that the matter should proceed.

Any alternative which involved deferring consideration of this important project would be unjust on the petitioners and would cause delay, uncertainty and anxiety for many who live and work in the area. It would also delay a project which, if the House approves, will bring substantial benefits to thousands of daily travellers.

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): Will the hon. Gentleman name one petitioner who wishes the motion to be passed?

**Sir George Young:** It would be unfair on the petitioners, who have already incurred considerable expense, if the motion were not carried. It would not serve their interests to leave the matter in abeyance, yet that is the case that the hon. Gentleman will make. He must know that every Bill promoted by British Rail since 1979, except one general powers Bill, has had to be carried over at least once. If private Bills are blocked, as the hon. Gentleman has blocked this one, and they have to go into Committee, it is practically impossible to complete all their stages in a single Session. There is nothing unusual about the motion.

**Mr. Dobson** *rose*——

**Sir George Young:** For many Sessions both Houses have accepted that to deny carry-over motions on private Bills causes needless expense to the promoters and the petitioners, and increases uncertainty for those whose land may be subject to compulsory acquisition. Against that background, it is right to allow the Bill to proceed, bearing in mind that the House will have the opportunity to consider it again on Third Reading before it goes to another place.

7.30 pm

**Mr. Chris Smith** (Islington, South and Finsbury): I vigorously opposed the Bill on Second Reading and I oppose it now. It should not be carried over. The sooner it falls, the better for all concerned.

I confess that I am astonished at the arguments put forward by the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young), which are usually of better quality. He seemed to imply that it would be unfair to petitioners if the Bill were not carried over. Each and every one of the petitioners against the Bill would be only too delighted if it were not carried over tonight, but sent into the state of limbo that it richly deserves.

**Sir George Young:** The hon. Gentleman must know that the Bill would simply be reintroduced. To reject the motion would not solve the problem.

**Mr. Smith:** Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will allow me to develop my arguments. The crux of the debate is precisely the necessity for British Rail to get its proposals right before reintroducing a Bill on a second Channel tunnel terminus in London. I am sure that all petitioners who are my constituents would endorse that sentiment.

I wish to remind the House of what the Bill does to my constituency and to my constituents and those of my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson). It involves the destruction of 31,000 sq m of property in two conservation areas, the demolition of four listed buildings, the destruction of a valuable Victorian townscape, the enforced relocation of 88 families living in 88 residential units, the possible closure of 116 businesses involving 1,950 jobs and the destruction of the Camley street natural park, which brings joy and education to thousands of school children in a part of London which has fewer open spaces than anywhere else in the country.

We are talking about the destruction of homes, jobs, livelihoods and an entire neighbourhood. That should be permitted only in the most exceptional circumstances, with the most pressing need and in the absence of a viable alternative. In this instance, that simply is not the case. There are several specific reasons why British Rail should go back to the drawing board and think again about its proposals for a second London terminus. By rejecting the motion, that is what we shall ask British Rail to do. I suspect that no one is against maximising the benefits of the Channel tunnel and the traffic that will flow from it, but the Bill is not the right way to go about doing that. British Rail must go back to the drawing board.

Clause 19 establishes a frightening precedent. The issues that it raises must be resolved before we give the Bill a fair passage. Clause 19 proposes to remove all the usual planning requirements and controls for listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments. There are seven listed buildings in the development area covered by the Bill. Four of them face demolition as a consequence of British Rail's proposals. The grade I listed buildings of St. Pancras and King's Cross stations are likely to be substantially affected by the proposals. In addition, there are Saxon and Roman archeological remains to be protected.

The problem with clause 19 is that it establishes an awesome precedent by removing entirely the legal controls which protect listed buildings and valuable archeological sites. A private Bill will override public legislation. English Heritage, in particular, has expressed the gravest anxiety about that precedent and even the Secretary of State for the environment—for once siding with the angels on conservation—has expressed concern about it. It is simply not acceptable to enshrine a proposal to overturn all the present protections for our heritage in a specified area in a private Bill which is being rushed through the House. This issue is too important to remain unresolved if the Bill is to proceed at its present leisurely pace through

Committee. Before we allow it to carry over, we must resolve the issues surrounding the preservation of our heritage thrown up by clause 19.

Clause 28 raises similar issues. I am tempted to observe that clause 28 always seems to end up being controversial. This clause 28 relates specifically to the case being mounted by the trustees of St. Bartholomew's hospital and the Church Commissioners against British Rail about their rights over some of the land contained within the purview of the Bill. That is the subject of litigation. A revealing exchange took place during the Committee proceedings. The Chairman expressly asked counsel for the promoters of the Bill:

> "Can you tell us whether it is expected that they will determine the questions"—

that is, the questions relating to clause 28—

> "before this Committee winds up its own proceedings?"

The answer from counsel for the promoters was:

> "I think that is probably unlikely, sir."

Counsel for the promoters was of the opinion that the legal issues relating to clause 28 and the ancient rights of the trustees of St. Bartholomew's hospital and the Church Commissioners—not insubstantial bodies—over the land would not, in all probability, be resolved before the Committee concluded its proceedings. It would be much better for those issues to be resolved before we continue with our consideration of any proposals from British Rail relating to the land in question.

Thirdly, there is the issue of the Camley street natural park. As hon. Members will remember from Second Reading, the park was created several years ago, with help from the Greater London Council, to provide an area of natural wilderness with trees, shrubs, water, insects, birds and the fullness of wild natural landscape in the middle of an area of considerable dereliction. The Bill will destroy that park. It is remarkable that British Rail has, in its list of prospective witnesses on its behalf, failed to include any ecological experts. It is even more remarkable that in Committee counsel for British Rail specifically said that the London Wildlife Trust, which is petitioning against the Bill and which is currently charged with the running of the park, was absolutely right in its assessment of the value of the park. British Rail's case was not that nothing of value would be destroyed by the Bill, but that, although something of value would be destroyed, something even better—in BR's view—would be put in its place.

Unless and until there is proper ecological evidence putting British Rail's case and outlining what would be done to reinstate that park, we cannot seriously consider the Bill's proposals. British Rail must have the support of ecologists of note and weight. Whatever British Rail proposes, even if it is the most superb proposal—which I doubt—for the reinstatement of a better and larger version of the park, it is undeniably true that for at least five years there will be no park for the enjoyment of the school children in my constituency and the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras. Virtually an entire generation of schoolchildren will be deprived of the opportunity to enjoy that park.

Fourthly, there is the absolutely crucial question of the traffic that will be generated above ground by the development in the King's Cross area and beyond. The promoters' environmental statement is a weighty document, but has only a relatively short section—section 12—on the vital question of traffic impact. It reaches the somewhat unbelievable conclusion that traffic flows will increase in the locality of King's Cross, but only to a very limited extent. The detail about traffic flows provided in that statement is worthy of close examination. Surely there must be better and more credible traffic impact information on the siting of the second station at King's Cross before we can begin properly to assess the effect of British Rail's proposals.

The statement deals with roads in the immediate vicinity of King's Cross. York way runs immediately beside the existing King's Cross station and divides the constituencies of myself and my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras. It is one of the principal routes from the north to King's Cross area. The environmental statement says that traffic flows on York way

> "will not be significantly different to forecast flows"

for the general proposals for development in the King's Cross area. The statement admits that on Pancras road there will be some increase in traffic flows. It says that between Euston road and the new east-west road forecast flows in the northbound direction will be 80 to 90 vehicles per hour higher than they would otherwise be. On Euston road, in both eastward and westward directions, the statement says that there will be about 40 vehicles per hour more than there would otherwise be.

A picture emerges of York way having no significant increase, an increase of 80 to 90 vehicles per hour on Pancras road and an increase of 40 vehicles per hour in each direction on Euston road—none of which is of enormous significance to the present traffic congestion.

Most unbelievable of all is the statement's forecast for Copenhagen street—and east-west road running directly through much of my constituency which comes to a right-angled junction with York way immediately opposte the site of the proposed major office development just to the north of the new international station. Copenhagen street will undoubtedly carry an enormous amount of extra traffic as a result of the Bill's proposals. Yet the statement said:

> "In common with the results of the LRC development only, it is predicted that traffic flows on Copenhagen Street with the addition of the International Rail Terminal will be no greater than at present."

I challenge the authors of this environmental statement, especially the authors of the traffic implication assessments in the statement, to come with me to meet the people who live on Copenhagen street and tell them that, because they do not believe it for one moment. So long as we have traffic assessments of such a dubious quality and traffic consultants suggesting that the greatest impact of the construction of a new international terminus at King's Cross, with upwards of 10 million or 15 million extra passengers a year travelling through it, will be an additional 150 cars per hour, those assessments will be entirely unbelievable. Until we see some better traffic assessments and more reliable witnesses, we cannot possibly continue to consider the Bill properly.

**Mr. Dobson:** The hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) may raise the same question, but my understanding is that, in addition to the international platforms, there will be two carrying Kent commuter trains into the international station. Having looked through the evidence, I am not at all clear whether the traffic assessments allow for the likelihood of 12,000 commuters arriving from Kent at the new King's Cross-St. Pancras Station. According to the authority's figures at least 6,000 of them are expected

*[Mr. Dobson]*

to continue by tube, which leaves another 12,000 who will have to get their place of work by some other means. Undoubtedly, some will go by road.

**Mr. Smith:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We know that British Rail's proposals involve the construction of an eight-platform station underground, rather than the original proposal of a six-platform station underground. We also know that British Rail is assuming that the vast majority of travellers on to the international trains —presumably this is the same for the suburban trains— will come to and leave from King's Cross by public transport. I do not believe that British Rail is making anything other than a hopeful guess when it says that. The likely increase in congestion in the King's Cross area should be taken into account if we are to consider the Bill further.

**Mr. Andrew Rowe** (Mid-Kent): I wonder if the hon. Gentleman is being wholly fair to British Rail. Its record on forecasting has been impeccable to date. For example, he will remember that it forecast, on the basis of a 13-year decline in traffic, that a high-speed railway link would not be needed at all. Would the hon. Gentleman care to extrapolate from some of British Rail's figures to see what sort of figure he comes up with if its margin of error is as great for road traffic generated by King's Cross as it was for rail traffic?

**Mr. Smith:** The hon. Gentleman is right to be entirely sceptical of British Rail's record as a forecasting agency. It appears to be rivalled only by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's forecasts for the British economy.

Three years ago, British Rail said, in its evidence to the Select Committee considering the Channel Tunnel Bill, that King's Cross would not be needed as a second Channel tunnel terminus and that Waterloo would be sufficient well into the 21st century. It went on to say that King's Cross was not a feasible option precisely because of traffic congestion in the King's Cross area. That position has not changed—the only change has been that the traffic congestion there has become even worse. For British Rail to come to us now with the totally unbelieveable tale that the traffic impact of a new international station at King's Cross will be an extra 150 cars per hour at most is something that we cannot possibly accept. We must demand a better quality assessment before we can proceed properly with the Bill.

**Mr. Dobson:** I am sorry to interrupt the free flow of the speech of my hon. Friend and neighbour, but my understanding—I am afraid that I have the information at second hand—is that today, in evidence to the Committee, Mr. Richard Meades of London Underground said that the information about the decision to have two platforms devoted to Kent commuter trains had not been communicated to London Underground in time for it to assess the extra impact of those commuters on the Underground system. It would be unfair to expect my hon. Friend to know the answer to my question, but perhaps the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) could intervene on my hon. Friend's speech and give us the facts.

The question is: was the information about the intention to use two platforms for Kent commuters available to those making the traffic assessments or were those assessments made in total ignorance of British Rail's intention? If, as I suspect, the latter is correct, that is all the more reason why the Bill should be deferred, taken away, re-drafted and returned in the next Session or not at all.

**Mr. Smith:** My hon. Friend makes an extremely telling point. I suspect, although I do not know, that the answer is that the assessors did not take account of the added impact of traffic on King's Cross and the surrounding area. It would not surprise me in the least if in this, as in so many other matters, British Rail was moving the goalposts in the middle of the game.

An important issue, on which much of the Second Reading debate focused and which was subsequently highlighted by discussions in Committee, was that of through trains travelling to other parts of the country. Some extremely interesting points arose in Committee. In the second volume of Committee proceedings, on page 23, the issue of through trains from places such as Newcastle was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) in his questions to counsel for British Rail. When he pressed her on this subject, she said:

> "we would not expect to run a very high frequency service from Newcastle to Paris."

On the same page, British Rail estimates the through services that it expects to provide.

We should bear in mind the fact that British Rail has been selling King's Cross to hon. Members as the ideal location for through traffic from the Channel tunnel to all the northern parts of the country. That is the line that British Rail has been peddling to get support from hon. Members on both sides of the House for its proposals for King's Cross. However, in the report of the Committee proceedings, we see the reality of what British Rail actually proposes, which is as follows:

> "a number of overnight services from north of London, perhaps something like a train from Edinburgh, a train from Glasgow, and a train from the South-West and South Wales, to go to the Continent, and in the daytime to run something like four trains a day each way, and those four trains a day each way would basically be two from the West Coast Mainline, probably from Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Manchester, joining up at Rugby, and two from the East Coast Mainline, probably from Edinburgh and Newcastle and a portion from Leeds, also joining up probably at Peterborough."

In other words, from the Committee proceedings we know that British Rail's intentions on services through King's Cross running direct from Paris or Brussels to the north of the country are three night trains and four day trains. Seven through trains in 24 hours will be the sum of this marvellous opportunity for people in the north, in Scotland and in the north-west to enjoy the benefits of the location of the international station at King's Cross.

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): I take it that my hon. Friend is saying that the evidence that we have received is enough to decide us that the Bill should not proceed further. On forecasting, leaving aside the ridiculous idea that one can forecast traffic 20 or 30 years hence, let alone the 50 years that would be the life of the station, will my hon. Friend comment on my surprise at the fact that only four international platforms are designated? Bearing in mind the expansion likely in railways, another eight platforms jointly between King's Cross and St. Pancras, which have not been markedly extended since the turn of the century, would be adequate for domestic traffic. Does that not predicate that this terminal will be far too small for any through-London or terminal station for the Channel tunnel?

**Mr. Smith:** My hon. Friend makes a valid and important point. He should have added that, when one builds a station underground in a box that one has specially created for the purpose of that station and that station alone, one cannot extend it. That ought to be borne in mind by British Rail if it is at all confident of its predictions about future traffic.

**Mr. Dobson:** Is not the evidence that my hon. Friend has just read out a demonstration of British Rail's chicanery? That was not the explanation that it got the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) to proffer against the instruction that I proposed on Second Reading —that the Committee should ensure that this project would permit a frequent, safe and reliable service of fast trains to the midlands, Scotland and the north. We know now that this wondrous service will amount to seven trains, three of which will be "night flights", with all that that implies, and that the connection with the west and the north-west may be by way of travelator between King's Cross and Euston stations. In other words, much of the information that was given both during and before Second Reading, was wholly and falsely misleading, and calculated to mislead the House into approving the Second Reading.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. We are not in Committee and interventions should be brief.

**Mr. Smith:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that point. It is my contention that British Rail peddled this Bill on a fallacy when it came to the House before Second Reading and it is now revealed for what it intends, which is a minimal service of through trains beyond King's Cross from the Channel tunnel.

I cannot stress too strongly the importance of the number of through trains. The direct services that were promised by British Rail to chambers of commerce, trades councils, hon. Members and the country are now revealed for what they are—four trains per day in daylight and three at night. It is no wonder that British Rail wanted to defeat the instruction that my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras tabled, which asked for fast, frequent and reliable services to the north and to Scotland.

My hon. Friend also raised an issue that has been linked to the western main line route. Again, we had interesting evidence in Committee, which showed that British Rail has in mind the faint possibility that there might at some stage be a link called the West Hampstead link to connect the east coast lines with the west coast lines. It is not definite about that. All its references were along the lines of, "We hope to implement the West Hampstead link," or, "We think it probable that we might." There is no guarantee as yet of a proper link with the west main line services. Yet that link is vital if we are to ensure that the trains can get to Manchester, Liverpool, the north-west and on to Glasgow.

The Committee proceedings tell us that a travelator is being considered to link King's Cross with St. Pancras and Euston. Engineering assessments are being carried out, but British Rail does not know whether it will be done by cut and cover or by tunnel. It talks blithely about how easy it is for people to walk the 800 yards from King's Cross station to Euston to transfer from the international station to the west coast lines. That is nonsense, and until British Rail makes specific proposals for the lines to be linked by the West Hampstead link, or by a travelator from King's Cross to Euston, inadequate though that would be, until it comes forward with definite information on those points, we cannot ask the Committee to continue to consider the Bill in its present form.

We must also bear in mind the fact that the Committee proceedings reveal that the drive for King's Cross as the choice location for the second international station is clearly coming not from railway considerations but from considerations of railway land development immediately to the north of the proposed site for the new international station. At the first sitting of the Committee, counsel for British Rail revealed this when she said;

> "What is, however, of crucial importance in terms of timing is that a decision about the extent of railway works at King's Cross, including a second Channel Tunnel terminal, is made before any development takes place on King's Cross railway lands."

We have the Bill before us this Session and it is being rushed through in advance of the consideration of the Channel tunnel link to King's Cross. The British Rail board took only 45 minutes to reject Stratford in favour of King's Cross. All this has been done with unseemly haste because the board wants to get on with the office development to the north of the proposed station, so as to make as substantial a profit as possible from it. That is what drives British Rail—not the strategic planning of railway services for the country as a whole, which should be its motivation.

**Mr. Rowe:** The hon. Gentleman has studied these matters much more closely and in far greater detail than I have. Does the forecast of additional traffic generated by the works at King's Cross include the additional traffic generated by property development?

**Mr. Smith:** That is one item, and one item only, that British Rail appears to have got right. It has looked at the likely traffic impact, as it sees it, of the office development and the international station. It is the paucity of difference between the two which raises major doubts about the accuracy of the traffic forecast in the environmental statement. Surely it is the wrong way to go about taking a large-scale strategic transport decision in Britain—and, indeed, a large-scale planning decision—to be in such a hurry before the full considerations can be put before us.

The intensity of my protest against the Bill and my argument that it should not be carried forward into the next Session is heightened by the treatment that has been meted out to local people and to local petitioners against the Bill. Of some 280 petitions initially submitted against the Bill, only 151 survived the massacre that British Rail perpetrated upon them. Local people and organisations with a perfectly legitimate interest in the Bill, its contents and overall impact, have been debarred from making their voices heard in protest against it and from putting their arguments to the Committee. Among those excluded have been English Heritage—with a direct interest in clause 19 —the London boroughs of Newham and Lewisham, residents who live immediately to the south of the proposed development, and even the Islington, South Conservative Association.

Many of my constituents feel disfranchised by the procedure that the Bill is going through. The process will

*[Mr. Smith]*

end in the destruction of a neighbourhood and untold disruption to thousands of people, and it represents a denial of democracy for many thousands of my constituents. More than 200 years ago, Tom Paine sat down in a room above the Old Red Lion public house at the Angel, not half a mile from where British Rail is proposing to put the station, to begin writing the first part of "The Rights of Man". The rights of men and women are being trampled on by British Rail and by the Bill. I urge the House to seize this opportunity to throw it out.

8.12 pm

**Mr. Andrew Rowe** (Mid-Kent): The local horror of this major development is a matter for colleagues from London constituencies and my brief contribution to the debate this evening will be on the credibility of the promoter and whether the House should allow a promoter, whom I hope to show to be barely credible, the right to carry through a Bill into another Session.

The trouble with British Rail is that it thinks on its feet. Cogito ergo sum, said the philosopher. Today, when to all intents and purposes British Rail is not at all, is a good day to examine that ancient philosophical saw.

I used to be innocent enough to believe the theory of the private Bill which I absorbed when I first arrived here and before I arrived here at all. It was that a private Bill was introduced after the project to which it referred had been thought through and designed. All my experience of recent months has revealed to me that private Bills are introduced and then some hurried thinking is done on what is really meant.

**Mr. Dobson:** The hon. Gentleman will find confirmation of what he is saying on page 46 of the sixth day of the Committee's proceedings, when a Mr. Edgley, representing British Rail, was asked whether British Rail intended to produce a master plan for everything to do with the consequences of the Channel tunnel development. He replied:

> "No, we do not intend to produce a master plan. We do intend to produce plans for single issues."

British Rail's whole approach is one of temporary spatchcock plans for different issues in the hope that it will be able to con the House into passing a long succession of allegedly unrelated Bills.

**Mr. Rowe:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. It was Mr. Edgley who told the all-party Transport Committee of the House that on the high-speed rail link, which immediately affects my constituency, British Rail had intended to conduct consultations with the local public on the basis of the plans that it had put forward on 6 March. But the people of Kent had been so swift in producing alternative plans that it had to carry them out in a piecemeal fashion. In fact, the consultation in Kent has been a complete farce because people have had to debate propositions which they already knew had been overtaken by events.

British Rail is full of nice, polite people who mean well. The trouble is that we all know the terminus to which roads paved with good intentions lead. Let me exemplify why I believe that British Rail is not to be trusted as the promoter of this massive enterprise.

As we know, British Rail told the Select Committee that there would not need to be a high-speed line at all. Now it cannot cope without one. It told—this is an extraordinary story—Swale borough council this month that that assertion to the Select Committee was based on traffic figures relating to 1966—not 1986.

British Rail told the Select Committee that it would be bad for the travelling public to have two termini for the Channel tunnel trains. Now it not only insists on having two, but is full of all sorts of powerful arguments why two termini are so much better than one. They were not better than one a year ago, but they are much better than one now.

British Rail published its original plans last year showing Stratford as one of the options. Let it be known that it was a front runner. Now it says that Stratford will not do at all.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham. North-West): Unlike British Rail, the London borough of Newham has had a proper study made of the merits of Stratford as the site of the terminal vis-a-vis King's Cross. The hon. Gentleman probably already knows, but the study shows that Stratford would be £1 billion cheaper. Travel to central London is only a matter of a few minutes slower and connections with the rest of the United Kingdom are similar to those provided by King's Cross. In addition, there is ample car parking space which there is not at King's Cross, and there are direct connections to the M11 and the M25. Any reasonable person would conclude that Stratford was the obvious choice. Does the hon. Gentleman agree?

**Mr. Rowe:** The hon. Gentleman forgets that it would be impossible to choose Stratford because whereas the people there want Stratford to be chosen, the people of King's Cross passionately do not.

It is impossible to believe that British Rail reached the view that it did after taking into account the studies into the east-west and north-south London lines. After all, a promoter who admits using figures that are 20 years out of date may not be scrupulous about the date on which he closes his consideration of the available evidence. Those studies show, as does the Buchanan report commissioned by Newham, that Newham's accessibility is superior to that of central London.

It is essential to remember the point made so well by the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith), that it will not be possible to undertake any expansion at King's Cross. Throughout the whole saga, British Rail consistently under-estimated demand. It originally said that the line was not needed at all. We were led to believe that British Rail was very reluctant to embark on great works, because it did not see either a need for, or a profit from, them. British Rail is now saying that, because everything is getting so busy, it cannot wait even a few months.

British Rail came late to the understanding that there is a future in railways after all. Had I been British Rail, I might have been doubtful about the future for railways. Nevertheless, in Europe at this very moment, 12,000 miles of railway are being planned, whereas British Rail is thinking very small and very incrementally. My belief is that no sooner would the new King's Cross be completed than British Rail would return to the House with a plan to expand another location, because its choice of a central London site left no scope.

Another example of the same kind of thinking is British Rail's assertion that it must have a commuter station in Kent—and one where there can be massive car parks. Everyone knows that commuters need to get to and from their station in their cars, yet British Rail turns that argument on its head in respect of King's Cross. As more and more offices and centres of work are moved from their formerly convenient positions in central London, commuters want to drive their cars to the station. The prospect of thousands of commuters driving their cars to King's Cross, and then finding that there is no car park for them there, is bizarre. *[Interruption.]* The sponsor of the Bill is making noises, and I think is agreeing with me that it would be absurd to have no car parking space at King's Cross.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Perhaps the sponsor is saying that there will be 100 parking spaces at King's Cross, and that the 3,000 places at Stratford would not be good enough.

**Mr. Rowe:** My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) may be saying that. He may be saying that the commuters who use King's Cross are different in kind, or are a different species, from the commuters in Kent.

**Sir George Young:** My hon. Friend draws an absurd parallel between a railway station in Kent and King's Cross, which is served by five Underground lines. The parking requirements of commuters using a station in Kent are totally different.

**Mr. Rowe:** My hon. Friend makes an interesting argument. One might argue just as well that there need be no parking facilities at a railway station because it is served by a railway line. One might equally argue that a railway station in Kent should be served by a bus service. No, in reality commuters must be able to use and to park their cars.

I wonder whether we should buy a Bill from a punch-drunk promoter who changes his forecasts and plans, and even his rolling stock. When one asks British Rail what rolling stock it will use, it says that it is still negotiating with the French, to establish whether Mickey Mouse-sized wheels can be used, so that rolling stock can be used on track on both sides of the Channel.

*Question put:—*

*The House divided:* Ayes 134, Noes 44.

**Division No. 308]** **[8.25 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Beith, A. J.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Boyes, Roland
Bright, Graham
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Curry, David
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Duffy, A. E. P.
Durant, Tony
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Freeman, Roger
Gardiner, George
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hinchliffe, David
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Illsley, Eric
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Miscampbell, Norman
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
O'Brien, William
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Patchett, Terry
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Portillo, Michael
Redmond, Martin
Riddick, Graham
Roe, Mrs Marion
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thurnham, Peter
Trotter, Neville
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Warren, Kenneth
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Sir George Young and
Mr. Anthony Nelson.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beckett, Margaret
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Caborn, Richard
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cryer, Bob
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dobson, Frank
Dunn, Bob
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Fyfe, Maria
George, Bruce
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, Dave
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Rowe, Andrew
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Vaz, Keith
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Chris Smith and
Mr. Tony Banks.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Ordered,*

That the Promoters of the King's Cross Railways Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

*Ordered,*

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

*Ordered,*

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

*Ordered,*

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time and committed (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read and committed);

*Ordered,*

That all Petitions relating to the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill, together with any minutes of evidence taken before the Committee on the Bill, shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

*Ordered,*

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph (b) of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

*Ordered,*

That in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

*Ordered,*

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

*Ordered,*

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.

## Animal Health

8.35 pm

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Donald Thompson):** I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 4183/89, 4839/89 and 5057/89 relating to the animal health aspects of trade in certain animals and animal products; and supports the Government's intention to negotiate satisfactory arrangements to ensure effective safeguards against the introduction of animal disease.

I welcome this early opportunity to outline the Government's position on three very important proposals. They are the first of 20 or more measures that the Commission intends to publish this year on animal-health aspects of trade in animals and animal products.

Let me say at the outset that the Government have no intention of jeopardising our current high health status. Let me also thank the hon. Members for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) and for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North (Mr. Howells), who sought me out yesterday and today to ask me about this important measure.

The three proposals should be seen as part of a wider process of rationalisation leading to the eventual completion of the Common Market. The Government's general position on animal health matters in the context of the single market is clear: we fully support the overall objective of harmonisation of Community health requirements and are committed to the eventual removal of trade barriers, but—as I have said—we have no intention of jeopardising our current status. We therefore welcome the Commission's frequently declared intention of ensuring that the completion of the single market is achieved without giving cause for animal disease to spread into areas where it is not currently prevalent.

To the extent that the Community achieves uniformly high health standards, the need for controls over the movement of animals and animal products between member states will, of course, eventually diminish. In the meantime, the progress towards achievement of such standards must not be put at risk by a premature relaxation of existing safeguards. For geographical and historical reasons, the position of different member states on animal disease varies considerably. Safeguards are needed to protect the health status of the regions that are relatively free from disease—including, of course, the United Kingdom.

I know that those general principles are widely shared by many interested organisations that we have consulted. With them in mind, let me now deal with the three specific proposals that are the subject of the motion.

The proposal concerning intra-Community trade in, and imports from, third countries of bovine embryos has been discussed in detail at official level. It is likely to be presented to the Council of Ministers in the week beginning 24 July, which is why we are having this debate this evening. As matters stand, after the Council working-group discussions, intra-Community trade in bovine embryos will be subject to a common set of rules covering the animal-health status of donor animals and the conditions under which embryos are collected, processed, stored and transported.

Embryos will be permitted to be moved from one member state to another only if they are accompanied by an official health certificate confirming that they comply with the prescribed health requirements. Designated embryo collection teams will, under veterinary supervision, be responsible for carrying out collection, processing and storage of embryos.

Imports of bovine embryos from third countries will be permitted only from countries, or parts of countries, approved by the Community. Approval will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will depend on animal health in the country concerned, the structure of its veterinary service and its ability to respond to and control outbreaks of disease. Where approval is granted, all consignments will need to be accompanied by an official health certificate, under conditions that are specific to the country or areas concerned. In line with intra-Community trade requirements, the collection, processing and storage of embryos will have to be carried out by officially approved collection teams under veterinary supervision.

As explained in the explanatory memorandum, submitted on 22 March 1989, the proposal, if adopted as it stands, will provide protection against foot and mouth disease for the United Kingdom, Denmark and the Republic of Ireland which do not vaccinate against the disease and therefore have fully susceptible livestock populations. Article 4 allows imports of fresh embryos to be prohibited from member states where vaccination against foot and mouth disease is practised and, in the case of frozen embryos, for pre-export virus isolation tests of flushing fluids for the foot and mouth disease virus. There has been some pressure from other member states at working group level for a less stringent provision, but we shall continue to resist any measure that does not provide adequate guarantees against the introduction, even remotely, of foot and mouth disease.

We are satisfied that bovine embryos, imported under the conditions that I have briefly described, would provide the same high level of protection against the introduction of animal disease as is currently the case under our national import rules.

The sheep and goats proposal, No. 4612/89, also covers trade between member states and imports from third countries. Sheep and goats would have to be accompanied by official health certificates confirming compliance with prescribed health requirements. Member states could seek approval to demand guarantees over and above the minimum laid down if they have, or propose to have, national disease control programmes which require the same guarantees for movements within their territory. Therefore we could lay down stricter conditions, provided that we were willing to impose the stricter conditions in our own country. We already do so and we shall continue to do so. As with cattle and pigs, we should be able to require post-import quarantine against foot and mouth disease.

Imports of sheep and goats from third countries would be subject to the same set of rules as already apply to the import of cattle and pigs from third countries under directive 72/462. Imports of sheep and goats would only be permitted from those countries, or parts thereof, that had been approved by the Community. All animals would have to be accompanied by an official health certificate and would be subject to an official animal health inspection immediately upon arriving within the Community. The list of diseases in directive 72/462 would be enlarged to include those significant epizootic diseases of sheep and goats.

Unlike the bovine embryos proposal, the sheep and goats proposal would not provide the same degree of protection against the introduction of diseases as the current national rules. For example, in the case of contagious agalactia, which is prevalent in many South American countries but absent from the United Kingdom, the proposal requires animals to be six months clinically free in the herd of origin, but we require three years of freedom and pre-export testing. Because of the chronic nature of the disease, we believe that the proposal as it stands could significantly increase the chances of it being imported. If that happened, affected animals would have to be destroyed, which would be extremely costly. We understand that it costs Spain about £26 million a year.

The sheep and goats proposal has been discussed by national experts in a Council working group. My officials expressed our concerns. It became clear that other member states are also concerned that the proposal is deficient in several respects. There is a lot of work to be done. We shall continue to press for the necessary level of protection.

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): I do not think that the Minister referred to the extent to which the eventual legislation will be decided by majority or unanimity voting. The motion refers to the Government's intention to negotiate satisfactory arrangements. The Minister has referred to the fact that other member states are unhappy. Complete satisfaction can be assured only if there is unanimity. If there is less than unanimity, satisfaction cannot be guaranteed.

**Mr. Thompson:** If the majority is against it, we shall be satisfied. The hon. Gentleman is right to point out that these measures will be decided on a qualified or a proper majority. He knows that not every country has the same number of votes. We have 10, Ireland has three and Luxembourg has two. The hon. Gentleman was instrumental in urging us to hold the debate so that the concerns of hon. Members could be put before Ministers and their officials. He has just put one of those great concerns before us. We fully understand that we shall have to work very hard to ensure that health status is preserved.

Directive 5057/89 relates to the poultry and hatching eggs proposal. Its main provisions for intra-Community trade require that all export consignments must originate from premises approved by the member state and in accordance with plans approved by the Commission, that special provisions be made for exports from member states that vaccinate against Newcastle disease to those that do not, that any voluntary or compulsory disease control programme in force, or introduced by member states, must be approved by the Commission and that each member state must designate a national laboratory responsible for co-ordinating disease diagnostic methods.

As for third country trade, imports would be permitted only from countries approved on the basis of, first, their animal health status, secondly, their freedom from classified diseases and, thirdly, their veterinary service structure and ability to guarantee compliance with the prescribed import conditions. In addition, as with the other two proposals, consignments would be subject to a check at the first point of entry into the Community.

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): The Minister will recollect that he gave me a most courteous and constructive hearing when I went to see him in his office on 18 May regarding the importation of poultry, but particularly parrots, and especially Amazonian parrots. Can the Minister report any developments that have

*[Mr. Tam Dalyell]*

occurred in the past two months? He was full of good will at the time and I have no doubt that he is doing his absolute best on this difficult subject.

**Mr. Thompson:** Knowing that the hon. Gentleman would be in his place tonight, yesterday my officials sent me a letter on the four points that he raised. I was not entirely satisfied with the thoroughness of that letter so I sent it back as I felt that we could get closer to what the hon. Gentleman and I seek regarding the importation of exotic birds into this country, their despatch from their country of origin and the way in which they are looked after here before they go into the retail trade. I knew that the hon. Gentleman would be here, but I was not prepared not to go as far as I could.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** Order. Is that category of poultry within the framework of document No. 5057/89?

**Mr. Thompson:** I would not wish to suspect that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, had not read the document. It mentions single birds and perhaps the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) was worried about single birds.

**Mr. Dalyell:** The family of psittacus is classified as a game bird and the document includes game birds.

**Mr. Thompson:** We had better not argue with Mr. Deputy Speaker any longer as we have a long time to go and we shall need him later.

Quarantine would be permitted for imports from third countries only if disease were suspected. The proposal is scheduled for a first reading by a Council working group later this week. With the support of the House, my officials will press for our genuine concerns about the implications for the health of our national flock to be taken fully into account.

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South): The memorandum provided by the Select Committee on European Legislation states on page 9:

> "The trade criteria which third countries would have to meet in order to export to the Community have yet to be defined, but Member States would have the general power to impose post-import isolation on third country birds or hatching eggs suspected of being diseased."

It continues:

> "This could . . . be too late to prevent the spread of Newcastle disease".

Is the Minister satisfied that the trade criteria which third countries would have to meet would be of a sufficiently high standard to prevent the onset of such diseases?

**Mr. Thompson:** I am not entirely satisfied with that at present, and I shall deal with the matter in a moment.

I shall move on to a subject that worries many people —rabies. Hon. Members on all sides of the House have written to me on this matter.

The Government naturally support action at a Community level for the eradication of rabies but we would resist any suggestion that the Community should commit itself to any particular date for the elimination of quarantine. The Government's position is that the elimination of quarantine can be considered only when quarantine is no longer necessary to exclude the disease. Although the Government support the Commission's revised proposal that member states should implement eradication programmes before the end of 1989, we believe that eradication will take longer to achieve than the three years originally provided for. It is therefore likely that quarantine will remain necessary beyond 1992.

The United Kingdom, in common with a majority of member states, believes that we must retain the right to take urgent safeguard action against imports from other member states when a serious disease threat arises from that quarter. At present there can be no reason for confidence that the Commission would be capable of taking rapid and effective action in such circumstances. Speed of response can be crucial if the spread of a serious disease is to be prevented.

That is one reason why the Government attach considerable importance to quarantine, which is a necessary measure in relation to particular diseases while zones of different health status remain. In some cases, such as Newcastle disease, quarantine at the point of destination has proved to be effective, but in the case of foot and mouth disease, for example, quarantine needs to be applied at the point of entry, and isolated from native animals, to avoid the spread of disease. In the United Kingdom, quarantine facilities are largely provided by the private sector. We must make sure that the private sector is willing to pay for adequate safeguards to maintain the standards necessary for our successful import and export of animals.

8.55 pm

**Mr. John Home Robertson** (East Lothian): I hope that the House will be completely united in demanding the development and the maintenance of the most effective measures possible to prevent the spread of animal diseases. Rather earlier than he expected, the Minister has moved his take note motion which

> "supports the Government's intention to negotiate satisfactory arrangements to ensure effective safeguards against the introduction of animal disease."

Just this once, we shall give the Minister the benefit of the doubt, but we shall demand a full debate on the final proposals when the negotiations in the European Community have been completed. It would be interesting if the Minister were to give us some idea of the timetable which the Government and the European Commission have in mind.

The House must reserve its right to vote on a matter of vital national importance. For once we can use the word "vital" literally, as it is a matter of life and death.

**Mr. Spearing:** I agree with my hon. Friend that it is proper for us to debate the substantive legislation when it appears, but I hope that he is under no illusion that the resolution of 30 October 1980, under which the debate is being held on the recommendation of the Select Committee on European Legislation, gives no guarantee that such a debate can take place. Such a debate would occur only through the willingness of the Leader of the House or the use of a precious Supply day. I hope that my hon. Friend is under no illusion that a debate on this important and vital matter is assured or automatic.

**Mr. Home Robertson:** The House is indebted to my hon. Friend for his work in these matters. Technically he is quite right, but I was trying to obtain from the Minister an undertaking that in due course the House will have an opportunity to debate and vote on this vital matter of life and death. The House must retain and establish its rights and I hope that the Minister will give an undertaking that the Government will provide time for such a debate in due course. I am more than willing to give way if he wishes to deal with that point now.

**Mr. David Maclean (Lords Commissioner to the Treasury):** Usual terms.

**Mr. Home Robertson:** That was a helpful intervention by the Government Whip from a sedentary position, but we hope to hear from the Minister in due course.

We have at present——

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Home Robertson:** No, because I want to make progress.

**Mr. Cash:** Will the hon. Gentleman not give way?

**Mr. Home Robertson:** All right.

**Mr. Cash:** I am surprised by the hon. Gentleman. I did not realise that we were in such a tearing hurry. Perhaps he has something more important to do later.

I want to ask the hon. Gentleman whether he is suggesting that we shall be able to amend any future Westminster legislation if it is derived from the directive? Surely he understands enough about the European Community to know that that will not be possible.

**Mr. Home Robertson:** I understand that clearly, and the hon. Gentleman is right. We have plenty of time for this debate; I understand that we can continue until 11.30 pm. However, I do not want to take too many interventions, because Front Bench speeches can go on interminably in that case. I simply seek an assurance from the Minister that there will be a debate and a vote on the subject in due course.

We have admirably effective safeguards for animal health at present in the form of the North sea, the Irish sea, the English channel and the Atlantic ocean, combined with rigorous controls at ports and airports, and effective quarantine regulations. However, sadly, the Commission regards any frontier controls as anachronistic obstructions to the internal market, which must be swept away in 1992.

I am a long-standing supporter of the principle of European unity, so I hope that I shall be allowed to say, in the best communautaire spirit, that this proposed extension of the European principle may turn out to be fraught with unjustifiable dangers which should and must be avoided. No political or economic ideal can justify measures that would lead to the avoidable spread of disease, and surely frontier health controls are one manifestation of national sovereignty which is wholly justifiable in international terms. We urge the Government to forget about Britain's sovereign rights to opt out of the social charter or to pollute the sea and instead to concentrate on protecting our livestock and people against imported diseases.

The House is indebted to the House of Lords Select Committee on European Communities for its report entitled "1992: Health Controls and the Internal Market", which sets out the background to the proposals with admirable clarity. We must recognise that there is a wide variation in the pattern of animal health in different parts of the European Community and I will give three examples.

Foot and mouth disease, to which the Minister referred, is common in Italy, sporadic in Germany and non-existent in the United Kingdom, among other countries, largely thanks to the combined effects of quarantine controls and the policy of the slaughter of affected herds whenever outbreaks have occurred in the past. That policy has been supported by the farming industry and Governments of all parties. However, that policy could be at risk under these proposals.

My second example is Aujeszky's disease in pigs. It is endemic in most other European Community countries, but it has been virtually eradicated in Britain, largely thanks to concerted action by the British pig industry. That achievement is protected at present by the application of health standards on imports. What guarantee can there be that such protection will remain in place if the proposals go through as they stand?

My third example is rabies, to which the Minister referred. He knows that hon. Members of all parties and the British public are alarmed by the possibility that rabies could be reintroduced into the United Kingdom in future. Rabies is endemic in wild animals in most of the European mainland. It is an ever-present, potentially fatal risk to farm animals and humans. Britain has been kept free of rabies because of our natural advantage as an island, combined with quarantine regulations and great vigilance at our ports.

I could cite many more examples of different diseases, but the fundamental point is that it would be a costly and tragic disaster if diseases such as foot and mouth, Aujeszky's disease or rabies were to return to Britain because of the ill-considered relaxation of frontier controls to meet political deadlines in 1992-93. Let us not overlook the rights of other countries to protect themselves against the problems that may arise in Britain, such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, a disease which is new to the world as far as I know, and new to Europe, and which crops up in many parts of the United Kingdom. We must recognise the right of our European Community partners to take steps to prevent the spread of that disease on to their territories.

The framework of national controls to isolate diseases wherever possible has worked well, especially in the islands or peninsular states of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark. It would be downright reckless to relax those controls unless they were to be replaced by measures that were at least as effective—or, wherever possible, better.

We can sum up the Commission's present proposals as follows. It proposes first to raise animal health standards throughout the European Community. It then wants to go on to rely on the authorities in the regions from which animals are being moved to certify that their health is up to the standard of the region to which they are being consigned. I am sure that we all support the objective of raising health standards and we are genuinely impressed by the efforts being taken to eradicate rabies, for example, on the European mainland.

I am sure that the House would want to support the efforts of our European partners in that campaign, which will be costly and difficult and take a long time. There should be no question of dropping our guard until it is certain that the risk has gone. Neither rabies, foot and mouth disease, Aujeszky's disease, BSE nor any of a long list of animal diseases will be eradicated from the territory of the European Community by the end of this millennium, let alone by 1993. That cannot be done.

**Mr. Cryer:** My hon. Friend is making a powerful case and giving a competent exposition of the dangers. Ray MacSharry, the Agriculture Commissioner who has signed one of the European Community documents, said in May in the Assembly in Strasbourg that there would be complete freedom of movement of animals by 1992. He is determined to press ahead with these proposals, in spite of the dangers that my hon. Friend is setting out so well.

**Mr. Home Robertson:** My background on the general debate about European issues is rather different from that of my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer). Like my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), I have consistently supported the principle of European unity. It is, however, daft to concede some points in these circumstances. The House should be united. I am astonished that responsible people such as Mr. MacSharry propose doing away with safeguards that could put an important industry in his country, the Republic of Ireland, at risk.

We may be able to legislate to abolish frontier controls, but surely the House understands that, powerful as we may be in this great Parliament of ours, viruses and bacteria are not susceptible to legislation. We have controls that can prevent the spread of these diseases and keep them in place. Meanwhile, there can be no substitution for the protection of our veterinary surgeons and environmental health officers monitoring and controlling imports. In an ideal world, officials at a point of departure could be relied upon to act in the best interests of the point of destination, but strange things can happen in transit. Many of us remember that someone must have authorised the dispatch of at least 20 consignments of nasty meat from Ireland last year into the United Kingdom, which were detected only by a vigilant environmental health officer in Cornwall.

Let us keep our environmental health officers and our vets in position, with the powers that they need to protect the health of our animals and our people. The House should heed what they say about these proposals. The Institution of Environmental Health Officers has said:

> "We believe that the Commission's desire to remove barriers to trade prior to 1992 is taking precedence to public health and that the Regulations are designed to protect producers and encourage trade rather than to protect the consumer."

Surely, if the Government and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food have learnt nothing else during the past 12 months, they have learnt that it is time that the Government and the European Community understood the need to protect the interests of the consumer. The consumer is not prepared to put up with lax standards from the Government or anyone else.

The British Veterinary Association has said:

> "Given the differing health status of the member states . . . the time is not ripe to dispense with existing frontier controls."

The BVA went on to question the Community's ability to achieve uniform high standards of veterinary controls in the short term. It pointed to the fact that the proposed new system

> "will require considerably increased resources in money and veterinary manpower at the Commission and in . . . the UK."

Government agencies have been threatening to cut veterinary education at Cambridge and Glasgow and the Government have been cutting expenditure on the state veterinary service, yet we are debating a new system of controls that will require the services of many more vets. What do the Government say about that? Will they make provision for more vets to make the new system work when and if it comes into effect?

The British Veterinary Association also referred to the animal welfare aspects of the proposal to expand trade in live animals. Occasionally we see alarming reports of sheep or calves being transported across several countries in conditions even worse than those at Heathrow or Gatwick in July. It is not a laughing matter. Many of our constituents are deeply concerned when they see television film of sheep that have been kept tightly crammed into cattle lorries with little access to food or water for long periods while they are in transit across mainland Europe. Do we really want to encourage the transport of live animals and poultry to and from every point between Crete and Donegal? I suggest that, with the exception of the specialist trade in quality breeding stock, we should concentrate our efforts on reducing the avoidable stress on live animals in transit by encouraging the alternative trade in meat on the hook.

The documents refer to poultry and eggs. I remind the Minister that some months ago his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State had to respond in rather difficult circumstances to respond to the emergence of evidence of the risk of salmonella in eggs. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food did not exactly cover itself in glory but, after much clucking and scratching around, the Ministry is now applying better controls to guard against salmonella in the British poultry industry. Grave shortcomings remain, however, in our ability to enforce similar standards in respect of imported eggs.

I am indebted to my hon. Friend the Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) for letting me see a copy of the letter dated 10 July from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, referring to the importation of eggs and the difficulty of enforcing the new high standards of salmonella protection that we have in this country in respect of eggs imported from the European mainland:

> "Port Health Authorities are undertaking systematic sampling of imported eggs for the presence of invasive salmonella. It is not practicable to hold up importation while the tests are carried out but any positive finding is referred to the European Commission and to the country of origin so that action can be taken to deal with the problem at source."

I ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker: tests are carried out on eggs, but if the authorities discover something wrong with those eggs, the rest of the consignment is put on the market in the United Kingdom nevertheless, and a written report sent to the European Commission and to the authorities in the country of origin. That means that our farmers, who are being asked to apply stringent and costly controls and to maintain higher standards on their poultry and egg farms, are having their position undermined by unfair competition from across the water. That is not a reassuring background against which to debate the documents.

Finally, let me register our alarm at the categories of animal diseases outlined in the Commission's initial proposal. Three separate groups were listed—three separate categories of diseases and the different ways in which they were to be dealt with. Group I was the group of diseases that were to be subject to compulsory notification and were recognised as a serious threat to the Community economy. Group I included foot and mouth disease, classical swine fever, swine vesicular disease and Newcastle disease; so far, so good.

Group II covered contagious diseases to be notifiable on a herd basis. That group included tuberculosis and brucellosis, which ought surely to be subject to the tightest possible controls in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the Community.

Then we come to Group III, which included diseases that were to be subject to discretionary notification and voluntary eradication in individual herds. It was to include, amazingly, not only serious animal diseases such as Aujeszky's disease, but rabies. Are we really to believe that, not long ago, the Commission was proposing that rabies should be a category III disease subject to voluntary eradication? It is against the background of that lackadaisical approach that we are being asked to sanction the relaxation of frontier controls.

Of course, as the Minister acknowledged, other important diseases, such as sheep scab, were not mentioned in those initial lists. In a written answer on 17 February, the Minister told me that those lists were to be reviewed and that rabies, in particular, would go on the agenda. We are thankful for small mercies. However, with an agenda whose background owes more to politics than to any scientific consideration of animal health—followed by those absurd initial proposals in the list—we now find ourselves moving towards negotiations that could threaten a century of achievements in animal health.

Mr. K. W. Wilkes, a former head of the animal medicines division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and now a consultant to the British Veterinary Association, reported on a recent session in Brussels in the 15 July edition of the *Veterinary Journal*. He said:

> "the determination to remove frontier controls was considerably greater than the likelihood of securing the necessarily uniformly high health standards by the end of 1992."

That is an alarming prospect. This is a serious debate, and I hope that the entire House will be united. I hope that the Minister and his colleagues will go to Brussels and negotiate in the certain knowledge that people in Britain and the British Parliament are not prepared to tolerate the watering down of such essential and literally vital standards. The House will expect the Government to introduce a far more responsible approach to these affairs in those coming negotiations.

9.15 pm

**Mr. Roger Gale** (Thanet, North): I have no desire to detain the House but, as the representative not only of my constituents but of the all-party group for animal welfare, I must say how we appreciate the robust line that is being taken by my hon. Friend and the Ministry within the Council of Ministers on this vital issue, and the Government's determination to ensure that our high standards are maintained.

Having said that, on both sides of the House there is grave concern that our advantages as an island may be dissipated and that the considerable standards of animal welfare, health and care that have been established over the centuries, and especially in recent years—not only through good husbandry, but through high standards of veterinary care—may be swallowed up in a rush towards a unified European market, when others are prepared to settle for far lower standards.

The documents before us show that the measures are but the first of some more than 20 animal health measures —whether they are animal welfare measures is a moot point—to which we are likely to be subject. I hope that my hon. Friend will not take it amiss when I say that, as one who is considerably concerned with animal welfare generally, I see this as the potential thin end of a very dangerous wedge.

On occasions, this Parliament and this country have been accused of being little Englanders. However, one of our certain advantages as an island is that not only do we have legislative measures—which, as the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) said, are of small value—designed to promote animal health and to protect the environment of the United Kingdom, but we have a natural boundary of which we have been able to take advantage.

The word "rabies", which is highly emotive in the House and throughout the country, has been mentioned several times. I feel that it is incumbent on me, if no one else, to say that the measures before us, which deal mostly in the rabies context with sheep and goats, are not likely —even were they implemented in the Commissioner's wildest dreams—greatly to increase the risk of rabies throughout the United Kingdom, because sheep and goats are regarded as end-of-the-infection-line animals. They do not infect other animals, but they could, under certain circumstances, infect humans with rabies. Nevertheless, it is potentially the thin edge of a wedge.

If we rush towards the single market without due care for animal health and animal welfare, the advantages that we have accrued in this country and the protections that our vets and farmers have built up over the years will undoubtedly be threatened.

Therefore, I must advise my hon. Friend the Minister that I agree entirely with the hon. Member for East Lothian and share his hope that, if the unelected Commission sees fit to pursue these matters without due regard to the high standards in this country in its move towards the single market, and if it adopts the lowest rather than the highest common denominator, we in this House will have the opportunity fully to debate these matters. I hope and believe that this is an all-party issue and one that we all take seriously. Hon. Members of all parties will, I am sure, reject any measures suggested by Europe that do not seek to promote, maintain and even improve upon the high standards that we have come to expect and enjoy in this country.

I should like my hon. Friend and his colleagues to take a clear message to Europe: we in the United Kingdom are not prepared to settle for second best. At the moment, we enjoy high standards and should like to achieve even higher standards, and in this context we expect the rest of Europe to follow us.

9.20 pm

**Mr. Geraint Howells** (Ceredigion and Pembroke, North): We are united in our deliberations tonight on safeguarding the interests of the public and looking after the interests of our animals.

I congratulate the Minister on being frank with us on his stand in Brussels on this important issue. Hon. Members may not know this, but I am aware that the Minister is well used to animals and knows about their best interests and the health risks facing them. Therefore, he is in the right position to discuss the problems of animal health tonight. I wish him well in his further negotiations on behalf of industry and the public in Brussels when the opportune time arrives.

*[Mr. Geraint Howells]*

The documents that we are debating relate to trade in bovine embryos; in eggs—poultry and otherwise—and in sheep and goats. With respect, I believe that the reason for all these moves is simply to standardise rules and procedures across the EC. However, in its determination to bring every member state into line, the Community is in danger of reducing public health standards and increasing the risk of disease. Indeed, these are not animal health regulations; they are animal ill-health regulations, unless we can improve them.

The EC is attempting to round down to the lowest common denominator. It is refusing to recognise the traditions of individual countries and Britain's special nature as an island. I know that the Minister and everyone else involved in animal health is proud of this country's record. I hope that the Minister will be able to persuade others to change their minds and to improve the standards of animal health in the Community.

My specific complaint is that the rules relating to certain diseases would be relaxed. Contagious agalactia —an udder infection—is currently subject to an official certification of three years' freedom from the disease, plus pre-export testing. This would now be limited to six months. It would thus require the United Kingdom to seek derogation to retain its higher standards. I hope that the Minister will be able to persuade his counterparts in Europe to accept again the certification of three years' freedom from the disease.

Other diseases are rare in Britain but are more common on mainland Europe. I am thinking of caprine viral arthritis-cae and maedi visna. The relaxation of existing rules could prove a threat to unaffected livestock in this country.

The sheep and goats proposals would reduce to 30 days the present six months period during which animals must be free from rabies before being allowed in. That period of 30 days would be less than the incubation time. I was surprised to read that rabies in sheep and goats represents 14 per cent. of all cases in the Community. The Minister will have to press that point forcibly at the opportune time. Other wind-borne diseases would be less well controlled. There is, therefore, the risk of a significant reduction in the United Kingdom's "animal status," as the Select Committee put it.

Checks would be made mainly at points of origin and destination. That would be madness for an island such as Britain, for our spot checks and quarantine arrangements would be seriously undermined. Post-import quarantine would not be permitted for imports from third countries unless disease was specifically suspected. Animal health criteria would have to be certified by the exporting country.

The EC wants an expansion of intra-Community trade in poultry and in hatching eggs. Only recently there arose the problem of cracked and dirty eggs originating in Europe. What steps do the British Government and the EC propose to take to prevent a recurrence of that state of affairs?

In relation to the important issue of foot and mouth disease, will the Minister give an assurance that we in Britain will retain our present slaughtering policy? It would be a retrograde step if that policy were discarded.

If matters concerning animal health went wrong, it would be a sad day for our sheep industry if that meant that we could not export live lambs and carcases to Community countries. Our sheep farmers would never forgive the Government if they did not ensure that our policy of exporting was able to continue for many years to come.

On behalf of all concerned, I wish the Minister well in his discussions. Producers and those who look after and breed animals look to him to ensure that, for many years to come, the interests of all concerned are safeguarded and that the economy of sheep farmers, dairy farmers and all producers in Britain—not forgetting the public—are safeguarded.

9.28 pm

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford): Hon. Members on both sides of the House have canvassed most of the issues with which we are concerned today. There are serious dangers in the proposals before us. The Minister has conducted the negotiations so far with the determination and skill that we expect of him. There is all-party, cross-party, parliamentary determination not to allow Britain to be taken down a route which would not serve the nation's requirements. I do not know how Ireland is facing up to these issues —it, too, is an island—but perhaps the Minister will be able to enlighten us on that.

In view of the strong agreement in all parts of the House and the views that have been expressed about the dangers which lie ahead, I suggest, in view of the record that we have established, that it boils down to one main point. If we are satisfied that it is not simply a matter of trying to negotiate away something that cannot be negotiated away because we have reached rock bottom, only one course remains. If there is a persistent determination to continue down a route that we find unacceptable, we must say clearly, "We cannot accept it."

The time is coming when we must face up to the fact that we cannot negotiate about the face of the Cheshire cat. If there is nothing there, there is no point in trying to negotiate about it. We must simply veto it. Exactly how we do that raises important matters of Government policy. I shall not elaborate on that now, but I make the general proposition that we should say that enough is enough. The arcane argument that somehow the Luxembourg accord has been dispensed with is not true. Those who are familiar with the nuts and bolts of the Single European Act know that when our vital interests are affected we can exercise the veto. I hope that it will not come to that, but if it does, I hope that we shall do just that.

9.31 pm

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): On 18 May the Minister gave me a most courteous and helpful hearing at the MAFF about imports of tropical birds from rain forests. He said tonight that he was not in a position to reply to the points that I put to him and I await his letter with considerable interest. I am heartened that a Minister should request further action on a letter from an Opposition Member. That is the sign of a good Minister. When I was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Dick Crossman, he did that on several occasions so that even an Opposition Member could get a better answer. This is a difficult subject and certainly not one of party conflict.

I raise under the third measure the importation of parrots. It would be unfair to go over my interview with the Minister. Since then, the matter has been raised twice in the media. On Sunday evening, 16 July, there was a radio 4 programme by Jessica Holm in the "Nature" series specifically on that subject. Arising out of that programme, there are three important points among many for the Ministry to consider. First, the statistic was quoted on the programme that for every parrot bought at a pet shop in the United Kingdom, perhaps four die on their way here, either in dreadful truckloads travelling to market across countries such as Senegal or, from my personal observation, on rough journeys in the eastern Amazon.

In our interview I explained to the Minister that I had been to the Altamira conference with the Amerindians of the Xingu river and seen at first hand the destruction of mile after mile of rain forest. We must acknowledge the major problem of the destruction of habitats, followed by importation.

Can the Minister tell us, without being out of order, about the number and proportion of parrots the Government estimate die in transit, compared with the number that arrive? In the programme the trade representative disputed the figure and said that 25 per cent. was a more realistic figure than 80 per cent. Whatever it is, we are talking about some increasingly rare birds. In fact, many species are in peril. I hope that the Minister will tell the House of any thoughts that he may have on this matter.

Secondly, the programme emphasised that anyone who thought that we could justify the taking of parrots to breed them so that they could return to the wild was stretching an ecological point a little far. Sometimes it might be a success, but breeding in captivity by no means ensures that stock can be returned to the wild.

Thirdly, the programme demonstrated that the trade in parrots is quite unlike the ivory trade. Those who sell the parrots to the traders get only the proverbial peanuts for them. It is pathetic that they get so little for the capture of those birds. The species are endangered, and for what? It is for pence rather than for pounds. That is the great sadness. I shall not go into detail about the ivory trade, but ivory is at least valuable whereas the trade in parrots is not to needy people who catch the birds. That is an important point.

Four days after my interview with the Minister, on 22 May, there was a striking programme in the "Wildlife on One" series, which featured the capture of parrots in Senegal. One live bird was used as a lure to entrap others. It was suggested that up to 20,000 parrots were legally imported to the United Kingdom from Senegal every year and that they were subjected to cruel treatment in captivity and during transportation to this country.

International trade in endangered species is subject to the provisions of the convention on international trade in endangered species, which is implemented in the United Kingdom and other EC countries by EC regulation 3626/82, as amended. The convention regulates the import and export of threatened species. Those listed in appendix 1 to the convention are considered to be under immediate threat of extinction and, for the most part, are subject to a complete trade ban. Is that complete trade ban actually effective, first, in the United Kingdom and, as far as the Government can estimate, in other European Community countries?

Those species included in appendix 2, of which the African grey parrot was featured in "Wildlife on One", are not considered to be under immediate threat, but trade is limited to a level that is not detrimental to their survival. The difficulty is that, because of the destruction of habitat, which can happen very quickly, parrots that we thought safe five years ago are now, in some cases, teetering on the borders of extinction. Very close monitoring is necessary if we are serious about dealing with that problem.

The convention requires only that traders in the country of origin should have an export licence—Senegal is a party to the convention—but the United Kingdom also insists that an import licence is issued for trade in appendix 2 species. Licences are issued by the endangered species branch of the Department of the Environment, the management authority of the convention, and our main concern is for the conservation of the threatened species. I would in no way want to embarrass this Minister, who has been so kind and helpful. If he does not have all the information available tonight, he can send it to me in writing. It is important that Parliament has the necessary information on the record so that hon. Members can refer to it. He might put his letter in the Library, whose staff have been so helpful to me.

We Members of Parliament receive an increasing number of letters, particularly from young people asking what we are doing about this. CITES is advised by one or two scientific authorities—the Nature Conservancy Council in the case of animals and the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in the case of plant species. The other day, I was Ghillean Prance's guest at Kew when we discussed this, and there is a problem. He is a distinguished menage botanist and knows better than most the problems of rare species of birds. I hope that the Department will contact Kew and that its officials will play a video of the "Wildlife on One" programme of May 22 and of Jessica Holm's programme last Sunday.

The Department of the Environment review of the EC CITES regulations of 1986 observed that there was a presumption to recommend approval for species in appendix 2, provided that the trade is monitored under licence and that the Nature Conservancy Council recommends refusal only where there is evidence that

"there are likely to be negative conservation implications"

That is probably the responsibility of the Department of the Environment, although I saw a Minister from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. I realise that there is an interface between the two. I do not complain about that, and I do not think that there should be a different civil service departmental allocation. Where there's a will, there's a way and the system seems to work perfectly well. However, I recognise that another Department is involved.

The African grey parrot is considered to exist in sufficient numbers in the wild not to be under immediate threat. Well, it may not yet be under threat. Powers to regulate the conditions in which birds and animals are transported are vested in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under the Transit of Animals (General) Order 1973, which places a duty of care on the carriers of livestock. The order provides for the carriage of all animals in suitable containers of adequate dimensions, which are properly labelled and stowed to ensure no risk of injury or unnecessary suffering. Other provisions deal with the feeding and watering of animals in transit.

*[Mr. Tam Dalyell]*

Jessica Holm's nature programme emphasised that sometimes aircraft passengers could be unaware that animals were dying all around and that there were few survivors among a number of dead bodies. What kind of checks are carried out at Stansted, Heathrow, Gatwick or the other airports at which these planes arrive to ensure that this does not happen?

The assertion in the BBC programme was that massive abuse took place. I hope that a recording of the programme giving exactly what was said will be made and be taken into account. I have to confess that on Sunday I was picking blackcurrants and listening to the programme at the same time and did not take notes. I am not sure exactly what was said, but I hope that the Department will check it out.

Carriers, including foreign carriers arriving in British jurisdiction, can be prosecuted for failing to comply with any of these provisions. However, the Ministry has no powers to deal with the means of capture or keeping of the creatures in the country of origin before their dispatch. That must be a matter of international arrangement and possibly, either in writing or in person tonight, the Minister will say what is being done, particularly with the Senegal, but also with the Brazilian and other authorities, to try to obtain a better understanding of dispatch, if we must have importation.

The Importation of Birds, Poultry and Hatching Eggs Order 1979 contains provisions relating to the hygiene and quarantine of imported birds, and a veterinary inspector may require the slaughter of any that are found to be diseased. Over 500 species of birds from 30 countries were brought into the United Kingdom during 1988 and many birds died during quarantine. I understand that quite often birds are in quarantine and the people looking after them may have total goodwill, but not the expertise.

I return to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) that if we are to have proper regulations, we need more vets with expertise in this matter. That means paying vets. Will the Minister say something about the provision of vets and whether he is satisfied that there is proper scrutiny of the quarantine facilities?

As I understand it, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is conducting a survey into the mortality rate of these birds, which it hopes to publish in about three or four weeks. Is that true? The Minister probably knows about this, and if not, his officials, who have struggled through the traffic to be here today—good on them for doing so—will know about it. Such a survey would be of wide interest.

The Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act 1976 contains further powers whereby the Secretary of State for the Environment may extend the list of species protected under the CITES regulations and restrict the sale of exotic species. Several species of parrot are scheduled by the 1976 Act, but I understand that it does not cover many more birds. The hon. Member for Lincoln (Mr. Carlisle) who is a Whip, has a good record on wildlife and countryside matters. We both served on the long Committee considering the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, when he was a Back Bencher. I hope that he will use his influence on the Government if need be to ensure that these matters are taken seriously, and to back up the Minister in his best endeavours.

You have been patient with me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I think that these points are in order. I ask for nothing tonight other than what is convenient for the Minister, but I look forward first to a reply to the letter following my interview of 18 May and secondly to a reply to the rather detailed points that I have raised tonight.

9.46 pm

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South): This is an important debate, but its importance is not reflected in the level of attendance in the Chamber. The order represents a potential shift away from maintaining a long-standing policy of scrutiny of, and protection from, animal diseases. I intervened in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) and spoke about Mr. Ray MacSharry. While the debate has been going on, I have confirmed my memory from *The Rainbow* of the Common Market Assembly, which meets in Strasbourg. I share the reservations expressed by my hon. Friend, although he supports the Common Market and I do not. I think that it has been a burden on this country, and I continue to be a critic of it. Nothing that has happened recently has removed the point of any of my criticisms. It is interesting to see that people from both points of view are expressing concern that the Common Market seems intent on pursuing a policy that is daft to the point of lunacy, and which might conceivably allow the spread of diseases such as rabies.

The solution often put forward by the Common Market Commission is that of a certificate of origin, which would certify that animals were free from rabies or other diseases. That would not be acceptable because we would have no guarantee about the quality of the inspection, the qualifications of the inspectors, or the diligence with which the inspections were carried out, which is vital. If the inspections are done in a slap-happy way, and the inspectors are not adequately qualified, the result will be rabies entering a hitherto rabies-free zone. It is important that that should not happen, so the Common Market solution is not a solution.

Numerous people in the Common Market Assembly, the Commission and the Council of Ministers are obsessed with a concept of federalism which overrides the sense and sensibility of allowing member states an element of individual scrutiny at borders to ensure standards of animal hygiene. That is of major concern.

Members of this Parliament simply do not understand the strength and ferocity of the federalist movement within the institutions of the Common Market. Those people intend to override our objections. I press the Minister to make it clear in his reply whether we shall use our veto by declaring this to be a matter of vital national interest or whether we shall simply be outvoted on a majority vote and find ourselves unwillingly acquiescing in rules imposed by the Common Market with which we go along because the Cabinet feel that it must make some sort of gesture of solidarity in the light of 1992.

That would be a grave mistake. I am sure that many people who support the Common Market would have strong reservations about such a solution, saying that we can work within the Common Market but we do not have to accept the abolition of our right of scrutiny of animals and birds coming into Britain. I press the Minister to tell the House that, if necessary, the Government will use their veto by declaring the matter to be one of vital national interest.

We are debating a motion to take note of the EC documents and supporting

> "the Government's intention to negotiate satisfactory arrangements to ensure effective safeguards against the introduction of animal disease."

I am happy to support that motion, provided that the Minister can assure us that it will be carried out with a degree of dedication that will involve using every right that this nation state has within the Common Market to prevent the institution of rules which would be inimical to the maintenance and development of good agricultural animal hygiene and consumer standards in Britain.

During the week beginning 22 May this year, I attended my last Strasbourg Assembly. Curiously enough, the last word that I uttered as a member of that Assembly was on this very issue. I am delighted to think that many members of that Assembly were pleased to see the back of me. I was an unremitting critic and they do not like critics in their gathering.

One question for the Commission was entitled "Contrôl de la rage." The French language shows the power of rabies. I cannot translate the original question, which was in French, because it is too long. People often do not realise that the English version of the record of the Strasbourg Assembly takes about three or four months to produce. A verbatim report called *The Rainbow* is produced the following day which is not terribly helpful if one cannot read Greek, Danish, French, German or whatever language happens to have been used. However, the essence of the question in French was, "How will rabies be controlled by the Commission?"

Mr. MacSharry, who signed one of the documents that we are considering today, said:

> "As the hon. Member is aware, rabies is the subject of a special Commission report which is accompanied by proposals to eradicate this disease. The report and proposals demonstrate that rabies has been treated as a special case and that the Commission's policy is to eradicate rabies from the Community thus obviating the necessity for quarantine."

The questioner, Dr. Caroline Jackson of the European Democratic Group, asked:

> "I appreciate that the Commission has a programme to eradicate rabies but until rabies has in fact been 100 per cent. eradicated will the Commissioner not agree that the British Government is within its rights under Community law to apply the quarantine period?"

Ray MacSharry answered:

> "All I would like to say is that the provisions that will operate after 1992 will totally depend on the eradication proposals that are now in place and these, hopefully, will be successful and thus obviate after 1992 the necessity for quarantine."

The matter was pursued by Mr. Provan of the European Democrats, who asked the Commissioner:

> "Is he satisfied himself that the Commission's programme is well enough funded to actually eradicate rabies within the foreseeable future or does he feel that we must enhance that programme to make progress a little more rapidly so that we can achieve the abolition of rabies in the Community as quickly as possible?"

Commissioner MacSharry replied:

> "I am satisfied and hopeful that the proposals that are in place and the resources that are available will lead to that situation."

I then asked the Commissioner the following question:

> "Does that not mean, in effect, that since rabies is advancing in Europe at the rate of about 25 miles a year, as stated in a report submitted to this Assembly, that by 1992 it will be impossible for the United Kingdom to have completely open borders if they are going to maintain their existing strict quarantine scrutiny of animals coming into the United Kingdom? Is that not an important reservation for the United Kingdom, in order to stop the spread of rabies into the United Kingdom which is rabies-free at the moment?"

Commissioner MacSharry replied:

> "Yes, I know the situation that has been raised by the hon. Member and by Mr. Provan and Mrs. Jackson. It is, of course, a concern of both the UK and the Irish authorities. Our effort on a Community-wide basis is to eradicate this disease and, therefore, obviate the necessity for any quarantine. I have to say that it is hypothetical at the moment what situation might exist after 1992, but if there is to be any consideration for quarantine subsequent to 1992, then it can, or could be, become considered at the point of origin and not at the point of destination and thereby overcome any difficulties that may arise."

Commissioner MacSharry clearly stated that after 1992 checks for rabies should be at the point of origin and not at the point of destination.

**Mr. Cash:** As Commissioner MacSharry is an Irish Commissioner, has the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), in all his research into the situation in Ireland, established the extent to which the Irish Government are enthusiastic about importing various diseases into that country?

**Mr. Cryer:** Of course the Irish Government are not enthusiastic about that prospect. The truth is that Commissioners are, by and large, politicians who have been put out to grass. They are not experts who have been appointed because of their commitment to sense and sensibility or to the development of good rules. They are the political friends of their sponsors. In Commissioner MacSharry's case, the Taoiseach wanted to find a safe place for a Finance Minister who had imposed a number of harsh economic policies in Ireland. Once appointed, a Commissioner is secure and has no accountability for the policies that he advocates, other than to the College of Commissioners.

It is worth remembering, in respect of imports of live animals into the United Kingdom, that the only loyalty that a Commissioner owes is to the College of Commissioners. When Sir Leon Brittan left this House to become a Commissioner, he said that he would look after British interests, but the truth is that he was obliged to swear an oath of allegiance to the College of Commissioners.

**Mr. Home Robertson:** My hon. Friend has said a little about rabies, presumably referring to the farm animal categories mentioned in the documents. He has echoed points raised by other hon. Members, including myself. Clearly, however, a far greater risk of rabies being introduced into this country would be posed by any relaxation of the quarantine regulations affecting cats and dogs. A separate document, not included in the group with which we are dealing, specifically recognises the right of the British authorities to maintain quarantine regulations affecting cats and dogs because we are uniquely free of the disease. My hon. Friend should be thankful for small mercies. He is, however, right to put his finger on the fact that there is still the rather remote risk of rabies being introduced by goats or sheep.

**Mr. Cryer:** My hon. Friend is right to raise that point. Some people in Common Market institutions, however, want to remove those restrictions. They want certificates of

*[Mr. Cryer]*

origin to be provided for cats and dogs, and any other domestic animals which may be affected. That has been the subject of press releases from members of the Assembly.

Another person who intervened in the discussion to which I have referred was a man called Dieter Rogalla, a member of the Socialist group and—if I may use such an enticing expression—a rabid pro-marketeer. On his desk is a Customs barrier which is permanently lifted, as a symbol of his devotion to the removal of all barriers. He seeks every opportunity to argue that barriers of every kind must be removed. In the report, he asked the Commissioner, in effect, to counter my comments by asking when quarantine would be abandoned by Great Britain. Mr. Rogalla, by the way, is also a member of the "kangaroo group", a powerful and influential group in the Assembly, the kangaroo symbol representing the ability to jump over barriers at each country border. I mention that merely to demonstrate that there is strong pressure to remove the barriers that we are discussing.

In reply to Mr. Rogalla's question, Ray MacSharry replied, in effect, that he hoped that quarantine would be ended:

> "I hope in the not too distant future and definitely after 1992."

I have the document here, and it will be quoted in *Hansard* tomorrow. I hope that the Minister can give us an assurance that today's motion means something, and that the Government will negotiate satisfactory arrangements to ensure

> "effective safeguards against the introduction of animal disease."

I hope that we shall not be fobbed off and find in six or 12 months' time that a document has been produced saying, "We have discovered that quarantine is not all that valuable—inoculations have been used on a widespread basis in the Common Market and rabies is no longer important as a disease transmittable to humans and animals." I hope that the reference to effective safeguards means that the Government will ensure that we do not depend on certificates of origin from other Common Market countries or from third countries importing into the Common Market, and that we shall use our right of national interest to veto any such proposals. It is vital that the Government should take a firm stand and not capitulate as they have done on so many other Common Market issues.

10.4 pm

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I shall answer the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) immediately by reading out again what I said earlier:

> "The Government naturally support action at a Community level for the eradication of rabies. But we would resist any suggestion that the Community should commit itself to any particular date for the elimination of quarantine. The Government's position is that the elimination of quarantine can be considered only when quarantine is no longer necessary to exclude the disease. Whilst the Government support the Commisson's revised proposal that member states should implement the eradication programmes before the end of 1989, we believe that eradication will take longer to achieve than the three years originally provided for. It is therefore likely that quarantine will remain necessary beyond 1992."

Before I came to the debate I read with interest the exchanges to which the hon. Gentleman has just referred. That exchange of views was vital. I place as serious an interpretation upon it as does the hon. Member for Bradford, South.

**Mr. Home Robertson:** I am grateful to the Minister for repeating the Government's position about the maintenance of provisions to protect the United Kingdom against the importation of rabies. However, there were one or two weasel words in the statement that he has just read out again. He said that the Government would resist the lifting of quarantine under the circumstances that he described and that he thought it unlikely that those circumstances would arise. What does the word "resist" mean in that context? Do the Government acknowledge that this is a matter of vital national interest, which ought to warrant the use of the veto?

**Mr. Thompson:** I do not intend to turn this into a drafting session on a paragraph that is perfectly plain and that can be understood by the whole House. "Resist" means resist, oppose and all the rest. The hon. Gentleman went to nearly as good a school as I did, so he can put his own interpretation on it.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) put his argument at a most opportune time. On 27 July, there is to be a meeting of the international committee on these matters. I shall ensure that my officials read his words as they compose the Government's answer to him and that they bear them in mind when they attend the meeting on 27 July. It is a pity that the wife of the Minister for Roads and Traffic, who is to reply to the Adjournment debate, is not sitting next to him. My hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) has a great deal to do with these matters in the Department of the Environment. I assure the hon. Member for Linlithgow that both the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West and I are very concerned about the importation of parrots and other animals that have to rely upon our support and protection. As he kindly suggested I do, I shall write to him further about the matter.

**Mr. Dalyell:** I hope that officials will listen to the programme on Sunday by Jessica Holm and that they watched the "Wildlife on One" programme that was broadcast on 22 May.

**Mr. Thompson:** I shall do that, and I shall ensure that my officials do so, too.

It is clear from the debate that the whole House agrees that we should work as hard as possible to ensure that the United Kingdom's animal status is well protected. The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) made that point very well. He also made the point that BSE is now unfortunately endemic in this country. Continental countries must now realise that, for the first time in many ways, there is a two-way argument.

I do not intend to be drawn into the debate on eggs. We are talking not about eggs for breakfast but about eggs for hatching.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) was right to emphasise the fact that animal welfare goes hand in hand with animal health. He drew to our attention the serious matter of rabies. He can be assured that I and the Farm Animal Welfare Council will ensure that the twin protections of welfare and proper standards for animals are maintained and kept in mind.

I have answered most of what the hon. Member for Bradford, South said. He and my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) stressed that we should use every method and every device possible in Europe. Both hon. Gentlemen should remember that I voted against the last beef premium, and that it is unusual to vote against anything in the Council of Ministers. We shall keep that resolution in this most important matter of animal health. The hon. Gentleman on the Liberal Bench, the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North (Mr. Howells)——

**Mr. Home Robertson:** Before the Minister moves on to the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North (Mr. Howells), may I bring him back to the important issue that he has just covered? He has just admitted that the best he can do in the Council of Ministers is to vote against something. That may be unusual, but he voted against the new beef premium. However, we have the new beef premium, regardless of that vote. We are discussing something of more fundamental importance than the beef premium—the possible introduction of deadly diseases into Britain—so may I press the Minister further for an undertaking that it is the Government's intention that the House should have the opportunity to debate the issue further when negotiations in Europe have been concluded?

**Mr. Thompson:** The usual channels sit on each side of me. It may be that by the time that happens I shall be Leader of the House and will be able to decide that myself. However, that is unlikely and I can go no further.

The hon. Gentleman on the Liberal Bench was kind enough to call me a round peg in a round hole. I have spent all my life with animals and I can assure the Opposition and my right hon. and hon. Friends that we take the matter extremely seriously. I am sure it is not the last we have heard on it.

**Mr. Cryer** *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. The Minister is not giving way; he has finished his speech.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 4183/89, 4839/89 and 5057/89 relating to the animal health aspects of trade in certain animals and animal products; and supports the Government's intention to negotiate satisfactory arrangements to ensure effective safeguards against the introduction of animal disease.

## Airport Congestion

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

10.12 pm

**Mr. Harry Greenway** (Ealing, North): For the past few months, just about everyone in the air travel industry has been warning that 1989 will see more congestion in the skies than ever before. Already the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers believes that it will be a disastrous summer. The majority of the delays will almost certainly be at Gatwick airport, the most popular starting point for charter flights to the Mediterranean, which are most vulnerable to delays than other flights. Many of those flights will be bound for Greece and Spain, where the air traffic control systems are even more overstretched than ours. With the French air traffic controllers permitting six rather than 54 flights per hour through their air space, as they did last Saturday, an outrageous, unacceptable and miserable situation for holidaymakers and travellers is certain. Something will have to be done about it.

Last summer and the summer before, the chaos at Gatwick made headlines for weeks on end. In 1987 the cause of the chaos was industrial action by the French, the Spanish, and at one point the British air traffic controllers. In 1988 the Spanish air traffic controllers' strike caused the initial backlog. After their weekend action, the Greeks then went on strike, the result being delays of up to five hours. The problems were worsened at Gatwick by the breakdown of the main air traffic control computer at West Drayton, repairs to the Gatwick runway, the combined police-military operation to test airport security, and fog.

As the issue of delays comes increasingly into focus, there is a need for a major new initiative to provoke greater Government and aviation industry action to solve the growing crisis affecting airports in the south-east. In considering airport congestion, it is important to distinguish between the delays caused by air traffic controllers through industrial disputes, when they deliberately perform below their best, and those due to traffic volumes being in excess of system capacity. In the United Kingdom, delays for any reason can concertina flights into later periods when congested runways and airspace are already fully committed. That causes knock-on delays, increasing inconvenience and hardship to users and additional costs to airlines and airports.

One solution which is often suggested for easing the problems of delays is night flights. The relaxing of restrictions is still seen by some as a viable method of overcoming delays. It has been anticipated that over the next five years there will be a 20 per cent. increase in the night flight quota at Gatwick. It has been argued that the increase will be brought about by the use of new super-quiet aircraft of the NNA category, which will be phased in at the expense of noisier aircraft.

The use of night flights however, is an intolerable, unacceptable and unnecessary method of relieving congestion at airports. The bottom line of the argument is that any aircraft is noisy and will seriously affect the quality of life of residents in the location of airports. I am pleased to see my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) in his place agreeing with me. Night flights are a significant part of the environmental

*[Mr. Harry Greenway]*

distress that will be suffered by residents. Once night flights are established, the authorities may be reluctant to withdraw them, especially at times when delays are excessive. That point is highlighted when we consider that passenger demand is estimated to rise by up to 10 per cent. per annum.

Many of the problems can be anticipated and therefore overcome when we consider that for any increase in charter flights in the summer the traffic schedules are drawn up about nine months in advance. The ensuing chaos could thus have been foreseen. Furthermore, any increase in activity will add to the problem of air safety, especially near-misses. Yet decisions are frequently made without consultation with interested bodies and without safeguards.

Heathrow is unique in that it is located in the suburbs of a capital city, near my constituency, with its runways pointed towards the heart of the city. As a result, Heathrow has the world's worst airport environmental problems.

The issue of congestion in controlled airspace above London and in other parts of Europe comes sharply into view during the summer months. In 1983, the Civil Aviation Authority pointed out that while the then current capacity of the London terminal manoeuvring area had about 130 air movements per hour, the potential traffic-generating capacity at Heathrow was 71, Gatwick 40 and Luton 16, which was 127 aircraft movements per hour. Moreover, other movements, essentially from other airfields, amounted to seven movements per hour, giving a peak demand of 134 movements per hour even before Stansted was taken into account. My source for that is CAA paper 84006. That problem has worsened significantly over the intervening years since those figures were originally published.

The National Air Traffic Service is gradually introducing new equipment with major radar replacements and electronic data displays, for example, and wholly reorganising the use of controlled airspace within the London terminal manoeuvring area. A new system of air traffic control for the south-east, known as the central control function, will enable the NATS to handle at least 30 per cent. more traffic by the mid-1990s. In the short term, by specifying the number of aircraft that can be received, the NATS is imposing limits on airport capacity during peak periods. That not only delays visitors to the United Kingdom—it delays British holidaymakers at airports in this country when it is employed by other European air traffic control centres.

The total reorganisation of the LTMA is programmed to take place in seven stages until 1995. The basis upon which the NATS is undertaking this exercise is unclear, but if it is assumed that Stansted should be developed to the maximum potential of a single runway, it would be necessary to plan for a peak demand of 185 to 200 aircraft movements per hour in the LTMA. Those figures are based upon the following hourly aircraft movements: Heathrow, 72; Stansted, 40; Luton, 20; and minor airfields and overflyers, 13 to 28. There is some uncertainty about the point at which the growth of aircraft movements at Stansted will adversely affect such movements at Luton. If, however, that assumption is invalid, there would be a need to extend the capacity of controlled airspace in the LTMA by between 42 and 54 per cent.

There could also be an impact in the long term at the world's major airports, as congestion would limit the number of aircraft handled by the end of the century, constraining the development of air transport. For example, in 1987 in the United States delays caused airlines to lose the equivalent of almost 100 days in aircraft operating time every day. That figure was based on a typical 10 hours per day use of each aircraft in their fleets to compensate for delays. Those difficulties at airports cost United States airlines some $2 billion in 1987, or 4 per cent. of revenue last year. That exceeded total airline profits in any single year. It is worth noting that United States flights suffer an average delay of 15 minutes.

Problems for airline manufacturers would include cash flow considerations and low profit margins, which would limit new civil aircraft programmes on both sides of the Atlantic to about one new project every seven to 10 years. Europe launched new principal aircraft types over the past 20 years as European manufacturers caught up the ground lost to United States airline manufacturers. Boeing launched three new programmes in the past 20 years. Consequently, the development in the design of new airliners will be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

A review of the past 15 years shows that to solve the problem British aviation interests must take a major part of the blame for the chaos in the air over Europe and the consequent congestion on the ground in the United Kingdom. All the aviation experts have consistently claimed that aircraft would get larger so that fewer, quicker aircraft would be required. At the last major aircraft industry inquiry, the British Airports Authority stated that Heathrow would handle 53 million passengers per annum, with 300,000 aircraft movements—about 177 passengers per plane. Currently, Heathrow is managing about 38·2 MPPA, with 332,000 aircraft movements—about 115 passengers per plane.

The result of this inaccurate forecasting is that 50 per cent. more aircraft than expected are needed to handle passenger demand. Heathrow and Gatwick are running out of aircraft capacity during the day and the air traffic control system must cope with 50 per cent. more flights than expected. As Heathrow and Gatwick are the two biggest international airports in the world, they dominate the European system, so if Britain gets it wrong the whole of Europe suffers. European air traffic controllers therefore cannot plan efficiently if the United Kingdom's forecasting is inaccurate.

It is true also that, if the Government relax the restrictions on night flights, the rest of Europe will be under pressure, so this must not happen. It has been argued that larger aircraft will solve the problem, but few airlines are planning to fly any because passengers see greater choice in frequency and destination rather than in simply consolidating existing services. Continental airports close at night, and so should ours.

Europe's aviation authorities have been urged to co-operate in urgent and efficient plans to ease airspace congestion and provide capacity to meet demand through the 1990s. Last November, Lord Brabazon, president of Eurocontrol, requested an investigation into the short-term ways in which congestion could be relieved. He called for a greater pooling of information on national plans for handling air traffic, for the removal of incompatibilities in national air traffic control systems in Europe and for the immediate identification of remedial measures for implementation. The Minister called for a new common strategy for improving the efficiency of the air traffic control system throughout Eurocontrol's member states. Lord Brabazon also called for controls in the financing of Eurocontrol and urged member states to make readily available the resources needed to undertake the necessary work, fully recovering the costs from air transport users.

There is also a need to upgrade Eurocontrol's central data bank to improve the future operation of flow control in Europe. Only time will tell whether the changes will result in any movement in the existing system. I warmly welcome my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) and my hon Friend the Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle), who is also in his place.

A more far-sighted approach to the problem of congestion would be to switch traffic from the south-east airports—*[Interruption]* I invite my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South-East (Mr. Lightbown), who is the Whip, to listen—and actively to encourage increased activity in the regional airports. That would benefit operators and users alike, while spreading the effects of aircraft activity.

For instance, Gatwick at present handles some 21 million passengers per year and is designed to take 25 million. Rather than planning for increased capacity at Gatwick better solution would be to direct growth to the regions and to Stansted. The first stage of Stansted's development will be ready by 1991, when it will be able to handle about 8 million passengers per year and when there will be a fast rail link to Liverpool street station.

Already about 50 per cent. of Gatwick's passengers come from north of the Thames. If more services were available nearer to passengers' homes, it would reduce the need to travel through London and thus reduce travelling time and costs to the consumer. It would also have the beneficial effect of alleviating road congestion in my constituency and those of other hon. Members in west London.

One measure that could be employed in promoting regional development would be to provide incentives to airline operators to use regional airports. The British Airports Authority is in a strong market position, given that it has monopoly control of London's airports, and can offer attractive landing charges to operators to encourage the use of Heathrow and Gatwick. An unlikely solution would be to ask the BAA to increase its landing charges to allow regional airports to compete more readily. A more likely solution may be provided by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The BAA price control formula is reviewed every five years by the commission and the first review is due to be carried out in 1991. That may provide an initial foothold for changing the pricing structure for aircraft use and could be employed in providing the incentive for operations to shift from the south-east to the regions.

10.29 pm

**The Minister for Roads and Traffic (Mr. Peter Bottomley):** I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) on his erudite speech. He seems to have answered some of the questions implicit in his remarks. It would be proper for me to acknowledge the interest shown in the matter by the hon. Member for Antrim, East (Mr. Beggs) and to pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South-East (Mr. Lightbown), who shows care and concern for those of us who are worried about airport noise, as well as the need for mobility and for transport issues generally. He also shows kindness in helping us with our own transport arrangements. He is one of the silent servants of the House and the Government.

The reason for air traffic control is air safety, as all those who have served in military or civil aviation will know. The first consideration in the handling of air traffic is safety.

United Kingdom civil aviation is, happily, among the safest in the world. That has not come about by chance, but because of work, consultation, debate—sometimes robust debate—attention to detail, and because, as Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales said when she visited the Civil Aviation Authority,

> "It takes a special kind of person to work in air traffic control."

In the Civil Aviation Authority report which came out today, Mr. Tugendhat, the chairman, said:

> "This has been another exceptionally busy year for the Authority in all its main areas of activity. The National Air Traffic Services, both at airports and centres, again dealt with more record-breaking traffic levels. There was an overall 11 per cent. increase in air traffic handled by civil controllers in the year up to the end of March, on top of the 9 per cent. growth experienced in the previous year. In addition, several milestones were passed in connection with the Authority's ambitious £600 million investment programme in new air traffic control equipment and facilities."

I leave the rest of the report to be read by those who want to pursue an interest in it. I believe that it shows that many good things are being achieved.

There is no reason and no need for complacency. On a slightly lighter note, to acknowledge the interest of my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby), I must recall the Flanders and Swann song about how much safer air travel was than going on the roads—and their claim that perhaps the airline coaches had instructions to ensure that the statistics were kept favourable.

**Mr. Michael Shersby** (Uxbridge): Will my hon. Friend give way?

**Mr. Bottomley:** Before I give way to my hon. Friend, can I just acknowledge that I followed him all the way to his constituency last week, and he drove impeccably? That is probably one reason why the road statistics are improving in the same way as the aviation statistics. I give way to my hon. Friend, who is acknowledged to be the policeman's friend.

**Mr. Shersby:** After that wonderful tribute, I am loth to intervene in my hon. Friend's speech. He may, however, have heard Mr. Tugendhat on the radio this morning say that it was the CAA's intention to step up recruitment of air traffic controllers very considerably and to recruit at the rate, I believe, of more than 160 a year for the next few years. I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree that that will make a great contribution towards improving air traffic control.

**Mr. Bottomley:** That is right. As hon. Members say, if it is needed, it is right.

It is appropriate to acknowledge that the Civil Aviation Authority has responsibility in these matters. It is one area in which we do not have split responsibility. The CAA has the responsibility, and it is important that Ministers do not

*[Mr. Bottomley]*

interfere when matters of safety are involved. In the same way as I assume responsibility for road safety and help to organise the alliance that drives casualty rates down, the CAA has that responsibility for air safety, which it should be allowed to carry out without the Minister going in for the cheap political gesture. I pay tribute to my noble Friend the Minister for Aviation and Shipping, Lord Brabazon, whom my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North mentioned.

I have talked about air safety, but I also want to talk about the need to remove any unnecessary obstacles to increased traffic at regional airports. My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North was right—I think that he had the whole-hearted support of my hon. Friends the Members for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) and for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle)—in trying to ensure that people can fly from the areas that are most convenient to them. That would mean that fewer people would drive through the areas that are less convenient to those of us who represent London constituencies. I acknowledge the work of my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes in keeping unnecessary traffic out of London. I only wish that more London papers could recognise that that is my policy as well, rather than continually repeating the misguided—sometimes the deliberately misguided—reports from others.

The Government believe in the importance of the role of regional airports in meeting demand. Consistent policy has been to encourage the use and development of the regional airports to meet as much as they can of the demand that arises locally. That encouragement has tangible form. Since 1981-82, the Government have approved capital allocations totalling more than £240 million towards the development and expansion of local authority airports. I am delighted to report that traffic at many regional airports is growing healthily. For example, Manchester airport handled 9·5 million passengers in 1988, which is an increase of 87 per cent. in the past five years. The Government have approved investment for a second major passenger terminal there.

It would be a mistake to suppose that expansion at Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow or Northern Ireland would make possible a radical shift in the pattern of demand for air services. It is a fact that about three out of four passengers at London airports start or finish their journeys in the south-east. In time we shall see more of a regional balance, as people begin to realise the attractions of living and working in the north-east, the north-west, the south-west, Wales and Scotland.

Under this Government, we have seen greater recognition of regional opportunities, rather than relying on a few civil servants sitting in a London office block and trying to direct others away from London. We have been trying to build up the proper attractions of other regions in terms of community, education and quality of life because that will lead to a greater movement away from London and the south-east, and will remove some of the terrible development pressures which have been suffered on the outskirts of London.

I therefore welcome this opportunity to stress the importance of this topical subject of air traffic control and capacity. My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North referred to the dispute in France. We should acknowledge what some of our disputes have done to other people. Let us imagine, for example, a person who is trying to tour England, but who finds that some mode of transport cannot be used. I hope that, both in this country and in Europe, we can work towards recognising our responsibilities towards others and that we should not—whether we are French or English, British or European in a more general sense—wantonly destroy the holiday of a lifetime for people who may have been saving up for their first chance to visit the "Costa Lot".

Naturally, I hope that many people will follow my habit of taking my main summer holiday in the United Kingdom, whether it be to the loughs of Northern Ireland, the lakes of Wales, the lochs of Scotland or the coast of the Isle of Wight. I am sure that many people want to appreciate what we have in Britain. However, those who want to go the "Costa Lot" should have the chance of flying without unnecessary delay.

I pay tribute to many people involved in the travel business, not only to the operators, but also to the agents who have made it possible for many more people from this nation to see places abroad, whether they are in the rest of Europe, across the Atlantic or in other parts of the world.

We should remember that the difficulties that we are now facing, leaving aside the additional issue of disputes, are the result of successes in both the industry and the economy. Those successes have led to levels of activity and volumes of traffic which no one could have predicted. The challenge now is to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the system to accommodate the traffic and to realise the fruit that it can yield.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North referred to the CAA's advice. The 1985 White Paper set out strategy to take us through to the mid-1990s. There is now a need to carry forward White Paper strategy. Last summer, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State commissioned the CAA to provide advice covering both airport and airspace capacity. The authority has consulted widely, and today has published advice on the traffic distribution policy for the London airports. This is an important piece of work, and we shall now study it carefully. In doing so, we will also be keeping in mind views expressed on the subject by the Select Committee on Transport in its report published in March, and the report published last week by the independent committee chaired by Lord Rawlinson.

The CAA now proposes to do further technical work to provide us next summer with advice on airport capacity in the longer term, including on the key question of runway capacity. It would be wrong to anticipate the authority's advice on those longer term issues tonight.

One reason for tonight's Adjournment debate is to put more of these issues on the public agenda, rather than to go in for quick snap answers and responses to the CAA's initial views and to the later views, yet to come forward.

I turn now to the major causes of aircraft delays. We must remember that aircrafts do not have feelings, except for that jumbo jet that we keep reading about. It is people —passengers—who have feelings and who are affected by aircraft delays. The major cause of delays to aircraft is airspace congestion, which affects all airports in the United Kingdom, and is not confined to airports in the south-east.

There is a shortage of airspace capacity throughout Europe. It is not a problem confined to the popular holiday destinations like Greece and Spain. Countries like the Federal Republic of Germany, France and the United Kingdom all face a serious shortfall in capacity.

At busy times, flow management restrictions have to be introduced. Aircraft are either re-routed round the congested bottlenecks, or are held on the ground until the system can accommodate them. Without flow management, the system would become overloaded at busy times with too many aircraft entering the airspace for the controllers to handle safely.

Even if everything was working smoothly, flow management is needed nowadays at busy times to keep the system safe. As has been said, it is worth remembering that the take-off slot times which the aircraft would be given would not usually delay them for very long—say, for 15 to 20 minutes.

One reason why my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes has lent his presence to the debate —he has been heard giving his support to the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North—is the issue of night flights. Our policy on this is clear. The Government are committed to improving the night noise climate around Gatwick and Heathrow without imposing unnecessary restrictions on the airline industry. Those two points together are the points that matter most.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** Why can we not move to the total closure of airports in this country, as they do on the continent?

**Mr. Bottomley:** I am not an expert on continental airports. I am aware that aeroplanes are at times delayed. One occasionally hears even of Concorde coming across a little late. There are times when one hears a plane in the middle of the night, but that is rare in London and it normally occurs because there has been a delay elsewhere or because of some other problem. To take an absolutist view may not be possible, but if my noble Friend the Minister for Aviation and Shipping has points to add to my response, I will pass them on to my hon. Friend.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North said that London Heathrow, if not the closest in, affected the population most. A larger population here may be affected, but I remember coming in to land at Kai Tak airport in Hong Kong. At least, when coming into Heathrow, one does not find oneself flying beneath buildings, with people looking down from their bathroom windows as one's jumbo jet comes into land.

**Mr. David Lightbown (Lords Commissioner to the Treasury):** The same applies to Detroit.

**Mr. Bottomley:** My hon. Friend is right to remind me of Detroit. There may be other city airports where the same state of affairs exists.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North was making the point that there was potential in London for a large number of people to be disturbed. As my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes reminded us, all the planes seem to change gear as they pass over his constituency.

Traffic forecasting is not an exact science. It is difficult to do. We are learning all the time and we hope to move forward so that, at London airports and throughout the country, we can meet people's needs. In all forms of transport, we are dedicated to do the best we can to make life better, not worse, and to extend opportunity, while maintaining, if possible improving, the environmental impact which is part of the airline industry.

To that extent, we are getting better and quieter planes and a safer air traffic control system. All those involved, whether in the Government, in the CAA or in the lobby groups, have much of which to be proud. I hope that we shall continue to make further improvements.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at nineteen minutes to Eleven o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Wednesday 19 July 1989*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

# Oral Answers to Questions

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Manufacturing Output

1. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the current level of United Kingdom manufacturing output; what it was on the same date in 1979 and 1981; and if he will make a statement.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Robert Atkins):** In the three months to May 1989, the output of the manufacturing industry averaged 118, based on 1985 equal to 100. The comparable figures for the same three months in 1979 and 1981 were 108 and 89·6 respectively. Manufacturing output during 1989 has been at record levels, and in the three months to May was 9 per cent. and 32 per cent. higher than in the same periods in 1979 and 1981 respectively.

**Mr. Kennedy:** The Minister's civil servants, although not the Minister, are to be congratulated on their ingenuity in trying to make a good story out of a disastrous one. Those figures confirm that following the deep recessionary policies of the Government between 1979 and 1981, our manufacturing base has still not recovered to the level that it was when the Government came to office 10 years ago. Is that not a savage indictment of the Government's economic policies and of the damage that those policies have caused to our manufacturing base?

**Mr. Atkins:** The hon. Gentleman has asked this question in almost the same terms before, and he received a robust answer from my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade. The hon. Gentleman may recall, although he was not here at the time, that we experienced a substantial recession, which also affected the rest of the world, since when manufacturing output has increased to a level that it has never reached before. It is a very good story.

**Mr. Kennedy:** It has been 10 years.

**Mr. Atkins:** The hon. Gentleman should be aware that there has been a recession. Growth is now 5 per cent. higher than the previous all-time peak growth in manufacturing output. The hon. Gentleman should remember that if he asks a question once and gets the right answer, it is not worth asking it again.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** Although there is some good news in my hon. Friend's answer, does he accept that the news could be even better if industries such as textiles and clothing were faced with fair competition rather than diabolically unfair competition? There has been considerable investment in those two industries in particular, and they have excellent management and have sought to market their goods internationally, yet they are being undermined by unfair competition. Does my hon. Friend agree that if the Government came into the real world and examined the position of manufacturing industry, the picture could be even better than the one that he has presented to the House this afternoon?

**Mr. Atkins:** My hon. Friend always speaks vehemently and articulately for the industries in his constituency. As he knows, my hon. Friend the Minister of Trade, who cannot be here today, fights long and hard for the interests of the textile industry in Europe. My hon. Friend makes a fair point, although it is worth drawing to his attention the fact that since the peak of 1979, there has been an 11 per cent. increase in production in textile consumer products. That shows how successful at least part of the textile industry has been.

### Monopolies and Mergers Commission

3. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether there have been any changes in the role of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in recent years.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. Francis Maude):** The principal role of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission has not changed, but its role has been extended over recent years by certain provisions in the Telecommunications Act 1984, the Airports Act 1986, the Gas Act 1986 and the Water Act 1989.

**Mr. Riddick:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the primary function of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission should be to identify and prevent possible monopolies from being created and to stop price fixing in industry? Does he think that the MMC has been extending its functions in recent years by proposing how industry and markets should be structured and run? Is my hon. Friend aware that as a direct result of an MMC diktat on how the gas industry should be run, the textile industry in my constituency will face a massive increase in its gas bills? Does my hon. Friend think that the fact that my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State had to alter significantly the MMC proposals on the brewing industry illustrates that he believes that the MMC has overstepped the mark?

**Mr. Maude:** No, Sir. I do not agree with my hon. Friend. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission carries out functions given to it by Parliament. It investigates matters that are referred to it either by the Director General of Fair Trading or by my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State. It makes findings and recommendations. It is within the commission's powers to make the recommendations that it has made. We have implemented those that we think it proper to implement, in the way in which we think it proper to implement them.

Where the MMC finds monopolies, as in the case of the breweries and British Gas, it is entirely within its powers to recommend action to rectify the public interest detriment. That is what the MMC did and we responded to it.

**Ms. Short:** Does the Minister agree that we need a complete review of our monopolies and mergers legislation? In Britain, it is possible to have short-term raiding to break up companies and extract money and to detract from long-term investment in the productivity of our economy. That contrasts with what happens in West Germany and Japan, and it means that our industrial future is being destroyed in the interests of short-term takeovers. We need a new framework of law to encourage long-term investment.

**Mr. Maude:** The hon. Lady is wrong if she believes that Government action prevents such things from happening elsewhere——

**Ms. Short:** It is the framework of law.

**Mr. Maude:** It is not. The hon. Lady is wrong if she thinks that it is the framework of law. We are talking about the way in which markets operate and how companies are structured elsewhere. The hon. Lady is talking about interfering with the right of individuals and companies to sell their shares to a willing buyer. One should not do that unless it is in the public interest. I seem to remember that not all that long ago Opposition Members were complaining about the growth of conglomerates; now they seem to be complaining about conglomerates being broken up.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** Does not the increase of between 8p and 10p in the price of beer announced by the brewers yesterday illustrate the importance of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigating the brewing industry and of the action that the Government proposed in their statement last week?

**Mr. Maude:** It was right for us to respond to the report in the tough way that we did and to take the steps that we proposed, which will allow 11,000 more public houses to buy their beer at the cheapest price and from whoever they want. I urge pub customers to look round and find the best price for the beer that they want to buy. Not every brewery has increased its prices, by any means. There is a market and I hope that people will look for the cheapest beer that they can find.

**Mr. Clelland:** Will the Minister advise the Monopolies and Mergers Commission that it would save Government time, and save it much effort in making its recommendations if it took into account company donations to the Tory party?

**Mr. Maude:** The MMC might also want to take into account letters such as that written by Norman Willis, the general secretary of the TUC, to my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State, in which he urged that all the recommendations of the MMC should be completely ignored. No doubt that was motivated by his well-known concern for Conservative party funds.

**Mr. Andrew MacKay:** Does my hon. Friend share the widespread concern about highly leveraged bids? If so, would it not be desirable for the Hoylake bid for BAT to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, especially bearing in mind what the MMC said about the Elders IXL bid last year, which was similarly highly leveraged?

**Mr. Maude:** The House will not expect me to express a view about that case. The Director General of Fair Trading is considering what advice he should give to the Government on whether the bid should be referred to the MMC and while we are waiting for that advice, it would be quite wrong for us to comment.

**Mr. Gould:** In the light of today's news on beer prices, might not the Monopolies and Mergers Commission be forgiven for concluding that its major role today is to provoke powerful monopolists to raise their prices so that the public has to pay the costs of successfully campaigning against the MMC's recommendations? Will the Minister at least reassure the MMC that it does have a continuing role? Will he think of saying something like, "I am minded to implement any recommendations that the commission makes in future if my party's paymasters will let me"?

**Mr. Maude:** The hon. Gentleman should have a word with his party's paymasters who have been lobbying extremely vigorously for us to ignore every one of the MMC recommendations. The TUC, and the Transport and General Workers Union, have been lobbying heavily. When the MMC finds that there is a monopoly operating against the public interest we must take action, and that is what we have done. Even if we had done everything that the MMC recommended that could not have affected what the breweries decided to do in the meantime.

### Enterprise Initiative

4. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the total cost of the advertising campaign for the enterprise initiative; and what has been the average cost per take-up.

**The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Anthony Newton):** Expenditure on advertising the enterprise initiative since January 1988 has been about £19 million. Of this, we estimate that some £14·4 million has been specifically directed at promoting the six consultancy initiatives, which would represent an average of about £485 per application.

**Mr. Wilson:** Will this obsessive reliance on television advertising, which is aimed far more at the electorate than at meeting any legitimate departmental purpose, survive the reign of its architect, Lord Young?

**Mr. Newton:** Our surveys show that the advertising is reaching about 70 per cent. of the target market and that it is producing an encouraging response from business people. Inquiries about Department of Trade and Industry services have risen by about 20 per cent. this year. I am strongly in favour of having better services that are better known and more widely used to make British industry stronger.

**Mr. Dickens:** Is it not a fact that this country's success was founded upon enterprise and initiative? I believe that £19 million is a small price to pay to encourage this country once again and to encourage young people leaving school, colleges and universities to think about running their own businesses. Such initiative and invention will make this country great again.

**Mr. Newton:** My hon. Friend makes an excellent point. The advertising is directed not only at the consultancy initiatives, but at the promotion of the education and enterprise initiative, which this year has contributed to

65,000 extra work experience places for pupils and to the recruitment of about 5,000 teacher secondments to industry.

## Chlorofluorocarbons (Fridges)

5. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement about the reclamation of chlorofluorocarbons from redundant refrigerators and freezers.

**Mr. Atkins:** The recovery and recycling of CFCs used as refrigerants in industrial and commercial refrigerators and freezers is well established and my Department is currently engaged in research into ways of retrieving CFCs from domestic appliances.

**Mr. Bennett:** I thank the Minister for that reply. Does he accept that the substantial problem relates to commercial freezers and refrigerators and that the problem is smaller for household freezers? The responsible firms that provide large fridges and freezers have been reprocessing for some time, but many small, badly behaved firms have not operated in a similar manner. Something must be done to bring them into line. Some local authorities have started to collect domestic freezers, but as yet they have no way in which to reprocess the refrigerators once they have been collected.

**Mr. Atkins:** I differ slightly from the hon. Gentleman in that commercial and industrial refrigerators are being retrieved in great numbers, although I accept that there is always room for improvement. The hon. Gentleman no doubt appreciates that the difficulty is that domestic refrigerators use smaller quantities of CFCs and, given that there are about 30 million users of them in the country, a much more sophisticated approach to collection and recycling is required. That is why I said that we are working extremely hard on this matter with the Department of the Environment, as is the refrigeration industry, which has given a great deal of thought and attention to it.

**Mr. Thurnham:** My hon. Friend will remember that I brought a delegation from the refrigeration industry to see him. What has happened since then? Will he use his best endeavours to persuade all Government Departments to change their specifications to ozone-friendly refrigerants and to follow the Prime Minister's advice? Private sector firms such as Sainsbury have set a good example, but health authorities are still specifying R12.

**Mr. Atkins:** My hon. Friend speaks with considerable authority because he knows the industry well. As he said, he brought a delegation to me from the refrigeration industry board and the Institute of Refrigeration to talk about those matters. My hon. Friend makes a fair point. I am in constant touch with other Departments with a view to encouraging them to do much the same as we are doing.

**Ms. Quin:** Are the Government considering the introduction of a nationwide CFC recovery scheme such as that which has been announced in West Germany? Does the Minister accept that it is simply not good enough to leave the matter to individual manufacturers who may be unwilling to take on the extra costs for competitive reasons, making a Government strategy and Government measures necessary?

**Mr. Atkins:** The hon. Lady should have realised from my answer that the Government are taking a lead in that respect. However, collection is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. I am keen to encourage any local authority initiative in the collection of refrigerants. As I said, the industry is taking many measures to try to improve the position.

**Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** Should not the Government be praised for having raised public perception of this important matter? Will my hon. Friend congratulate Gedling borough council on the specific initiatives that it has taken, on its own or with other local authorities, to organise the collection and reclamation of old domestic refrigerators and other domestic and commercial freezer units?

**Mr. Atkins:** The answer to both questions is yes, Sir.

## Motor Industry

6. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the measures he is taking to assist the British motor car industry.

**Mr. Newton:** The Government's policies are designed to improve the competitiveness of business as a whole. The improved output and exports of the British motor industry are a clear sign of their success.

**Mr. Smith:** Does the Chancellor recall that at the time of the acquisition of Rover Group by British Aerospace, the EEC Commission was concerned to restrict overall car production capacity within the EEC? What discussions have there been with the EEC since then, and with what result? Can the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that Honda's output from Swindon will have access to all EEC markets and that it will be in addition to, not in substitution for, production at Cowley?

**Mr. Newton:** The hon. Gentleman knows that the issues at Cowley are separate from the announcement that was made last week about Honda development at Swindon. Our experience with the Commission on Nissan car exports to Europe is a sign of what we can expect on Honda or, for that matter, Toyota exports. The EEC car market has undoubtedly proved rather more buoyant than was expected at the time to which the hon. Gentleman refers, not least in Britain. The EC's current regime seeks not to restrict capacity but to prevent the payment of state aids except on a level playing field basis. The hon. Gentleman will know that in the case of Toyota and Honda no Government aid is being paid.

**Mr. Beaumomt-Dark:** Does my right hon. Friend accept that most hon. Members welcome the Government's measures, particularly in relation to Honda? Has he noticed that only 10 days ago the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) was urging the Government to restrict the relentless use of cars? Better the sinner who repenteth, perhaps, but the hon. Gentleman repenteth because he thinks that it will help him with votes.

**Mr. Newton:** I had not noticed the earlier remarks of the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith), but I am sure that he will reflect on what my hon. Friend has said.

**Mr. Cryer:** The Minister will recall that when the statement was made about the Honda plant being installed it was said that his Department would help British component manufacturers to obtain a share of the component capacity in that factory. What means will he use to do that to help Hepworth and Grandage in Bradford, the foremost piston and gudgeon pin manufacturer in Britain, to obtain some of that capacity? If Honda manufactures its own engines it will erode the opportunities for British component manufacturers.

**Mr. Newton:** The most helpful thing that we can do is to continue what we have been doing—creating a climate that assists the development of efficient and competitive enterprise and the opportunities for it.

**Mr. Oppenheim:** When we take into account the misguided Government-sponsored mergers of the 1960s, the huge subsidies and trade protection in the form of a pernicious gentlemen's agreement which limited the choice of cars for consumers, has not the British car industry already had far too much help from Government? The best help that the Government can give is not to cosset or guide it, but to tell it to go out and make products that the public want to buy.

**Mr. Newton:** We have created such a climate and that is why many people are coming here to make cars, thus strengthening our economy.

### Financial Services (Regulation)

7. **Mr. Geoffrey Robinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the regulation of financial services.

**Mr. Maude:** I receive many representations on a variety of topics relating to the regulation of financial services. We carefully consider those which relate to the scope of the framework of the regulatory system, or the powers under the Financial Services Act 1986 which the Government retain. Those which relate to matters that are the responsibility of the Securities and Investments Board or of another regulatory authority are passed to the appropriate body.

**Mr. Robinson:** Does the Minister agree that there is enormous disquiet in the country, in the House and in the City in particular about the County NatWest-Blue Arrow-Manpower affair? Does he agree that when the public pays for a report it is entitled to see it? Is he aware that the reluctance of his Department to publish reports gives the impression that it is trying to operate a secret society instead of a major Department of State? Will he give an unequivocal undertaking to the House to publish the inspectors' report on the County NatWest-Blue Arrow-Manpower affair so that we may raise it, as appropriate, in the House before the recess?

**Mr. Maude:** We shall certainly publish the report as soon as we possibly can.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** Is my hon. Friend monitoring the extent to which the Financial Services Act, which was designed to protect the consumer, is in fact resulting in the rapid disappearance of independent financial advisers and intermediaries who are rapidly being sucked into being paid agents of given products? Will this not leave the public bereft of the protection of independent advice under the guise of protecting their interests?

**Mr. Maude:** I hope that it will not have that effect. I regard the existence of independent financial advisers who can give unbiased advice about which financial products customers should purchase as quite important. At the same time, it is important that people who hold themselves up as being competent to provide such advice should in fact be competent to do so. The operation of the Financial Services Act in the past 15 months has led to the withdrawal of some applicants to join FIMBRA, the regulatory body for intermediaries. Many of those were withdrawn because the applicants had stated on the application form things that were untrue. It is desirable that people who indulge in such behaviour should be prevented from offering their services to the public.

**Mr. John Garrett:** Will the Minister enlarge somewhat on his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-West (Mr. Robinson)? Will he confirm that the Secretary of State has received the inspector's report on the Blue Arrow Manpower takeover involving County NatWest and some other leading institutions? Does he propose to publish it before the recess, or does he propose to stifle discussion on the matter?

**Mr. Maude:** It is difficult to discuss the matter until it is published. I can confirm, as I think the hon. Gentleman already knows, that we have received the report and that we shall publish it as soon as it is proper to do so.

**Mr. Beith:** Is the Minister able to give an assurance that, under the terms of the Companies Bill, clients of insurance brokers will be as fully protected as all other clients of financial advisers?

**Mr. Maude:** I am not sure what the hon. Gentleman is getting at. There is no reason to suppose that what he suggests should not be the case.

**Mr. McCrindle:** My hon. Friend has mentioned the comparative success of the Financial Services Act 1986. Notwithstanding its many critics, does he agree that it is surprising that the one financial transaction that is undertaken by most of us at one time or another, which is perhaps the most important in a lifetime—obtaining a mortgage—is outside the ambit of the Financial Services Act 1986? Why does the Minister not give some consideration to future legislative change to embrace that within its sphere?

**Mr. Maude:** The lending of money is governed by the Consumer Credit Act 1974. The Financial Services Act 1986 was framed to regulate the provision of investment services and is designed to require all those who conduct investment business to be authorised. The borrowing of money on a mortgage is not an investment. Buying a house may be an investment, but borrowing the money is not. They are two different regimes, and it is proper that they should be. I see no reason to change that.

### Trade Statistics

8. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster with which Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries the United Kingdom is running a trade surplus.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Eric Forth):** In the 12 months to May 1989, United Kingdom visible trade was in surplus with Australia, Spain, Ireland, Greece and Canada.

**Mr. McAvoy:** I thank the Minister for that answer. He listed five countries with which the United Kingdom has a trade surplus. Will he confirm that we are in deficit with the 19 other countries of the OECD?

**Mr. Forth:** I can confirm that the hon. Gentleman's arithmetic is correct.

**Mr. Marlow:** One of the slight problems that the Government have is the balance of payments deficit. As my hon. Friend knows, one of the bases for that problem is the predeliction of the British consumer sometimes to buy foreign goods when British goods are equally good, if not better. Although my hon. Friend himself may not wish to use them, will he tell the House what powers he and the Government have to encourage people to buy British goods?

**Mr. Forth:** My hon. Friend is well aware—if anything, he knows it better than I do—that as a member of the European Community we are not able explicitly to encourage the purchase of British goods in the public sector. What private companies or concerns do to encourage customers to buy their products is entirely up to them. The Department and the Government generally have always emphasised that when a company makes a product of good quality at the right price, there is no reason why the public should not flock to buy it. One of the things that the Department has tried to do in various ways, and with many policies, has been to give as much support as possible to industry to make good products so as to encourage people to buy British.

### Civil Research and Development

9. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to seek to increase the level of civil research and development spending by British industry.

**Mr. Forth:** The Government have created a favourable economic climate, which encourages companies to invest in research and development themselves. Industry increased its own funding of research and development by about 30 per cent. in real terms between 1983 and 1987.

**Mr. Michie:** Even taking that into account, at present British industry is enjoying record profits, mainly off the backs of the workers in industry and those who lost their jobs. Directors are giving themselves massive wage increases. Instead of putting money into research and development, they are putting it into their own pockets. That is quite different from what is happening with our major competitors abroad. They are putting a percentage of their output into R and D, which we are not and we are stagnating.

**Mr. Forth:** The hon. Gentleman is wrong for two reasons. Largely because of the volume of noise—probably of approval for what I said—coming from Opposition Members, the hon. Gentleman did not hear me when I said that industry had increased its own funding of research and development by about 30 per cent.——

**Ms. Clare Short:** We do not believe the Government's statistics.

**Mr. Forth:** —in real terms between 1983 and 1987.

**Mr. Holt:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I distinctly heard the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) call the Minister a liar.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman is perfectly correct to draw that to my attention. I did not hear it. I hope that the hon. Lady did not say that, but if she did I am sure that she would be prepared to withdraw the remark.

**Ms. Short:** I said that we do not believe the Government's statistics. They lie to us all the time about statistics. That is my view and I think that that is allowed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Can the hon. Lady help us to get on and confirm that she did not accuse the Minister of being a liar? That is all that I ask her to do.

**Ms. Short:** I have just made it clear that I said that it was impossible to believe the Government's statistics because they lie to us all the time. I did not accuse the Minister of lying to us—I was referring to the barrage of statistics that we are given.

**Mr. Speaker:** Perhaps we can accept that and get on.

**Mr. Forth:** On the hon. Gentleman's other point, he claimed that we are behind other countries in civil research and development. We are ahead of some, at about the same level as some, and behind others. There is nothing wrong with that. It is hardly reasonable to expect us to be ahead of everybody.

**Mr. Oppenheim:** Does my hon. Friend agree that all this concentration on research and development can be misleading, bearing in mind that in the world's most successful economy—in Japan—private industry and the Japanese Government spend relatively little on R and D, preferring to concentrate their resources on buying in licences from others, improving their technology and concentrating resources on manufacturing production and marketing?

**Mr. Forth:** Yes, my hon. Friend is correct. Interestingly, Japan is one country in the league table suggested by the hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley (Mr. Michie) which invests less than we do. We must try to maximise the effectiveness of the research and development spend in this country. The Department of Trade and Industry has many programmes to encourage collaborative research between higher education and industry, between different companies and within the European Community framework. That is the way to proceed and it will be much more useful to consider the effectiveness of our research and development spend in those terms than to look at the overall figure.

**Dr. Bray:** I think that the Minister should check his figures. Since the German and Japanese industries spend 50 per cent. more of their own money on research and development as a proportion of their domestic product than British industry does, and since after 10 years of this Government British industry is plainly not increasing its research and development fast enough even to narrow, let alone close, the gap, with Germany and Japan, does the Minister agree that it is necessary for the Government to increase their support and incentives for research and development rather than reduce them, as they have, from the peak level by 20 per cent. in real terms?

**Mr. Forth:** It would be particularly futile and not a good way to spend any of our time for me to bandy figures with the hon. Member for Motherwell, South (Dr. Bray). If he would care to write to me, I am perfectly prepared to indicate—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. These interruptions take up a lot of time and hon. Members want to ask questions.

**Mr. Forth:** If the hon. Gentleman would care to write to me I am perfectly prepared.

**Hon. Members:** This is question time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Minister should be able to complete his answer. If he intends to write a letter, perhaps we can progress more quickly.

**Mr. Forth:** If the hon. Gentleman would like to do as I have just suggested, I shall be prepared to give him the correct figures, which I am sure he would find reassuring. We believe and continue to believe that by having a low tax regime and an environment in which companies can be profitable, we leave the decision of how to invest in their hands, rather than confiscating money from companies through taxation and imposing our decisions on them about how they should invest. That surely makes sense in a vigorous, capitalist economy.

### India

10. **Sir George Young:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he is satisfied with the volume of British exports to India; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins:** British exports to India have risen steadily over recent years reaching a record £1·1 billion in 1988. My Department is actively promoting trade with India and we expect to see further increases, including earnings from inward investment and joint venture collaborations.

**Sir George Young:** Is my hon. Friend aware that while many British firms are successful in winning export orders in India, some, sadly, face difficulties in getting paid because of delays in the Indian courts. Is he aware that one firm in my constituency won its court case against nonpayment in 1981, but has not been paid because of delays in hearing the subsequent appeal? In view of the delays and the impact on general exporting to India, what help can my hon. Friend and the Department extend to British companies which find themselves in that position?

**Mr. Atkins:** I am fully aware of the case to which my hon. Friend refers. He will know—or perhaps I can inform him if he does not know—that my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade is pursuing the case strongly with India. We understand that at the moment there are still some difficulties, but we shall pursue the case that he has raised —it concerns a product which is perhaps unmentionable here—with full vigour and in due course, no doubt, there will be a satisfactory result.

### Inward Investment

11. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the levels of inward investment into the United Kingdom in 1988-89, the contribution of the Government by way of regional selective assistance and the number of jobs created.

**Mr. Newton:** According to the latest information available to the Invest in Britain Bureau, there were 277 inward investment decisions during the financial year 1988-89 which were expected to create 24,000 jobs. Many of these investments came without specific financial assistance, but during this period about 90 foreign-owned companies received offers of regional selective assistance, which is available only in Great Britain, worth around £140 million towards projects expected to create 18,000 jobs.

**Mr. Hind:** That is excellent news, and a great share of that investment is going to Lancashire, particularly Skelmersdale, with investment in Longulf from the Yemen and Garrett Air Research from the United States. Can my hon. Friend confirm that over the past five years, among EC partners, Britain has achieved one of the largest proportions of inward investment, which has created a large number of jobs? He will know that Ministers from his Department, from the Scottish Office and from the Welsh Office constantly tour the world advocating the British cause and attracting new investment and jobs.

**Mr. Newton:** I can confirm virtually everything that my hon. Friend has said. We estimate that over the past four years inward investment has created or safeguarded the better part of 200,000 jobs. A quarter of all United States and a third of all Japanese investment in the Community has come to the United Kingdom in recent years, and there have been some outstanding successes in my hon. Friend's part of the world. In addition to those that he mentioned, there is also Sanko Gosei, a leading Japanese manufacturer of moulds and plastics, which is to establish a £6 million plant employing 120 people at Skelmersdale.

**Ms. Armstrong:** Is the Minister content that regional assistance is now virtually exclusively through inward investment, certainly in the north-east? His decision last week and the incompetence shown by his Department in dealing with the European Community in the case of North-East Shipbuilders in Sunderland and the announcement last week about the closure of a factory in Newton Aycliffe mean that the 2·5 per cent. of firms in the north-east which are British based are being undermined even more. What does the Minister intend to do to ensure that he supports British investment in the regions?

**Mr. Newton:** Our purpose is to support the regeneration of the economic base of the north-east and other parts of the country. Nissan is achieving a great deal and providing additional opportunities for locally based industry, and Fujitsu is soon to arrive at Newton Aycliffe. The case for the success of what we are achieving makes itself.

**Mr. Holt:** I hope that my right hon. Friend will take no notice of the whingeing from the hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong). Is not the north-east now booming far better than it has done for many years, and is that not reflected not only in the voices of the chambers of commerce and industry, but even in those of trade union leaders in the north-east who are admitting that that is happening?

**Mr. Newton:** It is happening not only on Tyneside, but on Teesside, as my hon. Friend knows. I hope to have an opportunity later in the year to visit his part of the area.

**Mr. Caborn:** The Minister paints a glowing picture of the success story, but the figures for forward investment are rather different. Although that amounts to £7 billion, does not the export level of £15 billion in direct investment and £10 billion in investments in portfolios abroad show that there is a massive vote of no confidence?

**Mr. Newton:** No, I would not agree with a word of it. Historically, the United Kingdom has benefited from an open and liberal trading and capital movement system. It is clear that we are benefiting from that now.

## Exports

12. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the volume of Britain's *(a)* food and *(b)* automobile exports in each of the past eight years.

**Mr. Atkins:** Between 1981 and 1988 the volume of United Kingdom exports of food increased by 34 per cent. and that of passenger motor cars by 25 per cent. The full set of figures will be included in the *Official Report*.

**Mr. Gill:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the food manufacturing industry employs more than 500,000 people, produces 6·4 per cent. of manufacturing industry output, and continues to serve the British economy extremely well?

**Mr. Atkins:** My hon. Friend is right. Since 1975, the industry has doubled its exports in volume terms. It makes a major and welcome contribution to our export achievements.

**Mr. Allen:** Is the Minister aware that in these two sectors, as in others, there will be a tremendous impact come 1992? Has he read the EEC report which states that 2 million jobs will be lost due to the effect of 1992? Some sources say that 200,000 of those jobs are in the United Kingdom. If the Minister does not know the answer, will he write to me?

**Mr. Atkins:** I have not yet had the pleasure of reading the report to which the hon. Gentleman refers. When I do so, I shall certainly write to the hon. Gentleman, and I hope that he will be in when I do so.

**Mr. Roger King:** Does my hon. Friend agree that much of the work of improving the export performance of the British motor industry has been outstanding by companies which I know are dear to his heart? Leyland-DAF, through its van subsidiary, has dramatically expanded its export potential within the Community. As for the Rover Group, one third of its production goes overseas. Jaguar is well known for its exports both to the United States and to Europe. The news that Peugeot is to start exporting cars to Japan must be a clear sign that we are in the car business to stay.

**Mr. Atkins:** My hon. Friend never ceases to sing the praises of the motor industry, about which he speaks with such considerable authority—*[Interruption.]* Unlike many Opposition Members, my right hon. and hon. Friends know what they are talking about, usually from personal experience. My hon. Friend is rght to draw the attention of the House to the success story of the motor industry.

Following are the figures:

*Exports of food and passenger motor cars*

| | *Volume indices 1985 = 100* | *Overseas trade statistics basis* |
|---|---|---|
| | *Food*[1] | *Passenger motor cars*[2] |
| 1981 | 83·5 | 100·0 |
| 1982 | 82·9 | 94·2 |
| 1983 | 94·5 | 86·1 |
| 1984 | 96·5 | 82·9 |
| 1985 | 100·0 | 100·0 |
| 1986 | 109·5 | 93·8 |
| 1987 | 116·5 | 120·6 |
| 1988 | 112·1 | 125·3 |

*Sources:*

[1] MAFF

[2] DTI

## Financial Services (Regulation)

13. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the regulation of financial services.

**Mr. Maude:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave to his hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-West (Mr. Robinson) in response to question 7.

**Mr. Eadie:** Given the answer that the Minister gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-West when he expressed great doubts about the working of the regulations, will he accept that an error was made when the regulations for the City were not made statutory? Does he agree that there is an abundance of evidence that when Governments meddle with legislation and make regulations permissive rather than mandatory, they find themselves in trouble? The Government are running into trouble, and the Minister should make that confession to the House.

**Mr. Maude:** I do not think that the hon. Gentleman heard correctly the supplementary question put by the hon. Member for Coventry, North-West, which had nothing to do with the Financial Services Act 1986 but related to a different kind of investigation under a different piece of legislation. He did not express any views about the efficacy or otherwise of the Financial Services Act. I can reassure the hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) on the issue of whether financial service regulation should be statutory. His question can be answered satisfactorily—it is indeed statutory.

**Mr. Charles Wardle:** Has my hon. Friend had an opportunity to consider the EEC proposals for a single banking licence? Would not the creation within the Community of the largest unified market in the world for banking services present the City with considerable opportunities?

**Mr. Maude:** It undoubtedly would. We hope that the Community will move swiftly to complete the single market in life insurance and in investment services as well.

The banking directive, to which my hon. Friend refers, will make the Community a more open market for banking than the United States.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Is the Minister aware that despite the authorisation requirements of the Financial Services Act, a number of the big, rogue fish who were responsible for running companies—a number of which had to close—are now surfacing in other guises in various parts of the City? Why are they not being cleaned out of the City, especially as FIMBRA, the Securities Association and a number of self-regulatory bodies are cleaning out their employees, who were only taking instructions from those rogue fish?

**Mr. Maude:** Since the Financial Services Act came into force it has been illegal to carry on investment business without being authorised by the Securities and Investments Board or one of the regulatory bodies. It is impossible for any of those to whom the hon. Gentleman referred to operate a legal investment business without being authorised. Anyone with a record of misbehaviour can be prevented from operating. If the hon. Gentleman knows of anyone who is operating without authorisation, I should be grateful if he would supply me with details immediately.

**Mr. Nelson:** Does my hon. Friend agree that despite the overtures from the Opposition, the Government have struck the right balance between total free licence for the City and total state regulation? While the Government cannot anticipate future needs, I am sure that they will respond as necessary. Is it not true that experience both of companies legislation and of financial services legislation has already shown that the Government's middle-way approach of encouraging and supporting the self-regulatory process in the City has been a great success and should be continued?

**Mr. Maude:** My hon. Friend is right. It is essential that financial services legislation has full statutory backing, but it is equally essential that it should be flexible and responsive because the regulatory bodies need to be sufficiently fleet of foot to keep abreast of the changes in the market place.

**Mr. Gould:** May I ask the Minister a question that he has ducked twice already? Will he publish the County NatWest report before the end of the Session and in time for the House to question Ministers on it?

**Mr. Maude:** I am astonished that the hon. Gentleman can find it in himself to quibble with the reply that I have already given him. I said that we would publish the report as soon as it was proper to do so. It would be a remarkable proposition to suggest that we publish it before it is proper to do so.

**Mr. John Marshall:** The financial services sector takes a great interest in the Barlow Clowes affair. When does my hon. Friend expect to receive the ombudsman's report on that?

**Mr. Maude:** I cannot do that because I do not answer for the ombudsman. He must conduct his investigation in the way that he thinks proper. I am sure that he will want to complete his investigation as soon as possible.

## Rain Forest Trees (Bournemouth Beach)

14. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what consideration he is giving to the importation of 800 tropical rain forest trees for the protection of the beach at Bournemouth.

**Mr. Newton:** There are at present no controls on the import of tropical timber into the European Community. It is therefore for the judgment of the local authority concerned whether or not a purchase of such timber is appropriate.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Is the Minister aware that Bournemouth needs 50 new groynes, which requires three acres of rain forest trees? Is he further aware that Bournemouth has already consumed 2,000 acres or more, an area the size of Epping Forest? Is it not folly to destroy the ecosystem of rain forests and leave them to global warming, so that the sea defences deteriorate and more protection is needed for coastal defences? Should there not be a policy of using metal or concrete groynes rather than mahogany groynes?

**Mr. Newton:** I note the hon. Gentleman's suggestion and will ensure that it is considered by the relevant Ministers. The key issue is that we do everything possible to ensure the proper management of the rain forests. As the hon. Gentleman knows, my right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development has recently been discussing that matter with the Brazilian Government. We are also seeking to make progress in a number of ways through the International Tropical Timber Organisation. The hon. Gentleman and the House may rest assured that the British Government will continue to do all that they can to achieve that broad, essential objective.

**Mr. Knapman:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that we cannot mummify the forests but should manage them on a sustainable basis, which may occasionally necessitate felling mature trees?

**Mr. Newton:** That is another way of conveying the point that I tried to make. We are trying to focus on the proper management of the forests.

## Trade Statistics

15. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the countries within the European Community with which the United Kingdom is in a trade deficit.

**Mr. Forth:** In the 12 months to May, United Kingdom visible trade was in deficit with West Germany, Netherlands, Italy, France, Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg and Portugal.

**Mr. Allen:** What do the Government intend to do about that?

**Mr. Forth:** The Government have in place a number of policies to make industry even more aware of the opportunities presented by the single European market and the 1992 campaign. We are following up our spectacular success in increasing awareness with a number of policies aimed at persuading British industry—only British industry, and no one else, can affect our trade figures—of the potential offered by the single European market and the markets beyond, so that industry can gird its loins and sell British products throughout the

Community and beyond. We are confident that it will do so. In the three months to May, for example, exports to the Community grew strongly—by 8 per cent. over the previous three months—while imports fell by 1 per cent., so we are already on the right track.

**Mr. Curry:** Is not British private sector well ahead of the field in investing in manufacturing and service bases in the Community? Is not that the logic of the Community, and will not the profits made overseas be turned into dividends for the benefit of shareholders and workers in the United Kingdom?

**Mr. Forth:** Yes. My hon. Friend, who has unparalleled knowledge of such matters as a result of the service that he has given to the European Parliament over the past 10 years, is correct to point out that Britain has already made moves to take seriously the opportunities and challenges that the Community market presents. By investing throughout the continent, Britain is placing itself in a strong position to meet that challenge as we move towards the fulfilment of the single market.

**Mr. McAllion:** Is the Minister aware that Britain's deficit in visible trade with the rest of the EEC has increased fivefold since the Conservative Government came to power in 1979? Does he think that that increased deficit is a product of what he described earlier as a free and vigorous capitalist economy?

**Mr. Forth:** In a very real sense, any deficit is obviously a product of a free and liberal trading regime. It is always up to the wealth creators and those in trade and in business in any one economy to make the best of the trading opportunities available to them. I have attempted to describe how seriously we take those opportunities and what we are doing about them. I stress again that it is not the Government but business that can improve the trade position. We are confident that the business community will do so.

### Breweries (Tied Loans)

16. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the future availability of tied loans from breweries to clubs and voluntary associations.

**Mr. Maude:** As my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry announced in his statement on 10 July, we do not propose to prohibit new tied loan agreements. However, we intend to impose the requirement on national brewers that tied loans should be restricted to beer sales and must be capable of termination by the borrower without penalty on no more than three months' notice.

**Mr. Stern:** I thank my hon. Friend for reiterating the welcome announcement of our right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State in confirming that the traditional source of finance available to sports clubs and to other clubs and associations in all our constituencies will remain open.

**Mr. Maude:** We took the view that tied loans are a particularly useful source of finance for clubs. The only danger arises when clubs or pubs are unable to repay the loan without penalty, and we are taking steps to ensure that that cannot happen.

### Business in the Community

17. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met representatives of Business in the Community; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton:** I attended the Business in the Community president's committee on 7 March. In addition, I regularly meet representatives of BiC and its member companies in the course of carrying out my duties.

**Mr. Favell:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the success of the village, town or city in which a business or industry operates depends very much on the contribution that that business or industry is prepared to make to the management of schools, the training of unemployed people and the cleanliness and general quality of the environment?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes, I agree. That is one of the reasons why the Department's enterprise initiative, which is harnessing and encouraging all those elements, makes such an important contribution to the development of our towns and cities.

## Local Government Finance

3.30 pm

**The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the local authority grant settlement for 1990-91 for England.

As the House will know, next April sees the introduction of the new local government finance system. The community charge will replace domestic rates, there will be a uniform national business rate, and there will be a new grant system. Those reforms bring greater accountability to authorities' spending decisions. To give local authorities the maximum time to plan their budgets, I am today announcing the Government's proposals for aggregate external finance—that is, the amount of support that will be available to local authorities in England from Government grants and business rates. I am also announcing my assessment of total standard spending and the community charge for standard spending.

In the current year, 1989-90, English local authorities have budgeted for spending of about £30·3 billion. That is £1·2 billion more than the Government had provided for in the last RSG settlement. It is £1·9 billion more than the total of grant-related expenditure assessments, the Government's assessment of the amount which authorities needed to spend. Local authorities have budgeted to increase spending by 9 per cent. compared with 1988-89, which is more than the rate of inflation. Over the last four years local authority expenditure will have increased by 13 per cent. in real terms. This is excessive.

In assessing the amount of revenue spending that is appropriate for 1990-91—known as total standard spending—I have taken account of what can reasonably be afforded. I have also taken into account the amount that authorities are spending now, and the local authority associations' views about the pressures for increased spending next year. My right hon. Friend the Minister and I discussed that with them in the Consultative Council on Local Government Finance on 12 July. I have had regard to the continued scope for local authorities to make substantial savings through controlling their payroll costs, increased efficiency, competitive tendering and, in some cases, by eliminating wasteful and unnecessary activities. I understand that the value-for-money improvements now identified by the Audit Commission could be worth more than £900 million annually, and only £350 million of them have been achieved.

Under the new system, total standard spending is my assessment of the amount appropriate for authorities to spend in providing services. I propose that this total should be £32·8 billion. On a comparable basis, allowing for technical changes such as the ring-fencing of the housing revenue account and others, that is £1·2 billion more than authorities have budgeted to spend this year. It is a significant real increase on the amount that the Government assessed authorities needed to spend this year.

I propose that the aggregate amount of support that will be available from Government grants and business rates will be £22·9 billion. In addition, I intend to provide a further £200 million of support for two specific purposes, which I shall describe shortly. That makes a total for aggregate external finance of £23·1 billion in support of revenue spending—£1·8 billion more than in the current year, an increase of 8·5 per cent. I shall announce in the autumn how the £23·1 billion is to be divided between standard spending grant, the various specific grants, and the amount likely to be raised from business rates. This implies that if local authorities budget to spend in line with our assessment, just under £10 billion will fall to be raised from community charges. That corresponds to a community charge for standard spending of about £275, broadly the same as the existing average rate bill per adult; £275 is the level of charge which, apart from the safety net, each charging authority could set if spending is in line with the Government's standard spending assessment.

The actual charge in each area in the first year will, however, depend on the transitional arrangements, and the level at which local authorities choose to spend.

As the House will know, we have proposed that there should be a four-year transitional safety net in order to phase in the impact of the new system. The objective is that people living in areas which traditionally have had low rate bills will have a period in which to adjust to the greater demands on them. I believe it is right that those people should have some protection. But, as originally proposed, that protection had to be paid for by the gainers postponing receipt of virtually all their gains.

I have therefore looked again at the safety net arrangements in the light of responses to our earlier proposals, with a view to achieving a better balance between the interests of gainers and losers. It is wrong that areas which have suffered under the present unfair system of resource equalisation should have to wait a further year before seeing any relief. Equally, I think it fair that areas which stand ultimately to have higher average bills under the new system should be expected to make some adjustment from the first year.

I am therefore now proposing new arrangements. In those areas in which charge payers can expect to see their bills falling, nearly half of the gain will come through immediately. To allow this, I propose that losses of grant support equivalent to up to £25 per adult should be allowed to feed through in the first year. This will allow those who gain from the reform of the finance system to see between 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. of their gain come through to them in the first year, although the precise figure will not be known until the autumn. In this way we can begin to move more quickly towards the position we shall have once the new arrangements are fully in force. As in my earlier proposal, the maximum amount of gain deferred will be £75 per adult, but whereas before this applied to a significant number of authorities, it will now only apply to a handful of the largest gainers. In most cases the gain deferred will be significantly less.

I turn to my two proposals for extra protection for certain areas.

First, there are some authorities where, due to the historical accident of low rateable values, the adjustment to the full community charge is generally greater proportionately than in other areas. I therefore intend to provide extra protection of up to £25 per adult for charging authorities in England where the average domestic rateable value per hereditament is £130 or less and where the introduction of the new system results in a loss. This means that in these areas there will be no loss. Authorities with average domestic rateable values per hereditament between £130 and £150 will receive support on a tapering scale. This support will cost roughly £100 million. I will publish in the *Official Report* a list of authorities which may qualify under these criteria.

**Dr. John Cunningham** (Copeland): Today?

**Mr. Ridley:** Yes, today.

Secondly, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has today announced that the Government will be making available a transitional grant to inner-London boroughs and to the City which will be taking over education responsibilities from ILEA on 1 April. The cost of this extra grant will be £100 million in 1990-91. It will take some time for the boroughs to eliminate wasteful expenditure inherited from ILEA. This grant will provide transitional protection for their charge payers while the savings are realised. Both these proposals will require minor legislative changes, which we will seek to enact in the Local Government and Housing Bill.

Compared to the original proposals for the safety net, these revised arrangements will enable much quicker progress towards the full introduction of the new local government finance system. A large percentage of the gains will come through to gaining areas immediately. In inner London, where community charges threaten to be highest, the proposed specific grant will help authorities to keep down charges. There will be special protection for areas with low rateable values and the maximum extra that local councils in any losing authority need impose on their local chargepayers works out at only 50p per week per adult.

In response to a parliamentary question, I am placing in the Library today illustrative charges showing how a safety net on this basis would have operated in 1989-90 had the new system been in force now. These illustrative charges reflect authorities' own 1989-90 spending decisions and show what the community charge might have been in each area. I have also exemplified the effect of a system of capital value rates and local income tax. Copies of these tables are also available in the Vote Office.

I shall be discussing these proposals with the local authority associations in September. I will bring forward full proposals for the settlement in the autumn, including details of the methodology which we propose to use to distribute standard spending grant between authorities.

Under these proposals, if local authorities control their spending and improve their efficiency, the average community charge need not be higher than about £275, and could be lower. We recognise the particular problems that some authorities face through the change to the new system, and we are providing extra help targeted on these areas. But it will be for local authorities to set their budgets, and for community charge payers to judge whether the amount they are asked to pay is justified.

*Following is the list of areas potentially benefiting from extra protection:*

*Authorities where the average domestic rateable value per hereditament on 1 April 1989 was less than £150*

| | *Domestic rateable value per hereditament (£)* |
|---|---|
| Burnley | 103 |
| Pendle | 105 |
| Wear Valley | 113 |
| Hyndburn | 113 |
| Barrow in Furness | 115 |
| Teesdale | 116 |
| Calderdale | 116 |
| Easington | 117 |
| Kirklees | 119 |
| Barnsley | 120 |
| Copeland | 121 |
| Blackburn | 122 |
| Rossendale | 123 |
| Derwentside | 125 |
| Kingston upon Hull | 127 |
| Bradford | 128 |
| Torridge | 129 |
| Sedgefield | 129 |
| Allerdale | 130 |
| Eden | 131 |
| Bolsover | 132 |
| Wansbeck | 133 |
| Rotherham | 135 |
| Wakefield | 135 |
| Boothferry | 136 |
| Berwick-upon-Tweed | 136 |
| York | 136 |
| Gateshead | 136 |
| Sunderland | 137 |
| Ashfield | 138 |
| Sheffield | 138 |
| Carlisle | 140 |
| Doncaster | 140 |
| East Yorkshire | 141 |
| Craven | 142 |
| Rochdale | 142 |
| Hartlepool | 143 |
| South Tyneside | 143 |
| Scarborough | 144 |
| North Devon | 146 |
| Penwith | 147 |
| Tameside | 147 |
| Kerrier | 148 |
| Oldham | 148 |
| Leeds | 148 |
| Lincoln | 149 |
| Mansfield | 149 |

**Dr. Cunningham:** The most important aspect of the statement by the Secretary of State is what he has left out. He has made no decision about, for example, the implications of national business tax and he has kept the House and the business community in the dark about it —so much for his plea in Newcastle upon Tyne last week about having debates on the basis of the facts.

The Secretary of State has introduced a new terminology to describe what he is doing—a kind of Ridleyspeak—but everything that he has announced today can be undermined at a later date by his decisions on the needs assessment for every local authority in England. He has allowed himself the flexibility to adjust those assessments by very large amounts. For example, on one set of figures in front of the Secretary of State, Birmingham needs £627 million to provide a standard level of finance—that is, to the Government's standards—but another set of figures for the same city shows Birmingham needing £750 million to provide a standard level of provision. Such latitude exists for every local authority, deliberately to allow the Secretary of State to exercise the

*[Dr. Cunningham]*

kind of political control that he wishes—or, perhaps more accurately, his successor wishes—to exercise over local government finance.

Contrary to what the Secretary of State has said, is it not the case that today's statement announces a major cut in Government support for local services? On the new calculation basis, total standard spending this year is £31·6 billion. The Secretary of State used old figures and the old basis. With inflation at 8·5 per cent., that means that local government needs £34·1 billion for the coming financial year, just to maintain the existing real level of spending. However, the Secretary of State is providing only for £32·8 billion—a major shortfall of £1·3 billion, simply taking inflation into account, never mind wage increases and other increases. The Secretary of State misleads the House when he describes that as a significant real increase. It is a major shortfall in what is likely to be required. His statement today increases the total by only 3·8 per cent. in real terms, which is less than half the current rate of inflation.

The Secretary of State says that local government expenditure increases are excessive, yet teachers' pay and police salaries are under the control of Ministers, not local government. Are salaries and wages to be funded in local government on the basis of a 3·8 per cent. increase, with inflation at 8·5 per cent.? Will the Secretary of State tell the House what the Government's intentions are in that regard? After 10 years of these policies, central Government expenditure has risen by 23·8 per cent. while local government expenditure has risen on the same basis by just 19 per cent. If any expenditure increases are excessive on that basis, it is central Government's not local government's.

If expenditure goes up simply by the amount the Secretary of State is talking about, where does he recommend that local authorities should make cuts? Should it be in employment, in the quality of services, or in the extension of services? How does he expect local authorities to make up a shortfall of over £1 billion with inflation running at its present rate? I am sure that the Secretary of State understands the reality, but I ask him whether he does. Inflation alone will add almost £40 per annum to each individual poll tax bill and it will be the Government, not local councils, who are responsible. How can the statement bring greater accountability to local government decision taking when over 70 per cent. of all funding is in the control of the Secretary of State? It is not in the control of local authorities and their committees. As he controls that level of expenditure, the major accountability for what is happening rests with him and his Department.

Why has the Secretary of State given no information on the likely level of the national business tax? Is it because of the already extensive fear and concern among small business people about the implications of that and the revaluation? How does he expect small business people to plan ahead without some clear idea about the burden of this new tax on their businesses?

It is all very well for the Secretary of State to talk about average poll tax, but in the real world thousands of families face massive increases in what they are likely to pay. It was, after all, the Secretary of State who asked candidly why a duke should pay more than a dustman. He is planning major increases for the majority of households. If one considers my own constituency as an example, the real likely poll tax in Copeland in the next financial year will be about £350 per person. The Secretary of State says that he is expecting people to pay only an additional 50p a week. In a four-adult family, that is £100 a year and in a five-adult family, it is £125 a year. How does he think that people on low incomes will cope even with those minimum levels of increase in their taxes? The Secretary of State is not living in the real world, and he knows it.

The real explanation for the statement and its deliberate obfuscation is simple. The Secretary of State knows that his Back Benchers, the overwhelming majority of whom voted for the legislation in the first place, are now panicking at its likely impact in their constituencies. They are enmeshed in their own ramshackle safety net arrangements. On the one hand, there is not enough in the way of safety net protection—in the north-west in particular—and, on the other, some Conservative Members are complaining about the likely bills that their constituents will face to fund the safety netting in the first place. It would be far better for everyone—although perhaps too late to save the Secretary of State—if he took the legislation away altogether instead of announcing further tinkering with it.

**Sir Bernard Braine** (Castle Point): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to raise a point of order of some substance. We have before us a statement—[HON. MEMBERS: "We have not."] We have listened to a statement which touches upon every constituency in the land. The document from the Department of the Environment giving the illustrative charges has been available to a handful of hon. Members, but it is not available to the rest of us, and apologies have already been given in the Vote Office. It may be too late to do anything about it now, on this important occasion, but I should like to protest on behalf of hon. Members on both sides of the House. Perhaps a lesson can be learned from this experience. Each of us wants to know how our constituencies are affected by the statement and by the criticism made of it. Can we be taken into Minister's confidence?

**Mr. Speaker:** As far as I am aware, the document is available in the Vote Office—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] Order. I shall have the matter looked into.

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Should not the sitting be suspended so that every hon. Member may have access to the document? When I went to the Vote Office, I was told that some hon. Members had taken a number of copies away and handed them out on the Conservative Benches, although it seems that many Conservative Members do not have copies nevertheless. Will you, Sir, suspend the sitting so that we may all look at the document? Then we can reasonably debate this matter. The present state of affairs is most unreasonable.

**Mr. Tim Devlin** (Stockton, South): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. The statement of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) was not accurate. A number of Conservative Members went to the Vote Office to get copies. The Vote Office will not give hon. Members more than one copy each and it has—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. What is the hon. Gentleman's point of order?

**Mr. Devlin:** My point of order is that the Vote Office will hand out only one copy to each Member. A number of hon. Members are sharing, and no more copies are available.

**Mr. John Battle** (Leeds, West): When I asked the Vote Office for a copy of the document I was told that I was being given the last copy. There were no other copies available in the Vote Office and it seemed that there were not enough for every hon. Member to have a copy. It should also be placed on record that some of the figures to which the Secretary of State referred are in the Library but we cannot check the illustrative figures in the Library against the figures in the document.

**Mr Speaker:** Perhaps the Secretary of State can help us by explaining why copies are not available for all hon. Members.

**Mr. Ridley:** I apologise to the House. I thought that I had made arrangements for adequate copies of the document to be placed in the Vote Office. I now understand that the original supply was insufficient, and that reinforcements are coming hotfoot to the Vote Office. I apologise for the fact that there seems to have been a defect in the administrative arrangements.

**Mr. Merlyn Rees** (Morley and Leeds, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Given that arrangements have broken down on a most important issue that affects all the people of England and Wales, and given that we cannot discuss the matter properly, may I ask you to suspend the sitting for half an hour?

**Mr. Speaker:** Clearly the House is in difficulty about this. We have another statement to follow. I believe that is would be sensible to take that statement first and then return to this one when, I hope, copies of the document will be available.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I suggest we get on with the other statement.

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As we are taking, unusually, the second statement now, may we have copies of the statement made by the Secretary of State of the Environment distributed to hon. Members because, as usual, while the Secretary of State was speaking, copies of his statement, which were not available to hon. Members, were being distributed in the Press Gallery. I object to different treatment being given to members of the Press Gallery. We should have copies of the statement on the Floor of the House.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is not possible, but when we return to the matter I hope that the document that some Members have, but other Members do not have, will be available.

# Legal Profession

3.56 pm

**The Attorney-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew):** With the leave of the House, I shall now repeat a statement made today in another place by my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor, which is as follows.

When I published the Government's Green Papers on the legal profession, which were designed to remove any unnecessary restrictions in the provision of legal services, I undertook to make a statement to the House before the summer recess. I have received over 2,000 responses to the Green Paper, and held discussions with many of those directly involved. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped in that process. All the points which were put to me in writing or orally have been carefully considered. The Government are today publishing a White Paper containing their own proposals for legislation.

The Government propose to introduce legislation which will set out broad objectives designed to further the interests of the administration of justice, to increase access to justice and to extend the range of those possessing rights of audience before the courts. All those involved in granting rights of audience will be required by the statute to have regard to these objectives. An independent statutory advisory committee on education and conduct will give advice on the achievement of these objectives. Again there will be a statutory requirement for all those involved in granting rights of audience to have regard to this advice. The advisory committee will have a membership broadly as set out in the Green Paper, but, in order to emphasise its independence from the Government, it will have the power to appoint its own staff.

The Government propose that both the Bar and the Law Society should have a statutory entitlement to grant rights of audience to their members in all courts. All those called to the Bar should receive rights of audience in all courts. On qualification, solicitors will continue to receive rights of audience equivalent to those they now possess. Solicitors will, however, also be eligible to progress to rights of audience in some or all of the higher courts, if they have achieved the necessary standards of competence and conform to appropriate rules of conduct.

All rules relating to the competence and conduct of advocates will continue to be made by the professional bodies, but, building on the current arrangements for the Law Society's rules, all changes in such rules will in the future require the concurrence of the Lord Chancellor and each of the four heads of division, the Lord Chief Justice, the Master of the Rolls, the President of the Family Division and the Vice-Chancellor. All these will be required to have regard to the statutory objectives and the advisory committee's advice. Other professional bodies might subsequently be empowered by Order in Council, approved in draft by both Houses of Parliament, to grant rights of audience in particular classes of business in particular courts, provided their competence and conduct requirements satisfied the Lord Chancellor and the four heads of division.

Similar arrangements will apply for the future to any professional body which might want to have the right to

*[The Attorney-General]*

issue legal process or to take steps in proceedings on behalf of others. These rights are at present reserved by statute to solicitors.

The importance of ensuring that both a wide range of barristers generally and an adequate choice of specialist barristers are available to take cases in court requires that the Bar should continue to be able to make its own rules about partnerships and multidisciplinary practices. Considerable concern was expressed in the responses to the consultation that removing such rules might threaten the future viability of the Bar. The Government attach great importance to the continued existence of a vigorous independent Bar.

Solicitors, who are also frequently involved in litigation, ought to be treated on an equal basis to barristers. The Government therefore propose to remove the existing statutory restrictions which prevent solicitors from forming multidisciplinary partnerships, but to provide that the Law Society will henceforth be allowed to make its own rules about partnerships and multidisciplinary practices.

Except in so far as such rules are related to advocacy and the conduct of litigation and are approved as necessary in the interests of justice by the Lord Chancellor and the heads of division, they will be subject to review under the new restrictive trade practices legislation proposed in the Department of Trade and Industry White Paper "Opening Markets: New Policy On Restrictive Trade Practices". The links between the two sets of proposals, including an extended role for the Director General of Fair Trading, are set out in the two White Papers.

The Government propose also to remove the present statutory obstacles to multi-national practices and to ensure that lawyers from Scotland and Northern Ireland will have the same rights in England and Wales, and vice versa, as lawyers from other European jurisdictions will have under Community directives.

The Government propose to legislate, as the Green Paper suggested, to replace the provisions in the Building Societies Act 1986 with a power to allow the Lord Chancellor to recognise professional bodies as competent to authorise their members as authorised practitioners to undertake conveyancing for their borrowers. Conveyancing by such practitioners will be subject to the existing requirement that it is supervised by a solicitor or licensed conveyancer; and every such authorised practitioner will be required to offer its clients a personal interview with the solicitor or licensed conveyancer having conduct of the transaction. Throughout the transaction, that solicitor or licensed conveyancer will have a paramount duty towards the borrower.

There will be a detailed code of conduct laid down by statutory instrument by which authorised practitioners will have to abide. Moreover, authorised practitioners will be prohibited from providing conveyancing services to both seller and buyer in the same transaction, except in very limited circumstances and from providing estate agency services to the seller and conveyancing services to the buyer in the same transaction. Making the provision of one service conditional upon taking another, so-called "tying-in", in connection with house purchase will be prohibited. Authorised practitioners will be required to charge for their conveyancing services on a basis that is not less than the true cost of providing them.

The arrangements are designed to provide adequate protection for individual clients and also to ensure that all those who want to provide conveyancing services, whether small firms of solicitors or large financial institutions, can compete on fair terms.

Litigation will be permitted to be undertaken on the speculative basis now allowed in Scotland. It will also become possible in such cases for there to be a moderate percentage uplift on the ordinary taxed costs otherwise payable, within a maximum to be prescribed by statutory instrument. There should, however, be no introduction of any kind of contingency fee linked to a proportion of the damages received.

I have dealt with these issues in particular because they are those about which there has been most public comment. These proposals, and others, are presented in more detail in the White Paper. Taken together, these proposals, which are an integral part of the Government's wider programme of improving access to justice, represent an appropriate balance between the encouragement of competition and the maintenance of standards in the administration of justice and the provision of legal services. I believe that those proposals provide a satisfactory framework for the future.

**Mr. John Morris** (Aberavon): It would be churlish of me not to welcome some of the results of more mature consideration by the Lord Chancellor of his original proposals which bore the mark of excessive haste and of being dragooned by the Department of Trade and Industry.

My first criticism is about the failure of the Government to provide time in the House to debate the proposals. Let the Government never forget that it is this House that has the right to be heard before the granting of Supply. Will the Leader of the House provide time for such a debate in the overspill, and obviously before a Bill is published, since otherwise everyone will have been consulted except the House?

I welcome the distancing of the Lord Chancellor from being involved, even indirectly, in the licensing of advocates. The independence of the staff of the advisory committee is a step forward, but will the members of the committee still not be the nominees of a political Minister? I take it that the advisory committee will have a power only of recommendation.

In the interests of freedom of choice, I welcome the Lord Chancellor's retreat from the concept of multi-disciplinary practices to include barristers. Has he done that because of the recognition of the fears of thousands of solicitors that they would be at the mercy of the City mega-firms which would have barrister partners? Would that have meant less and not more choice for the consumer?

What does the White Paper mean when it says:

"With exceptions"—

important ones, I hope—

> "the new restrictive trade practices legislation may lead the Bar and the Law Society to implement a number of the changes canvassed in the Green Papers."

Will the Attorney-General please be specific: is this a back-door means of imposing parts of the Green Papers?

On conveyancing, if solicitors and licensed conveyancers are subject to discipline, which could mean striking off, will the supervision of other conveyancers be undertaken in a similar situation with the same degree of force and necessary discipline? The White Paper uses a pretty phrase when it says that the Government's aim

"is to make justice more available to all."

They disingenuously claim in the Green Paper that contingency fees would be one of the means of providing an additional avenue to the courts. The gravest indictment of both papers is the failure of the Government to grapple with the problems of legal aid. The system is crumbling, and is becoming less available to the many and, strangely, legal aid practitioners are paid less than the market rate.

Is the Attorney-General aware of any hon. Member who has not had the experience of constituents at his surgery with cases due to be heard at tribunals and no representation? Such cases involve mobility allowance, constant attendance allowance and unemployment and industrial benefit. Thousands of pounds are involved, and if the cases are successful they could change the whole quality of life of hundreds, if not thousands, of our constituents.

The Government have given fortunes to their supporters. If the Government's broad objective to provide access to justice means anything, why should legal aid, tribunals and law centres be ignored?

**The Attorney-General:** I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for his refusal to be churlish about the many things that he welcomed in the White Paper. He welcomed the insistence and emphasis upon the independence of the advisory committee. He asked whether the nominees would be the nominees of a political Minister. The advisory committee is independent. Its staff will be appointed by the committee in order to meet the anxieties expressed in the consultation lest the advisory committee should be the creature of the Lord Chancellor. The members will be nominated by the Lord Chancellor, but after very wide consultations and with the intention of securing a wide spread.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman welcomed the provisions relating to multidisciplinary partnerships between barristers and solicitors. Much anxiety was expressed about this during consultations. The fear was expressed that it would lead to the loss of independence of the Bar and to the erosion of the Bar. As the House has already heard, the Government attach great importance to the maintenance of a vigorous, independent Bar. Therefore the Government felt, having listened to the consultation, that it was right that they should leave it to the professional bodies concerned to decide whether there ought to be, or whether it is proper for there to be, multidisciplinary partnerships. I believe that the House will welcome this reliance on the professional bodies.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman mentioned restrictive trade practices legislation. Perhaps he and other hon. Members will wish to look at chapter 11 of the White Paper when they have more time than is at present available. The Bar's and the Law Society's current rules and codes will remain in force when the legislation proposed in the White Paper is implemented until either the professional bodies choose to amend them or to take some other step.

The remainder of both professions' regulatory frameworks will therefore be subject to the restrictive trade practices prohibition in the normal way. It will be up to the professional body concerned to amend those rules which restrict or distort competition, or to apply for exemptions in the transitional period which the legislation will contain.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman ended with a reference to legal aid. I think that it is right to remind the House that the Government have already brought forward proposals for legal aid. They are committed to an effective system of legal aid for those of poor or modest means. This matter was discussed extensively during debates last Session on what became the Legal Aid Act 1988 which set up the Legal Aid Board and a new statutory framework. These proposals deal with the separate question of the structure of the profession which will deliver legal services, including those services which are delivered on legal aid.

I welcome the right hon. and learned Gentleman's general welcome of the White Paper and the evidence it gives of heeding the results of the consultation.

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): Of course we want time to consider the proposals which appear in very small print, but I thank my right hon. and learned Friend and the Lord Chancellor for having had the further considerations which at first we were not promised, because the Green Papers were going to be a White Paper. I thank them for taking on board a number of representations.

Will my right hon. and learned Friend assure the House that the extension of the right of audience to solicitors, which is now made possible by the White Paper, will not eventually result in the fusion of the legal profession and the driving up of legal costs that we all want to avoid? Will he also assure the House that the removal of the near-monopoly on conveyancing by village solicitors will not further dry up the availability of legal services in rural areas, which is something all of us are concerned about?

Will my right hon. and learned Friend assure us that judges will not be enticed into the contentious situation where they have to decide whether solicitors should have the right of audience, in an atmosphere where the wrong kind of attitude will prevail with regard to our judicial leaders?

Finally, will my right hon. and learned Friend assure the House that contingency fees, as proposed in the White Paper, will not lead us rapidly down the slippery slope, where legal fees escalate through the roof as in the case in the United States of America, and where people cannot be sure that they will always get fair and high-quality justice?

**The Attorney-General:** I omitted to answer one of the questions of the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris). My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House has heard what has been said, which is all the answer that the right hon. and learned Gentleman can expect.

I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend for his general welcome for the proposals of the White Paper. He asked whether the proposals would lead to fusion. I can assure him that they will not. I said that the Government attach great importance to the continuance of a vigorous and independent Bar. The White Paper creates a structure so that rights of audience which are conferred by the professional bodies shall be subject to rules affecting training, competence and conduct, which will require the concurrence of the Lord Chancellor and the senior judiciary who are both required by statute to take heed of the advice given by the independent advisory committee. Therefore, if the proposals lead to the end which my hon.

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and learned Friend fears, it will be only as a result of the operation of the structure which I have described, and will defeat the Government's declared intention that we should continue to have a vigorous and independent Bar.

My hon. and learned Friend also asked about the network of solicitors. There is great value in the maintenance of that network throughout the country. The changes which have been made to the Green Paper proposals, with the special safeguards written into the provision of conveyancing services, should go a long way to meeting the genuine fears that the financial institutions would present unfair competition.

My hon. and learned Friend suggested that judges might be enticed into acting in a way which was other than conscientious. I do not believe that that was more than a rhetorical flourish on his part. There can be no danger of what he feared from contingency fees when we take account of the fact that all that is proposed is conditional fees of the kind which have applied for a long time in Scotland.

**Mr. Robert Maclennan** (Caithness and Sutherland): Does the Attorney-General accept that access to justice is not only the right of the citizen, but the Government have a duty to provide it? These measures do little to improve the scandalous position whereby between 10 million and 13 million people in this country are unable to enjoy rights of access because of the legal aid rules, and only those who are extremely poor or extremely wealthy are able to enjoy access to the courts.

Does he agree that the structural proposals will not reassure those who are concerned that the independent, expert specialist Bar will be available generally, on the cab rank principle, to those who may have need of those services in the future and who see the Government's move as a step towards the withering away of the Bar? Does the Attorney-General recognise that, although he introduced the Scottish role on contingency fees, it did not resolve the problem of access in Scotland and will not do so south of the border?

**The Attorney-General:** I dealt with the relevance of legal aid in answer to a question from the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris). It bears repeating that the Government are committed to an effective system of legal aid to those of poor or modest means, and that the Legal Aid Act 1988 represents the Government's response to the needs of the moment. The Government do not intend that these proposals should lead to the withering away of the independent Bar and I think that when the hon. Gentleman has had the opportunity to read the White Paper in detail he will be reassured.

**Sir Anthony Grant** (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that this is a thoroughly sensible response to the sensible comments made on the Green Paper, particularly because it preserves the independence of the Bar and the judiciary, which is important, while at the same time ensuring that they have regard for the proper administration of justice? In particular, it is welcome that, as I understand it, my right hon. and learned Friend has entirely rejected the odious United States contingency fee racket. Will he bear this point in mind? If solicitors are encouraged by the changes to move into banks, building societies or, even more undesirably, estate agents' offices, there will be, particularly in rural areas, a diminution of the sort of general legal services that should be available to people in those parts.

**The Attorney-General:** I am grateful for what my hon. Friend said at the outset of his remarks. The key to this exercise has been the Government's desire to balance the need to encourage competition with the need to maintain standards in the administration of justice and the provision of legal services. This is not an easy balance to strike, but I believe that my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor has got it right.

As to contingency fees, I am grateful for what my hon. Friend said about the change from the Green Papers, and I believe that there will be general approval—the consultation was strong on this—that we shall go not for contingency fees, as they are properly understood, but for the much more limited conditional fee applied in Scotland for many years.

I note what my hon. Friend has said about the possible effect of increased competition on solicitors, but solicitors have shown themselves to be versatile and capable of adapting to changing conditions of competition. I believe that they will bring those qualities to bear on the arrangements that the White Paper has described.

**Mr. Peter Archer** (Warley, West): Is not the real problem in our legal services inadequate funding? Is it not the case, on any computation, that whereas in 1979, over 70 per cent. of households were eligible for legal aid, that figure has fallen to less than 60 per cent.? Will the House have an opportunity to debate how what the Green Paper calls keen competition operating from the discipline of the market makes any contribution to the need for wider choice, consumer protection or adequate resources?

**The Attorney-General:** The right hon. and learned Gentleman will recall that, in 1979, the bill for legal aid was £100 million annually; it is now £500 million annually. We have to give the Legal Aid Act time to work before fair castigation of arrangements can possibly be made. That is an important matter with which the right hon. and learned Gentleman will agree.

**Mr. Timothy Kirkhope** (Leeds, North-East): Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the solicitors' profession as a whole will be pleased to learn that the representations made on its behalf by the Law Society have been so carefully and considerately dealt with by my right hon. and learned Friend and his colleagues? Will he provide us with further assurance that the proposed regulations on conveyancing will be carefully and vigorously monitored at all times?

**The Attorney-General:** I am grateful for what my hon. Friend has said. The consultation has been unusually fruitful. More than 2,000 responses were received and my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor has given careful thought to each and every one. I am glad, but not surprised, that my hon. Friend believes that solicitors will be greatly reassured by the way in which their genuine and sensible anxieties have been heeded. That reassurance is justified. The whole purpose of the Bill is to try to achieve a balance between the need for competition and the need for the maintenance of standards. It is for the professional bodies, under the structure laid down by the White Paper, to make regulations, but they will also have to have the concurrence of the Lord Chancellor and of the heads of division. They must also receive the attention of the independent advisory committee.

**Mr. Keith Vaz** (Leicester, East): What has the Attorney-General on offer for those who are involved, or wish to be involved, in the provision of public legal services? In particular, I see no reference in the White Paper to the development and extension of law centres, and no solution to the recruitment crisis that is gripping the Crown prosecution service.

**The Attorney-General:** I pay tribute to the great amount of important work that is done for the public good in the provision of legal services. When the hon. Gentleman has had time to read the White Paper more closely, he will see that the "Civil Justice Review", which the Government have accepted, contains proposals for wider representation by lay people in the county court and small claims court. I believe that the hon. Gentleman will welcome that. It is something that is in part established, and it will be built upon. That is not neglected in the White Paper, and it is important that it should not be.

**Mr. Ivor Stanbrook** (Orpington): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the Lord Chancellor is to be congratulated upon having listened to constructive criticism of his original proposals, on having stuck to his guns on the main lines of his proposals, and on resisting the pressure, which was originally of an intemperate nature, which came from the Bar and the Bench?

Is not the Lord Chancellor to be congratulated also on his thoroughly welcome proposal that there should in future be the abolition of the lay observer, who is nothing but a snare and a delusion, being usually just an apologist for the Law Society, and the substitution of a legal services ombudsman, who will have a new statutory power to investigate the original complaint? This will be a great improvement and a tremendous help to lay people, who do not understand why their complaints have not been properly considered.

**The Attorney-General:** I am grateful for what my hon. Friend has said. The Government's purpose in bringing forward the Green Papers was to secure greater competition and lower costs, and at the same time the maintenance of high standards. There has been no departure from any of these purposes or objectives. Considerable anxiety was expressed in some quarters that certain aspects of the proposals in the Green Papers might work in the opposite direction, and the Government felt it right to heed some of the objections. I am glad that my hon. Friend believes that there has been an improvement without any departure from the important objectives to which I have referred.

I welcome what my hon. Friend said about the ombudsman. The ombudsman system is well tried, and I think that there is a good place for it in the provision of legal services, and especially in monitoring the operation of the professional bodies in the way in which, for example, they deal with complaints from the public.

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. Beggs.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Call another lawyer!

**Mr. Roy Beggs** (Antrim, East): I am just a back-room lawyer.

The legal profession in Northern Ireland has had to cope with problems in circumstances very different from those experienced by the profession in England, Scotland and Wales. I feel that it has contributed much to normalising the difficult situation in Northern Ireland. Indeed, we are dependent on confidence being maintained in the administration of justice. To that end, may the House be told whether a legal aid board will be established in Northern Ireland and that those facing serious charges will continue to have the services of the most competent advocates?

**The Attorney-General:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has published a supplement to the Green Papers that is applicable to Northern Ireland. I think that the hon. Gentleman's question about a legal aid board is one that he will need to be written to about rather than receive an answer today.

**Sir Peter Hordern** (Horsham): I thank my right hon. and learned Friend and the Lord Chancellor for bringing peace where there was conflict. Will the proposals make the administration of justice cheaper for the consumer than would otherwise have been the case? Will the course of justice be made any quicker as a result of his proposals, considering the interminable delays in litigation now?

**The Attorney-General:** I am grateful for what my hon. Friend has said. To the extent that the proposals promote competition, which they do in a real way, they will operate on cost in the way in which my hon. Friend desires and which the customer for legal services desires.

The "Civil Justice Review" published last year by the Lord Chancellor, whose provisions will form part of early legislation, is in part aimed at making litigation simpler and quicker. That is very much to be desired. Substantial proposals will be brought forward; they have already been outlined in the "Civil Justice Review". The entire Government share my hon. Friend's view.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** (Great Grimsby): I congratulate the Attorney-General on his triumph in throwing back the Picts and Scots and free market hordes from north of Hadrian's wall. Is it not a humiliating climb-down for the Government? Does it not sanctify the system of government by barristers, for barristers, of barristers? Is it not true that he has done nothing about the restrictive practices of the Bar—for example, barristers' clerks, QCs, double fees and so on? He has not—*[Interruption.]* He has not allowed the Crown prosecution service to compete —*[Interruption.]* It is competition under the control— *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Even I cannot hear the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Should not the Attorney-General have made what is essentially a service industry get out and serve the consumer instead of its own vested interests?

**The Attorney-General:** I suppose that the hon. Gentleman enjoys making that sort of speech, and we all enjoy listening to it, even though we hear it year in and year out. It is not fair to describe listening to consultation as a climb-down; indeed, it is rather hard to do so. If the Government fail to come forward with changes to their original proposals following a consultation period, they are accused of being arrogant and of the consultation being a sham. If, however, they come forward with

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changes based upon that consultation, they are accused of a climb-down. I suppose that it was ever thus, but it is a little hard—not that that will disturb the hon. Gentleman.

I do not think that it can be described as a departure from the Government's original principle. The whole problem of, for example, rights of audience has been going on for 20 or 30 years. People ask why it was not left to rest after the royal commission. The answer is that the problem did not go away, and nor did the debate. That was recognised by the Bar and the Law Society when they set up the Marre committee.

I believe that what is now set out in the White Paper represents the skilful balance achieved by the Lord Chancellor, and it provides a real opportunity for evolutional change. It will break the logjam without risking breaking up the whole system.

**Mr. Ian Gow** (Eastbourne): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the past six months have been well spent and that the proposals in the White Paper are greatly preferable to those in the Green Paper? Is he further aware that there has been a genuine exercise in consultation? Is it not only right that, when sensible proposals are made following a Green Paper, there should then be changes?

May I ask my right hon. and learned Friend two questions about restrictive practices? In future, will those members of the Bar who wish to accept instructions direct from a lay person be able to do so? Secondly, does my right hon. and learned Friend propose to remove the present restriction that non-contentious probate work can be done only by certain people?

**The Attorney-General:** I am grateful for my hon. Friend's remarks, particularly because he is a distinguished solicitor. There has been a great deal of work during the past six months and that has led to improvements. I am grateful that my hon. Friend recognises that.

On the question of the Bar taking direct instructions from a lay client, the White Paper makes it quite clear that the Bar Council should come forward with proposals in the form of rules of conduct.

Those rules, whatever they may be, will need to take account of the views of the advisory committee, and my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor and the senior judiciary will have to give their approval. It is not possible to say what will be the outcome of any proposals because the Government no longer propose to hold that matter under their own control.

There are proposals on probate in chapter 6 of the White Paper. Rather than take up the time of my hon. Friend and of the House in dealing with a matter of some technicality, I commend the fairly short proposals to be found in that chapter.

**Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones** (Ynys Môn): In view of the new restrictions on corporate conveyancing, what further assurances can the Attorney-General give rural solicitors in respect of three specific issues? First, how will the regulations on conveyancing costs be policed, and who will be responsible for ensuring fair competition? Secondly, what will be the position in respect of the unequal balance of advertising whereby building societies and banks will be able to promote their services far in excess of the level that solicitors in rural areas can afford? Thirdly, does the right hon. and learned Gentleman know that the first port of call for anyone involved in the conveyancing process is banks and building societies? How will people be encouraged to approach solicitors to establish whether their charges are competitive?

**The Attorney-General:** I shall try to answer briefly the hon. Gentleman's complex questions. Rural solicitors will be advantaged by the White Paper's proposed changes. Lending institutions will be required to set out their costs and to report the charges that they have been making. It will be open to those with an interest in such matters to determine whether those charges genuinely reflect the cost of the services provided.

There may be a disparity in the level of advertising as between the big lending institutions and rural solicitors, but small firms of solicitors have advantages that the big firms have not, including a local clientele and close contact with the communities in which they live and which they serve.

I shall deal with the hon. Gentleman's final question when I remember what it was.

**Mrs. Teresa Gorman** (Billericay): As a non-lawyer and an ordinary consumer who, from time to time, uses the services of the legal profession, I should like to know how many of the protestations against the Lord Chancellor's excellent proposals were made by ordinary citizens wanting access to justice but who are unable to obtain it because of the cost and complexity of the legal system. I doubt very much whether many such people thought to write in with their point of view.

The issue of contingency fees seems to evoke an hysterical response based on experience of the American system, which cannot be extrapolated automatically to suit our personal circumstances. Contingency fees provide a method by which ordinary people can gain access to the law without resort to legal aid. Therefore, they are an extremely important part of the original proposals. The situation in Britain is different from America, because in this country the amount of damages awarded is strictly controlled by the justices, and the cost of conducting the case in the courts can also be controlled to some extent.

**The Attorney-General:** My hon. Friend is right to say that in this country judges and not juries determine the level of damages. That is a significant difference between the American system and our own. Nevertheless, strong objection to contingency fees was expressed in the consultations. I believe that the Government are right in seeing more disadvantages than advantages in that method of funding litigation.

My hon. Friend spoke about members of the public writing in, and asked how their interests were considered, particularly in respect of the speed and cheapness of legal advice. As I said, the "Civil Justice Review" contains many significant proposals for quicker, cheaper and more efficient provision of legal services.

As to consultation, chapter 1 of the White Paper reveals that 29 per cent. of the 2,000 responses came from members of the public, groups representing consumer interests, educators, and others.

**Mr. Brian Sedgemore** (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): Why do the Government not admit their surrender to a bunch of self-seeking judicial hooligans led by Lord Chief Justice Lane, who is in danger of choking on his own hyperbolic verbosity?

**The Attorney-General:** On the assumption that such a question is in order, it is not one that I propose to answer.

**Mr. Barry Porter** (Wirral, South): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the conclusion can be drawn that the Government have been deafened and blinded by the cannon of the Bar and Bench but have taken little notice of the grapeshot that has come from the ordinary jobbing solicitor? The argument that he has advanced about ensuring that banks and building societies compete fairly is, in my judgment, so much froth.

We should like to know precisely how that fair competition is to be policed. For instance, will a bank or building society be allowed to add the cost of its fee to a loan, and would that be prevented if the individual saw an independent solicitor? Those questions may seem petty at this point, but they go to the root of the matter. If the independent solicitor is to be destroyed, whether in Ynys Môn or the Wirral, anyone who thinks that there will be cheaper or more efficient conveyancing should consider the probate fees charged by banks.

**The Attorney-General:** What my hon. Friend has said about insufficient notice being taken of criticisms made by solicitors is at variance with what has been said this afternoon by some of my other hon. Friends who are solicitors.

Careful attention has been paid to what solicitors have said, and there is genuine anxiety about unfair competition. If, however, my hon. Friend has time to look at paragraph 5.13 of the White Paper he will see that, in addition to the provisions of the code of practice which appear in the Green Papers and are set out in annex D of the White Paper, there is a requirement for a personal interview with the solicitor responsible for the conveyancing to be offered to the customer. He must be told that independent advice will not be available from the solicitor acting for the lending institution, and that is then drawn to the attention of the client, who will be able to decide whether he wishes to go elsewhere for independent advice. Conflicts of interest must be drawn to the client's attention, and there is also a requirement for the true cost of the conveyancing service to be set out.

Questions of policing are important, and will be a matter for mature and detailed consideration. I believe, however, that the White Paper has gone as far as it reasonably can to meet the anxieties that have been expressed.

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): Can the Attorney-General explain to someone who is not a lawyer the dividing line between listening carefully to barristers and brewers and giving in completely, and listening to dockers, trade unionists and the former GLC and deciding to ignore all opposition?

**The Attorney-General:** The distinction is one that the hon. Gentleman would find it very hard to understand. It is based on paying attention to individual circumstances, and establishing whether objectives that everyone agrees are correct are likely to be achieved by the initial proposals or could be better met as a result of listening to what is said in the course of a consultation. That is what the Government have done.

**Mr. Spencer Batiste** (Elmet): Notwithstanding the invective employed in the last two or three questions, the package announced by my right hon. and learned Friend wil be widely seen as a reasoned, balanced judgment on a number of important and difficult issues.

May I ask a question about the multidisciplinary practices for solicitors? Once the statutory restrictions have been removed, what will happen if the Law Society and the governing bodies of other professions are either unable or unwilling to reach agreement on the terms on which such practices can be set up? What time scale will be involved before the Director General of Fair Trading can intervene? Does my right hon. and learned Friend recognise that the evolutionary process that he has described will require the redrawing of professional demarcation lines to reflect the realities of the market place more accurately?

**The Attorney-General:** I am glad that my hon. Friend welcomes the proposals, because he speaks as a solicitor. One of the difficulties involved in putting control of such matters into the hands of the professional bodies—with the requirements for the concurrence of the senior judiciary and the taking of advice from an independent advisory committee—is the impossibility of foreseeing the outcome, let alone when the end will be reached.

I am not able to answer to my hon. Friend's question about the time scale; we shall just have to see how matters develop. I believe, however, that we should welcome the proposal for the professional bodies to be invited to present suggested rules that will take account of the lifting of the present statutory bar—in this instance, on the forming of multidisciplinary partnerships by solicitors. Whether the professional bodies take that opportunity, and when they do so, is not a question with which I can deal today.

**Mr. Alex Carlile** (Montgomery): I welcome the Attorney-General's commitment to the independence of advocates in the higher courts. Will he join me in hoping and, indeed, expecting that the Law Society and the Bar —as part of their professional rules for independent advocates—will insist on the continuation of the cab rank rule, and that advocates in the highest courts should not take part in the preparation or investigation of evidence for courts save in an independent and advisory capacity?

**The Attorney-General:** What the hon. and learned Gentleman has said about the cab rank rule is very important, and the Bar has always attached great professional significance to it. What the solicitors and other professional bodies may do in that regard remains to be seen.

As for advocates' involvement in the preparation of cases in the criminal court, the principle laid down in the royal commission chaired by Sir Cyril Philips, which lies at the heart of the Crown prosecution service, provides that there should be a separation. That is a valuable principle.

**Mr. Edward Leigh** (Gainsborough and Horncastle): My right hon. and learned Friend may remember the views that I expressed in an Adjournment debate. Although I am a barrister, I found it difficult to defend an absolute bar on solicitors being heard in the higher courts. Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that this seems to be a sensible compromise based on evolution and self-regulation? Will he confirm that the onus is now placed on those

*[Mr. Edward Leigh]*

who want to argue against solicitors being heard, and that the heads of division will have to bear that in mind if they do not want to be taken to task by a judicial review?

**The Attorney-General:** I am glad that, given his previous interest in the matter, my hon. Friend sees the value of the evolutionary structure provided in the White Paper. There is an opportunity for change, and the statute will express the intention that change should come. We shall have to wait and see how the structure, with its careful and sensitive balance, will operate in individual cases. An important feature, however, is that individual consideration can now be given by all concerned to separate types of cases, which I believe will make for a much more reliable result.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): Once again the Government have retreated in the face of opposition from powerful vested interests. Last week it was drinks all round for the brewers; today the barristers will be throwing their wigs in the air with joy at the Attorney-General's announcement.

May I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman how much his rumoured threat of resignation if the Green Paper proposals were implemented in full influenced the Government's White Paper proposals?

**The Attorney-General:** Lord Denning once said that he had every Christian virtue except that of resignation. I certainly do not want to investigate such matters, save to say that the hon. Gentleman should not believe everything that he reads in any newspaper.

There is no question of a retreat. I prefer to regard it as an advance: we have advanced much more reliably towards the attainment of the objectives that we have set out. Let me add that the present Government have contributed more to the establishment of competition and the break-up of old, traditional arrangements that did not operate to the advantage of the consumer than any Government that the hon. Gentleman has ever supported, or will ever have the chance to support.

**Mr. Tim Devlin** (Stockton, South): I, too, congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on the clever compromise that he has announced today. Further, however, to the answer that he has just given, may I ask him to exemplify the improvements that there will be for people who want to go to the Bar but who want to train first as solicitors? As a result of the White Paper proposals, will access for people coming from other European countries and for people coming from other branches of the profession be easier in the higher courts?

**The Attorney-General:** I am grateful for my hon. Friend's welcome of the proposals. I believe that there is material in the White Paper that should reassure those who wish to join the Bar straight away and young barristers. The Law Society recognises that as soon as someone has qualified as a barrister, from the time that he or she finishes pupillage, rights of access will be available to all the courts. In the case of solicitors, the Law Society recognises that it would be more appropriate to proceed by stages by reason of the fact that solicitors will not necessarily be specialist advocates. The Bar has also made substantial changes to its arrangements. It has provided for the payment of pupils and also for a very much more advantageous environment for young entrants to the Bar. I believe that that in itself, very creditable as it is to the Bar authorities, is a consequence of the White Paper. Much advantage has been achieved, and I am glad that my hon. Friend thinks likewise.

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South): During the Attorney-General's statement and climb-down from the Lord Chancellor's original proposals, he used the phrase that the new proposals were designed to preserve the viability of the Bar. Does that mean to preserve the huge fees that members of the Bar are used to receiving? Would not a reduction of the astronomical sums that they demand for often indifferent and incompetent work in the courts give greater access to ordinary people who cannot afford the sort of fees that the Bar demands? Is it not an outrageous example of the Government's unjust attitude that they can make a statement about people whose fees, if they were reduced to £100 an hour, would represent a marked reduction in the sums that they earn when they are busy attacking trade unionists, such as NUR members, who are lucky if they earn £100 a week? What is the Minister going to do about reducing the astronomical and parasitic sums that lawyers earn?

**The Attorney-General:** I have heard all this before. As it happens, I did not use the phrase that these proposals are designed to secure the viability of the Bar. I said that the Government attach great importance to the continued existence of a vigorous and independent Bar. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome the effects of competition, as opposed to what is experienced by the consumer when there is a monopoly or a nationalised industry. If one wishes to go to the most fashionable silk, one can expect to pay a very large sum of money. If one wishes to go to the able but as yet very young practitioner, one will pay very much less money.

The point about an independent Bar is that 6,000 barristers are available to be chosen by anybody who wishes to secure their services. That is why it is so important that an independent Bar should be preserved. Therefore, for all the malice that the hon. Gentleman brings to bear upon those who provide legal services, I do not believe that there is any material here that can attract sensible criticism along the lines that the hon. Gentleman has just advanced.

**Mr. Nicholas Baker** (Dorset, North): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that these sensible proposals will be welcomed not least because of the improved access to justice and to lawyers' advice that will be available to members of the public and also because they will provide the means for the customer to complain about inadequate services? Does my right hon. and learned Friend also accept that the principle of self-regulation that is enshrined in the White Paper and the independence of the legal profession are both very much in the interests of the consumer?

**The Attorney-General:** I readily acknowledge that. The White Paper uses words to the effect that the Government believe that self-regulation in the professions is the most effective form of regulation in the interests of the consumer. I believe that to be true. I am extremely glad that my hon. Friend regards them as sensible reforms. He also speaks as a solicitor. Since it suits certain Opposition Members to say that there has been a climb-down at the expense of solicitors in favour of the Bar, it is very welcome that he, speaking as a solicitor, along with many others this afternoon, welcomes the proposals.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Is the Minister aware that his very presence at the Dispatch Box today suggests that the so-called radical reforming Government have now come to an end? It is one thing to take on the trade union institutions, the education authorities, local government and other aspects of British life, but when it comes to the lawyers versus the people the Minister runs away and gives in to the lawyers. During this parliamentary week one Minister has given in to the brewers who provide the money for the Tory party while another Minister, the Attorney-General, has given in to the lawyers, the very people who launder the money from the brewers and get it to the Tory party.

**The Attorney-General:** That was something worth waiting for all these noisy minutes. When the hon. Gentleman says——

**Mr. Skinner:** People out there will notice.

**The Attorney-General:** It is all very interesting——

**Mr. Skinner:** Has he burnt his fingers?

**The Attorney-General:** I should be very interested to be present in any court over which the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) presided in a judicial capacity. Considerable fees would have to be demanded before anybody was prepared to appear before him, and very well earned they would be. *[Interruption.]* I wonder whether I might be allowed to intervene, however briefly? When the hon. Gentleman speaks of lawyers versus the people, he might reflect on the fact that without any law and the professionals to serve it there would be no freedom for the people.

**Mr. Kenneth Hind** (Lancashire, West): The Bar will welcome my right hon. and learned Friend's announcement. Could he assure hon. Members and law students who are studying in our universities and polytechnics that the system that he is devising, under which members of the public will be able to go direct to solicitors who will be able to take the case right through to the High Court, will provide sufficient advantages and encouragement to young people to go to the Bar so that the Bar does not wither?

**The Attorney-General:** My hon. Friend puts his finger on an anxiety that has been expressed in quite a number of responses to the Green Paper proposals. Since the Law Society recognises that it is appropriate that those who have been called to the Bar should have rights of access immediately to all courts once they have finished their pupillage, any students in the law schools who want to become specialist advocates are likely to opt for the Bar. There might have been some reason for anxiety if that were not the case and if everybody had to proceed by stages. However, since that has been recognised by the Law Society, it has enabled the Lord Chancellor to come forward with a very much simpler scheme for qualification for rights of audience. Therefore, anybody who really wants to be a specialist advocate and who is now a law student should feel that it is entirely appropriate to join the Bar and take his or her chance in that most competitive of professions.

# Local Government Finance

**Mr. Speaker:** I am informed that adequate copies of the illustrative community charges are now available in the Vote Office. I think that we should proceed with the statement.

4.59 pm

**Dr. Cunningham:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Before the Secretary of State resumes answering questions, I hope that he can clarify what appears to be a difference between his statement and the document that has now been issued to Members from the Vote Office.

In his statement, the Secretary of State said:

"the maximum amount of gain deferred will be £75 per adult."

As hon. Members can see, the following statement is made at the top of the tables:

"Safety net allows losses of up to £23 per adult and 47 per cent. of gains subject to maximum of £70 per adult".

The statement does not accord with the information on the tables. They show examples of over £70 per adult. Which is right?

**Mr. James Lamond** (Oldham, Central and Royton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall take the point of order because I was given notice of it.

**Mr. Lamond:** Earlier today, while the Secretary of State was making his statement at the Dispatch Box, I thought that I saw the civil servants in the Box to your right, Sir, hand out a number of copies of the paper to Conservative Back Benchers. I say that I thought I saw that happen —I was not sure. I would not raise the matter with you, Mr. Speaker, if I had been assured by the civil servants that that was not the case.

Naturally, I went to ask the civil servants. When I did so, the Secretary of State and the Minister intervened to say that on no account were those civil servants to answer my question and that the only answer that I could have was from them. I am sorry to say that I am not prepared to accept any reply from the Secretary of State or the Minister. I prefer to have the truth, if possible, from the civil servants.

**Mr. Speaker:** I hope that the hon. Member will accept this response from me. Since he raised the matter with me privately, I have looked into it and I can assure him that that did not happen.

**Mr. Ridley:** With regard to the point of order that the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) raised, if he looks at the tables he will see that they are for 1989-90, whereas the arrangements that I announced for the safety net are for 1990-91, a year later. The figure of £75 which is the maximum contribution in 1990-91 should be reduced, because of the effects of inflation this year and next year, to a comparable figure. The hon Gentleman will therefore understand why we have used the figure of £70 as the cut-off point in exemplifying the system for the current year as opposed to next year.

The hon. Gentleman asked for details of the national non-domestic rate. The Inland Revenue has not yet completed its revaluation and given the details that we

*[Mr. Ridley]*

need before we can give the hon. Gentleman those figures. They will be made available as soon as possible, and certainly in the autumn.

The hon. Gentleman asked also about the standard spending assessment. He is right—that is the variable in this package which we have not yet given the House and which is essential before any authority can calculate what its community charge may be next year. The authorities do not know what assessment we will choose. There is good reason for that, as the hon. Gentleman should know. We have been discussing the standard spending assessment with local authority associations since Christmas. We have been exemplifying all sorts of suggestions that the associations have put forward and asked us to exemplify, some of which the hon. Gentleman quoted. No choice has yet been made, because we should like, if possible, to carry the associations with us on what is the correct assessment from their point of view as well as ours. We cannot be firm until those decisions are taken.

The hon. Gentleman described this settlement as a "cut", which surprises me. It is an 11 per cent. increase in the provision that we made for the current year. I do not think that the hon. Gentleman is right to base his opinions on the budgets for this year, because the current year was a strange year in the history of rate support grant. It was the last year of the system and a number of authorities increased their spending, partly to unwind creative accounting, partly because they were not subject to grant penalties for so increasing their spending and partly for other reasons. It is, therefore, the worst year that the hon. Gentleman could possibly use to base his calculations on the budgets.

The hon. Gentleman asked in what way local authorities could achieve this settlement as the Government suggest. There can be enormous efficiency savings, some of which I mentioned in my statement. The tendering-out process, which has started, is beginning to show ever-greater opportunities for savings, and I think that that is the right answer.

The hon. Gentleman moved on to his constituency and said:

> "the . . . likely poll tax in Copeland in the next financial year will be about £350 per person."

I have very good news for the hon. Gentleman. The safety-netted charge in Copeland is £196 this year, not £350. The hon. Gentleman is therefore totally wrong—almost by a factor of two—in making that claim. His council has an opportunity to get the amount even lower if it will look at its spending. The hon. Gentleman is a great beneficiary of the safety net that we have produced.

The hon. Gentleman may like to cheer up his constituents by telling them that there will be a 17·1 per cent. reduction in the business rate. He may not want it, but his constituents do.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I appreciate the great importance of the statement, but the House knows that it will involve legislation. I therefore hope that hon. Members will put pointed and brief questions and not go into great detail at this stage.

**Mr. John Heddle** (Mid-Staffordshire): Does my right hon. Friend accept that if non-domestic ratepayers receive transitional relief while we transfer from an unfair rating system to a much fairer one in the longer term, it is obvious that householders in prudently run authorities should also do so, and to that extent the House will welcome his statement? Will my right hon. Friend reflect that not many prudently run local authorities have an average rateable value as low as £150? When discussing the matter with the local authority associations later in this summer, will he consider extending that?

**Mr. Ridley:** I agree with my hon. Friend. We have provided transitional relief for non-domestic ratepayers and for community charge payers. The systems will be different in each case because their circumstances are different. The careful, gentle transitions that we are providing will greatly ease the introduction of the new system. My hon. Friend was right in his comments on well-run councils. One council in his constituency, Cannock Chase, will make a small contribution to the safety net and will have a reasonably low community charge.

**Mr. Matthew Taylor** (Truro): I am sure that the Secretary of State agrees that he originally brought forward his original safety net proposals to protect those that might otherwise suffer financially under the financial changes associated with the poll tax. It appears that he has decided that, to buy votes for Conservative Members, it is worth sacrificing some of those needs that he previously identified. The problem is that he has not even satisfied Conservative Members, because he is not prepared to spend Government money to do so but simply tries to transfer money between the poor old ratepayers and poll tax payers in their areas. The right hon. Gentleman's successor will come under great pressure to make changes. The proposal does nothing to meet the needs of those areas where bills will increase or of other areas, including those Conservative Members who have been worrying about them, that are asked to finance his policies.

Does the right hon. Gentleman also accept that although those areas may be able to wait until the new Secretary of State takes office in the autumn, the people who will suffer most from the announcement are business ratepayers who, as he has made clear in his answer to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham), will not be given an idea of how they will suffer until the autumn? They are already trying to draw up budgets for their businesses. Will the Secretary of State respond to that before the recess?

**Mr. Ridley:** Most of that was in the nature of statement rather than question. The hon. Gentleman is wrong in suggesting that we are reshuffling the money to provide interim protection. All we are doing is providing a sufficient grant for the safety net. It is better that that should be shown to the customer—each community charge payer—on his own bill so that he is aware whether he is contributing directly to or getting benefit from the safety net, rather than having it lost in the whole grant structure, which is the alternative.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Call Rhodes Boyson.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Will the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) try to contain himself now? I think that we have all had enough of it.

**Sir William Shelton** (Streatham): My constituents will warmly welcome the announcement by my right hon. Friend of a transitional grant for inner London to cushion the costs of the change from the Inner London education authority to local councils as education authorities. Will my right hon. Friend tell us how long the transitional grant will last? Will it be tapered? Will the educational content of the Government grant to inner London be more or less the same level as the £950 million that ILEA is spending currently each year in inner London?

**Mr. Ridley:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I shall answer his later questions first. The new grant for the authorities that receive educational responsibilities in London will be tapered over a five-year period. That is extra to any grant that comes through the standard spending assessment, the details of which, as I said earlier, have not yet been finally decided. However, I doubt whether it will come to the full amount of the current overspend of ILEA of £183 per adult. He will be glad to know that for his constituency this year, the community charge, if we had had it in place, would have been £297 in Lambeth. He might equally like to know that if we had a system of combined local income tax and capital value rates in place, the burden on the average man in his constituency would be £1,218.

**Mr. Rees:** Will the Secretary of State turn his mind to the page of the statement headed "1989/90 Illustrative capital value rates and local income tax" and the six pages that follow? Surely the Department of the Environment cannot possibly know what the position will be after the next general election, about the rate of local income tax declared or about the nature of capital values. Were those figures drawn up by the Civil Service? Do those figures come out of the statistical department of the Department of the Environment? If anyone had suggested that such political matter should be provided under any Government under whom I served, the permanent under-secretary would have said very firmly that it was not a matter for the Civil Service.

**Mr. Ridley** *rose*——

**Mr. Rees:** I have not finished. Surely those seven pages should come from Conservative Central Office at the time of the next general election, when it sees what is in our manifesto. The Secretary of State is being too clever by half in cloaking a bad tax and that should not be done in a document such as this.

**Mr. Ridley:** I am extremely sorry that the right hon. Gentleman does not like having his own party's policy put to him. It seems extraordinary that he should have blundered into drawing attention to the fact that this is the adopted policy of his own party. *[Interrruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Secretary of State must have a chance to answer the question put to him.

**Mr. Ridley** *rose*——

**Mr. Jeff Rooker** (Birmingham, Perry Barr): It is a lie.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** That is a lie.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Secretary of State must not be accused of lying. He must answer the question that was put to him.

**Mr. Ridley:** I have received parliamentary questions asking me to exemplify certain systems of local authority finance. That is the question I have answered and, as far as I know, this is the system that the Labour party has adopted as its policy. If Labour Members want to alter any of the assumptions on which it is based, the hon. Member for Copeland has only to let me know and I shall alter the assumptions. However, on the assumptions clearly stated here and in answer to a parliamentary question, the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) will find that his constituents would have had to pay £252 in the first year of the community charge, if it had been this year, and £460 under the scheme of local authority finance that he supports.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman** (Lancaster): My right hon. Friend knows that at present the county councils pay to the district councils a certain percentage of the collection of the rates and a certain percentage of any losses incurred from non-collection. As I understand it, there is no allowance under the new proposals for the county council to pay anything to the district councils. Lancashire has 17 district councils, which means that Lancashire county council will make a substantial profit on the collection to spend on the harebrained schemes thought up by the Labour-controlled council.

**Mr. Ridley:** The question of shortfall in the yield of the charge which arises either through evasion of paying or through the costs of collection is still under discussion with the local authority associations.

**Mr. Peter L. Pike** (Burnley): Although I welcome the fact that Burnley will receive one of the biggest reductions, of £107 per head, as a result of having low-rated property, will the Secretary of State accept that we made that point when the Bill was going through Parliament? Will he also realise that the people of north-east Lancashire will recognise that these measures are being taken more with a view to saving the Tory marginal seats in that area? People with this concession will still be paying more than they are under the present rates system. This is only a transitional arrangement. The poll tax is grossly unfair because of its failure to take into account ability to pay.

**Mr. Ridley:** I take it that the hon. Gentleman now regards his seat as a Tory marginal, which may be underestimating the extent of our majority there after the next election. I was also glad that he recognised the help I have offered to seats such as his, which have a low average rateable value per household. The people of Burnley will like to know that the first year community charge, if it had been applied this year, would have been £173, but if they had had local income tax and capital value rates, they would have had to pay £499. What does he think is fair about that?

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** (Altrincham and Sale): Can my right hon. Friend explain why, if the purpose of the community charge is to make councils more accountable to electors, community charge payers in my constituency will have to pay an extra £49 a year to bail out extravagant Socialist councils such as Manchester, which have overspent like mad? What encouragement is there in the arrangements for councils that have followed prudent policies over the years?

**Mr. Ridley:** My hon. Friend's constituents are already paying quite a lot to other areas under the resource equalisation mechanism in the rating system. Under the present arrangements they are paying £62 a head, whereas for the new community charge, we have been able to reduce the figure to £44. I think that my hon. Friend will find that that is a considerable improvement.

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): Will the right hon. Gentleman explain why, even with the safety net, in Liverpool each individual will have to pay £338, whereas in areas such as Tewkesbury, where there is a slight increase, individuals will have to pay £239? That will place a greater burden on the mass of ordinary working people in an area with high unemployment and serious problems and under great stress. Is it not clear that the Government are putting the burden on to the shoulders of those who can ill afford to pay, whereas those who can afford to pay —the right hon. Gentleman's friends in his constituency —will get away with paying much less?

**Mr. Ridley:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his tribute to Tewkesbury council, which is, indeed, a very well-run authority, which is more than one can say for Liverpool. That is why Liverpool faces such a high community charge. The hon. Gentleman should address his question to Liverpool city council and not to me. He ought to ask the hon. Member for Copeland how he justifies a system of local authority finance which, in his own constituency, would make the average man pay £640 in local income tax and capital value rates.

**Mr. Steve Norris** (Epping Forest): Does my right hon. Friend agree that under the present ludicrous and iniquitous system of block grant redistribution, the poor in rich areas have been subsidising the rich in poor areas for many years? Does he further agree that the great advantage of the present system of identifying the safety net is that the Government have identified it in order to eliminate it?

**Mr. Ridley:** My hon. Friend is exactly right. The present arrangements result in many very poor people having to pay over the odds to subsidise those in other areas who could well afford to pay the full amount. We are removing the inequity from the system—in one step next year, to be followed by other steps.

**Mr. Jeff Rooker** (Birmingham, Perry Barr): May I ask the Secretary of State about Birmingham? Why should Birmingham poll tax payers pay a surcharge on the Tory tax of £67? It is one of only five local authorities in the whole list with a net overspend of zero. Why should my constituents pay £67 to subsidise overspending Tory local authorities such as Blackpool and Lancaster?

**Mr. Ridley:** I welcome the hon. Gentleman to the support of the new system. He may not know it, but for many years his constituents have been paying more than what the city of Birmingham requires to subsidise those authorities. That has happened under the system of resource equalisation. We have started his constituency on the road towards reducing that excess and winding it out altogether, but the large increase in rate support grant that Birmingham received this year has altered the figures for this year, as compared with last year.

**Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark** (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Will my right hon. Friend forgive me for saying that we seem to swap one unfair system—which it certainly is —for another unfair system and that the people of Birmingham will not understand his assertion that we got too much last year and that is why the figure is getting worse this year or why the financial prudence of Birmingham city council is now being thrown in its face? However my right hon. Friend cares to explain it, the £67 is £67 that we should not have to spend. My right hon. Friend has uttered fine words about new Elysian fields of fairness in local government. Why is it that this year the system in operation is possibly the most unfair system that we have ever had and that all the great overspenders in London are laughing at the fact that Tory common sense has become a Tory folly?

**Mr. Ridley:** I understand my hon. Friend's impatience to reach the end of the transitional period and to have the full community charge in place in Birmingham. I can understand why he wants us to cease having to impose on the citizens of Birmingham the burden of having to contribute through the resource equalisation mechanism to other citizens elsewhere. We all share that objective, including the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker). The question is how soon and how quickly we should phase the arrangements out. I believe that it is generally accepted in the House that it is right to have a four-year transitional period over which to phase them out rather than putting an immediate end to all relief.

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood): Given that the average rate burden per head of the population in Lambeth is £250, will the Secretary of State confirm that the non-safety netted poll tax will be substantially more than twice the present burden? Can he say whether the figures that he has published today are widely welcome among Conservative business men in Croydon, Bromley, Westminster, Wandsworth, Kensington and the City of London?

**Mr. Ridley:** With current spending rates, the full community charge in Lambeth this year would have been £543. The hon. Gentleman must take that up with Lambeth council because it is entirely due to that council and to ILEA that the figures are so extremely high. We have granted Lambeth relief under the safety net for four years, so the hon. Gentleman has four years in which to persuade its council to put its house in order.

**Sir Rhodes Boyson** (Brent, North): Does my right hon. Friend agree that to transfer community charge money from provident to improvident authorities under the safety net arrangements is to undermine the very basis of the community charge which, in the beginning, was that one paid only for what one voted for?

**Mr. Ridley:** My right hon. Friend has heard the argument about whether there should be a transitional period. Many hon. Members are grateful, and have said so today, for the transitional help that we have given to their constituents so that they will not have to move up to the full level immediately. That help must be paid for at the expense of those who have gains to come.

**Mr. George Howarth** (Knowsley, North): Ministers always refer to Knowsley as a well-run borough, although it has tremendous problems of deprivation none the less. Can the Secretary of State explain why Knowsley has turned out to be a net contributor to the safety net, given the extent of our problem as compared with those of councils in constituencies represented by Conservative Members? Can the Secretary of State explain why in Merseyside—a fairly deprived area by any standards—three out of five local authorities, including those covering Bootle and Birkenhead, are net contributors to the safety net? Has the right hon. Gentleman any justification that would be in the least bit convincing?

**Mr. Ridley:** I have to tell the hon. Gentleman the disappointing news that those three boroughs are currently contributing to the permanent safety net that has existed in the form of resource equalisation. It is only by getting rid of that element in the present system that the full charge can be applied. We have agreed that there should be a transitional period before the full charge comes in. The fact that we have moved his constituents slightly in that direction is the result of my announcement today that all those losers will be asked to contribute £25 a head.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock** (Batley and Spen): I know that my right hon. Friend has had many representations today and in previous weeks from many hon. Members who object to their constituents paying towards the safety net. My authority is a receiver of the safety net, but even though we receive some £89 from it, can he help me explain to two pensioners in my constituency, whose current rates payable are £267, why they will have to pay £624 under the new system? It will be difficult to explain to them that the new system is fairer and that they will be better off.

**Mr. Ridley:** What I have announced today will be of considerable help to my hon. Friend as she rightly pointed out. She would fare far worse under the Labour proposals. Were her constituents subject to capital value rates and local income tax they would be asked, on average, to find £554 this year. That is what someone on the average rate would have to pay.

**Mr. James Lamond** (Oldham, Central and Royton): Will the Secretary of State confirm that the figures that he caused his civil servants to work out for party-political purposes and which he has tried to represent as Labour party policy, are incorrect? Column 8, from which he has quoted several times, gives the tax bill resulting from local income tax rates when expenditure in the domestic sector is raised 100 per cent. from that source. The example he gives is not, as he suggested, based on the average man, but on a single adult on average male earnings and in receipt of the single persons's tax allowance. If there were another column that showed a married adult whose wife was not earning anything, her contribution would not be what he has said, but would be nothing.

**Mr. Ridley:** If the hon. Gentleman would like to put down a question I will, of course, give him the full exemplifications for any system, any combination of systems or any types of people that he wants. I am longing to have any correction from the Labour party to the data upon which the figures of its twin-tax nightmare are based because it is time that the Opposition realised what a considerable problem they have if they persist with such an absurd scheme.

**Sir Philip Goodhart** (Beckenham): Does my right hon. Friend recognise that his Department's new proposals for calculating local authorities needs and assessments will substantially penalise authorities such as Bromley, that have a good record of economic administration? Does he recognise that his Department's proposals could push the community charge for Bromley far higher than the £209 calculated in my right hon. Friend's paper?

**Mr. Ridley:** There is no decision on this. We have based the figures on what we believe is about the best type of standard spending assessment that we can devise. If that is the one that is finally adopted, the figures given would be very nearly correct. It is something that we must get right with the local authority associations and I do not believe that my hon. Friend need be worried by the extremes quoted by the hon. Member for Copeland because they are responses, in the main, to suggestions from various classes of authorities as to how the grant might be divided. Clearly those suggestions are designed to be in the interests of that particular class of authority. There is nothing wrong with that, but I doubt whether that would be acceptable to the generality of the associations.

**Mr. Chris Smith** (Islington, South and Finsbury): How can the Secretary of State possibly justify a system that produces results of such massive discrepancy between different authorities? The London borough of Barnet, which contains the Tory marginal constituency of Finchley, currently has an average rate bill per household of £708. The indicative first year safety-netted community charge will be £290 per person. Yet the London borough of Islington, whose constituents I represent, currently has an average rate bill of £776, which is not dissimilar to the one for Barnet, but its first year safety-netted community charge is £496 per head. That is twice as much as the Prime Minister's constituents must pay.

**Mr. Ridley:** Of course the hon. Gentleman must realise why: it is because the London borough of Barnet conducts its affairs frugally and efficiently, which can hardly be said of the London borough of Islington. He might like to know that the situation would be very much worse if his solution to the problem were adopted in Islington.

**Mr. Patrick McLoughlin** (Derbyshire, West): I want to draw my right hon. Friend's attention to the position in Derbyshire and to the full community charge as outlined in column 3. It shows that, overall, Derbyshire has one of the highest sets of community charge in the country. That is not because of anything that central Government have done, but is largely due to the high-spending county council. Column 4 gives us a few of the transitional periods of payment. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the place that does best in Derbyshire is no marginal Tory seat, but that held by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner)? That area will receive a plus of £88, which is far better than that for any Tory authority or Tory constituency in Derbyshire.

**Mr. Ridley:** I apologise to my hon. Friend if I got it wrong.

**Ms. Dawn Primarolo** (Bristol, South): Will the Secretary of State please explain why his statement, which was presented as a safety net to cushion the full effects of the community charge, means that in Avon, where there are six district authorities—only one of which is Labour—the safety netted community charge is, without fail, higher than his own estimate for the community charge this year? Why is the Secretary of State increasing the community charge for the county of Avon?

**Mr. Ridley:** I do not follow what the hon. Lady is saying. Spending in Bristol is high and, as a result, it has a high community charge in the short and long term.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton** (Macclesfield): Will my right hon. Friend explain to me why Macclesfield borough council, one of the most prudently and responsibly managed in the country, which has a record of underspend and not overspend, should have to pay out for those authorities, particularly in inner cities, that have been irresponsibly and badly run? How can I explain to my pensioners who live on the retirement pension with perhaps a little additional private income, and to those who are unfortunately on income support, that they must bail out people in areas that have been badly run?

**Mr. Ridley:** I am sure that my hon. Friend has already explained to his constituents that they have been paying heavily towards other areas that benefit. What we are doing is unwinding the unfair system whereby his constituents and those of many other hon. Members must pay to areas of low rateable value for no other reason than that. I am glad to tell my hon. Friend that in the new system that I announced today I have managed to reduce what his constituents must pay from £75, if it were for this year, to £51. That is some relief.

**Mr. Jim Cousins** (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): Will the Secretary of State give some thought to the people who live in a unique domestic architecture known as the Tyneside flats, with which I am sure he is familiar, as his ancestors built several thousand of them? Those Tyneside flats have a low rateable value, but, as a result of the withdrawal of the safety net from Newcastle, its underpinning, and the fact that Newcastle will now contribute to the safety net rather than benefit from it, those people in the Tyneside flats in my constituency, most of them elderly, will suffer. Will the Secretary of State give some consideration to that particular form of low rateable value housing and advance some concession to bring benefit from the disbenefits that his statement creates?

**Mr. Ridley:** The hon. Gentleman's constituents will not benefit from or contribute to the safety net under the arrangements that I have put forward. This is only a device to equalise authorities, not a device to equalise different types of property or people within an authority. That function is carried out by the rebate system and 9 million people will be given help in the form of community charge rebates.

**Mr. Michael Shersby** (Uxbridge): The first year safety net and community charge for the London borough of Hillingdon is shown as £342 compared with the community charge of standard spending of £240. That is due to overspending of £97 per head by that borough. In his statement, my right hon. Friend referred to the opportunities for savings which exist for local authorities arising from their payroll. Has my right hon. Friend's Department accumulated figures over the past three years to show by how much London local authorities have increased their payrolls, so that ratepayers can be given some idea of the increase that has resulted in that overspending?

**Mr. Ridley:** I cannot here and now give my hon. Friend the information that he seeks, but I shall see whether there is anything that we can give him to help him explain an overspend in his borough of £97 per head this year compared with an underspend in some similar boroughs in outer London. There must be some reason to do with the efficiency of a council for such a situation.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Hon. Members know that we have a heavy day ahead of us. I am conscious of the fact that virtually every constituency is affected, although I think not in Scotland, but I shall do my best to call those hon. Members who are standing, provided that they ask brief questions.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Will the Secretary of State confirm that Allerdale is a beneficiary of the safety netting arrangements but that in subsequent years will have some of the highest poll tax increases, first because of inflation and, secondly, because of the need to close the safety net from which it is now a beneficiary? Before the right hon. Gentleman quotes me the local income tax figure, let me say that any person who goes to the Dispatch Box and says that Allerdale's people will have to pay £775 in income tax under a Labour Government will be telling a lie to the House of Commons.

**Mr. Ridley:** I must tell the hon. Gentleman the correct figure. A single man on average wages in Allerdale would pay £491 under the Labour party's system. The hon. Gentleman should tell his constituents that, because I will tell them if he does not.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** That is rubbish and a lie.

**Mr. Ridley:** If it is a lie, and it is wrong, will the hon. Gentleman please tell me on what he would like the exemplifications based? We only need the assumptions to be corrected and we shall give him the exemplifications.

**Hon. Members:** Withdraw.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We should not use the word "lie". If hon. Members feel that something is untrue, they may say that it is wrong, but we must not break the traditions of the House by accusing each other of lying.

**Mr. Richard Page** (Hertfordshire, South-West): I support the principle of the community charge, but does my right hon. Friend accept that with a full community charge in my constituency of £285, and a first year safety net of £360, my constituents in presently low-rated accommodation will find the impact of the community charge severe enough without the extra £75 that they will have to pay under the safety net? They will ask me why they have to pay that £75 to bail out profligate councils and I will have great difficulty in giving them an answer. Will my right hon. Friend examine low-rated property and bring forward measures when the House reassembles after the recess before the matter becomes enshrined in law?

**Mr. Ridley:** This year, the average rate bill per household in the Three Rivers council in my hon. Friend's constituency was £827—one of the highest there is. That impost is already being levied on my hon. Friend's constituents. We are seeking to phase that out and he will find that his constituents gain considerably in the first year under the system that I have just announced.

**Mr. David Clelland** (Tyne Bridge): Let me take the Secretary of State back to a point raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr.

Rees). It is undoubtedly legitimate for Tory party Central Office to criticise Labour party policies, but under what moral, if not legal, authority does the Secretary of State issue the document "Illustrative capital value rates and local income tax"? Is that not a blatant example of political propaganda at public expense, a practice that he has deprecated in local authorities? Is that not the height of hypocrisy and as near as can be to political corruption?

**Mr. Ridley:** The answer is simple. If the hon. Gentleman looks at the Order Paper he will find that I was asked to set that out, and if a Minister is asked a question, he should, if it is possible, give the answer, which in this case I did very fully. The trouble is that the hon. Gentleman does not like it. That is all that is wrong.

**Mr. W. Benyon** (Milton Keynes): I did not vote for the community charge, but I understood that its principal object was to make local authorities truly accountable. In the circumstances, would not it have been more sensible and fair to make the Exchequer pay for the transitional arrangements?

**Mr. Ridley:** As I have explained, in a sense that is what is happening. We have two alternatives. We can either not show the contribution to the safety net on the rate bill, or we can do so. I hope that my hon. Friend will agree that it is much easier to tell his constituents which part of the bill relates to the community charge and which part relates to the safety net, rather than the other way around.

**Mr. Allen McKay** (Barnsley, West and Penistone): I accept that the system will give Barnsley some protection in the first year, but when we come to the full poll tax, 95 per cent. of my constituents' households will pay more. Will the Secretary of State take into consideration the needs element, which could, if the right hon. Gentleman is not careful, withdraw £24 million from that authority which it cannot afford?

**Mr. Ridley:** I understand that there is a particular problem in the hon. Gentleman's constituency and that he is coming to see my right hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government. We shall do our best to try to find a solution to the particular problem in his constituency.

**Mr. Ian Bruce** (Dorset, South): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that his announcement today of an additional £200 million in grants for 1991 would, if applied to the figures that we have been given for 1989-90, have had the effect of reducing each person's community charge by £5 across the board? Is that not an excellent point to make to the country? Are we not hiding our light under a bushel by not giving such illustrative figures?

**Mr. Ridley:** My hon. Friend is quite right. I should explain a rather technical matter in answer to his question. The £200 million made available next year will go to the inner-London authorities and to the low rateable value authorities which I described. In order to make the exemplifications for this year comparable—we have, of course, no means of adding grant to the figures for this year—we have had to make the figures for the exemplifications for 1989-90 £5 per head higher than they would have been if we had been able to add the extra grant. These figures would have been rather lower if we had. It is rather tortuous logic, but I am afraid that that is the way it is.

**Mr. Elliot Morley** (Glanford and Scunthorpe): Is it fair that in these notional overspending figures a town such as Scunthorpe, which has been dominated for many years by one large industry, should be crippled because of the loss to the local council of the business rate? Can the Secretary of State explain why, on his own figures, Boothferry council is deemed to be spending more than Glanford, yet in the first year of the change will pay £60 more per head than Boothferry? Is the answer that the Secretary of State's figures are as nonsensical as his arguments?

**Mr. Ridley:** I did not quite follow what the hon. Gentleman said, but I think that he was talking about the difference in the rateable values between two councils, which, of course, will show up as soon as we move to the safety net, because the safety net is based on the present contribution.

**Dr. Keith Hampson** (Leeds, North-West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that one item in his statement is particularly welcome? It is the recognition at last of the need for special relief for those areas in the north that historically have averaged lower rateable values. However, will he look again at the way that that system will work? Sunderland and Leeds currently have approximately the same average rateable values. Sunderland is overspending by twice as much as Leeds, but instead of paying £21 more, people in Sunderland will, as a result of the relief, pay £27 less. It would be a much better solution to the problem, given its scale, if at long last we recognised that education is primarily a national service which should be funded by national and not local taxpayers.

**Mr. Ridley:** I am glad that my hon. Friend acknowledges the help that the rateable value specific grant will bring to areas in the north. There does not seem to be quite the same gratitude from the Opposition, but at least my hon. Friend sees the point. This is not the time for me to speculate on whether education should or should not be paid for out of local authority finance. Such debates were held in Committee and, given the statement on the assessments, I do not think that we can do it.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): The Secretary of State said that he was unwinding the rate system. What he is unwinding this afternoon is his political career. It is quite magical to hear words from a political corpse. I hope that the Secretary of State will not be shuffled off in October. I hope that he stays at the Dispatch Box and suffers right up to the general election defeat that the poll tax will bring about. How come that a borough such as Newham——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman had his chance.

**Mr. Banks:** How come that a borough such as Newham, which has the 11th highest rate in London, will end up with the sixth highest poll tax in London? Does the right hon. Gentleman not realise that Newham is the second most deprived local authority area in the whole of England and Wales? We have social problems that the Secretary of State does not even know about, never mind experienced.

**Mr. Ridley:** I agree with the hon. Gentleman on one matter; I hope that there will not be a reshuffle of the Opposition Front Bench because the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham), who has not been here for

*[Mr. Ridley]*

the last hour, is the greatest asset we have. He can tell his constituents from me that if they ever have the system of capital value rates and local income tax the average man on average earnings in Copeland will pay £1,116 to his high-spending Labour council.

**Mr. Richard Holt** (Langbaurgh): Would my right hon. Friend care to examine the situation in two neighbouring authorities, both of which I have the honour to represent in the House—Middlesbrough and Langbaurgh? Both authorities have approximately the same number of people, but there are two variants in terms of grant. Middlesbrough has a large ethnic minority and Langbaurgh has a large area of wasteland as a result of dereliction. Consequently, the ratepayers of Langbaurgh have the highest rate in the country to pay and endure. We have taken five separate delegations every year to see Ministers and each year we have been told, "Next year it will be different." Even when we came last week we were told that under the new system it would be different. But it is not different, and as a consequence I must tell my right hon. Friend that there will be outrage in Langbaurgh at the failure to recognise its special needs because it is not on the list, and will remain the highest rated in this northern area.

**Mr. Ridley:** My hon. Friend's constituency is another with a special problem like that of the hon. Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay). My hon. Friend has seen my right hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government and it is better for us to try to sort out the problem in the best way that we can. My hon. Friend will be pleased to know that this year we have seen a 28·4 per cent. reduction in the business rate in Langbaurgh.

**Mr. Harry Barnes** (Derbyshire, North-East): It has taken a long time for common sense to come to some hon. Members, as the question by the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) has shown. Is the Minister aware that fairness cannot be introduced to a system that is inherently unfair? In attempting to introduce some fairness to some areas, the transitional arrangements will lead to a comparative loss in high rateable areas while in low rateable areas there will be a comparative gain. As my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Cousins) said, problems arise in that some people will lose in low rateable value areas within constituencies that have a high rateable value, while people in high rateable value property in low rateable areas will gain. My constituency is directly affected by that, because some of the benefits that might transitionally come to other constituencies will not come to mine, as it is a mixed district area with different rateable values.

**Mr. Ridley:** Every constituency has different problems and different distributions of people and rateable values. There is nothing unique about that. We are seeking to phase out resource equalisation in the transitional safety net while at the same time providing protection for individuals through the very extensive system of rebates which should take care of anybody in an especially bad position.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This statement refers to England. I therefore propose to call two for one because, of course, this is a United Kingdom Parliament and I shall then give Scottish Members an opportunity to put their point of view.

**Mr. Edward Leigh** (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Can my right hon. Friend confirm that it is only fair and equitable to help areas such as mine which have traditionally enjoyed low rateable values? Is it right that in Copeland, for example, the average rateable value per hereditament is £121 and therefore Copeland will benefit considerably from the statement? Does my right hon. Friend agree that that underlines that it is vital not to look at these matters in isolation, but to consider the alternatives? That is why my right hon. Friend was wise to warn people in Copeland on salaries of just £11,000 a year that they could end up paying £1,000 if the scheme of the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) is implemented.

**Mr. Ridley:** I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. I hope that he will visit Copeland, as I hope to do, in order to make sure that the people there are made aware of that fact.

**Sir Hugh Rossi** (Hornsey and Wood Green): My constituents enjoy the unenviable distinction of having to pay the highest community charge in the country—£642 per adult. No doubt that is due to the fact that the local authority is overspending by nearly £400 per adult, and no doubt the electors will take account of that next May. Will my right hon. Friend tell me why a constituency in that situation should be making a contribution to the safety net? Will he introduce powers to rate-cap, and will he apply them vigorously to boroughs such as Haringey?

**Mr. Ridley:** Haringey is both a high-spending authority and a high rateable value authority, so its ratepayers currently contribute to other councils as well as having to pay a great deal to their own council.

I assure my hon. Friend that capping powers are in the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and, if it is felt correct and necessary, we will not hesitate to use them.

**Mr. Harry Ewing** (Falkirk, East): The Secretary of State referred to what he called Labour party policy in relation to these seven pages. Can he tell the House the total cost of producing them—a cost borne by the United Kingdom taxpayer? Is the Secretary of State aware that, by producing these pages, he, personally has called into question the impartiality of the Civil Service? The head of the Civil Service ought to look at the damage that the Secretary of State has done to that service. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that if Labour councils produced that kind of political propaganda the Secretary of State would impose a surcharge? We will be glad to see the back of him and of his double standards.

**Mr. Ridley:** I cannot understand why Opposition Members keep returning to this subject. It would be far wiser to try to forget it. [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah!"] I do not want to forget it. I am delighted for the hon. Gentleman to raise it. Opposition Members seem to be so extremely sensitive about their proposals being mentioned. That surprises me very much.

I have received a parliamentary question. Am I not supposed to answer it? Should I answer parliamentary questions from the Opposition but not from this side?

**Mr. Tony Baldry** (Banbury): Is the reason that we are having to spend so much time this afternoon discussing safety nets, the consistent and persistent overspending by a large number of local authorities, almost all of which are Labour-controlled, such as the London borough of Lambeth which, on average, spends £303 per adult more than it needs to each and every year? Despite that, the council still has hundreds of council units of accommodation empty and hundreds that are full of squatters and it is spending thousands of pounds on the wages of former Labour Members of Parliament who have been defeated in an election and now act as its special advisers. Is it not necessary to introduce the community charge to protect the community as a whole from this consistent and persistent overspending?

**Mr. Ridley:** My hon. Friend is exactly right. Whether the new director general of Lambeth will succeed in putting up the community charge still further remains to be seen, but I would not be surprised if he did.

**Mr. Julian Brazier** (Canterbury): Can my right hon. Friend confirm two things? First, are all the swings that we are so exercised about very modest compared with those that would have resulted from rate revaluation? Secondly, would not areas such as Canterbury, where there have been enormous movements in house prices for reasons that have had nothing to do with local prosperity and a great deal to do with second home owners and other outside factors, lose very heavily if we retained the existing system?

**Mr. Ridley:** I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. The high house prices in some parts of the south-east, particularly his constituency, are the worst possible reason for the people who live there to be asked to pay more towards local government even when their council is a low-spending one. It is absolute nonsense at present. To bring it back in the form of an annual valuation—we must consider the expense of administering it—to clobber people who happen to live in areas where there are high house prices, is the most suicidal policy I have ever heard of.

**Mr. Alex Salmond** (Banff and Buchan): What is the total additional funding that the right hon. Gentleman feels that he has to provide to meet the anxieties of English Tory Members now that the poll tax chickens have come home to roost? Does he realise that the maximum contribution change from £70 to £75 for 1990-91, implies an inflation rate for that year of 7·5 per cent.? Is that a forecast? If so, has he told the Chancellor?

**Mr. Ridley:** If the hon. Gentleman has listened to the statement, he would know that the aggregate external finance for England is £1·8 billion higher than the current year, which is an 8·5 per cent. increase. Those are the figures. The fact that they are higher than what we firmly believe the rate of inflation will be shows that this is quite a generous grant settlement.

**Mr. Alistair Burt** (Bury, North): On behalf of non-domestic ratepayers in the metropolitan borough of Bury, I welcome the anticipated 20 per cent. drop in their rate bills. Will my right hon. Friend reassure domestic ratepayers—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Give the hon. Member a chance.

**Mr. Burt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can my right hon. Friend reassure domestic ratepayers as soon as possible that the main determinant of the community charge will be local authority expenditure rather than Government expenditure policy?

**Mr. Ridley:** I have no doubt that the very large reduction in business rate poundages which will reach the north with the introduction of the new system will make an immense difference to the prosperity of those areas and to their ability to maintain high levels of employment. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his recognition of that.

We hope that the full community charge will begin to take effect as quickly as possible so that we get full accountability of councils to their electors. There will be two elements for a few years—the charge and the safety net—but that should not divert people from the essential task of looking at their community charge as a ready reckoner to assess the efficiency of their council.

**Mr. Timothy Wood** (Stevenage): I welcome the expected reduction in the business rate in Stevenage, which means that local businesses will be free from the high-spending local authority in that respect. The statement about safety nets clearly demonstrates the iniquities of the present system. I only wish that we were able to get rid of some of those iniquities rather more sharply.

**Mr. Ridley:** My hon. Friend is right on both points. This statement begins to get rid of the iniquities of resource equalisation rather more quickly than was originally expected.

**Mr. Brian Wilson** (Cunninghame, North): Does the Secretary of State agree that the silence that greeted his statement before the unnatural break and the disarray that we have since heard from Conservative Members shows that the headless chickens are coming home to roost?

The attitude of those of us who are already suffering the poll tax and those of us who served on the Standing Committee on the Local Government Finance Bill who warned exactly what would happen to Tory Members who are now finding out about it is one of hell mend them, because they will find out a great deal more before it takes effect. Instead of spending money on bogus statistics, will the Secretary of State consider spending a little to set up a helpline for Tory Members who lose their seats because of the poll tax? There are plenty of counsellors available among former Tory Members in Scotland who lost their seats because of the poll tax.

**Mr. Ridley:** There are not nearly as many former hon. Members as there would be if there were a local income tax and capital value rates. In Cunninghame, North the Labour party would lose every seat if it brought that in.

**Mr. Kenneth Hind** (Lancashire, West): Will my right hon. Friend accept the thanks of the voters of Lancashire, West who, as a consequence of his listening to the arguments about a safety net, will now benefit by £25 a head? Will my right hon. Friend look at the figures in front of him for the Labour councils which surround Tory-controlled West Lancashire? He will know that every one of them—Knowsley, Wigan, St. Helens and Liverpool—will pay at least £40 or £50 a head, despite the fact that West Lancashire will contribute towards the safety net.

**Mr. Ridley:** It is a curious fact that the vast majority of authorities which can spend below their GREs are Tory-controlled and the vast majority which spend above their GREs are Labour-controlled. The reason for high community charges is high spending by inefficient Labour councils, and nothing else.

**Mr. David Gilroy Bevan** (Birmingham, Yardley): Will my right hon. Friend accept my thanks for seeing me and other delegates prior to this announcement, when we asked for a fairer system? Will he please record my bitter disappointment on behalf of the Birmingham ratepayers at the fact that this so-called juster technical system which he has found is one which increases even more the injustice faced by Birmingham poll tax payers? Will he think of a transfer to national taxation in line with the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Milton Keynes (Mr. Benyon)? That would mean that after the summer recess, we could, once and for all, do away with this iniquitous system which disprivileges the good housekeepers and is to the benefit of the bad.

**Mr. Ridley:** I must refer my hon. Friend to the fact that Birmingham currently contributes towards resource equalisation. The new system will phase that out. That is what we are doing, and that will be the beginning of the end of the rating system to which he objects so greatly.

**Mr. John Marshall** (Hendon, South): Will my right hon. Friend accept that many believe that the safety net provisions place a premium upon extravagance and a penalty on prudence? Will he confirm that the community charge payers of Barnet will be asked to pay £55, while the community charge payers of Islington will receive £173? In view of the lack of gratitude on the part of the recipients, will he consider ending this compulsory tax on Barnet's community charge payers? Will he confirm that the cost savings under competitive tendering can be as high as 20 per cent.? What would be the cost to the community of a local income tax?

**Mr. Speaker:** Briefly, please.

**Mr. Ridley:** My hon. Friend is quite right—massive savings are available under the new competitive tendering, which authorities can take much further than they are required to do by the law. That is one way, among others, in which they can reduce their community charges. I think that my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall), who sat through the statement today, would agree that there are at least as many people who are grateful for the safety net as there are who resent having to contribute to it. It is obviously difficult to get the balance right, but I believe that in this case we have.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is well known that as you are Mr. Speaker, and stand as Mr. Speaker, you clearly cannot ask a question of a Minister, but you must have a constituency interest. I wonder whether I could assist you, Mr. Speaker, by asking the Secretary of State why, in Croydon——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman could best assist me by keeping his mouth shut.

## BILL PRESENTED

### LOCATION OF PORNOGRAPHIC MATERIAL

Ms. Dawn Primarolo, supported by Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mrs. Audrey Wise, Ms. Clare Short, Mrs. Ann Clwyd, Ms. Harriet Harman, Mr. Frank Doran, Mr. George Howarth and Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, presented a Bill to restrict the location of pornographic material; to provide for licensed vendors of pornographic material; to extend the powers of trading standards officers; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 188.]

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

*Ordered,*

That the Bristol Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (British Railways Board) Order 1989 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

## Poll Tax (Popular Consultation)

6.14 pm

**Mr. John Hughes** (Coventry, North-East): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to require the holding of a referendum before the coming into operation of the Local Government Act 1988.

After that statement, this could not be a more opportune moment to bring my Bill to the House. It will allay some of the fears of worried Conservative Members because it brings a solution to their problem: we should not have the poll tax. The Poll Tax (Popular Consultation) Bill is not an extension of the debate on the pros and cons of the poll tax which appear to be continually debated in this House. Debates have taken place in every town and city which have involved the community in the widest sense. Churches of every denomination have participated, as have charity organisations and every sector of the community, including bishops, priests and vicars. An overwhelming majority have reached the common conclusion that the poll tax is an unfair, regressive tax which discriminates against those with low incomes.

The public at large have a more detailed knowledge of the poll tax than of any other Government legislation which has passed through the House this Session. They are aware that the poll tax makes no allowance for extreme differentials in income or wealth. The public are aware that an elderly pensioner can be required to pay as much as a millionaire or a millionairess. The public want a fair local tax, determined by locally elected representatives and based on ability to pay, with a rebate scheme which would fully offset any hardship which a tax on low incomes would otherwise inflict.

The public have made an informed decision and have rejected a tax which resorts to bailiffs and the seizure of household goods. They have rejected a tax that will get its pound of flesh by imprisonment and, most importantly, they have rejected a tax which fundamentally threatens their democratic right to vote.

My Bill deals specifically with that right as a poll tax issue. My Bill will fully restore that fundamental democratic right, and because it offers every British citizen an extension of his or her democratic rights, its consideration by the House could not be more opportune. Its democratic expression has an affinity with the wider expression of democracy conveyed in the current celebrations of the French revolution, an important landmark in human rights, which coincides with other important democratic revolutions that have been enacted across eastern Europe.

They are all important landmarks in the advancement of the individual and the collective rights of the people. They are major historical events that tend to eclipse and overshadow the English revolutions, especially the peasant revolutions, when the general will of the people forced a dictatorial sovereign to remove a poll tax from the statute book. Regrettably, previous British sovereigns were no respecters of people's rights and offenders were the recipients of the ultimate in physical lessons, and had their heads removed. Steps were taken through the parliamentary process to prevent any succeeding sovereign from challenging the democratic rights of the people.

However, those parliamentary changes failed to foresee or anticipate political usurpation, intentionally or unintentionally, of the people's rights. That would require a Bill of Rights. Until that is on the statute book, I do not suggest that we should revert to the executioner's axe and, although I have heard people say that the Prime Minister behaves like a dictator, I do not suggest that we should remove her head—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] The Prime Minister is supposedly Britain's greatest advocate of human rights, and lord of the rights of every nation and its citizens. She has stomped the streets of Moscow on walkabouts and met Russian dissidents. This weekend, she emphatically defined the high value that she supposedly places on the rights of the British people when she admonished the French President and reminded him of the Magna Carta. She supposedly stands spiritually shoulder to shoulder with Lech Walesa and the Polish people's rights. I ask her to stop denying the British people their rights. If the Prime Minister insists on continuing her charade, it will take Bills like mine to put her and her Government in their place.

I consulted the Prime Minister about a poll tax referendum. I wrote to her on 31 May, before the European elections, and said that I should like to make the most economic use of the polling station facility provided at considerable public cost to carry out a Coventry, North-East poll tax referendum, with the poll tax forms to be provided at my expense. She referred that request to the Home Office for its adjudication, and the Minister's response on 12 June explained that the polling station facility could not be used in that dual manner.

Having been denied that facility, and in the knowledge that the imposition of the poll tax is a matter of serious concern, not only to my constituents but to every hon. Member's constituents, I have introduced this Bill, knowing that it will have the widest possible support. Any Gallup or MORI poll would confirm that, as it would give every elector the same right of access to the ballot box as the Prime Minister imposed on every trade union member.

While this simply worded Bill may not be as visually impressive as the multi-page, word-saturated documents churned out by the Government, it is the most important Bill to come before the House this Session. It gets to the heart of the matter. It recognises the genuine will of the people as it provides them, in 30 frugal words, with the right to exercise their choice on the Government's infamous poll tax. I am grateful for this opportunity to bring the Bill before the House.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. John Hughes, Mr. Frank Cook, Mr. Dave Nellist, Mr. Harry Barnes, Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie, Mr. Bob Cryer, Ms. Mildred Gordon, Mrs. Audrey Wise and Mr. Harry Cohen.

### POLL TAX (POPULAR CONSULTATION)

Mr. John Hughes accordingly presented a Bill to require the holding of a referendum before the coming into operation of the Local Government Act 1988: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 20 October and to be printed. [Bill 189.]

## Points of Order

6.22 pm

**Mr. Bruce Grocott** (The Wrekin): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am amazed that the Bill moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes) received the unanimous support of the House. It concerns a crucial matter, relating directly to the statement that we have just heard, and the critical questions that it raises. In view of the unanimity of the House, will you use your good offices to see whether there is any means by which we could, even at this late stage of the Session, facilitate the quick passage of the Bill, as it would not be opposed?

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd):** Second Reading is on 20 October.

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. We shall soon deal with 15 statutory instruments. Three of them carry on the Order Paper the notification:

> "The Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments has drawn the special attention of the House to the Instrument in its Twenty Sixth Report".

That report is in the Vote Office, but the Committee has not been able to conform with the Standing Orders and make a full report because it examined these instruments, which were drawn to our attention by our counsel, yesterday afternoon at 4.15 when we had our usual weekly meeting. That means that the evidence, which was taken over a period lasting well over an hour from civil servants involved in the drafting of the instruments, and which contains a great deal of background and elucidation material, cannot be provided for the House. In those circumstances, although this is not a point for you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I feel that the statutory instruments should be withdrawn. By crowding through these statutory instruments, the Government are preventing a Standing Order from being operated. I wanted to draw that to your attention.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** I understand the point made by the hon. Gentleman, but it is for the House to decide whether it wishes to have regard to the Committee's opinion. There is nothing out of order about the motions before us. This is a matter for the House to debate and for the House to take a decision on at the end of the debate.

**Mr. Peter L. Pike** (Burnley): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** We should really get on with motions 1 to 15 on water and public health.

**Mr. Pike:** On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I seek your guidance on two issues. I hope that you will be able to consult Mr. Speaker on the first point, which concerns the problem that the papers with the statement were said to be available in the Vote Office, but were not. This problem has put Mr. Speaker and the occupant of the Chair, whoever that person is, in difficulty on numerous occasions. It is time that Mr. Speaker, you and others involved found a better way for making papers relevant to statements available to hon. Members when the statements are made. It is even more appalling that those papers are handed out to members of the press; they get a better service than hon. Members.

On several occasions the Secretary of State referred to a question that he had to answer, but it was a planted question, No. 215. This happens time after time. We always recognise those questions on the Order Paper because they bear that mark that shows that they were handed in for answer the day before.

What is particularly galling is that other hon. Members may have asked similar questions some time before, and got the answer afterwards in the reply to the planted question. The Chair should be making it firmly known —it is your job, Madam Deputy Speaker, to protect the interests of Back-Benchers—that the practice of Ministers, through their parliamentary private secretaries, of asking one of their colleagues to table these planted questions is to be deprecated and should be stopped.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** On the first point that the hon. Gentleman raised, I am sure that Mr. Speaker and my other colleagues in the Chair appreciate the sympathy that the hon. Gentleman and others have extended. I agree with what he said. As to the second point, it is a matter of procedure. I ask the hon. Gentleman to ponder it carefully and seek to raise the matter with the Select Committee on Procedure.

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. This concerns the documents appended to the statement, which we were told by the Secretary of State today referred to a parliamentary question outlining what the Secretary of State believes to be Labour policy. As you will know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is pure unadulterated lies and rubbish. Now——

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order. Mr. Speaker has already dealt with that matter. If the hon. Gentleman has a point of order, I must listen to it, but it must be a genuine point of order and not a matter for debate.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** This is not a question for debate. I have tabled many questions over the past 10 years that I have been a Member of Parliament and on a number of occasions I have received the reply that questions cannot be answered because of disproportionate costs. In replying to that question, the Secretary of State has set a precedent because he has accepted that a certain question can be answered at a particular cost. I put it to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Chair should establish what the cost was so that in future, when questions are not answered because of disproportionate cost, we might have the basis for appeal to the Chair to have the questions answered.

This is not a spurious matter. It is important because the precedent has been set for expensive questions to be answered. The Chair and Parliament should know what the cost was in this instance so that in future we can measure whether it is fair and reasonable for a Department to state that a question cannot be answered on the basis of disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. When a Minister responds to a question referring to the Opposition's policy —this arises during questions to departmental Ministers and especially during questions to the Prime Minister—the occupant of the Chair will invariably remind the Minister that it is for the Government to state what their policy is and that we should not respond by referring to the

Opposition's policy. That is because the Minister is responsible for Government policy. He has no responsibility for the Opposition's policy.

This afternoon we have seen an extension of the practice that Mr. Speaker deprecates during Question Time. When Mr. Speaker says that an hon. Member cannot continue asking questions about matters for which the Minister has no responsibility, the hon. Member must resume his place. In this instance, the Secretary of State for the Environment answered a planted question from one of his hon. Friends about Labour party policy——

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** It is not Labour party policy.

**Mr. Skinner:** I should have said "suggested" Labour party policy or "alleged" Labour party policy. As I have said, we have seen an extension of the practice that is deprecated by Mr. Speaker. If the practice is deprecated during oral questions, it is my opinion that the action of the Secretary of State for the Environment this afternoon should be deprecated and that it should be stopped.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** That is entirely a matter for the Minister. The points of order have been noted. We have a busy day before us and we must now proceed with the debate.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Is it a new point of order?

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** I did ask for a ruling. I ask that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, with Mr. Speaker, should establish the cost of answering the question which was the subject of my point of order. It would set a precedent for those of us who wish to establish whether we are being fairly treated.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** I have known the hon. Gentleman for a long time. I am familiar with the way in which he is able to elicit answers from Ministers. I suggest that he might take up the matter himself and seek the answer from Ministers by the various means available to him.

# Water

6.33 pm

**Mrs. Ann Taylor** (Dewsbury): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1147), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take the following motions:

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Surface Waters (Classification) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1148), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Controlled Waters (Lakes and Ponds) Order 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1149), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Control of Pollution (Consents for Discharges etc.) (Secretary of State Functions) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1151), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Water and Sewerage (Conservation, Access and Recreation) Code of Practice Order 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1152), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Director General of Water Services' Register (Inspection and Charges) Order 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1154), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Water Reorganisation (Pensions etc.) (Designated Persons) Order 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1155) dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Trade Effluents (Prescribed Processes and Substances) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1156), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Control of Pollution (Discharges by the National Rivers Authority) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1157), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Control of Pollution (Radioactive Waste) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1158), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1159), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Control of Pollution (Registers) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1160), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Water Reorganisation (Pensions etc.) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1161), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Water Appointment (Monopolies and Mergers Commission) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1162), dated 7th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Control of Pollution (Revocations) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1150), dated 6th July 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th July, be annulled.

**Mrs. Taylor:** The motions relate to the regulations that the Government are introducing following the passage of the Water Act 1989. We are debating—yet again in rushed circumstances—important regulations that the Government are seeking to push through with the minimum time for consultation and discussion. So great was the haste of the Government to introduce the regulations that the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments had to insist on its right of proper scrutiny when the Government tried to bounce the Committee by presenting 15 sets of regulations and asking the Committee to deal with them within five days. That would have enabled the debate to take place last week, with even less time for consultation and discussion with outside groups.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) said earlier, the Joint Committee had time to consider only three of the 15 sets of statutory instruments in detail. When the Committee had examined the three sets, it issued a pretty damning report in which it outlined the major defects and drew attention to sloppy drafting which should not form the basis of legislation. I hope that the Minister will clarify some of the issues that have been raised by the Committee. Its comments on the regulations are significant and important.

Everyone will agree that the water supply and water quality regulations, which relate to EC standards, are important. The Joint Committee reported that the drafting is defective and that there are unexpected uses of powers or provisions that give rise to doubt as to the vires of the regulations. Various examples are given.

The Committee queried regulation 3(6) with the Department's officials and witnesses. The Department's witnesses

> "admitted that the drafting of the regulations was not successful."

Similarly, the witnesses admitted that the drafting of regulation 6(2) was defective and confusing. They agreed that the drafting of regulation 8(1) was deficient. The Committee asked the witnesses for the meaning of some of the phrases contained in the regulations. The witnesses confessed that the meaning was not revealed in the text because after the making of amendments there had been an accidental failure to make consequential amendments in the text of the instrument. It is obvious that the Government have yet again put their haste to rush these regulations through before the quality of the legislation that they have enacted. I could produce further examples, but I do not wish to detain the House too long.

The Joint Committee has drawn the attention of the House to the fact that, on the basis of its discussions and investigations, it has found an unusual and unexpected use of powers. The same criticisms are made of the water supply, sewerage service and customer service standard regulations.

When the Joint Committee was discussing these matters and taking evidence from departmental witnesses, the Department gave some assurances that amending regulations to rectify some of the drafting omissions would come into force on 1 September. We are nearing the summer recess and I ask the Minister what opportunity there will be for parliamentary scrutiny of the amendments. We have precious little time today to discuss 15 sets of regulations. If they are all as defective as the three that the Joint Committee identified, a host of defective regulations will be introduced while Ministers and their officials talk about possible consequent amendments that it will not be possible to subject to parliamentary scrutiny. I hope that the Minister will clarify the position. It is not good enough for Parliament to be asked to pass defective regulations which the Department has admitted that it intends to amend before they come into operation.

**Mr. Tim Boswell** (Daventry): Does the hon. Lady agree that in these matters a balance must be observed? She will note that SI No. 1159 provides for the payment of penalty charges for unsatisfactory service. Is it not entirely desirable that the payment of such charges should become possible at the earliest date? Would not the course that she has outlined, where we might have to wait quite a long time for minor and technical defects to be rectified, prevent customers from availing themselves of the benefit of an entirely positive regulation?

**Mrs. Taylor:** The customer will not get the so-called benefits of the system in September. It will be quite some time before it takes effect. The problem is that the Government are intent on pushing ahead with privatisation as quickly as possible. That being so, they are not willing to consider the interests of consumers or of others. Our discussions on the Water Bill, as it then was, have been marked at every stage by the ridiculous haste and curtailment of debate which have been imposed by Ministers.

Fortunately, the public are not as naive as Ministers would wish and they have rumbled the consequences of privatisation despite, or perhaps because of, the Government's panic. There is no doubt that Ministers are longing for the recess so that they can make even more statements relevant and important to privatisation—perhaps on debt write-off or the value of the K factor—without even the degree of parliamentary scrutiny being allowed today. Given all the current speculation, it appears that Ministers responsible for the bad handling of the Act are likely to be out of the Department, even out of the Government, before the policy is out of the woods.

By allowing only three hours debate on 15 regulations, is the Minister saying that they are not sufficiently important to warrant more time? I believe that they are potentially very important. They could have helped to protect us from the worst consequences of privatisation —the threat to land, the problems that consumers will face in dealing with a private monopoly and problems with access to information.

A whole stream of regulations must be debated today in a short time. For example, there are the Surface Waters (Classification) Regulations, which comprise one group that we are happy to accept. I wonder why the Government accept 50 mg of nitrate per litre as an appropriate minimum standard for surface water extracted for drinking water when they opposed a draft EC directive set at the same limit. Is it simply that the Government are schizophrenic and will not agree to limits for Europe that they will agree to in Britain, or has there been a mistake and we are to have standards higher than some parts of the Government might wish? Of course, we do not make any complaints about that.

I hope that the Minister will answer one important question: to which waters will the regulations apply? Will he give us a straight answer? I hope that he will confirm that they will apply to all waters where there is abstraction for drinking water. I hope that he will tell us tonight and not say that we will have an answer in a few weeks when everyone is on holiday.

Another set of regulations that cause concern, and that are certainly not adequate to give the protection that we need post-privatisation, are the Control of Pollution (Registers) Regulations. We acknowledge, even if the Secretary of State does not, that the public wants proper access to information and will increasingly demand it. The regulations are inadequate because they do not make it easy—indeed, they make it difficult—for the public to have meaningful access to critical information. Information is to be stored in a few places, in a technical form only, and there will be a charging system for access. That makes it difficult, to say the least, to obtain the information that the public may require. In addition, some water authorities define certain samples as operational and omit them from the register. That creates a huge potential for abuse.

We know that the Secretary of State has a new-found concern for accurate information. However, even before his statement this afternoon the Opposition had concluded that the old adage should be rewritten and that we should now say that there are lies, damn lies, statistics and Ridleys. The accuracy of the Secretary of State's information is—if I can say it—rather far from accurate.

We are not surprised that the Secretary of State and the Minister have not taken the opportunity provided by the regulations to improve public access to verified information. I hope that the EC directive on access to environmental information will ensure that information is not only available, but available in a form that can be readily used and readily understood by the public. It is a shame that the EC appears to be giving protection that should more appropriately have been provided by the Government.

The EC plays the same role in the drinking water regulations. It goes without saying that we welcome the transposition of the 1980 EC directive on drinking water quality into British law. After all, we pressed for that in Committee. We are concerned about the sloppy drafting referred to by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments. The transposition of that directive into British law takes us no further forward in the implementation of the directive. Only last week the Secretary of State pleaded with the European Commission for more time to implement a directive that the Government signed in 1980 and that should have been implemented by 1985. The Secretary of State said during the debate on Lords amendments to the Water Act that he could not accept the House of Lords deadline for compliance by 1993 because it was against Community law which gave a deadline of 1985.

We learned today that the Secretary of State was no more successful in pulling the wool over the eyes of the Commissioner than he has been in persuading the British public of the virtues of privatisation. No doubt he put the case badly. The basic position remains, and all outstanding action against the United Kingdom remains active. The Commissioner, despite the Secretary of State's comments to the contrary, is still not satisfied that the British Government have produced a reasonable timetable for compliance with the drinking water directive. The European Commission will take action against the United Kingdom on a variety of issues.

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford): Given the Opposition's feeling about this matter, is it not possible that, far from the Government taking a negative stance on the purity of water, they are in fact ensuring that any standards that are adopted are applicable to this country and its rivers and geological strata, which are not similar to those in the European Community? Are not the Government defending the British people, including my constituents, to ensure that there is water purity consistent with what we need?

**Mrs. Taylor:** The hon. Gentleman's statement astounds me. The Government signed the 1980 directive and agreed to the standards and parameters laid down in it. Ministers have not said that they do not intend to implement the directive; they have simply failed to make any progress. Do the Government now intend to change their policy and, as the hon. Gentleman suggests, say that they should not implement the directive?

**The Minister for Water and Planning (Mr. Michael Howard):** The hon. Lady has failed to deal with the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash). Of course the Government intend to comply with the directive, including in the area represented by my hon. Friend, but we are not prepared to comply with it using technology that is unproven and may, in itself, lead to health risks for my hon. Friend's constituents.

**Mrs. Taylor:** That is complete nonsense. The Minister is looking to make excuses, because he wants to go back on Government assurances on compliance. The hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) mentioned geological problems. There is scope in the directive for derogations where such problems exist. Earlier, the Minister accepted the need to implement the directive. If he is going back on that, the Commission will be very interested to hear about it.

**Mr. Howard:** I am not going back on it, but I hope that the hon. Lady is not challenging the bona fides of the advice on which we are acting, and which we put in detail to the Commission, on the denitrification technology that is necessary to comply with the nitrate directive in two areas of the country, including that represented by my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford. That technology is not yet proven, and we cannot be satisfied that it would not itself pose risks to health. Is the hon. Lady challenging that evidence? If so, on what basis?

**Mrs. Taylor:** I am making the point that the Government are looking for excuses to delay action yet again. The Government have had since 1980 to produce their plans, but they deliberately prevaricated and delayed. They are now looking for even more excuses.

**Mr. Michael Lord** (Suffolk, Central): It would be of great assistance to many right hon. and hon. Members if the hon. Lady would answer precisely the question just put to her by my hon. and learned Friend the Minister.

**Mrs. Taylor:** The Government obviously decided that they need to look for new excuses. When we debated the Lords amendments, the Secretary of State told the House that there was no need to worry about the problems surrounding nitrates because he would secure relaxations of the directive from the EC. Obviously he has not done so, so the Government are trying to change their tactics. We should be clear where responsibility lies. The Government signed the directive in 1980 and had nine years in which to

*[Mrs. Taylor]*

come up with a method of dealing with the problem. Instead, they sat on the problem, and now refuse to deal with it because they want to prepare the water industry for privatisation.

**Mr. Howard:** I shall deal with that point in due course, but will the hon. Lady stop prevaricating and answer the question that I put to her? Is she challenging the scientific basis on which we have yet to test the technology that is necessary to achieve compliance in respect of Stafford? If so, on what basis? Such matters are far too serious to be dealt with irresponsibly, as the hon. Lady is doing.

**Mrs. Taylor:** I am challenging whether the Government are serious about their intention to comply with the drinking water directive. The EC has been compelled to take action against the British Government in many areas. I refer to the lax interpretation of the lead parameter in Scotland, nitrites in Norwich, levels of aluminium and bacteriological standards in Bradford, levels of aluminium, lead, polyforms and high $pH_2$ in Calderdale, nitrates in Redbridge, aluminium in Birmingham, and illegal derogation from the required aluminium levels in Yorkshire. Time and time again, the Commission asked the Government for their plans for complying with the 1980 directive. I repeat that, after nine years, the Government have still not come up with any.

**Mr. Roger Knapman** (Stroud): Will the hon. Lady give way?

**Mrs. Taylor:** I have given way on a number of occasions, and I have revealed exactly what are the Government's intentions.

Contrary to the Secretary of State's statements when the Lords amendments were debated, there is no prospect of a general relaxation of the directive. The regulatory committee established to monitor compliance with the directive is charged with the responsibility

"to improve and accelerate practical implementation of these Directives, and while retaining the protection provided to man and the environment . . ."

As the Minister and his officials know, the only likely change will be a more comprehensive specification of the parameters for pesticides. Any other changes are likely to involve the setting of higher, not lower, parameters for substances such as aluminium.

The Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 1989 have been proclaimed by the Minister as giving the consumer a better deal. However, by comparison with the consumers' charter that we advocated in Committee, the regulations are pretty meagre, and they are totally inadequate for the dangers posed to the consumer by privatisation.

The Minister consulted on those regulations, but unfortunately ignored many of the representations he received. Certainly he ignored many of those made by the National Consumer Council, though he may have listened to the people who hope to run the industry post-privatisation. The National Consumer Council, like ourselves, welcomes the basic principle of a guaranteed standards scheme and of a compensation scheme, but there is much that the council would like to change. It points out that the arrangements for consumer redress are complex and not comprehensive, when they should be simple and easy to understand and use. The NCC also comments:

"Because the balance of power between individual consumers and a monopolistic supplier"—

such as the water plcs will be—

"is weighted in favour of the industry, we believe the burden of proof must rest largely with the water and sewerage companies."

The council has many arguments with the Secretary of State and with the Minister for Water and Planning, and is disappointed that its representations were not taken on board.

The regulations lay down the arrangements that should be observed if appointments made by the undertakers are not kept, yet such appointments will be imposed by the undertakers and will not be the subject of agreement between the company and the customer. Moreover, the customer will have to prove that the record of an appointment made by the company is incorrect, which it will be very difficult for the individual customer to do.

As to the interruption of water supplies, obviously the hon. and learned Gentleman listened to the industry rather than to the consumer organisations. The draft regulations stipulated that there should be 24 hours' notice of an interruption of supply, but now the Minister proposes no minimum period of notice. The regulations incorporate a number of glaring anomalies. They include the provision that anyone in debt to a water company will not be entitled to compensation. That is likely to create problems, especially if one bears in mind what is likely to happen to water charges and that the prospect of metering is looming. Both will lead to an increased number of debts and a higher percentage of disputed bills. All in all, the regulations do little to strengthen the hand of the consumer, and I hope that the Minister will think again about them.

Perhaps the hon. and learned Gentleman will this evening answer the question asked of him by a number of consumer organisations. Will he confirm that any undertaker that breaks the code of practice and does not follow the regulations' guidelines will be liable to lose its licence? As even some Conservative Members said, one is dealing with a private monopoly which will pose many dangers to the consumer.

**Mr. Edward Leigh** (Gainsborough and Horncastle): This is a matter of grave importance to my constituents as I represent an area that has been accused of being high in nitrates. I hope that the hon. Lady will answer my question; she has not done so yet, although she has been given many opportunities. If she has her way tonight, my constituents may be put at risk.

**Mrs. Taylor** *rose*——

**Mr. Leigh:** I do not want any more prevarication. My constituents may be put at risk if Labour's proposal is implemented, because the necessary technology is not available. It is about time that she answered.

**Mrs. Taylor:** The hon. Gentleman is scaremongering yet again. He knows very well that his Government signed that directive and agreed the limits on nitrate. The Secretary of State may think that he knows better than the EC and the health organisations what constitutes a safe nitrate level, but I assure him that his consumers would like the 1980 water directive to be implemented.

**Mr. Keith Raffan** (Delyn): Will the hon. Lady give way?

**Mrs. Taylor:** No, I have already given way far too many times.

Let me say a little about what many consider one of the most important of all the regulations, and one of the most controversial. It is controversial because the Minister has been very misleading. I refer to what will happen to the land owned by the water authorities. What are the implications for conservation, access and recreation after privatisation?

Throughout our discussions the Minister has tried to play down the problem of the protection of public land —for, until privatisation, it remains public. We all know that he faces a dilemma. The water authorities own nearly half a million acres of land—much of it in areas of outstanding natural beauty, even if not all of it is formally classified as such. The Government have bowed to different pressures at different times. In the House of Lords they introduced first one and then another set of amendments, and then came up with the proposal that a share of the proceeds would go to the public. That was, at the least, an admission that land sales would result in a gain.

The Minister's basic problem is that if he places too many restrictions on the use of the land he will send what are, from his point of view, the wrong signals and messages to the City. He must keep open the prospect of money to be made from the development of the land. After all, the water industry is a no-growth—or, at least, low-growth —industry, and such industries are not usually very attractive to the stock market. The land represents the "carrot". That is why the code of practice on conservation, access and recreation is full of pious intentions but is, as a whole, almost unenforceable.

The Minister is paying lip service to the protection of public access. He recognises that he must say something about it, but he is not doing anything. Neither the Water Act nor the codes of practice will necessarily prevent the water undertakers, their subsidiaries, holding companies or subsequent owners of the land from blocking public access.

That is a deliberate policy. The Minister had a choice: he could have written into the legislation real constraints on the use of land and access to it, but he chose not to. The cash-register mentality has prevailed. That is the problem with all the regulations—the interests of the new public companies come before those of consumers. That is why we shall vote against the regulations tonight.

7.4 pm

**The Minister for Water and Planning (Mr. Michael Howard):** The speech of the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) typifies the approach to the legislation that the Opposition have adopted from the outset. It was full of wild statements and allegations which the hon. Lady, when questioned, was completely unable to substantiate, although they were bound to give rise to considerable concern in her constituency as well as in those of my hon. Friends. These are serious matters, and they deserve to be dealt with seriously rather than being made the subject of the kind of trivial scaremongering that we have heard from the hon. Lady.

**Mrs. Ann Taylor:** Is the Minister saying that people are not concerned about the quality of their drinking water? If they are not concerned, why is the Commission receiving more and more complaints from areas where nitrates and aluminium are causing problems?

**Mr. Howard:** I shall be dealing with the views of the Commission. The fact remains that the hon. Lady made specific allegations about the quality of drinking water in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash), and entirely failed to substantiate her challenge to the explanation that has been given of why we may not be able to comply with the Community's nitrate directive in my hon. Friend's constituency by 1993. She maintained her position with a series of generalisations that did not back up her point. That is a disgracefully irresponsible attitude, and the hon. Lady ought to be thoroughly ashamed of herself.

**Mrs. Taylor:** Does the Minister accept that neither I nor any other Opposition Member is taking action against the Government because of the standard of British drinking water—that it is the European Commission that is doing so?

**Mr. Howard:** The Commission recently issued a reasoned opinion in respect of drinking water in some restricted areas of the country. The first point to appreciate —this is something that Opposition Members do their utmost to conceal at every opportunity—is that practically every member country of the Community has already been taken to the European Court for breach of the directive. We are the only member country that has yet to appear before that court for breach of an environmental directive, and I am confident that we shall maintain our good record.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): Is there not something odious and wrong about the fact that an unelected body like the European Commission can lay obligations on a sovereign country such as the United Kingdom—obligations that will cause the Government and people of this country great trouble and cost—when that body has no democratic credentials and is responsible to no one but itself? It can make these statements and make others bring forward commitments, and it is no water off its back, to coin a phrase. Is that not democratically odious, and, when he is being frank, does not my hon. and learned Friend have the strongest reservations about it?

**Mr. Howard:** I think that it would be unwise to travel down the road along which my hon. Friend has tempted me. He used the word "odious", however, and what I find odious are the remarks of people such as the hon. Member for Dewsbury, who, in a broadcast earlier today, welcomed the fact that this country was being taken to the European Court. That is both odious and disgraceful, and another reason for her to be thoroughly ashamed of herself.

**Mrs. Ann Taylor:** What I said was that I was sorry that it had come to this, and that I wished that the British Government had taken action. If the British Government are not willing to protect drinking water standards in this country, we need to use the Commission to do so. It is the Government who are acting disgracefully.

**Mr. Howard:** If the hon. Lady checks the transcript of her remarks, she will find that she did indeed welcome the fact that the Commission was proposing to take us to court.

**Mr. Knapman:** I agree with what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). Will my hon. and learned Friend therefore speculate on why the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) takes no notice of the letter dated 16 May 1989, which is available in the Library, from the gentleman who purports to have powers over this country, Carlo Ripa di Meana, who said:

> "I am pleased to say that these discussions have now come to a satisfactory conclusion. The amendments . . . along with the statement which I understand to have been made when introducing these amendments in the House of Lords, satisfy me that the UK Government intends to rectify any deficiencies in water supplies as quickly as possible taking certain practicalities into account."

Is there not an inconsistency in EEC matters?

**Mr. Howard:** My hon. Friend is right to identify the substantial progress that we made during our discussions with the Commission. However, I want to deal with the one outstanding issue which relates to the nitrates directive and to the fact that we have said that we shall comply with it by 1993, the deadline which the Commission has set for us in all areas except two. We cannot guarantee that we shall be able to comply by 1993 in those two areas because we are not yet certain that the technology exists that can be used without risk to the health of those who live in those areas. These matters are still under discussion with the Commission. Detailed technical discussion of those matters is due to take place tomorrow between officials of the Department and officials of the Commission. I am confident that when the Commission learns at first hand of the technical details as to why it is simply not possible to give a guarantee that we shall comply in those two areas by 1993 it will see the overwhelming good sense of the British Government's case and we shall hear no more about the matter.

**Mr. Chris Mullin** (Sunderland, South): The Minister has had eight years to explain the technical difficulties to the EC. What has kept him?

**Mr. Howard:** If the hon. Gentleman had been half as assiduous during our deliberations on the Bill as he purports to be now, he would know the answer to that question because it has been given many times. The drinking water directive came into effect in 1980. As the hon. Member for Dewsbury suggested, it is perfectly true that we signed it in 1980. We, in common with many other member states, assumed that compliance with the directive would be assessed on the basis of the average of the samples that were taken. We wrote to the Commission in 1982 and set out our understanding of how compliance with the directive would be assessed. We received no answer. We assumed that we should be entitled to proceed on the basis that that would be the way in which compliance would be assessed.

Having written in 1982, we received no answer until the end of 1987 when, for the first time, we received a letter from the Commission which said that it proposed to assess compliance with the directive not on the basis of the average of the samples that were taken but on the basis that each and every sample that was taken had to comply with the directive. We are prepared to comply on that basis. We have not sought to challenge that interpretation of the directive, but any reasonable person must appreciate that, since that letter arrived only at the end of 1987, to comply with the directive on that basis would inevitably take a little longer than would have been the case if compliance could have been assessed on the basis of the average of the samples, which is what we had assumed to be the case during the long period from 1982 to the end of 1987.

That point arose during our discussions last week with the Commission. The version that I have put to the House is in no way in dispute. When I put this version to the Commission, there was no riposte, or come-back, or any attempt to suggest that it was inaccurate in any way. That is the answer to the question of the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin). It is also the answer to the question that was put more than once by the hon. Member for Dewsbury. That is the reason why we have not yet fully complied in every respect with the European Community's drinking water directive.

**Sir Nicholas Bonsor** (Upminster): My hon. and learned Friend deserves the sympathy of the House for having to deal with a Commission that is so lax in the way that it operates. I hope that he will bear in mind in his dealings with the Commission the profound dissatisfaction that many Conservative Members feel about the way in which detailed legislation that is proposed in this country is interfered with. I hope that he will do his best to ensure —as I am certain that he will—that the Commission bears fully in mind the needs of each member state when considering such detailed proposals.

**Mr. Howard:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend. Perhaps the last observation that I need to make on the matter is that I am confident, as I have already said, that our discussions with the Commission will lead to a satisfactory resolution of the problem without the need for the Commission to take us to the European Court. If the Commission were, notwithstanding all these matters, to take us to the European Court on the issue, I can think of few things that would be more calculated to bring the Commission into disrepute.

As for the remarks of the hon. Member for Dewsbury, is so far as they concern the regulations that are before the House and the Opposition prayer that the regulations should be annulled——

**Mr. Marlow:** Will my hon. and learned Friend give way?

**Mr. Howard:** Before I deal with the hon. Lady's remarks, I shall give way again to my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Marlow:** I should like my hon. and learned Friend's views on one other subject. Is it appropriate that a European institution should be responsible for deciding the quality of the drinking water that comes out of the taps in each member state? Should not each member state be able to decide for itself? My hon. and learned Friend has said that he is confident that we shall meet the standards and that we always do, whereas other countries do not. Is he confident that the Portuguese, the French and southern Italy will be able to meet those standards? Are we being picked on? Is there some degree of political spite by the Commission?

**Mr. Howard:** I can reassure my hon. Friend on his last point. There can be no question of spite. It is certainly not true that we are being picked on, because practically every other member state in the Community has already been taken to court for breach of this directive. My hon. Friend mentioned Portugal. Portugal is a shining exception. It has not yet been taken to the European Court. Perhaps that has something to do with the fact that the regulations do not yet apply to Portugal since it became a member of the EC only recently.

**Mr. Lord:** Before my hon. and learned Friend leaves the question of nitrates, is it not the case that throughout most of the country there is no difficulty in meeting the standards but that, in some parts of the country, because of unusual agricultural conditions due to soil types and agricultural practices over the years, many of which are extremely complicated and will take quite a time to sort out, there are peculiar problems as a result of nitrates? They can be removed from drinking water by means of blending and diluting the water in other ways, and that is what we do when we can. However, in order scientifically or chemically to remove nitrates from the water we need new technology which, as yet, we cannot be certain about. Therefore, as my hon. and learned Friend has said, it would be dangerous for us to proceed too quickly. The Government are looking at agricultural practices in those areas with a view to doing something about them, but will if not take some time? Is not my hon. and learned Friend moving forward as fast as he possibly can, given those limitations?

**Mr. Howard:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I agree entirely with what he has said, and I am grateful for his intervention which has entirely accurately expressed the position. There is only one important point that I ought to add to what he has said before we leave the subject completely. It is important that people should not be alarmed by the Opposition's scaremongering tactics and their irresponsibility. Even in those few areas where the directive's nitrates level is exceeded, it is important to appreciate that all our advice is to the effect that there is no danger whatever to people's health.

The hon. Member for Dewsbury used generalisations about the regulations and repeated the criticisms of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments. We accept its valuable criticisms. We shall put those matters right by means of amending regulations as soon as possible. We have not heard from the hon. Lady any reasons why the House should strike down these regulations. That is what the debate is about and what the Opposition's prayer asks the House to do—to strike down these regulations, which put in place the detail of the regulatory structure that is to be provided under the Water Act 1989 and provide the means of achieving those fundamental environmental improvements to which we are completely committed and which will secure for our people the cleaner water environment that they want.

We spent over 300 hours debating the Water Bill. Hardly one of those hours passed without our being told by the Labour party how keen it was to see environmental improvements put in place. At every turn Labour Members assured us that they recognised the mistakes that their party had made and that their record in government was lamentable. They said that they now wanted to improve matters and put those improvements into place. At the first opportunity of translating those words into action in respect of these regulations, their reaction is to pray against them, strike them down and deny our people the means of improvement that the regulations represent.

What do the regulations achieve? To what do the Opposition object so violently that they wish to strike them down? Are they the water drinking regulations? For the first time, they incorporate directly into the law of England and Wales the European Community's drinking water directive and, in many respects, go beyond it, imposing standards more stringent and demanding that those in the directive. Our view—this may be of interest to my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow)—is that the Commission should not be the final arbiter of drinking water standards in this country and there are respects in which we should go further than the Commission's directive would suggest. When that is the case, we do not hesitate to do so, and that is what the regulations provide.

For hour after hour during our debates on the Water Bill, the Opposition told us how keen they were to see the drinking water directive incorporated into our law. We were criticised for not incorporating it directly into statute. Now we have brought forward regulations that will achieve the incorporation of the drinking water directive, and more, into our law. What on earth are the Opposition doing voting against it, seeking to strike it down, seeking to deny our people the benefits that this provision will secure?

Why do the Opposition want to strike down the regulations that will give effect to customer service standards and the payments that the new companies will have to make when they breach them? The regulations provide for the £5 cash payment or credit for each occasion or day on which certain standards are not met. Why do the Opposition want to deny that benefit to customers of the privatised water industry?

Why do the Opposition want to strike down the regulations that provide for some of the details of the operations of the National Rivers Authority, increasingly recognised as the strongest environmental protection agency in Europe? Hour after hour in debate on the Water Bill we were told that the NRA lacked teeth. In many respects, these regulations give it those teeth. The Opposition's immediate reaction is to seek to extract them by striking down these regulations.

**Mr. Cash:** Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that, contrary to the views that are consistently expressed by the Opposition, including the Front Bench, on matters relating to water and water pollution, Conservative Governments have consistently—all the way through, from 1875, to 1936 and 1974—introduced legislation to improve trade effluents and deal with pollution? The whole of the Opposition's policy is constructed on a consistent policy of hypocrisy.

**Mr. Howard:** I know far better than to take issue with my hon. Friend on any matter relating to the 19th century, but I am happy to be able to agree fully not only with his reference to what happened in that century but with his more recent references. He is right; we have always taken these matters seriously. One need look no further than the history of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and the Labour Government's shameful neglect to implement it and do anything that would have enabled the public to play a part in monitoring water pollution. Labour's record —or lack of it—speaks for itself.

Why does the Labour party wish to strike down the provision for the code of practice on conservation, access

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and recreation? This document, in draft, was described by the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley), whom I am delighted to see in his place, as fine in principle and welcomed by many organisations. Since then it has been further improved. It is an important step in ensuring that the privatised water industry acts in accordance with the considerable duties laid upon it in the Water Act. What on earth is the Labour party doing in seeking to strike down the order that gives effect to that code of practice? Labour's attitude passes all comprehension.

I shall explain to the House exactly what the regulations and orders will achieve and why it is so important for the future of our water environment that they be approved by the House. The drinking water quality regulations are perhaps the most important of all these measures. If there were any doubts about the Government's commitment to high quality water supplies and to full implementation of the Community's drinking water directive, those doubts must surely now be laid to rest. The regulations comprise a comprehensive system for safeguarding the quality of our water supplies.

**Sir Hugh Rossi** (Hornsey and Wood Green): My hon. and learned Friend has just said that the regulations are a comprehensive scheme for protecting our water supply. I understand that the regulations relate only to drinking water. As he knows, the Environment Select Committee was concerned with wider problems of water quality. Can my hon. and learned Friend say when those other matters —for example, river quality—will be tackled and, in particular, give the timetable for laying down water quality objectives under section 105 of the Water Act?

**Mr. Howard:** My hon. Friend will appreciate that I am dealing with the measures that cover the drinking water regulations. Other regulations before the House touch on those wider matters, including the powers of the National Rivers Authority and the extent to which the public will have access to records on river water quality. My hon. Friend is right: the regulations do not deal with river water quality standards.

We want to deal with those matters as soon as we reasonably can, but I hope that my hon. Friend agrees that it would be sensible to await the NRA's advice before these standards are set. That is one of the more important functions of the NRA. It will advise the Secretary of State on the setting of the standards and, when they have been set, the NRA will have the important task of regulating discharges to ensure that those standards are met. We are some way off putting those standards into place, for the good reason—which I hope that my hon. Friend will accept—that it is important to have the NRA's advice before we take that step.

The drinking water regulations fully incorporate the stringent requirements of the Community directive directly into our law and go well beyond it in a number of important respects. They make it absolutely clear that all water supplies must comply not only with the European Community's quality standards but with 14 additional national standards. These include controls on certain chlorinated solvents, copper and zinc and acidity. The lead standard is also tighter than the one set in the directive. We believe that it is important to continue reducing people's exposure to lead from any source.

The regulations provide for frequent monitoring and analysis. They lay down minimum sampling frequencies far higher than those in the directive. For example, the regulations specify monitoring frequencies for aluminium, iron and manganese at least four times higher than those in the directive. They require sampling normally to be done at the consumer's tap and impose requirements relating to the collection and analysis of samples, with laboratories subjected to independent quality control checks. In addition, the drinking water inspectorate to be established shortly will check on the water undertakers' monitoring and analysis.

There are a number of new requirements for water treatment. All water supplied will have to meet certain minimum treatment requirements. Many more water supplies than now will have to be treated to reduce plumbo-solvency. No new chemical or product will be able to be used in treatment or mains relining unless its use has been approved by the Secretary of State.

The availability of information on water quality is crucial. People are entitled to full information about the quality of their water supply. For the first time, comprehensive information on water quality will be published regularly in a way that highlights whether supplies are complying with the quality standards and, if they are not, what is being done about it. A public record containing information about analytical results for every water supply zone will be established from next January. It will show clearly whether samples comply with the standards set in the regulations, particulars of any relaxations from the standards granted by the Secretary of State, details of any undertakings given under section 20(5)(b) of the Water Act for each zone and progress with those undertakings.

The public record will be held at all water offices normally open to the public, and the address and telephone number of one of these offices will be on the annual water bill sent to each customer.

**Mrs. Ann Taylor:** Will the Minister confirm that there will be a charge for access to that information?

**Mr. Howard:** The hon. Lady made that allegation in the course of her remarks. She is wrong about that as she has been in so many other respects. No charge will be made for access to that information.

**Mrs. Taylor:** Is the Minister saying, therefore, that there will be completely open access to and complete accountability of all information? Can the Minister go further and say whether that information will be presented in a form that is understandable by the layman, or are we to see computer print-outs such as the present print-outs, which are coded and virtually unintelligible to the layman? That is not proper access to information, is it?

**Mr. Howard:** Here again we see the Labour party's attitude——

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): Answer the question.

**Mr. Howard:** We see it at its most unattractive. Information will be available in the form in which it becomes available to the water undertakers. They will provide information about the samples that they take. Is the hon. Lady suggesting that someone else should edit the information and put it in a manner that, she says, would then be understandable by the public? Who would be the first to complain in that case that the figures were being doctored, if not the hon. Lady herself?

**Mrs. Ann Taylor:** Does the Minister want the public to have access to meaningful information or not?

**Mr. Howard:** I do, and that is why the information is being made available in the way in which I have suggested.

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg** (Hampstead and Highgate): My hon. and learned Friend will probably know that in the gas industry, for example, consumers are entitled when they receive their bills to tick a box saying that they want a declaration of calorific value supplied to them. Will my hon. and learned Friend examine the method used in the gas industry to see whether it might be a useful way for consumers to ask for information about water supplies? Does my hon. and learned Friend also agree that the Opposition are talking sheer rubbish? I doubt whether one in a million people want to waste time on this. Only those who are stirring up this nonsense will want to. Those of us who have been drinking tap water for many years are surviving perfectly safely and do not want this nonsense perpetrated.

**Mr. Howard:** My hon. Friend is correct in describing the Opposition's remarks as absolute nonsense. I cannot make an estimate of the number of people who will want access to these records and information, but I am determined that anyone who wants to should be able to gain access and see the information. That is what the regulations provide. On my hon. Friend's first point, I will study the matters to which he referred. However, he will appreciate that there are considerable differences between the gas and water industries and it may not be possible to adopt the precedent in the way he suggested.

**Mr. Raffan:** Does not the performance of members of the Opposition Front Bench on access to information contrast sharply with their behaviour when in office when they kept details of discharge consent applications secret from the public? They prevented the openness and access to information that this Government are now providing.

**Mr. Howard:** My hon. Friend is right. It is a bit rich for the hon. Member for Dewsbury to complain about the fact that the information will not be comprehensible when the Government whom she supported—and she was a Member of Parliament at that time—denied the customer access to that information altogether. It was not a question whether the information was comprehensible. The information was not available as a result of a deliberate act of a Government whom the hon. Lady supported day in and day out in the Division Lobbies.

Local authorities have a continuing interest in the quality of water supplies. The regulations will help them by requiring the water undertakers to send them additional information about supplies in their area at regular intervals. There is also a duty on water undertakers to notify both the local authority and the health authority immediately anything happens to a water supply that could be a significant health risk.

The principal task of the new drinking water inspectorate will be to check compliance with these regulations. It will have access to all the undertakers' records and will carry out a technical audit of its results, sampling and analysis arrangements, progress on its compliance programmes and action taken where a standard is breached. If the inspectors find any shortcomings, they will need to discuss corrective action with the undertaker and advise the Secretary of State on the use of his enforcement and prosecution powers. They will also produce regular published reports on their activities.

All these measures add up to a first-class system for ensuring that the high quality of water supplies in England and Wales is maintained and further improved. Tight legally enforceable standards, full disclosure of information, Government commitment to full compliance with the Community directive and a new team of inspectors provide the proof. Perhaps the hon. Lady will explain to the House what precisely she objects to in these regulations and why she will recommend the House to vote them down later this evening.

The second group of instruments is concerned with the control of pollution. They carry forward the updating and strengthening of the pollution control system in the Water Act and give immediate effect to the new systems from the transfer date. These instruments put in place from transfer date the essential regulatory mechanisms required to maintain and carry forward the basic element of the pollution control system—the regulation of effluent discharges.

In addition to this essential structure, the Act provides new powers for pollution control, including those for setting up protection zones, and further precautions in respect of dangerous substances. It introduces systems classifications and provides the basis for the system of statutory water quality objectives to which my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir. H. Rossi) referred. We shall be bringing forward further statutory instruments under these new powers when we have been able to complete the detailed preparations necessary. These will include, most crucially, taking advice from the new expert body and the strongest environmental agency in Europe, the National Rivers Authority. These instruments will be available to be taken into account in the river quality survey beginning in 1990.

Let me make clear the fundamental principles underlying the regulations. The first is openness and public accountability. In the Control of Pollution Act 1974 public registers, Britain already has a notably open and accountable system of water pollution control. These regulations extend it. They provide, for instance, for the inclusion of additional material, including in due course relevant river quality objectives and other data. In addition, they remove anomalies and loopholes in present arrangements and notably they require that in future the time limit for inclusion of data on the registers is to run from the taking of the samples rather than the receipt of the analysis by the registrar. We have recognised that consent arrangements could allow excessive delay in inclusion of results on the register and we are remedying that.

The second key principle is the absolute separation of poacher and gamekeeper. The NRA will itself make few discharges, but it will make some—for instance, from fish farms. In all the circumstances, it is clearly appropriate

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that some authority other than the NRA should be responsible for authorising them. Accordingly, one set of regulations modifies the Act to cover these circumstances.

The third key feature of the regulations is their rigour and comprehensiveness. It is obviously of the greatest importance that there should be public confidence in the probity and effectiveness of the system for granting applications for discharge consents. The regulations provide full and formal arrangements on such matters as public representations, appeals, and treatment of commercial confidentiality.

I ask the hon. Member for Dewsbury again—although her attention seems to have wandered from the serious matters and from the regulations, which are so important to the future of our water environment—which of these principles and which aspects of the regulations the Opposition object to.

Let me deal with the regulations on surface water classification on which the hon. Lady asked a specific question. She seems to be wincing. She took the trouble to ask a specific question and I take it that she wants it answered. If she contains herself for a moment, she will have the answer. As I said, I shall deal with the regulations on surface water classification and the associated order in respect of ponds and reservoirs. Together, they provide for due implementation of an important Community directive, directive 75/440 on the quality of surface water for drinking, and a critical link between the quality of water in the environment and in supply. They involve a first and preliminary use of the powers to introduce systems for water quality classifications, which will be used in due course for the general classification of surface waters for the establishment of quality objectives. These general classifications will cover not only standards necessary for abstraction of drinking water but also for fisheries, conservation, irrigation and other purposes.

It is, however, necessary to put in place now the system for the classifications in respect of abstraction for human consumption so that the level of treatment required for different qualities of water entering the supply system may be determined. That is so that we can put in place a regulatory framework for the new water supply companies and can give effect to the EC surface water abstraction directive. The regulations incorporate the mandatory EC values. Water authorities have already classified the waters from which thy abstract on this basis, but monitoring for compliance with the classifications will in future be a matter for the NRA.

The relevant lakes and ponds order is required simply to ensure that pollution controls apply to all waters from which water is abstracted for supply purposes. The hon. Member for Dewsbury has the answer to her question. Without that, we could not guarantee that all abstracted waters were properly classified and regulated.

A final measure concerned with the control of pollution deals with the discharge of trade effluent to sewers. Where these contain dangerous substances, they will be subject to authorisation by the Secretary of State.

**Mr. Allen McKay** (Barnsley, West and Penistone): The Minister will recall that in Committee I asked about the pollution of rivers from old mine workings and referred to the fact that the Act would remove British Coal's responsibility in respect of polluting rivers. When we produced evidence of the problem and asked for certain assurances, Ministers told us that they would consider the matter and give assurances, before the Bill became an Act, that grants to local authorities would, or could, be made to overcome the problem. Are we to get that assurance before this legislation leaves this place?

**Mr. Howard:** I understand that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State said that he would consider the nature of the grants available and draw them to the hon. Gentleman's attention. We shall ensure that that is done, if it has not already been done. My inquiries suggest that the water authorities are concerned about the problem; they are aware of it and are considering ways in which they can contribute to dealing with it.

An important element of the environmental package within the Water Act is the code of practice on conservation, access and recreation. I do not intend to say much about the code itself, which we debated at length in Committee. Its scope, its detail, and the fact that in our view it embodies the very best available guidance on these matters speak for themselves, but I ask the House to note three points.

First, the code was laid before Parliament within an hour of the signalling of Royal Assent to the Bill. That is a measure of our determination to take the code seriously and to put its provisions into effect at the earliest opportunity.

**Mr. Mullin:** Does the Minister agree that the real measure of the Government's determination will be whether the code of practice is enforceable?

**Mr. Howard:** Of course the code of practice will be enforceable, and of course it will be taken into account when decisions are made about the extent to which the undertakings are carrying out their statutory duties, which are specified in some detail in the Act. Has the hon. Gentleman already forgotten the many hours that we spent in Committee debating these measures? He knows perfectly well that the code is enforceable. That is why it is the subject of the regulations. That is why it is given statutory force.

The Opposition continue to claim that the code will have little effect. When we put the draft before them in Committee, they claimed that the original draft would be diluted and weakened. In fact, it is fuller and stronger. We took the consultation process very seriously. We have taken on board many of the points that were made during the consultation exercise and the draft, which was commended by the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe during our deliberations in Committee, is now even better than it was when it attracted his complimentary attention.

**Mr. Elliot Morley** (Glanford and Scunthorpe): I shall deal with this matter later in the debate. I think it fair to say, however, that the code before us now is not, in essence, the same as the draft code, which, while I felt it was good in principle, had many weaknessess in practice.

**Mr. Howard:** The hon. Gentleman is right to say that the code is not the same as the draft code. It is better than the draft code, it is stronger than the draft code, and it is more complete than the draft code was. It has been welcomed by the environmental organisations, which we consulted in detail on it. I am happy to say to the hon. Gentleman, therefore, that the agreement between us about the excellence of this code is so far undisturbed—even after his recent intervention. Of course, our agreement may not survive his speech later in the debate. No doubt he has been got at by the hon. Member for Dewsbury and I have a nasty suspicion that we shall hear as churlish a speech from him as we heard from her. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will prove me wrong.

I do not propose to say more than a few words about the other measures before the House.

**Mr. Peter L. Pike** (Burnley): If one accepts for one moment that the Minister is right and that the code is stronger than the original draft, could that not be because, despite what the hon. and learned Gentleman says, he recognises what Opposition Members and the associations of conservation groups outside the House know—that many aspects of the code are not worth the paper on which they are written because its terms are not enforceable? It is easy for the Minister to strengthen the code given that he knows that it is not important.

**Mr. Howard:** That is a most extraordinary statement. The House is debating regulations that will have statutory force. They will be debated in another place early next week and they will be part of the law of the land. The Secretary of State, on whom substantial duties are placed by the Water Act, will be obliged to take into account the provisions of the code in carrying out his duties. If he does not take into account the provisions of the code sufficiently, he will be subject to judicial review by the independent courts. The hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) must be aware of that. How can he possibly suggest that the code will not have any force? Of course it will have force, and it will act as a further powerful reinforcement of our determination to ensure that the legislation gives us the highest possible standards for our water environment.

The regulations are a necessary development of the framework for regulating the privatised water industry in the Water Act 1989 recently approved by Parliament. They are an important part of our policy to privatise the water industry as the quickest and most cost-effective way in which to ensure that we all benefit from even higher water standards. I am sure that their provisions will be welcomed by those concerned to achieve better standards in industry and, in particular, better environmental standards. I invite the House to reject the prayers of the Opposition.

7.49 pm

**Mr. Eric Martlew** (Carlisle): It feels like it has been a long day already so I will not delay the House for too long.

I shall vote against the regulations because of the discretionary powers that they give to the Secretary of State. Obviously we do not trust him, and after the debate on the poll tax his own Back Benchers do not trust him. When will the Conservative party realise that it is no good to Euro-bash any more? It tried that during the European elections and it was defeated. It is sad, and it brings no honour to the House, that a European Commissioner must protect our people because their Government have failed to do so. Conservative Back Benchers seem to take pleasure from criticising the Commissioner because he is not British, but that gentleman is doing a service to this country by ensuring that our water standards come up to a reasonable level.

In a debate earlier this month we learnt that 10·8 million people in England and Wales are drinking water that is not of a standard recommended by the EEC. The Government have been in power for 10 years, but after that time their record on water purity means that 20 per cent. of the population is drinking sub-standard water. Things will get worse rather than better.

Currently, because of privatisation, the Government are forcing water authorities to relax standards regarding the sewage that goes into our rivers and seas. In certain areas—my constituency is one of them—relaxation of standards at sewage works means that effluent will go into the river before water is drawn off to become drinking water for my constituents. Such is the policy advanced by the Government and it is little wonder that we are wary of anything that the Minister proposes.

The Minister said that information about standards would be made clear to the public. I have had an example of the simple approach that has been adopted by North West Water. As the Member of Parliament for Carlisle I properly asked that water authority whether it could supply me with the details of the sewage works in Carlisle for the last year. I was sent 10 pages of computer read-out. No explanation was given; instead, the pages detail such things as sussols, bods and Mg/Ls. The public will not know what they mean and it is clear that that water authority has no idea what the public wants to know. Fortunately, earlier in my life, I worked in a laboratory and therefore I could understand the information. That document shows that North West Water has been acting illegally in my constituency. It is clear that 8 per cent. of the effluent going into the River Eden, one of the finest salmon rivers in Britain, is above the acceptable standard.

What have the Government done about such things? The answer was given in a document published by the Friends of the Earth, which states:

> "Your water authority has been discharging sub-standard sewage effluent. That's illegal. Selling off water companies that break the law is not easy . . . so the Government's solution is to relax the standards for over 1,000 sewage treatment works. That's legalised pollution".

We shall vote against the regulations because we do not trust the Secretary of State. Alarm has been created in my constituency and I am sure that the Secretary of State has received many letters voicing that alarm. As late as Saturday I received one from the Rockcliffe parish council.

**Mr. Howard:** The point about regulations is that they become part of the law of the land, which must be obeyed by everyone, including any Secretary of State, whether the hon. Gentleman trusts him or not.

**Mr. Martlew:** Presumably the Minister believes that the 10-page document I received from North West Water abides by the law of the land. It may abide by the word of the law, but not the spirit of it.

I received a letter from Rockcliffe parish council which was odd because it is not part of my constituency and nor is it a hotbed of Socialism.

**Mr. Nicholas Baker** (Dorset, North): Given the hon. Gentleman's sophistry, I must tell him that my colleagues and I are rather concerned that the list that he flourished from North West Water is the pools results for the last available football Saturday. He is wrong to suggest the Government have lowered standards. For years there has been a derogation from standards, but it is untrue to say that the Government have lowered standards. The hon.

*[Mr. Nicholas Baker]*

Gentleman and I spent many months debating the Water Bill in Committee and surely he accepts that one of its important features is that it will raise standards?

**Mr. Martlew:** I agree that standards should be raised, and nothing would please me more than if North West Water wrote to me to say that it would stop polluting the River Eden. In fact it has increased the level of pollution by 25 per cent., and it will still be within the law. I am happy to put the document in the Library if the hon. Gentleman wants to look at it, if he has time after finishing a game of squash in the morning.

Rockcliffe parish council wrote to me because sewage from my constituency is polluting its lovely village. It wrote:

> "The Council wishes to complain in the strongest possible terms against the proposal by the North West Water Authority to increase by 25 per cent. the amount of sewage released into the River Eden at Carlisle."

It states that current standards are not good enough and that Rockcliffe has to put up with all sorts of terrible pollution. The parish council also mentioned Rockcliffe marsh, which is on the Solway, and which is one of the finest wildlife havens in the country. The council asked me what I would do. I am asking the Minister whether he will retract the instructions given to North West Water. If he does not issue such a retraction, will he turn down any subsequent applications from North West Water?

People are extremely concerned about their drinking water, about effluent and the state of our rivers. They do not want privatisation, but the debate is not about privatisation. It is a sad day when Europe must protect the British people from their Government. I hope that we will win tonight.

7.57 pm

**Mr. Roger Knapman** (Stroud): I am obliged to my hon. and learned Friend the Minister for his comprehensive and erudite explanation of the regulations, which satisfy all reasonable people, including my hon. Friends.

There are many regulations, but I shall restrict my comments to three that relate to drinking water quality, the control of pollution and access to land when owned by the water companies.

The regulations fully incorporate the requirements of the European drinking water directive into British law. In Committee it was suggested that either the regulations would not be introduced or, if they were, they would be literally watered down. The regulations, however, go well beyond the requirements of the drinking water directive. My hon. and learned Friend has said that there are 14 additional national standards. He mentioned industrial and chlorinated solvents, copper, zinc and acidity standards. Perhaps the most important of all in terms of public perception is the lead standard, which is also tighter than that allowed for in the directive. I hope that my hon. and learned Friend will agree that that, coupled with tighter controls on vehicle emissions, will help to satisfy the public.

Timing is all-important and 1995 is a realistic deadline. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment said, the 1993 deadline is not. He said that the amendments proposing a 1993 deadline

> "ignore the question of practicality. Large investment programmes cannot be carried out overnight for very practical reasons that have nothing to do with the money involved."—[*Official Report*, 3 July 1989; Vol. 156, c. 92.]

My brother is a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and the citizens of Wincanton and several other towns and villages up and down the country have particular reason to be grateful to him. Their effluent goes downhill and is treated in modern premises in an approved place. We are now in 1989. The companies have yet to come into being, and planning permission must be sought. Quite apart from the units having to be designed, planning permission will take some months.

The planning and building of sewage stations provides the opportunity to put modern pipes under most of the streets of each village and town in the locality, and that must be done with a minimum of disruption to the local population or the local Member of Parliament's life is not likely to be pleasant for some time.

It is no wonder that the European Environment Commissioner observed of Britain that no other country in Europe now has such a determined awareness of environmental problems. I am surprised that Opposition Members did not mention that. After all, that was printed in *The Guardian*, which is their bible, on 17 July 1989. I am sorry that they missed it.

The regulations lay down requirements under the Water Act in respect of sampling, analysis, treatment of water and available information to customers—all matters which were lacking under the previous Labour Government. In particular, they specify minimum frequencies for the sampling of supplies and require sampling normally to be done at the customer's tap. That is the most important point at which sampling should be undertaken.

The regulations impose requirements relating to the collection and analysis of samples and specify that the laboratories must be subject to independent quality control checks. All water supplies will have to meet several minimum treatment requirements. No new substance will be cleared for use in water treatment or for the relining of pipes unless it has been approved by the Secretary of State. That will reassure my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) who, a few months ago, spent some four or five hours on that subject. The public have to be reassured that additives to water supplies can be made only under the strictest of conditions.

Comprehensive water quality information will be published regularly, enabling customers to see which supplies regularly comply with quality standards and, where they do not, what action is being taken to remedy the situation.

The second group of statutory instruments deals with pollution. They carry forward the updating and strengthening of the pollution control system in the Water Act and give immediate effect to the new system from the date of privatisation.

Again the Opposition have said that 1993, not 1995, is a responsible deadline. But what credence can their proposals have when they have yet again failed to answer questions that we have put to them time and again? Can the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) explain why the Labour Government took no action to implement part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 which deals with river pollution? We await the answer to that. Why did the previous Labour Government prevent members of the public from initiating prosecutions of river polluters—a subject on which we heard so much in the Committee which considered the Water Bill?

**Mr. Pike:** Whatever the Labour Government did in the period up to 1979, is not the simple fact that the Labour Government were in office for four years while this Government have been in office for 10 years? The important point is what the Government have done in those 10 years.

**Mr. Knapman:** But on what basis can the Opposition say that the 1995 deadline is too late and that it should be 1993? The investment that is necessary can come about only through our proposals. It will never be achieved through the Treasury under a Labour or a Conservative Government.

**Mr. Raffan:** If the Conservative Government did what the Labour Government did when they were in power and cut expenditure on river infrastructure by 50 per cent. there would be an outburst of horror. The Government have increased expenditure, yet the Opposition still dare to attack us. Of course we shall remind them of their record because it is so deplorable and disgraceful.

**Mr. Knapman:** I am obliged to my hon. Friend who, as always, makes his point well. Outrage comes easily to Opposition Members. As the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) knows, Opposition Members do not like to be reminded of previous Labour Governments' records.

Opposition Members know well the questions that I have to ask, because we have asked them so many times. My hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) has asked them on occasions. He might care to take over for a moment or two. How did the previous Labour Government discharge their responsibilities for monitoring pollution by sewage treatment works when it kept no records of the adequacy of their performance? Will the Opposition explain why the previous Labour Government kept details of discharge consent applications secret from the public and refuse to let them participate in the process of granting them?

We have asked those questions before and we shall ask them again. I suspect that we shall get no answer, but that does not really matter, does it? With that record, what right do the Opposition have to lecture us on whether 1995 is a reasonable date for achieving those ends? They know well that if a Labour Government came to power again —an unlikely event—they would have no more chance of achieving those standards than they did in the past.

Water authority land was also a subject of protracted exchanges in the Committee which considered the Water Bill. I am grateful to the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth for not suggesting that the proceedings have been truncated, as he did last week. I think that I heard my hon. and learned Friend the Minister say that we have now been debating these issues for 300 hours. I am not sure whether we are just coming up to 300 hours or have just exceeded 300 hours, but that is hardly truncated.

After privatisation, water companies will be under a duty to make their waters and associated land available for recreation so far as that is consistent with their other functions. My hon. and learned Friend has leaned over backward to oblige the persistent lobbyists on that matter. However, will he confirm that the main defence against unwelcome developers on water authority land must be the planning process? If something is wrong, the answer is not to introduce separate Acts of Parliament on every conceivable subject, but rather to ensure that any inadequate planning processes are changed.

I was born and brought up on the northern slopes of Dartmoor and I know that planning regulations in national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty are particularly strict and would prevent any unsuitable development on water authority land after privatisation, as they do now. The Government's proposal to give every district authority the duty to draw up local plans will strengthen the planning system further to protect against unwelcome development. I do not know whether the proposals are perfect, but they are far better than anything that has gone before.

I and, I am sure, my hon. Friends take what is possibly the last opportunity before the recess to congratulate my hon. and learned Friend the Minister and his colleagues on the splendid way in which they have taken the legislation through the House since the middle of December.

8.12 pm

**Mr. Richard Livsey** (Brecon and Radnor): The substance of the regulations is an increase in the powers of the Secretary of State. Those powers have the potential to undermine some of the promises made during the passage of the Bill. We must welcome the adoption of the European Community directive on drinking water. However, we must ask when the proposals in it will be implemented. During the debate on the Lords amendments the Government defeated the amendment relating to implementation by 1993. Will the Government tell us when they propose to implement the directive?

The European Commission is to be congratulated on its insistence that the Government should stop ducking and weaving over the introduction of drinking water standards. The Commission has asked the Government to tell it within two months what they will do about implementing the nitrate directive. Will the Minister tell us when he will reply to that demand from the environment Commissioner?

**Mr. Raffan:** Perhaps the hon. Gentleman could explain how the Government are ducking and weaving on the European Community directive when they have incorporated it in law and have imposed 14 additional national standards. That is an extraordinary way to duck and weave. Long may Governments continue to do that when it means improving on the standards that have been put to us by Europe.

**Mr. Livsey:** The hon. Gentleman does not say when the directive will be implemented. We are all waiting for an answer to that. We welcome its adoption but when will it be implemented? The European Commission has posed that question and so far we have not had a clear answer.

**Mr. Howard:** Was the hon. Gentleman not here when I dealt with this question earlier or was he here and asleep? Did he not hear me say that we shall comply with the Commission's nitrate directive in every area bar two by 1993? In the other two we expect to comply by 1995. I gave the reasons why we could not comply with those two by 1992. Is the hon. Gentleman claiming that he and his party were concerned about this matter and about the accusations that were made about delay in implementing

*[Mr. Howard]*

the directive in the 1980s? What complaints did his party make in the 1980s about the progress being made in implementing the Community directive?

**Mr. Livsey:** We certainly complained on many occasions about non-implementation. In 1980, the Government acceded to the directive but they have taken nine years to bring forward legislation. Now they cannot clearly tell us when the directive will be implemented, although I gather from what the Minister said that some of it will be implemented in 1993 and the rest in 1995. That is not soon enough. The Commission wants to know why, and that is a reasonable question.

**Mr. Howard:** When exactly did the hon. Gentleman's party complain about the pace at which we were complying with the directive in the 1980s?

**Mr. Livsey:** I will not engage in debating points. The point has been made by my party a number of times and the Minister knows that. We need to move on.

Earlier in the debate the Minister tried to protect his position by talking about sample averages. I am sure that he is well aware that one definition of average temperature is a person with his head in the oven and his feet in the fridge. Water samples containing nitrate can be widely disparate. Is the Minister saying that samples with twice the acceptable level of nitrate are acceptable in terms of public health? What advice did the Minister's scientists give about the proposal that averages would be used for nitrogen content? How many scientists resigned from Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution because their scientific consciences cannot come to terms with the way that the Government are proceeding on environmental protection?

Statutory instrument No. 1147 deals with the definitions of wholesome water and incorporates EC directives. Part 3 gives the Secretary of State power to relax those standards, and that power needs to be probed. Under what circumstances would he relax the standards, and in what situation would such relaxation occur? The document says:

"Authorisation is necessary as an emergency measure".

It also says that authorisation depends on

"the nature and structure of the ground in each area".

Some matters relating to that must be clarified, in the public interest.

Statutory instrument No. 1151 is about consents to discharges and allows the Secretary of State to determine requests for discharges of effluent above the recommended levels. We had a long debate on the Lords amendments about the 1,000 works that have broken the consent standards. In the next 12 months the Department of the Environment will allow the water plcs to go beyond the limit. Will powers about consents for discharges above the recommended levels be invoked? The statutory instrument clearly confers such a power and it would completely undermine the National Rivers Authority. It makes a mockery of the new regulatory body because it gives the Secretary of State the final say. The National Rivers Authority has, rightly, been given high billing by the Minister as an important environmental protection agency. I certainly recognise and welcome that. However, if it is not adequately resourced and is undermined by statutory instrument No. 1151, will it be an effective body?

Statutory instrument No. 1154 deals with the right of the public to inspect the register held by the Director General of Water Services. I hope that the information on the register will be available at the weekends as well as during normal working hours so that people who are engaged in their everyday business during the week can inspect the register on, for example, Saturday mornings.

I welcome statutory instrument No. 1155 which deals with pensions. In my constituency Welsh Water will soon become Welsh Water plc. The pensions of its employees obviously need to be protected.

Statutory instrument No. 1156 is important because it empowers the Secretary of State to determine applications for discharges of dangerous substances above accepted levels. It includes chemicals that are persistent in water and could include materials such as aldrin or dieldrin. Although they have been banned, sadly, some irresponsible people are still using them. The substances include atrazine and simazine which cause great difficulties in water catchment areas. I find it somewhat intriguing that the acceptable level of dangerous substances can be raised.

Statutory instrument No. 1158 deals with radioactive discharges. It treats radioactive waste as ordinary waste. This is another example of mollycoddling the nuclear industry. At present, 808 premises in England are authorised under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 to discharge liquid radioactive waste into the public sewers. This regulation appears to weaken the conditions of the 1960 Act by allowing the Secretary of State to bring such discharges within the scope of the Water Act 1989, and to treat them as normal. Perhaps the Minister will reassure the House on that.

Statutory instrument No. 1159 deals with compensation for customers who suffer at the hands of water companies. I suggest that £5 is insufficient and that the condition which gives the companies a let-out in cases of industrial action should be withdrawn.

In general, one should be critical of these statutory instruments because of some of the powers that the Secretary of State is taking to himself. He will be able to alter some of these regulations almost at will and some of the regulations act against the environmental quality of water.

The Minister should ensure that the proceeds of the sale of the industry are reinvested, for example, in the National Rivers Authority to ensure that it can function properly as an effective environmental protection body and to ensure that it is properly funded so that it can do its job properly.

There is no doubt that the basis of this privatisation is partly the sale of land. The flotation is made more attractive by this realisation. The water plcs are busy setting up subsidiary companies to exploit this asset.

Finally, I shall point out a technical matter to the Minister. The code of practice is already out of date in some of its wording because it refers to the Nature Conservancy Council when, only last week, it was amalgamated with the Countryside Commission. I hope that the drafters of the code will take account of that significant change.

8.23 pm

**Mr. Gerrard Neale** (Cornwall, North): I remind hon. Members of the serious contamination incident that took place just over a year ago in my constituency. I speak the day before publication of the independent health panel's report on that incident. Various aspects of the regulations relate to it and I should like to make a few brief comments about them.

However, I should like first to refer to the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey), who spoke on behalf of the Democrats. I do not know whether my colleagues share my view, but I am unclear whether the Democrats intend to oppose or to support these regulations. Hon. Members who represent constituencies that have an historic involvement with his party—under whatever name it trades—will not be surprised at that, because there has been considerable confusion about where they stand on a range of issues.

I say to the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael), in the absence of the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), who made a speech at the start of this debate, that there will be considerable astonishment in Camelford, given the interest that Labour Members appeared to have in the Camelford incident, and given the number of references that they made to it during the debate, that they intend to vote against these regulations.

The Opposition's constant criticism has left the clear impression that their sole objective is to stop privatisation. They want to find every possible accusation to level at the Government to try to stop privatisation, and they do not want to give credit for any of the regulations.

One need only take a cursory look through the regulations to see that they offer a range of measures which will be far more helpful to the consumer than any that existed before. I join my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) in congratulating my hon. and learned Friend the Minister on his work to ensure that these provisions were brought before the House on behalf of the consumer.

As my hon. and learned Friend said, there will be far clearer powers over environmental health cover through local authorities. Water authorities will have to provide much more information about the way in which their laboratories are run. A series of provisions in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 1989 are fundamentally helpful to the consumer.

Bearing in mind the fact that hon. Members on both sides of the House still wish to speak, I shall concentrate on one part of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations. There will be great relief and pleasure because of regulation 30, particularly because of subsections (5) and (6), which, brief as they are, should be repeated. They provide:

> "(5) A water undertaker shall notify a local authority and a district health authority as soon as may be after the occurrence of any event which, by reason of its effect or likely effect on the water supplied by it, gives rise or is likely to give rise to a significant risk to the health of persons residing in the authority's area.
>
> (6) An authority who have received a notification under paragraph (5) may require the water undertaker to provide them with such information relating to the event and its consequences as they may reasonably require."

I have to tell my hon. and learned Friend, who has been exceedingly helpful throughout the Camelford incident and its aftermath, that it is astounding that, in this day and age, the House finds it necessary to include that provision in regulations. I do not deny that it is now essential that it should. At Camelford, 20 tonnes of aluminium sulphide were dumped into the drinking water and the water supply of 20,000 people was affected. Who would have imagined that the water authority would decide not to tell the public health authority and the environmental health authority the truth for some weeks?

My hon. and learned Friend will recall—he saw me then—that at the time I said that one of the most astounding features was that there was no statutory requirement on water authorities to inform the health authority and the environmental health officers. He said then that the Government would give the most serious consideration to this. I can only thank him for including these provisions in the regulations.

Given the criticism of these regulations, what my hon. and learned Friend said at the Dispatch Box is worthy of note. He is aiming for far greater honesty with the consumer. This is the whole purpose of the regulations. He does not want—no sensible person would—any of the information to be doctored. Any information obtained by consumers must represent a direct copy of what has been produced in accordance with the sampling processes under these regulations.

By providing that information and being honest with the public, we shall save ourselves from what has happened in north Cornwall over the past 12 months as a result of the deceit of the water authority, which did not release the facts about what had caused the incident. That deceit infected every honourable statement made subsequently by any organisation. No matter what the independent health panel says tomorrow—it is my sincere hope that it will have discovered that there is no permanent health damage, which has been the hope of all of us since the incident—and no matter the lengths to which it has gone to analyse what happened, great doubt was instilled in people's minds as a result of the water authority's inability to tell the truth.

Among the many welcome regulations, this one is vital in ensuring that should such an incident recur, through accident or whatever cause, the water authority concerned will make what has happened known to the environmental health office and the health authority. It should also make available every possible source of information that either of those two authorities needs to protect the health of the people in its area.

We have heard a great deal of criticism about the Government's desire to privatise the water industry. If I had any doubts about this before the Camelford incident, I have not the slightest doubt now. That incident was caused by a public utility, a state-controlled body, which manifested the most shocking quality of management. It was able to exercise a monopoly not only over the supply but over the information processes, the responsibility for pollution and so on.

The Government's wisdom is shown in these regulations and in the Water Act itself. It is vital that we separate those processes and give the state, through the Secretary of State, clear-cut powers of control and of monitoring, through the drinking water inspectorate. The Camelford incident showed how welcome this move is. That should be separate from the supply of water, which must be carried out under stringent regulations laid down in the Act, in these statutory instruments and no doubt in subsequent measures.

**Mr. Mullin:** Who does the hon. Gentleman think will be in charge of the South-West water authority, about which he used the word "deceit", after privatisation? Will the same Mr. Keith Court be responsible, on higher pay?

**Mr. Neale:** The hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do that that decision is not for me but for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. He will also know, if he has studied the matter carefully, that at the time of the incident my view was that the chairman should have resigned. Everything that has happened since the incident has vindicated that view. I said then, and I still believe, that he could not possibly have known what was going on when it happened, but he did know shortly afterwards and he chose not to inform the public. Subsequently, to his credit, he apologised for not doing so.

For that reason, if for no other, my hon. and learned Friend the Minister deserves credit for making certain through these regulations that never again will it be possible for a water undertaking, whether inadvertently or negligently, to cause such an incident and then to avoid telling the health authority and the environmental health organisation what happened, and giving them all the information that they require. That offers far better protection than do many of the other elements in these regulations. My hon. and learned Friend will have the whole-hearted support of Conservative Members, and I congratulate him on introducing the regulations.

8.37 pm

**Mr. Elliot Morley** (Glanford and Scunthorpe): I am honoured that the Minister thinks that any endorsement that I have given to the code of practice in the conservation, access and leisure regulation recommends it for public consumption. If the Minister accepts some of what I shall say, I shall be happy to give my whole-hearted endorsement to the code of practice. He can even stamp on the bottom, "As recommended by the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe" if he deals with these points.

The main thrust of the measures in the code of practice is fine. They have been well thought out and well written, because they were recommended by the Nature Conservancy Council. That is a Government organisation for which I have nothing but the utmost respect. Therefore, it is a tragedy that the organisation in which the Minister was indirectly lavishing praise for drawing up this document is to be reorganised and broken up. One cannot have a great deal of confidence in a Government who treat one of their most effective bodies in this way.

As it is likely that the Secretary of State will no longer be in his position soon, I hope that his successor will think carefully about the way that the NCC has been treated. If the Government's commitment to conservation is to have any credibility, they need bodies such as the NCC, with its expertise, commitment and experience, to put a gloss on any Government measure dealing with conservation.

Let me deal with the reasons why I think that the regulation on the code of practice should be voted against unless it is changed. First, we see a great weakness in the enforcement of the code. Section 10(2) of the Act states:

> "A contravention of a code of practice as for the time being approved under this section shall not of itself constitute a contravention of any requirement imposed by section 8 or 9 above or give rise to any criminal or civil liability, but the Secretary of State and the Minister shall each be under a duty to take into account whether there has been or is likely to be any such contravention in determining when and how he should exercise his powers by virtue of this Act."

What steps would the Minister take in enforcing the regulation if it were found that a supplier was breaking it? The Minister would find that he had a bit of a problem. That is one of our main objections to the privatisation of water. Would the Minister take away the licence of the water plc? There would be nobody else or nothing else to replace the plc. Exactly what measures, hold, control or sanctions does the Minister have over the water plcs and how will he use them?

The Minister said that the code of practice is not the same as the measure that we were discussing and he argued that it has been strengthened. It is true that during the Bill's consideration in another place the Government accepted some sensible changes on the lines of amendments that we tabled in Committee. Everyone would have been saved a great deal of time and trouble if the Government had accepted amendments then instead of waiting until the Bill was considered in another place. I welcome the changes that have been made to the Bill, strengthening the code of practice, but parts of it have been changed for the worse and there are some serious weaknesses.

The priority given to nature conservation seems to have been lowered by the priority that has been given to leisure interests. I am not saying that nature conservation should always be put in the way of leisure interests and that there should be some special consideration that is not already present, but I think that the leisure organisations and groups would recognise that one of the great money-spinning potentials of privatising water is the commercial development of leisure facilities at reservoirs and on land that the companies own.

When the code of practice was in draft form, it suggested that if there were a conflict between leisure interests and conservation interests, conservation interests would be given priority. That is no longer clear in the new code of practice. There is a concern that when there is a conflict of interest the commercial leisure interest will succeed over the conservation interests. That is a real threat. We discussed in Committee examples which were set out in a journal entitled "Liquid Assets", which was published by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Royal Society for Nature Conservation. The journal demonstrated that there are conflicts already at some of our major reservoirs.

**Mr. Pike:** I am sure that my hon. Friend is aware of the Ramblers Association's concern that North West Water is considering developing a theme park at Rivington Pike which will bring the commercial interests very much to the fore.

**Mr. Morley:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for providing that example. It shows that there is already a conflict between leisure and recreation interests, the commercial motive behind them, and conservation interests. Another example is Rutland water, where there has been a conflict involving the extension of fishing licences in various parts of the reservoir and the need to keep parts of the reservoir available for wintering wild fowl. There will be other conflicts. There is a clear conflict between the leisure use of power boats for water skiing, for example, and the interests of wildlife. There are conflicts about the siting of marinas and timeshare developments and wetland habitats. The conflicts are numerous.

When there is a conflict, who will decide what come first —conservation interests or leisure interests? How clearly will attitudes towards zoning various water board lands and reservoirs for various interests and activities be taken into account? Once the water authorities have been privatised, what hold will the Minister have over them if they break the existing agreements—many of them are voluntary—with the various conservation groups in the management of their areas and the demands of their shareholders to maximise their revenue by developing commercial leisure interests? That is the major weakness in the code of practice and it is one which needs to be addressed. Unless the Minister can convince me that there are safeguards, I believe that we should reject the measure.

There are one or two smaller issues. We discussed the emergency operation procedure in Committee. The draft code of practice made it clear that when emergency procedures were being carried out by water authorities, the NCC would be consulted. I know that there are procedures for this when sites of special scientific interest are involved, but there are sensitive areas that do not have that status. There needs to be some protection for them so that the NCC can use its experience and expertise to advise water plcs on how to carry out repairs when there is an emergency. I have in mind drainage and the building of flood banks. We must ensure that there is the minimum amount of damage to sensitive areas.

In the draft document, plans were set out for annual consultation with conservation bodies. There is still provision for such consultation in the code, but it is no longer on an annual basis. I wonder why that alteration has been made.

The main conservation bodies are well known to the Government and they consult them, but in certain areas, on water board land, there are issues that require the attention of specialists. There is a need to involve various organisations that have a specialist interest, whether in orchids, moths or butterflies. I am not sure that in certain circumstances the consultation of specialists will take place and that we shall have the benefit of their advice.

There seems to be nothing in the code of practice that will make the water plcs take into account the effect of discharges on flora and fauna. Great damage can be caused in terms of the ecology of water courses if the nutrient enrichment of certain areas goes over certain levels. There are EC directives that cover the pollution of rivers and take into account wildlife. I suspect that the Government are in breach of some of the directives because they have given discharge consents to various sewage works without taking into account the effect that that will have on wildlife. The Government may find themselves in court on more than one issue if they do not take the effect of discharges into account.

I have raised some of the main issues that involve the code of practice, conservation and recreation. There are others that I know my hon. Friends will cover, especially the protection of access for ramblers. I do not believe that the code goes far enough in that direction. When it comes to nature conservation—I return to my original point—the code is fine in theory. It has taken into account many of the issues that I wanted to be considered, but I am not convinced that it can be applied successfully to ensure that water plcs take its provisions into account. With the conflict that will inevitably come between leisure and recreational use and conservation, I believe that there is a serious weakness.

8.49 pm

**Mr. Edward Leigh** (Gainsborough and Horncastle): If we did not enjoy politics, most of us would not be here. However, certain issues are so important that politics should take a back seat, and one of those is public health and safety. That was very much on my mind during the quite disgraceful speech of the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor). I am sorry that she has not remained in the Chamber to listen to the debate because I wanted to tell her about what is happening in Lincolnshire over the issue of nitrates. Lincolnshire is in the east midlands, an area of traditional arable farming. There is considerable concern not just among the general public but among the farming community about the use of nitrates. The debate rages.

We are told that there is no hard evidence that nitrates are injurious to health—yet the Government are taking the issue seriously and, I have no doubt, will act. It may be necessary for denitrification plants to be set up in certain areas, such as my constituency. We are told that the technology is not yet proven. If the Labour party were to have its way—and on this issue I can assume only that it is playing politics—and we accepted its ludicrous suggestions, denitrification plants would be set up that might prove more dangerous than the possible dangers of the current position.

These are highly technical matters. I shall not debate tonight whether it was wise for Britain or other nations to sign the directive. I have my doubts about the wisdom of the Commission becoming involved in the detail of drinking water policy. My view is that it is par excellence —to use a French expression—a region where national Governments should take precedence over the Commission. Nevertheless, the directive was signed. The Government are arguing a fair case—that they signed the directive, intend fully to carry it out, but that there are certain difficulties in doing so, not least practical difficulties such as planning. It has nothing to do with money; in some cases it may be impossible to carry out the directive in time.

I can only assume that the hon. Member for Dewsbury was, once again, playing politics and was not really concerned with public safety when she suggested that we could implement the directive by 1993. I cannot believe that she was serious. As I understand it—of course, I may be wrong—we are actually going further than the original proposals. We are tightening procedures, but we are not carping or playing politics; we are simply trying to do our best for the British people. The Government should be congratulated on that. We are talking about sampling, treatment and controls that we have not previously had. We have never had a drinking water inspectorate.

During our last short debate on these matters my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) spoke at length on access to Barn Elm reservoir, a matter which greatly concerns him. I spent about 20 years of my life living only a few yards from that reservoir, so I know what access to it has been like over the years that it has been controlled by a nationalised industry. Quite simply, there has been no access; there has been no recreation. One of the advantages of bringing this sort of legislation before Parliament is that the scrutiny will ensure that access to reservoirs and land owned by water authorities will be better for recreational and conservation interests than it has ever been before—*[Interruption.]* The

*[Mr. Edward Leigh]*

hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) may laugh, but he must recognise what has happened over many years with land owned by water authorities.

**Mr. Morley:** I was mildly amused because I know that already fencing is being erected on land in the Yorkshire water authority area that has traditionally been walked over. That is being done in advance of this legislation. The land is being put into a wholly owned holding company ready for the Yorkshire water authority to cash in on privatisation—and it certainly will not be for conservation or leisure.

**Mr. Leigh:** The hon. Gentleman is always ready to produce anecdotal evidence, but he is not prepared to study the provisions in the legislation. For the first time, statutory requirements are laid down. The hon. Gentleman is not prepared to study the code of practice——

**Mr. Morley:** I am.

**Mr. Leigh:** I think not. All that the hon. Gentleman is prepared to do is to produce anecdotal evidence rather than deal with what is in the legislation.

I wish briefly to deal with the K factor. I have often argued the case with my constituents—and I think that I have convinced them—that we will achieve the best of both worlds because although we will have private water companies that will attract private investment, they will not be wholly independent. They can only set a price laid down by the indpendent director of water services. I know that there must be a balance with K, but I have been impressed with the arguments of my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) that we should place more emphasis on ploughing back profits into conservation measures and improving quality.

The Government should explain—and they should begin now—that, unfortunately, charges will have to rise. There is no doubt about that. I hope that I shall be forgiven if I say that they have to rise because there has been gross under-investment in the water industry for many years. I shall not discuss what happened under the last Labour Government—we have had all those arguments—but we should now admit to the British people that we cannot escape an increase in charges. The charges are not related to the profit motive that Opposition Members claim to be the point of the legislation; they relate to improving quality and to ensuring that investment is ploughed back for the benefit of consumers. There will be a balance between the consumers and those who invest in the industry.

In the long term there will be a strong code of practice, improved access and recreation. For the first time, that code will set down the most rigid standards of wholesomeness and there will be a K factor that will ensure decent investment in the industry to the benefit of all. I should have thought that any objective observer, looking at the issue in that way, would conclude that we have it about right.

8.58 pm

**Mr. David Hinchliffe** (Wakefield): The House is debating 15 sets of regulations concerned with various aspects of the new water industry, but I shall comment only on pollution. I question whether there is any meaning or relevance in regulations to control pollution when we are all aware that the Government effectively announced an amnesty on prosecutions for pollution in the run-in to privatisation.

I make no excuses for being somewhat parochial in my view of pollution. Water is a major political issue and a matter of deep concern for Yorkshire people because of the river pollution problems that Yorkshire has faced for a number of years. Earlier, the Minister accused Opposition Members of making wild statements and allegations. Recent press reports on the state of the Humber estuary cannot be said to be wild statements or allegations because they were backed by facts. It appears that the Humber is now polluting the North sea and many other rivers on the east coast. That worries not only my constituents but those of my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley).

As to the regulations relating to sampling, the recent National Rivers Authority working group report made the point that present analysis of the Humber estuary is of little value for the purposes of water quality management because some of the pollutants discharged into the Humber have not even been identified. Therefore, I question the relevance of the regulations to the problems of the Humber estuary. I question whether they give the NRA sufficient powers to prosecute those responsible for the Humber's major pollution problems.

Greenpeace estimates that discharges from no fewer than 1,500 pipelines are polluting the Humber, with complete immunity for those responsible. Those discharges come from sewage works owned by Yorkshire Water itself, metal smelting plants, oil refineries and chemical complexes. Numerous different types of discharges are all contributing to major pollution of the North sea, which is something that should deeply concern and worry us all. We should see what we can do to improve upon that appalling situation.

The Humber is a receptacle for 300 miles or more of class 3 rivers in Yorkshire Water's area and for 90 miles of class 4 rivers. They are the most appalling and dead rivers in the country. They emanate from south Yorkshire and were debated in Committee.

The end of the line has been reached for the policies of Yorkshire Water, whose incredible complacency towards pollution has led to the problems now facing the Humber estuary. In the run-up to privatisation, the policy of Yorkshire rivers has markedly deteriorated. The hon. Member for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker), who earlier intervened but left the Chamber a considerable time ago, made the pont that the Government are not themselves responsible for the lower quality of river water. If, after 10 years in authority, the Government cannot be said to be responsible, who can?

I cite the example of Driffield canal, which is in a predominantly urban area and not one having many industries. In the course of a decade, that canal has been transformed from a pleasant waterway with an abundance of fish and wildlife to slow-moving, black sludge. The prime polluter of that canal is Yorkshire Water, which has allowed sewage consent levels to rise five times higher because its nearby sewerage works could not, some considerable time ago, meet the required consents. That led directly to the deterioration of that once beautiful waterway to what is now slow-moving, black sludge.

Few people in Yorkshire are celebrating the recent announcement by Yorkshire Water of a 27·5 per cent.

increase in its profits to £56·5 million. Record profits were also recorded for the previous year. In the run-up to privatisation, Yorkshire Water is fattening up its organisation to attract investors. Imagine what could have been done with that £56·5 million in dealing with the problems of the Humber estuary, Driffield canal and Yorkshire's class 3 and class 4 rivers, as well as with the sewage works owned by Yorkshire Water. A good deal could have been done with it. The move towards privatisation has allowed pollution to continue.

What could have been done with the £700,000 that Yorkshire water has spent in the past financial year on paying advisers on privatisation? What could have been done with the money put towards the £20 million spent on the Water Authority Association's propaganda campaign —especially the £1·1 million spent in Yorkshire on regional advertising propaganda, a sum dragged out of Gordon Jones in recent days?

When we consider that a blind eye has been turned to the real cause of pollution in areas such as mine, the regulations become largely meaningless. I endorse the comments of my hon. Friends and others: this is a worrying situation, and news of a pollution amnesty gives me no great confidence that the regulations will improve it.

9.5 pm

**Mr. James Hill** (Southampton, Test): Let me add my voice to the congratulations that have been conferred on the Department and my hon. and learned Friend the Minister on the able way in which a difficult Bill has been handled—and, moreover, on preventing the House from having to sit into the first week of August. I think that we are all very grateful for that.

I wish to speak only because I do not believe that the regulations cover a serious problem in the Southampton area. Part of the problem has been caused by a Greenpeace ship, the Moby Dick, which came up the Solent. The crew tied a wire around the propeller of the sludge vessel that distributes sewage—after some sort of treatment—into the Solent, and the Southern water authority warned that if it was not removed within three days raw sewage would go into the Solent.

Unfortunately, a different Department issues the licence. I think that there should be a gathering of great minds. The Ministry of Agriculture, which issues the licence for the dumping of sludge in an area just five miles south of the Isle of Wight, has been doing so for many years, and those who have monitored the site—certainly the Ministry's inspectors—have said that such dumping causes no harm either to the environment or to fish stocks. That may well be so, but will the Commission take it on board for another 20 years?

I believe that an industrial process is the answer. My constituency and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope), the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, contain four depots. The reservoirs fill up quickly with raw sewage which, on being treated, takes on the consistency of a thick paste. It is then taken to an area south of the Isle of Wight and discharged. Quite often, human nature being what it is, the ship leaves a trail of sludge leading to the dumping area. I have already asked the Minister of Agriculture to ensure that the actions of the crew, the dumping process and the licences are well monitored.

When I met the chairman and directors of the Southern water authority on one of the sites in the sludge farm in Marchwood, I feared that they were in no way prepared to spend many millions of pounds on industrial treatment. Apparently a firm in the midlands—BVH—turns the sludge into oil or graphite which can in turn be turned into burning bricks for generating plants.

We must think again about the treatment of sewage. We can no longer, because of our Community connections, continue with the old methods of disposing of raw sewage, or partly treated sewage. I hope that my hon. and learned Friend will bear that point in mind. However, with the privatisation of 10 water authorities, he is faced with a difficult problem, and I wish him the best of luck.

9.10 pm

**Mr. Howard:** With permission, Mr. Speaker, may I say that, rather against the odds, we have had an interesting debate? I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) and his brother. My hon. Friend made some powerful points. We have yet to get any answers to them from the Opposition. He put his points in the form of questions that have yet to be answered.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cornwall, North (Mr. Neale) spoke, on the basis of his particular constituency experience, of the difficulties that can arise. At all times, he has been most assiduous and motivated by the determination to ensure that what happened in his constituency about a year ago should not, if at all possible, happen again but that, if it ever happened again, proper procedures should be in place to deal with some of the consequences. We have listened carefully to the points that he has put to us from time to time and we have been able to incorporate some of his suggestions in the regulations. I am glad to have this opportunity to pay tribute to my hon. Friend for the determination with which he has pursued those questions, not only on behalf of his constituents but also in the wider interests of all our constituents so as to ensure that incidents of that kind do not recur.

In a characteristically robust contribution, my hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) made some important points about public health and safety. They, too, have not been answered by the Opposition. We look forward with great interest to the speech which is to be made by the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael). I cannot say that the hon. Gentleman's track record in answering questions is such as to inspire confidence that we shall receive any convincing answers during his speech, but we always live in hope. He may be able to answer the legitimate questions that have been put to him during the debate about the Opposition's attitude. It is their attitude that has posed so many questions during the debate and they have been signally unprepared to answer them.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill) asked a number of questions which he recognised were the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South): The Minister would have had those answers if I had been given a chance to speak.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I know that the hon. Gentleman is the Chairman of the Committee, but he raised a long point of order at the beginning of our proceedings.

**Mr. Howard:** My hon. Friend the Member for Test appreciates that those are questions that should be put to my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. I know that his questions will be considered seriously by my right hon. Friend, for I shall draw them to his attention.

Answers to questions have been requested.

**Mr. Cryer:** Yes, that is right.

**Mr. Howard:** I am very happy to answer them, as I did during my earlier speech. The hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) asked a large number of questions and I shall deal with the points that he raised. He asked about the medical advice that we have received about the nitrates standard on the basis of average samples which we originally understood to be the basis on which compliance with the European Community directive was to be assessed. I am happy to respond to that point. Our advice from the chief medical officer was that 50 mgl was the appropriate standard to be interpreted as an average, provided the concentration in any sample did not exceed 100 mgl. We acted on that advice and were convinced that it was sensible and reasonable to approach this matter on the basis that average samples were sufficient.

The hon. Gentleman made an assertion about the effect of these regulations on the radioactive waste regulations and the Radioactive Substances Act 1960. I am happy to tell him that these regulations do not affect the application of the 1960 Act. They deal with the radioactivity of the discharge. The radioactive properties of any waste will continue to be governed by the 1960 Act.

The hon. Gentleman asked also in what circumstances the relaxations that the Secretary of State would be empowered to give under regulation 4 of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations might be granted. Those powers directly reflect those that are contained in the drinking water directive, which grants powers to make relaxations when there is a mechanical breakdown, when there are exceptional meteorological conditions or in circumstances arising from the nature and structure of the ground. The circumstances in which those relaxations are likely to be granted mirror those that are contained in the drinking water directive.

The hon. Gentleman said that Statutory Instrument No. 1151 allowed the Secretary of State to undermine the National Rivers Authority by granting discharge consents with lax standards. He is wrong. It does nothing more than set out the procedures for appeals to the Secretary of State as provided for under schedule 12 to the Water Act 1989. The hon. Gentleman's point was based on a misapprehension.

I was surprised to see the hon. Gentleman nod his head vigorously in agreement with a point that was made by the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) about the Nature Conservancy Council. The hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe was complaining about the recent decision by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State about the NCC. One of the important effects of my right hon. Friend's decision was to make a separate Nature Conservancy Council for Wales.

**Mr. Livsey** *indicated assent.*

**Mr. Howard:** The hon. Gentleman now shows from a sedentary position that he welcomes that decision. When the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe was criticising it, he vigorously nodded in assent. The hon. Gentleman must decide what his position is. I am glad that that decision has his support. I hope that it will have the support also of the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth, who perhaps will tell us whether he agrees with his hon. Friend and whether he thinks that it was a good or bad idea to have a separate Nature Conservancy Council for Wales. We look forward with great interest to hearing his answer.

The conclusion to be drawn from the Labour party's stance on these statutory instruments—the only one that can reasonably be drawn—is that it does not wish to improve drinking water quality standards or our pollution control systems, that it does not support the issuing of guidance on good practice in conservation, and that it does not want customers to have the right to compensation for breach of standards. The party that boasts about its support for open government does not want to support even the moves for greater accountability in the control of pollution provisions and arrangements for access to the register of the Director General of Water Supply. Perhaps the only form of open government that the Labour party is prepared to support is leaked documents and the information contained in them.

The Opposition have made no case for the annulment of the instruments. I invite the House to join with those who welcome the Government's prompt action to complete the new environmental regime needed before vesting and to reject this utterly irresponsible attempt to obstruct and frustrate the progress they will achieve.

9.20 pm

**Mr. Alun Michael** (Cardiff, South and Penarth): The Government's plan to privatise water has long been recognised, in the words of a Conservative Back-Bench Member, as deservedly unpopular with members of the public of all political persuasions. During its passage, it has become increasingly complex, with a web of bureaucracy being woven to compensate for the manifest defects in the Government's plans. Today we come to the last legislative step in the process—or almost the last. I say that because, as the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments has exposed, and as my hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) underlined in her opening speech, these statutory instruments need to be amended now, even before they are adopted, simply so that they will make sense. It appears that the Government intend to bring in those amendments during the recess and to discuss them only after implementing the regulations and after the House returns. What a mess. Is it surprising that we should pray against this unsatisfactory set of documents?

It is ludicrous to have three hours to debate all 15 documents, given the importance that we place on trying to rescue the water industry from this mess and building the best possible protection for the public into the system. Time is short, so I can touch only briefly on some of the important issues underlying the many contributions to tonight's debate, each of which is worthy of separate scrutiny.

Let us look, for example, at Statutory Instrument No. 1151—the Control of Pollution (Consents for Discharges etc.) (Secretary of State Functions) Regulations. Here we see the power of the Secretary of State to call in applications for consent if asked to do so. Can we trust the Secretary of State being set as an arbiter above the National Rivers Authority and able to override it? Let us consider the experience with planning powers over the past few years. The Government are increasingly using the powers of the Secretary of State to remove or override provisions that were enacted to protect the public. We cannot trust the Secretary of State and we cannot trust the Government.

**Mr. Howard:** Is the hon. Gentleman now suggesting that it is his party's policy to eliminate call-in powers in planning applications? If it is not his view that those call-in powers should be eliminated, why is it wrong to have comparable powers in relation to water control?

**Mr. Michael:** My case is that the call-in powers and the powers of appeal have been abused under this Government to a shocking extent. They have used those powers to undermine the decisions of this House.

When we turn to the statutory instruments on supply and sewerage services and customer service standards, we see the Government's innovation of the £5 fine. That sounded rather attractive when we started off. However, when one looks at it and at the application, it is, of course, nominal and surrounded by caveats. If

"the complaint is frivolous or vexatious",

the fine need not be paid. That is necessary, but who decides?

The Joint Committee's findings are most telling of all. It said:

"Regulation 5(2) makes water or sewerage undertakers liable in ordinary circumstances to pay £5 to a customer who has made a complaint in writing . . . if they do not within 10 days send him either a substantive reply or an initial reply which explains why there cannot be an immediate substantive reply and says that a substantive reply will be sent within 20 days from the receipt of the complaint".

The Committee points out that there was no provision for any payment if the promise of a substantive reply was not kept, and the Minister has not answered that point in today's debate. That is shirking. The prescribed standard requires the promise to be made, but does not require it to be implemented. That is complete nonsense. It is not a drafting error; it is a major basic defect which reflects the Government's grave concern about whether they will be able to con the City into buying what the public do not want to sell.

**Mr. Cryer:** That was one of a number of points made by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments. Officials from the Minister's Department promised several new amendments to the regulations that are to be laid, presumably when Parliament is not sitting, to correct the hastily drafted regulations that are being forced through Parliament. Parliamentary rights are being trampled on, and my hon. Friend has given an excellent example of our concerns.

**Mr. Michael:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for supporting my point with such authority. It is a very serious point and the Minister completely failed to answer it during the debate.

Let us examine the Water Reorganisation (Pensions etc.) Regulations——

**Mr. Howard:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Michael:** No, the Minister has had his chance.

The Joint Committee drew the special attention of both Houses to the instrument on pensions on the ground that the drafting was defective. What have we heard about that?

Let us examine the code of practice on conservation, access and recreation. Time is so short that I cannot go into the details of its defects, but I shall answer one point that the Minister made. He mentioned a separate Nature Conservancy Council for Wales. That is less important than the Opposition's proposal, which Conservative Members voted down, for a separate Rivers Authority for Wales. We demanded subsequently that meat should be put on the bones of the committee that is to advise the Secretary of State on matters affecting Wales. The Committee appears in the Act, but there is no meat on its bones; it has no real powers and it has no real authority. It is a failure of will on the part of Ministers who should represent Wales.

As I said, the code on conservation, access and recreation contains several weaknesses. If the Government were serious about protecting and promoting public access, a number of measures could have a beneficial effect. The most important of those concerns enforcement. No matter how weak or strong the code is, section 10(2) of the Water Act makes it clear that

"contravention of the code . . . shall not . . . constitute a contravention of any requirement imposed by section 8 or 9 of the Act."

That means that the water undertakers will be free to ignore the code completely and to have regard only to the duties in sections 8 and 9. The provision is the only sanction available and the Minister should have said that he intended to give some reality to the code by using that sanction. Only if the Government intended to use that sanction—because the Act is otherwise so weak—would there be any sense or meaning or depth to the code.

Then we come to the control of pollution registers on which many important points have been made. The regulations specify that information on derogations has to be made available to the public. The Minister and Conservative Members have said that time is needed to introduce schemes to put right the present illegal discharges. I use that term because a derogation is a sort of probation period for the polluter, during which specified time a scheme of works is to be undertaken to end the illegality.

Last week, like other hon. Members, I examined the details of the recent rash of applications for derogations —in my case, those in Wales. The information is available in St. Mellons which, while inconvenient for most of Wales, is relatively convenient for me as it is in my constituency. Like other members of the public who have been able to make the approach, I was received courteously and my questions were answered—at least until I asked for the information about the schemes of work. I was told that the information is not kept; it is not available; the Government do not require it.

I had previously asked the Secretary of State when each scheme would be started, when it would be completed and to what standard discharges would be improved. The answer that I received to all those questions was that the Department did not know. I thought that, given the Minister's claims that the regulations improve matters, we should find something in the regulations to deal with this. But the Government do not know and they do not care. To

*[Mr. Michael]*

talk about meeting standards and then to take no interest in the method or the cost of doing the job is a failure. The Government are not demanding the appropriate records to be kept on the meeting of derogations and the schemes of work that are needed. That is a failure.

Let me deal with water supply and water quality, on which the Joint Committee's remarks are devastating. There is no doubt that in this case the regulations require elucidation. On the presence of coliforms, the Department's witnesses admitted that the drafting of the regulations was not successful. They admitted that the drafting of regulation 6(2) was "defective" and "confusing".

**Mr. Cash:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Michael:** The Government's regulations are defective and confusing. The accusation has not been answered by the Minister and I certainly shall not give way to hon. Members who cannot be bothered to be here for the debate when the Minister has failed in his task tonight.

**Mr. Cash** *rose*——

**Mr. Howard** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) is not giving way.

**Mr. Michael:** Two weeks ago the Secretary of State took the word "wholesome" out of the Bill and, across the Dispatch Box, told me that that word meant nothing. It appears in the regulations. In addition, paragraph 3 of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations represents an attempt to back off from the EC's 100 per cent. criterion on water quality. Paragraph 11 states:

"a water undertaker shall determine, in respect of each of its water supply zones, such number and location of sampling points as will in its opinion secure that analysis of samples obtained from those points in respect of the parameters listed in Tables A to E will, so far as is reasonably practicable, produce"

the data needed. The undertakers decide, and that is the weakness in the regulations.

Paragraph 23 contains the phrase

"so far as is reasonably practical the appropriate requirements shall be satisfied".

Again, the requirements will not be enforced or pressed on water authorities. Paragraph 28 suggests that it should be a defence for an undertaker to show that it took

"all reasonable steps and exercised all due diligence to avoid the commission of the offence".

Who will decide? Subsection (4) says:

"Proceedings for an offence . . . shall not be instituted except by or with the consent of the Secretary of State or the Director of Public Prosecutions."

The Director of Public Prosecutions cannot enforce the regulations; nor can a local authority; nor can consumers. What sort of regulations are these?

Tonight the Minister and his Back-Bench Members have followed the old Tory maxim, "If your case is weak shout a lot and be insulting," together with the new Thatcherite maxim, "If you are in trouble, pretend that the last 10 years did not exist." I shall make one point in response to questions asked by the Minister and others about Labour's record. From 1974 to 1979, average capital expenditure on water authorities was £1,254 million per annum. From 1979 to 1987, the Conservatives achieved an average of only £922 million. That is not a good record. That is a cut. In each debate the Minister has tried to move the goal posts and——

*It being three hours after commencement of proceedings on the motion,* MR. SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to the Order [14 July]:—*

*The House divided:* Ayes 207, Noes 310.

**Division No. 309]** **[9.32 pm**

**AYES**

Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAvoy, Thomas
McFall, John
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*

Marlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*

Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Allen Adams.

## NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*

Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cartiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*

Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David

Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter

Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Sir Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones and
Mr. Tony Durant.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

# Orders of the Day

## Social Security Bill

*Lords amendments considered.*

*Lords amendment:* No. 1, after clause 4, insert the following new clause—*Increase for child benefit*—

" . In section 63(2) of the Social Security Act 1986, after paragraph (a) there shall be inserted the following paragraph—

'(aa) which increases the sum specified by virtue of section 5(1) of the Child Benefit Act 1975 by a percentage not less than the percentage by which the sum prescribed for the purposes of section 21(6)(a) above in respect of a child aged less than 11 years is increased by the up-rating order; and'."

**Mr. Speaker:** This amendment involves privilege.

9.46 pm

**The Secretary of State for Social Security (Mr. John Moore):** I beg to move, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment.

The issue is not a new one for the House. We discussed it on 18 January on an Opposition Supply Day, on 24 April on Report and on 11 July on Report on the Finance Bill. In every case, the substance of the issue was debated and the House sustained the Government's decision by a large majority. Little new has emerged since then except for something in regard to family credit, to which I shall refer later, but the arguments have moved in favour of the Government. As succinctly as I can, because I do not want to detain the House unnecessarily, I shall explain the reasons for the decision that the Government took, to show why I shall urge the House to reject the Lords amendment.

I imagine that I shall take the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) with me when I say that I shall not spend too much of our limited time on the Lords amendment itself, because I assume that the House will agree that in many ways it is a stalking horse for the same child benefit debate, and I understand that. Essentially, as one of my noble Friends described it, they are seeking to impose a statutory duty based on the exercise of discretion. For example, if this year we follow the provisions of the Lords amendment, and for the under-11s we were able to secure an increase of 20·7 per cent., extended across the whole of the child benefit range that would result in a public expenditure cost of £675 million. In many ways, the remarks of Tony Lynes, who occasionally is drawn to the attention of the House, in the *New Statesman and Society* this week was interesting. He pointed out the fallacy behind the amendment, which would prevent the Government from helping the poorest.

I shall remind the House of what I have said many times, first about what child benefit was supposed to be. I am not talking about what, perfectly honourably, many hon. Members on both sides of the House would like child benefit to be or about what many people think that it should have been when it was first introduced. I am talking about what child benefit was when it was created in the 1975 statute and what Governments of both political persuasions have sought to enact since. Therefore, I shall go back to the quotation that I have given many times from the debate on 13 May 1975 when the late Alec Jones, when discussing why he did not think it appropriate to have an annual index of the review of child benefit, said:

> "We do not propose that there should be anything similar to child benefit because it is a totally different kind of benefit, fulfilling a different purpose.
>
> In the first place it is a new kind of benefit—a hybrid, which amalgamates a social security benefit with a tax allowance. In the second place, most of the people receiving it will be people at work, and the benefit will simply form a tax-free addition to their earned income. In this it is totally unlike benefits such as pensions which form the main source of income of those who receive them . . . It will be raised from time to time in the light of inflation and other developments. But just as neither family allowances nor child tax allowances are subject to the rigid pattern of upratings that has been evolved for social security benefits nor will their successor benefit be."—[*Official Report*, 13 May 1975; Vol. 892, c. 400-1.]

On a later date, the then Mrs. Castle said:

> "There is a difference between routine national insurance benefits and this new benefit. Indexation of the child benefit is inappropriate. National insurance benefits are major means of support when earning capacity is interrupted, but the child benefit is a tax-free supplement to families whose major source of income is earnings. Clearly maintenance benefits must be capable of moving automatically in line with changes in the cost of living. The child benefit is in a different category. . . . A statutory duty is placed on the Secretary of State to examine the rate in the light of the overall social and economic policies."—[*Official Report*, 7 July 1975; Vol. 895, c. 238.]

I shall not labour the point as I have made it many times in previous debates.

**Mr. Jeff Rooker** (Birmingham, Perry Barr): I shall not labour the point either. It is all very well quoting 1975, but that was before the House, during the Report stage of the Finance Bill 1977, accepted statutory indexation of personal tax allowances. Those speeches in 1975 would not have been made and those briefs would not have been written in the light of the change of policy agreed by the House in 1977.

**Mr. Moore:** I disagree with the hon. Member but——

**Mr. Rooker:** The Secretary of State knows that.

**Mr. Moore:** If the hon. Gentleman would be as courteous as he used to be and allow me to answer his point, rather than constantly interrupt me, I should be happy to do so. I was trying to illustrate the distinction that was clearly drawn between child benefit as introduced and other forms of then indexed benefit. There was a substantive debate then. I will be happy to go on, to illustrate why I think that is the case.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): I hope that my right hon. Friend can reassure me and many of my colleagues. Does he agree that families with children have obviously got greater family commitments than those without children and that this should be taken account of within the tax and benefits system? All families, at whatever level of income, have got greater commitments. My right hon. Friend has said, and he has read out, that when this benefit was introduced, it was stated at the time that it should be, as a result of inflation, increased from time to time. Will my right hon. Friend tell the House that he agrees that child benefit should be increased from time to time?

**Mr. Moore:** I have said that the nature of the statutory duty is clear. One of the confusions that has entered the debate is that people seem to assume that child benefit is a substitute for family credit. It is not. Child benefit, as my right hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security has said on many occasions, and precisely, is still part and parcel of the overall help that is given to families with children. That parcel includes child benefit, which is not means tested, and other forms of benefit. It is a package. I shall illustrate the character of the package and the way that the combination works.

**Mr. Frank Field** (Birkenhead): I am grateful to the Secretary of State for reminding us of what Labour Ministers said about child benefit. Will he also remind the House that he is quoting the same people who tried to rat on the benefit, and that had there not been a leak of child benefit papers from the Cabinet, the child benefit scheme would not now exist. Would it not be appropriate to draw on sources other than that group of people to support his case?

**Mr. Moore:** I recognise in many instances the role of the hon. Gentleman outside the House as well as inside it. I was doing what I thought was my duty, which was to remind the House of the background to the nature of my statutory duty, which is the duty of all Governments.

I shall move on because I wish to be relatively brief.

**Mr. Marlow:** Will my right hon. Friend give way?

**Mr. Moore:** No. I have given way excessively—and courteously, I trust.

I shall move on from the nature of the history of child benefit and the statutory duty upon the Secretary of State to remind the House that in an earlier debate on these matters I drew attention to what child benefit had replaced. I shall take up the points that have been made by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field). It replaced family and child tax allowances, neither of which were expected to, or did, rise each year.

To ensure that the record is correct for the hon. Member for Birkenhead, in the article that he wrote, he took the period 1946 to 1970, but then added to that the period from 1970 to 1972, which actually changed the data. During that period, for two thirds of children in the basic category for all those under the age of 11, the real value declined. I shall send the hon. Gentleman the details because, being a serious person, he would no doubt wish to see them. The two allowances that child benefit replaced had different characteristics, but the one that they shared with child benefit was that they were not expected automatically to be indexed.

What was at the back of my statutory duty that made me take the decisions I did this year? I had to recognise the nature of the whole character of the economy, what happens to families in other parts of the social security and benefits system, as well as the overall pattern of earnings. It would be improper for me to ignore the radical reductions in taxation, under which 80 per cent. of families with children benefit. It would be improper for me to ignore the fact that for the year in question when I made my judgment, when I considered whether to increase child benefit by 45p, families on typical male average earnings had had a £20 per week gain in income after tax during the previous year. I have to put all those into the balance in addition to the other improvements in living standards.

The Opposition and some of my right hon. and hon. Friends have argued their case from different angles. I respect many of their arguments. I pick out the eloquent

*[Mr. Moore]*

speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) during Report on the Finance Bill recently. He put his points extremely well and very quietly, as he always does. Hon. Members argue about horizontal equity, but I think that they tend to be over-conscious of —I dare not say obsessed with—child benefit to the exclusion of the overall pattern of the Government's help and support for families with children.

I am always grateful to the hon. Member for Birkenhead; I found his piece in *The Guardian* today fascinating. For those who do not have *The Guardian* as their daily read, I shall quote what he said:

> "The Opposition and the poverty lobby will need to get their facts together."

I shall not remind the House what the hon. Gentleman said about the Leader of the Opposition, although it was no doubt flattering—

> "Gesture politics here is the litany so often heard that child benefit is the only way of increasing family income."

It is in that context that it is essential that the Opposition and my right hon. and hon. Friends understand the pattern of improvement over the last decade—rightly in my judgment—in help for families with children. We have secured a massive increase in the overall pattern of support —the horizontal equity mentioned by my hon. Friends —of about 27·3 per cent. As a society, we are spending £9 billion-plus in that area.

I do not think that my hon. Friends need to be reminded of this, but the Opposition do. If they are obsessed with just one part of support for families with children——

**Mr. Frank Field:** I am not.

**Mr. Moore:** I do not mean the hon. Gentleman, I mean the Opposition generally. We should recall their appalling record when they were last in office. I specifically remind them about the relative position of child tax and of family allowances and child benefit, the process of which was changed during their time in office.

The last time that I stood at this Dispatch Box, I reminded the House that their real value for young children has been higher throughout the term of this Government's period in office that at any time during the last Labour Administration, except when Labour uprated benefits in its last month in office. I shall place the figures on the record. They reveal that spending in real terms on family allowance and child tax allowance in 1974-75 totalled £5,758 million. In 1978-79, the figure fell in real terms by 14 per cent. to £4,875 million, which is not a record of which Labour can be proud.

10 pm

**Mr. Christopher Hawkins** (High Peak): My right hon. Friend says that child benefit should not be looked upon as the only means of helping those with children and of achieving horizontal equity. What help other than child benefit is given to people with children who have medium or high levels of income?

*It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

*Ordered,*

That, at this day's sitting, the Lords amendments to the Social Security Bill and the Transport (Scotland) Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. John M. Taylor.]*

## Social Security Bill

*Lords amendments again considered.*

**Mr. Moore:** I commented that it was a judicious mix, and I go on to remind my hon. Friend and other right hon. and hon. Members of the way that we manage that mix. As my hon. Friend rightly says, it is a combination of child benefit. Sometimes, the media and certain of my right hon. and hon. Friends, as well as Opposition Members, behave as though child benefit is under threat. We are looking at a combination of benefits that matches the attempt to target additional help at poorer families with the universal benefit that is child benefit. Sometimes, it seems as though the only topic of debate is child benefit, but that is only part of the mixture.

**Mr. Timothy Raison** (Aylesbury): My right hon. Friend referred, rightly, to Labour's appalling record when in government. One of the most powerful arguments for the automatic uprating of child benefits is that if Labour were ever returned to power, it would be unable to perpetuate its appalling record.

**Mr. Moore:** My right hon. Friend has made that point before, and it is reasonable that he should make it again.

We are trying to help families with children in a balanced and sensible way against the backcloth of a massive increase in real terms in 10 years. We are combining targeted help with help on a universal basis. My right hon. and hon. Friends should remember more than some of them do that we are dealing with an entirely new structure of benefit support for families with children. The structure of income support and family credit means that there is no immediate gain to such families from a simple increase in child benefit. However, families with children under 11 have, under family credit, enjoyed a real improvement this year of 20·7 per cent.

As to the debate on targeting, I find it extraordinary that the Opposition act as though means-tested benefits, as opposed to universal benefits, are somehow a new invention and that an attempt to help people who are poorer than others is a new feature of Government policy. Anyone with knowledge of the subject will know that it has been a feature of our social security system for many years. The question is always how effective one can make such benefits. Most targeted benefits succeed very well, with £9 out of £10 of them reaching the people for whom they are intended. Most of the analysis that we have undertaken reveals that targeted benefits are not seen as demeaning by those who receive them. Certainly they are not seen as demeaning by lone-parent families, where the take-up of benefits is a successful 97 per cent.-plus.

I shall concentrate briefly on family credit. After two years, we have grown accustomed to the hon. Member for Livingston delighting us all, in advance of any debate on the Floor of the House, with the leaked proceedings of a conference or by distributing a piece of paper—if I may so describe the latest Walworth road press release, though I understand that that particular document was released at 00.01 hours.

That illustrates the essential dilemma faced by the hon. Member for Livingston. Looking at this piece of paper, it is clear that the first thing that we must do is try to work out what precisely are the Opposition's policies. In articles written outside the House, the hon. Gentleman has made it clear that he does not consider family credit a good benefit; as a good Socialist, he would prefer a minimum income—I think that that was the phrase that he used in an interview about poverty last year.

In public and in the House, however, the hon. Gentleman argues that, if family credit is to be provided, it should be taken up. I would have hoped, therefore—I am being as courteous and fair as I can—that he would address the matter a little more accurately than he did in that press release, which is a classic illustration of how to distort the facts by putting out incomplete information.

Let me take the hon. Gentleman's main points one by one, as they are central to the argument—especially that of my hon. Friends, whose frequent criticism is that, while they do not disagree with family credit, it should be made more effective and should reach more people. The hon. Gentleman's first point was elaborated on the radio this morning: "The Secretary of State cannot parade family credit as a substitute for child benefit." I have never done that, and shall never try to.

The hon. Gentleman's second point related to numbers: he quoted figures from the end of February and the end of June. Let me acquaint him with the precise position, which I could have done earlier had he asked me. At the end of March—at the beginning of the campaign—253,528 people were in receipt of family credit. The latest figure —again, the hon. Gentleman would have been welcome to it had he asked—is 268,984, an increase of 15,456, as opposed to the 9,400 that he suggested. More important, the underlying live load—those who might be expected to be full recipients of family credit—is now running at 315,000. There was an enormous surge in take-up, and 78,673 applications have not yet been considered.

The third point is interrelated. The hon. Gentleman suggested that the success rate was much higher before the campaign began, and gave a figure that did not conform to the facts. Let me remind the hon. Gentleman that the success rate before the campaign began was an impressive 70 per cent. When it began, a large number of people wrote in who were clearly not entitled to the money—people with no children, for example. I do not imagine that the hon. Gentleman would have liked us to help them. That, of course, meant that the initial disallowance rate was higher than it is now.

I know that the hon. Gentleman would like the campaign to succeed. He will be happy to know that since it began the success rate has risen to 55 per cent., and is improving: the figure for the current week is 60 per cent. The hon. Gentleman should be delighted at that. Some 315,000 people—which could be up to about 63 per cent. of the underlying potential beneficiaries—are now able to receive family credit. That represents something approaching 75 to 80 per cent. of the expenditure potential. Surely everyone wants us to succeed in helping poorer families at work.

In his attempt to decry aspects of the campaign, the hon. Gentleman was utterly mistaken in trying to illustrate —with figures that I have shown to be wrong—costs per person. Again he must be aware, as must the audience outside—I know that the hon. Member for Birkenhead is aware of this—that the potential claimant population is constantly changing. As is shown by research that I have placed in the House, the key is a lack of awareness of family credit: ignorance caused the main difficulty in targeting additional help effectively.

**Mr. Frank Field:** Will the Minister give way?

**Mr. Moore:** No. Perhaps I could explain, because this is information that the House will find important.

The hon. Member for Birkenhead will be delighted to know that the latest research suggests that following the campaign, which ended during the last two weeks, 93 per cent. are now aware of family credit, 90 per cent. were aware of the campaign and 83 per cent. know that it is a benefit for working families. I thought that it would be useful to get that on the record. I should like the take-up to be even higher and more people on low incomes in work to benefit from family credit, but that shows that, happily, it is building up into a success story.

**Mr. Frank Field:** Will the Minister give way?

**Mr. Moore:** No. I want to bring my remarks to an end, because I have already been on my feet for some time.

I remind the House that I said that we are not talking about family credit as a substitute for child benefit. We are talking about a judicious admixture of child benefit—£4·5 billion—of family credit, where expenditure is well over £400 million, which is a very good increase on the £180 million for family income supplement, and of income support, which goes to 1·1 million families with 3 million children, when one adds up the income support and family credit beneficiaries.

I urge the House to reject the Lords amendment. It would take away the flexibility that has contributed to the Government's outstanding record of support for families, achieved by a combination of economic success and a judicious admixture of universal child benefit and targeted help through income support and family credit. It is clearly in the interests of families that we should retain the flexibility of the present statutes.

**Mr. Robin Cook** (Livingston): The Secretary of State began his speech by referring to the number of times that we have debated the matter recently. I see from the speech that I made the last time we debated the matter in April that I said that the advantage of regular debates was that they reminded Ministers and the Treasury that this issue will not go away until child benefit is uprated. I did not, I must confess, appreciate that the issue would return to harass them quite as quickly as it has done. Nevertheless, the debate is timely because, at the end of October, the House will receive from the right hon. Gentleman, or his successor, an uprating statement for next April. In terms of sitting weeks, the end of October is only a fortnight away. This is the last chance to influence that statement before it is drawn up.

The Secretary of State referred to my former colleague, Alec Jones, whom I remember well as a close and valued friend. The Secretary of State quoted him as arguing why it would not be appropriate annually to uprate child benefit. The Secretary of State gave way to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) at that point. My hon. Friend the Member for Perry Barr was seeking to put to the Secretary of State the point that child benefit replaced, in part, the child tax allowance, a point to which the Secretary of State referred later.

The annual indexation of tax allowances was introduced in 1977, by which time child tax allowances were being phased out because they were being replaced by child benefit. If child benefit had not then already been coming into place, and if child tax allowances had had a stable future, there is no doubt whatsoever that child tax allowances would have been included in the statutory indexation. I think that I can say that with some authority. Although the Secretary of State disputed the point that was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Perry Barr, I think that my hon. Friend is in a better position to be an authority on this matter since he drafted the amendment that gave effect to the tax allowance indexation.

The Secretary of State was good enough not to waste the time of the House by debating the amendment as such, and I shall follow his precedent, but the nub of the debate on this issue of principle is not whether child benefit should be annually uprated but why child benefit should be annually frozen. I noticed the interesting omission from the Secretary of State's speech of an answer to a question that he was asked from below the Gangway by one of his hon. Friends, the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), which was: accepting that child benefit may not require annual uprating, did the right hon. Gentleman accept that child benefit was appropriate for uprating from time to time? The House received no reply to that question. It is precisely because that question is unanswered that many of us believe that it is not only reasonable but prudent to conclude that child benefit is under threat.

10.15 pm

**Mr. Moore:** I did not and cannot answer, for reasons that the hon. Gentleman knows precisely. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) points out, there are clear arrangements in the public expenditure White Paper to allow annual indexation, but the Secretary of State is beholden to make a judgment each year. It would be improper for me to pre-empt that judgment.

**Mr. Cook:** I shall turn in a moment to what judgment the Secretary of State should exercise on the coming year. I shall willingly give way a second time if he wishes to clarify this point. Leaving aside what individual judgment he may reach next year, and leaving aside the individual judgment that he reached last year, does he or does he not accept that, perhaps not annually, but from time to time, it would be appropriate and correct to uprate child benefit? I shall give way to the Secretary of State again if he wishes to answer that question, which he has now ducked twice. *[Interruption.]* The Secretary of State has certainly not given me or the House the answer.

**Mr. Moore:** The hon. Gentleman is playing the usual games.

**Mr. Cook:** The Secretary of State says that I am playing the usual games. I am generously giving him an opportunity to clarify what is in his mind.

**Mr. John Marshall** (Hendon, South): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Cook:** I want to give way to the Secretary of State. Only he can answer this question. I am not interested in whether the hon. Gentleman thinks that it is appropriate from time to time to increase child benefit. I want to know whether the Secretary of State thinks that that is appropriate. The fact that he will not answer that question must leave hanging in the air the possibility, if not the certainty, that this Secretary of State does not believe that it is appropriate to increase child benefit.

The Secretary of State said that he must apply his mind to that judgment in an agonising, painful reflection every year. I invite the House to apply its mind to the judgment that the Secretary of State might exercise for the coming year. We are talking about April 1990. The Lords amendment proceeds from the starting point that this year and last year are water under the bridge. We are debating what happens to uprating in April next year. That will be the third year of a freeze in child benefit if it is not uprated. Every additional year of freeze must make the judgment in uprating child benefit in the subsequent year that bit more compelling.

Child benefit has now been frozen for two years. In those two years, it has lost over 10 per cent. in value—£39 in a full year. That is a significant sum, especially to a mother on a tight budget. Some hon. Members will have noticed that during the Euro-elections I went shopping for clothes for an imaginary five-year-old. I was able with that sum to kit him out completely, with a track suit, shirt, vest, trainers and three pairs of socks and still have enough change left over to buy a milk shake to thank him for keeping quiet. It is important that those of us who do not feel the pinch of a weekly budget should recognise that it is that kind of shopping expedition that we make more difficult, if not impossible, for mothers by not uprating child benefit. It is against that background that the Secretary of State must exercise his judgment as to whether it would be appropriate to uprate child benefit next April.

Even if the Treasury is correct and inflation has peaked and from now will gently glide down in the same way that it bumped up, by next April the RPI will have notched up 17 percentage points since April 1987, when child benefit was last increased. In short, over those three years, child benefit will have lost a sixth of its purchasing power. In those circumstances, I find it impossible to conceive what may weigh in the balance when the Secretary of State comes to exercise his judgment to tell against uprating child benefit in that third year. The only reason why child benefit may be kept frozen for a third year is that those who freeze it hope that, if they leave it long enough in the deep freeze, it will be found frozen to death.

If that were to happen, we would lose a very important benefit. I have three grounds of principle for that belief which I will rehearse briefly. First, child benefit puts money in the hands of the mother. The mother is overwhelmingly the parent who feeds and clothes the children and she gets the cash from child benefit. Secondly, it is reliable. It is often the only stable point of reference in the budget. Low-income families, especially under this Government, are prone to get stuck in the revolving door of alternative bouts of employment and unemployment. When in employment, their wage packet may unnervingly go through bumpy rides of seasonal fluctuations in overtime. Through all that, child benefit may be the only reliable, predictable payment in the hands of the mother. It is the one income on which she can budget with confidence for her children.

Thirdly, child benefit provides a ladder out of the poverty trap. Its greatest strength is precisely the point that the Secretary of State keeps perceiving as its greatest weakness—that it does not go down if the family income goes up. It provides the family, therefore, with an incentive to find a job or do overtime without being penalised by the benefit being clawed back. It is worth recalling that a family on family credit and housing benefit can now face a clawback of over 90p in benefit for every extra pound earned. That is a penal rate of marginal taxation—double the rate of marginal taxation now experienced by the wealthiest in our community. The difficulty for the Secretary of State is that the better he and his colleagues succeed in targeting benefits, the more difficult they make it for such households to climb out of the poverty trap.

I want to refer here to what the Secretary of State said in relation to family credit. It would be churlish of me not to welcome the marked difference of tone in the description by the Secretary of State of family credit and the way in which he related it to child benefit. I am bound to say that it was not only a different tone but a somewhat chastened tone, for a reason that I shall come to in a moment.

I entirely accept that any comprehensive system of benefits for families will be a mix of means-tested benefits and universal benefits. The Opposition have never had any doubt about that. We accept that means-tested benefits will have a role to play. The doubt that has existed in previous debates is whether the Secretary of State accepted that universal benefits, in the shape of child benefit, had any future role in that mix. I accept from what he said tonight that there appeared to be a new note of caution in his assessment and that there appeared to be a willingness to recognise that means-tested benefits require to be supported by universal benefits such as child benefit.

The reason for that is not far to seek. Since the last debate, to which the Secretary of State was good enough to refer, we have had the relaunch of family credit. As the Secretary of State will recall, family credit was forecast to achieve an uptake of 470,000. We must measure the subsequent numbers who claim against that forecast.

**Mr. Moore** *indicated dissent.*

**Mr. Cook:** The Secretary of State shakes his head. That figure was in the public expenditure White Paper that was printed for last year, and if a figure that was included in the public expenditure White Paper does not constitute a Government forecast, we are moving into an era of rubbery statistics to an extent that I had not previously expected even of this Government.

**Mr. Moore:** Does the hon. Gentleman assume that if new data appear they are ignored by the Government and that if the old data are wrong we just ignore that? If he argues on the basis of the only clear knowledge we have, he knows the audience we believe to exist, as opposed to the 1985-86 figures, is a potential audience of 500,000 in 1988-89. He knows that that is the potential beneficiary audience for family credit, so what on earth is he talking about?

**Mr. Cook:** I am not talking about the 1985-86 figures, and I am rather surprised that the Secretary of State should think that the forecast of 470,000 was for 1985-86. The figure appeared in the White Paper for 1987-88, for which the right hon. Gentleman was responsible. It was the figure that he himself chose. I entirely agree with him that it turned out to be completely wrong, but it was his figure and his forecast. *[Interruption.]* I am using it to point out to the Secretary of State the margin of error in his forecast. His forecast was 470,000, and I agree with him, in the light of history, that it was a risible figure.

The take-up for family credit has since settled down at around the 250,000 mark. The Secretary of State taxed me with using figures in error in my press release. I have to confess that he may be right that the figures are erroneous; after all, they are entirely drawn from figures supplied by

*[Mr. Cook]*

him in parliamentary answers. *[Interruption.]* To the end of June. It was the figure that he quoted at social security questions only 10 days ago.

The figure of 263,000 is, as I said in my press release, precisely 9,400 more than the figure for the end of February. I could have made the figure even smaller. I could have taken the figure for the end of November. The figure for the end of November last year was 260,000—at least, that was the figure given by the Secretary of State, although perhaps he will wish to correct it now. That means that the figure is 9,400 higher than in March and only 3,400 higher than at the end of November.

Suppose that I take the point made by the Secretary of State and accept his latest revision of the figures, which would give us an additional 15,000 since the end of February—although only 9,000 since the end of November. I agree that that will change my calculations. In my press release I calculated that we were paying £510 in advertising costs for every additional new claimant of family credit. I concede that that was based on the figure of 9,400 claimants, which I had taken from the earlier figures given by the Secretary of State.

Suppose that I take the figure that the Secretary of State has given the House tonight—15,000 additional new claimants. That means that the advertising fee per additional claimant is working out at £320. Even at £320 in extra expenditure for every new claimant, we must be looking at what must bid fair for the prize for the least efficient benefit in Europe. Not only that, but we are left with barely a quarter of a million claimants and a refusal rate that has increased. In my press release I cited a refusal rate of 44 per cent. The Secretary of State corrected that by saying that the success rate is 55 per cent. If he reflects for a moment, he will notice that the two figures add up to 100 per cent. and are entirely reconcilable. The chief result of all the publicity—*[Interruption.]* If I did not, I cheerfully accept the correction. The figure is 44 per cent., although I am mystified as to why the Secretary of State should think that we believed any other figure as we are trusting, simple souls using information that he gives in parliamentary answers.

The Secretary of State has carried out a bold experiment, and I suppose that we should be grateful to him for it. He has tested means-tested benefits as a means of targeting families with children. So far it has been an expensive experiment. It has cost his Department and the taxpayer £5 million. The more he has persisted with the experiment in family credit, the more he has underlined the attractions of child benefit.

Child benefit is cost-effective. There is no need to advertise child benefit on every passing bus. It is cheap to administer. It costs only 2p per pound delivered to the claimant. Secondly, it achieves near complete take-up. Unlike family credit, it hits nearly all its targets. It gets through to many more mothers in poor families than family credit. In particular, it gets through to the quarter of a million families poor enough to qualify for family credit whom the Secretary of State cannot find or cannot persuade to apply for family credit.

10.30 pm

I began by mentioning how often we have debated this issue. I want to end by asking a question to which I have sought an answer on each of the past three occasions when we have debated the issue. It is a question which the Secretary of State, perhaps wisely, has never attempted to answer. As he fairly said, child benefit in part replaced child tax allowance. Had it remained a tax allowance I have not the slightest doubt, and I question whether any Conservative right hon. of hon. Member doubts, that the Government would have uprated it annually. They would have come to the House with pride and asked us to admire them for having done so.

There is, however, a clear and pertinent contrast. Under the Government, the married man's tax allowance has gone up by 22 per cent. in real terms. In the same period, child benefit has gone down by 13 per cent. If the amendment is rejected, and if the Secretary of State subsequently fails to uprate child benefit for next April, child benefit will have declined under the Government, not by 13 per cent., but by between 19 and 20 per cent., depending on what the rate of inflation is next April.

I ask the Secretary of State, or any hon. Member who can think of a convincing answer, by what feat of mental gymnastics can it be said that the cost of maintaining a wife has gone up one fifth while the cost of bringing up a child has gone down one fifth? Those who can find an honest answer to that question to their own satisfaction are welcome to vote with the Secretary of State; plainly they are beyond the bounds of reason. I invite into our Lobby tonight those who find that question difficult and troubling to answer and who recognise that it exposes the double standards of an Administration willing to cut benefits in order to cut taxation. We shall vote tonight against those double standards.

**Sir Ian Gilmour** (Chesham and Amersham): As has been said by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and by the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), this is well-trodden ground, so I will not detain the House for long.

I want to examine the two arguments that my right hon. Friend advanced tonight and in our debate on 24 April for not uprating child benefit. The first argument was to rely on what Lady Castle and Mr. Alec Jones said in 1975. I find that argument extraordinary. Apart from anything else, the dates are wrong. What Lady Castle might have said in 1977 had she been Secretary of State would have been more relevant, but that my right hon. Friend should use Lady Castle at all is most odd. Twice a week for many years my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has excoriated the Opposition for the appalling mess they made in government in the late 1970s. Why does my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State now take what they did in the 1970s as an example of what he should do now? To shelter behind Lady Castle is extraordinary, particularly as the Government now say—I hope that they are right, although I have no way of knowing—that the economy has been transformed under their aegis. Why should we seek to follow what the Labour Government, in their benighted days and their hopelessly incompetent ways, did in 1975?

That is as specious an argument as one could possibly find, except perhaps the next one advanced by my right hon. Friend when he talked about "the overall pattern" and his statutory duty. On 24 April he said:

> "I do not have the choice of looking at child benefit in isolation. I must rightly consider the relationship between child benefit and the economic and social patterns of our country."—*[Official Report*, 24 April 1989; Vol. 151, c. 722.]

During the past two years, what change has there been in the economic and social patterns of our country? Does he believe that too many children have been born? Does he wish to discourage that by cutting child benefit? It is important to know what social and economic patterns have changed. In the past two years substantial tax cuts have been showered around. Income tax allowance and every other allowance have been raised. The one thing that has not been raised is child benefit.

**Mr. Moore:** If my right hon. Friend looks at *Hansard* for 24 April, he will see that I illustrated for the two years in question precisely what had happened to families who were in receipt of substantial, net after-tax increases and the way in which in those years those families who did not so benefit benefited more than they would have done otherwise because of the precise policies that I had introduced.

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend. That was just the intervention that I wanted. The Government have done nothing like enough for the really poor, but that is not what I am talking about. I am talking about the simple point that was made by my hon. Friends the Members for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) and for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins): that people with children have greater expense than people without children. That applies at all levels of income. By refusing to uprate child benefit two years running, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is treating people with children worse than people without children.

I want to know what changes in the social and economic patterns of the country justify that. I cannot think of one. It is clear to all hon. Members that people at all levels of income have greater expense if they have children than if they have not. That is why we had child tax and family allowances before and why we have child benefit now.

It is not good enough for my right hon. Friend to refer to the very poor, on which the Government's record is not all that good. That is why my right hon. Friend did not answer my hon. Friends the Members for Northampton, North and for High Peak. However, I am talking not about the really poor but about people with families above the level of family credit and income support. When tax cuts and income tax allowance are being showered all around, why should people with children benefit less than anybody else?

That is why, with great respect to my right hon. Friend, I cannot take him seriously when he talks about his review. If he reviewed things properly, he could not possibly come to that conclusion. It is not within the bounds of reason. It has only happened—to some extent this lets out my right hon. Friend—because the Government have an insensate desire to cut public expenditure. They think that child tax allowance is not expenditure but that child benefit is, so they cut it. That is not the decision of my right hon. Friend, but of the Government, and they are to blame.

At some stage the Government will have to deal with the problem of horizontal equity. My right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary singularly failed to do that the other night, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has singularly failed to do so today. Until they do, they will be discriminating against people with children.

**Mr. Charles Kennedy** (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): I want to follow on from the last point made by the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour). There is no doubt that the central problem that has emerged in debate after debate on this issue—this is the third that we have had in the House this year; one in January, one in April and again tonight—is the Secretary of State's inherently weak position in the Government.

In January, the right hon. Gentleman attempted to swathe himself in legislative complexity about how tied his hands were. He followed that with further arguments to which the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) alluded in his speech in April. Tonight, he has, in a sense, ignored the core of the debate, which is that the Government were defeated in the other place after the arguments had been comprehensively trailed. Rebellious Conservative Back Benchers, Cross Benchers and the various Opposition groupings prevented them from mustering a persuasive argument to justify the attitudes that they have taken over the past two years on child benefit.

The right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham is right to remind us that this has been a two-year process. When the decision not to uprate was first made, there was some allusion to the fact that it should be viewed only in the context of the financial constraints and the economic decisions of the Government in that year. Then it was repeated, and now the Government are attempting to knock out a Lords amendment. If left further unchecked, it is clearly the Government's intention to allow child benefit to wither on the vine and die. It is as simple as that, and that is why it would be a good idea to fire a shot across the bows not just of the Department of Social Security, but of the Treasury. A substantial rebellion by Conservative Members would constitute such a shot.

The Secretary of State treated us to a trip down memory lane when he spoke about the mid-1970s. In that context, I quote from an editorial in the *Financial Times*. It appeared at the end of last year, and in a sense it puts the historical context of the debate in much fairer and fuller relief than did the Secretary of State. The editorial says:

> "Much of the opposition to child benefit . . . reflects a misunderstanding of what it is meant to achieve. It is said to be poorly targeted because it is received by rich as well as poor mothers. Yet it was a replacement for child tax allowances. Nobody argues that personal allowances are poorly targeted because both high and low earners receive them."

The *Financial Times* put the case with considerable cogency. However, only three years earlier, in June 1985, the Green Paper, entitled "Reform of Social Security", put it with even greater cogency and more persuasiveness:

> "The Government accept the case for continuing the system of child benefit. It is right that families with children at all income levels should receive some recognition for the additional costs of bringing up children and that the tax benefit system should allow for some general redistribution of resources from those without children to those who have responsibility for caring for them."

There we have the Government's own words.

The Prime Minister is continually alluding to the previous Labour Government. The Secretary of State is willing to go all the way back to 1975 and cite the actions of the Labour Government to justify being forced to carry out actions. Why does he not go back to 1985 and to the words of his Department's Green Paper on the reform of social security? If he and his Department no longer subscribe to what they said three years ago, as opposed to what Labour Ministers said 13 years ago, that further underscores the need to answer the question posed by the

*[Mr. Charles Kennedy]*

hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). The hon. Gentleman asked the Minister whether, if he no longer accepts that argument, he therefore accepts any continuing and viable future role for child benefit.

The Minister is asking the House to reject an amendment passed in another place. That is consistent, if his argument has any force—I do not think that it has much—with the longer-term thinking of the Minister and his Department. He has manifestly failed to tell us clearly about his long-term thinking, and from his demeanour at the Dispatch Box it is clear that he has no intention of telling us. That is as strong and powerful an argument as any that could be advanced for upholding the decision made in another place.

The House may have been treated to one swansong earlier in respect of the poll tax and the Secretary of State for the Environment. This shabby exercise for the third time this year by the Secretary of State for Social Security would be a fitting epitaph on his ministerial tombstone.

**Mr. John Maples** (Lewisham, West): The hon. Members for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) and for Livingstone (Mr. Cook) spoke about the old system of child tax allowances. Such allowances were valuable to the Labour Government because under that Government tax rates were incredibly high. If we still had a system of child tax allowances and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security had indexed them for the last 10 years, the Opposition would criticise us for reducing their real value by cutting the rate of income tax. Therefore, they should be careful about how they use that argument.

This debate used to be something of an annual event, but this is the fourth time in the last four months—three times here and once in another place—that the subject has been debated. Two things characterised those debates. The first is that the arguments on both sides do not change very much and the second, and perhaps more pertinent, is that those who continually argue for the annual uprating of child benefit fail to take into account the way that the world has moved on in the last 10 years. That has happened in two respects. First, we have seen the ability and willingness of people to shoulder more responsibility when they can afford to do so. Secondly, we have seen the quite extraordinary degree to which real take-home pay has increased at all levels of income.

I simply cannot believe that anyone who favours this Lords amendment, or any of its predecessors, if given £650 million by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to spend on trying to help families with children, who are in some financial difficulty, would choose to spread it around at a rate of £1·10 a week and not concentrate it on those who need the help. Most of the people who receive child benefit do not need the help.

**Mr. Hawkins:** If my hon. Friend would like to target child benefit only at the lower paid, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State clearly would, why do we not abolish the married man's allowance and target that at the lower paid as well? Why do we not do the same with mortgage interest tax relief?

10.45 pm

**Mr. Maples:** Often, when I used to speak in debates on the economy and taxation, I used to argue strongly for the elimination of all personal allowances and a reduction in the rate of income tax as a compensation. Mortgage interest tax relief has been frozen and we have recently introduced restrictions on deductions for pensions. My hon. Friend had better be a little careful about that argument.

The main piece of reality that the proponents of the Lords amendment fail to take into account is the enormous increase in real take-home pay during the past 10 years. During that period, the real take-home pay of someone on average earnings has increased by 31 per cent., or £52 a week. The pay of someone on three quarters of average earnings has increased by 28 per cent., or £38 a week. At all levels of earnings, people are substantially better off. People can and should devote part of that increased wealth to taking more responsibility for their own affairs.

In the context of such increased earnings, the failure to index child benefit, which would mean £1·10 per child per week, must be insignificant. The policy that I believe my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has followed for the past two years, and which I hope he will continue to pursue, is that child benefit should be frozen and that we should give generous help to people on low incomes with children through the family credit and income support systems. For the others, we should, by the control that that exercises on public spending, reduce their liability to income tax.

**Mr. Frank Field:** We keep hearing figures about take-home pay and what has happened to it during the past two years. Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that there were similar increases in take-home pay in the two years prior to that which he is quoting, and that is why the Conservative party won the general election? Is the hon. Gentleman saying that the Government were wrong to increase child benefit in those two years?

**Mr. Maples:** I do not have the figures for the previous two years. If it was so, I suppose the same argument applies.

There is one misconception about uprating child benefit. It is that in some way it helps poor families with children. That is the one group of people who are not helped at all. Any increase in child benefit is automatically corrected by a reduction in income support or family credit. As people can now receive family credit on an income of up to £10,000 a year if they have two teenage children, it follows that anyone who earns less than that will gain no benefit by an annual or other uprating of child benefit. Moreover, almost everyone above that level will pay more in income tax than they get in child benefit. The way to help them is not to increase child benefit but to reduce their liability to tax.

This is the old argument of universal against means-tested benefits, which the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) was rehearsing on the radio this morning. What he did not tell the public then or earlier in this debate is that the natural and inevitable corollary of a universal social security benefit is high taxation to pay for it. I think that we should move away from that, give generous help to people in need and leave others to take care of themselves. It is no business of the state to have one of its agencies take money out of the pockets of husbands so that another agency of the state, after the expenses of both, can put it back in the pockets of their wives.

**Mr. Kenneth Hind** (Lancashire, West): Will my hon. Friend give way?

**Mr. Maples:** No, I am coming to a conclusion so that others may have an opportunity to speak. I am sure that my hon. Friend will have his.

Nor is it any business of the state to put up everyone's tax so that we can raise everyone's benefits. We have a crazy system. We take £4·5 billion a year in tax out of the pockets of husbands and give rather less than that back to their wives through the social security system. We have a system in which low earners with no children subsidise high earners with children. We have a system by which increases in those benefits are of no use whatever to the families on lowest incomes and in the greatest need.

I cannot believe that anyone would reinvent a system of child benefit to try to help families in financial difficulties. It is a holdover from days of penal taxation and the idea that the Government know best how to run people's lives. It fails to take account of how real incomes have risen and it fails to leave people alone to run their own lives. We have now had this debate four times this year and several times over the past few years. I hope that this will be the end of them because out of the four debates this year, the Government may have won only three of the votes, but they have won four of the arguments.

**Mr. Raison:** I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for two things: first, that he accepted that this debate is about the principle of regular uprating of child benefit, and that is the course that the debate has taken; and, secondly, for his confirmation of what we all know—that money is provided in the public expenditure White Paper for the uprating of child benefit. There is no question of our asking for something that was not planned for. The plan allows for uprating, and we should adopt it.

My right hon. Friend talked about support for children as a judicious admixture of child benefit, family credit and income support. I accept that, and it is right that it should be such a mixture. Surely the essence of the case is that if child benefit is not uprated it will lose its meaning and we shall have only the means-tested benefits of income support and family credit to rely on, and we shall lose something that is of enormous benefit to large numbers of people who do not find the business of having children something that is easily borne. That is the heart of the matter.

It is vital that child benefit should be looked at in the context of the tax and social security systems as a whole. It is no good separating one from the other. The Government seem to be favouring targeting, but we already give indiscriminate, untargeted tax relief to occupational pensioners, to mortgage holders, to single persons, to married couples and now to people who take up private health insurance. The only targeting about all that is that those who get the most by and large get the largest tax relief. It is not possible to give all those forms of financial support to those groups and then, for those with children, who clearly are bearing extra cost, gradually phase out the form of support that helps them—child benefit. It must be accepted that the erosion of child benefit, which is what we are talking about, will do enormous damage to children.

We debated the other day a different approach—a return to child tax allowances. That is not a good approach, and I do not support it. Over the years, child benefit has proved to be the right answer. I shall not go into the reasons at length, but we know that there are several powerful advantages. First, as has been said, it does not create disincentives or the poverty trap. Secondly, it does not have the problems of take-up which persist with family credit. Thirdly, it does not require an elaborate system of means testing, nor does it induce the dependency that goes with that. Fourthly, it helps non-taxpayers and taxpayers alike, particularly the not-quite-poor—those just above the level at which they will receive means-tested benefit.

Fifthly, child benefit goes to the mother, which is something that the Conservative party has always stressed. In a world of family breakdown, mounting divorce and far too many one-parent families, the certainty of child benefit —the fact that it comes without means testing—is one of the most powerful arguments for its being maintained, and maintaining it must mean uprating it. It represents a commitment for which the Conservative party has stood for a long time.

I shall conclude by quoting some words of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister which support that contention. In a written answer, she stated:

> "It has for long been the view of all parties that our tax and benefit systems should recognise the needs of families with children, and should differentiate between such families and those without responsibilities for children. Child tax allowances achieved this but gave no help to families below the tax threshold. Family allowances did not recognise the first child. Child benefit, which replaced both allowances, was introduced in 1977 with the support of all parties. I am glad that, even in the very difficult circumstances of this year, we have been able to increase child benefit by about 10½ per cent. and so honour the pledge given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services on 28 July last year."—[*Official Report*, 17 March 1981; Vol. 1, c. *55*.]

That quotation illustrates clearly the principle that there is a difference between those who have children and those who have not. It is the job of our tax and benefit systems to have regard to that. That is why I hope that the House will support the proposal of my right hon. Friend Lady Faithfull.

**Mr. John Marshall:** Much of the debate so far has revolved round the principle of whether child benefit should be uprated next year, but the amendment goes much wider than that. The amendment says, in effect, that there should be no discrimination in favour of the poorest children in the community. It provides that family credit and child benefit must be uprated at the same level. Surely we want to concentrate our assistance on the poorest within the community. The amendment prevents us from doing that. For those drawing family credit, the amendment will be of no benefit. We want a system that helps the poorest and ensures that future increases do not necessarily go to those at the top.

We know that half those receiving child benefit are earning above-average wages. About 500,000 of those receiving child benefit are paying tax at the rate of 40 per cent. It seems wrong that we should be encouraged by the other place to say that those people should receive the same increase as people in receipt of family credit. It is much better that the poorest in the community should receive the extra assistance that they need. My right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir. I.

*[Mr. John Marshall]*

Gilmour) quoted statements from the past. Over the past two years, family credit has been introduced to help a greater number of children in need. That is one of the Government's greatest achievements, and I welcome it. We should concentrate our assistance upon those in greatest need rather than scatter it around like confetti, giving money to many of those who do not need it.

**Mr. Marlow:** Very briefly, I have some sympathy with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State because he is trapped within the system of Government expenditure. I am talking to my right hon. Frind so I am sure that he is listening even though he is offering me the back of his head. Not for the first—no, I will not say that. I put it —*[Interruption.]* I have been told to behave myself. I put it to my right hon. Friend that I have some sympathy with him because he is trapped by the system of Government expenditure. My right hon. Friend is given a budget and he is told, "Here are all your priorities, here are your needs and here are your problems. This is the amount of money that you have got. How are you going to deal with it?" As my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) said, quite rightly, my right hon. Friend has concentrated the resources available to him on the poorest, the most needy in the land. That is what he has done. But where my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West is wrong is on this score. If my hon. Friend needs that money —if he has to have it—he should not take it from other people's children. He should get it from somewhere else. What he ought to do is to look at Government expenditure overall, not just on the basis of my right hon. Friend's Department. If he did that, we would come to a different conclusion and have a different answer.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) posed a question to us. He said that, if we believe that the cost of looking after a wife or catering for a wife has gone up by a fifth, and that the cost of catering for a child has gone down by a fifth, we should support the Government. But it is more vivid than that. The Government, this Government, our Government, are committed to reducing taxes in future. If they reduce, as we hope that they will do, taxes in future, they reduce taxes for everybody. But they have got to get that money from somewhere. They might get part of that money from increased revenue, but they will possibly get some of that money from reductions in Government expenditure in other areas.

If child benefit is not being increased in line with inflation, the reality is—as the hon. Gentleman and the whole House know—that it is being reduced. So to reduce taxes, which we want, money is to be taken from families with children and given to those without children. That is manifest nonsense. However hard-line a Tory one may be, and I am looked on as being a hard-line Tory—[Hon. Members: "No. Withdraw."] All right, I am not a hard-line Tory, I am a soft-line Tory. I am a wet.

11 pm

If Sherlock Holmes were a member of the parliamentary Lobby and a sketch writer and he was sat up in the Gallery looking down on us, he would refer to tonight as being the night of the unanswered question. My right hon. Friend, in his remarks, said that when child benefit was introduced there was a commitment from time to time to increase child benefit. I have asked my right hon. Friend, but I am afraid that I was not dignified with a reply. The hon. Gentleman—far more important than me—on the Opposition Front Bench asked the same question. Many of my hon. Friends on this side of the House want to know, need to know, are required to know the answer to that question tonight before we vote.

*Question put,* That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 290, Noes 234.

**Division No.310]** **[11.01 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*

Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Maclean and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

## NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Dykes, Hugh
Eadie, Alexander
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCrindle, Robert
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John

Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Randall, Stuart
Rathbone, Tim
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendment No. 2 disagreed to.*

### Clause 8

### MOBILITY ALLOWANCE: INCREASE OF AGE LIMIT TO 80 YEARS

*Lords amendment:* No. 2, in page 8, line 42, at beginning insert—

"( ) In section 37A of the principal Act (mobility allowance) at the end of subsection (1) insert 'or is deaf and blind or is suffering from severe mental handicap such that he is either unable to walk or virtually unable to do so without physical control by another person'.

( ) In subsection (2) of that section leave out 'physical'."

**The Minister for Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Scott):** I beg to move, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment.

May I warmly welcome the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) to the Opposition Front Bench. He gave us a tough time in Committee. I imagine that he will do the same in his new position. Nevertheless, we warmly welcome him.

I am conscious of the fact that there will be some disappointment not only on the Opposition Benches but on the Conservative side that the Government disagree with the Lords amendment. Some of my hon. Friends have taken a keen interest in the question of a mobility allowance for the two groups who are covered by the Lords amendment. Potential beneficiaries outside the House have been watching the proceedings carefully. Campaigning organisations, not least Sense, the National Deaf Blind Helpers League and Mencap, have also been watching them with great care.

11.15 pm

In what I hope will be a brief opening of the debate I hope to do three things—first, to say something about the background to the mobility allowance, secondly, to say why I believe that it would not be appropriate for the House to agree to the Lords amendment and, thirdly, to consider the way ahead.

The mobility allowance has been a conspicious success since it was introduced by the Opposition in 1975. It replaced the old trike scheme but, unlike the trike scheme, it was made available for the first time to severely disabled people with mobility difficulties, whether or not they were able to drive. They were given a cash allowance that they could spend as they wished, either on a motor car or on other ways of broadening their horizons or enhancing their lives.

When the scheme was introduced the criteria were largely those that governed the trike scheme. The same criteria apply now, although case law has to a certain extent modified them. I repeat that the mobility allowance has been a great success. The growth in the number of recipients of this benefit has been impressive. Since the Government came to office, the number in receipt of mobility allowance has increased from 95,000 to 580,000. That number is steadily rising.

The increase is due to three separate factors. First, the age limit has been changed. When the scheme was first introduced the age limit was 65, then it was increased to 75, and it will rise to 80 when the Bill receives Royal Assent. That has increased the number of beneficiaries by 140,000.

**Mr. Kennedy:** The increase in the age threshold from 75 to 80 is to be welcomed. However, a postman in the Isle of Skye who came to see me revealed a general problem with the mobility allowance. All too often people do not realise that such an allowance exists and that they are eligible. By the age of 65 they cannot apply for the allowance. This constituent reached the age of 65 and then realised that the allowance would be of assistance to him in a remote rural area. However, because of his age he found that he could not receive the allowance. Is the Department trying to heighten awareness of the existence of the allowance, in particular of the age after which people will be unable to apply for it, even though the age of eligibility for the award is now as high as 80?

**Mr. Scott:** My second point was going to be about awareness of mobility allowance, which has increased dramatically. The more people who get it, the more other people know about it and are therefore encouraged to come forward. That is an important factor in the more than fivefold increase in take-up of this benefit over the past 10 years. In practice, people can apply up to the age of 66, as long as the condition existed before their 65th birthday. There is a 12-month period during which applications for the benefit can be made.

The third factor is the development of case law over the years since the mobility allowance was introduced. Anyone who has followed it knows that case law has sometimes taken three steps forward and two back in terms of being generous or more restrictive over the intervening period. The overall move has been in a more generous direction.

A combination of three decisions has made an important and constructive move forward. The first was the Edmunds decision and the subsequent regulations introduced by the then Labour Government following the 1978 decision about the criteria to be applied to those who were virtually unable to walk. Then, in 1986, the tribunal of commissioners, following the Lees case, made a decision on the way in which involuntary interruptions in the ability to walk could, dependent on their frequency, amount to a virtual inability to walk. There was also a series of unreported cases, which nevertheless form the body of case law, about the extent to which people who are deaf-blind and suffer from balance difficulties which lead to their needing physical support can also be entitled to the allowance. In three significant respects there has been some easement in the original conditions because of the development of case law.

**Sir Michael McNair-Wilson** (Newbury): Can my right hon. Friend assess the number of people who fit into the two categories referred to in the amendment?

**Mr. Scott:** I could not do so without a much more careful analysis. Cases are decided and then the appeal tribunals and the decision-making process—in practice, independent adjudicating authorities—make decisions about the eligibility of individuals which would not necessarily be recorded as flowing from a particular case that had been decided. It is clear that each of those aspects has had a not insignificant impact on decision making.

The House may say, "We have made all those improvements, so why not accept the Lords amendment?" [HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] I shall explain why I feel that at this time it is not appropriate to accept the amendment which their Lordships have sent back to us. I am aware of, and have been impressed by, the case that has been made by Sense, the National Deaf Blind Helpers

*[Mr. Scott]*

League and Mencap. A number of my predecessors have met deputations from those organisations and have been sympathetic to their suggestions.

This is not an easy problem to solve. Anyone who has studied the debates in another place will realise how difficult it all is. One of the most important features of the debate in another place was the gulf between the estimates by the Government and by the disability organisations of the numbers that might benefit from the amendment. I should explain why and how the Government came to their estimate, which they derived from the data of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. It should be made clear that the relevant data are not separately set out in any of the published OPCS reports. They were derived from a computer analysis by the Department of the data tapes, which are a part of the OPCS survey.

The survey data are divided between 13 different broad areas of disability—such as locomotion, personal care, continence, seeing and hearing. Within each of those areas the OPCS researchers have constructed a scale of severity. All that is explained in the first of the OPCS reports with which all those who study these matters will be familiar.

The aim of the Department's computer analysis of the data was to see how many people had disabilities of the type and severity such that there would be a strong presumption that they would need to be accompanied outdoors and in public, even to the extent of physical control.

Perhaps I could at this stage to interpret "physical control" as used in the amendment. It is the extent to which any parent would go in holding firmly on to a child that he or she was controlling.

**Mr. Harry Ewing** (Falkirk East): It would cost the Government money, and they do not want to pay it.

**Mr. Scott:** Therefore, the computer analysis counted the number of people who were at the top of the severity scale for behavioural disability, for disability of intellectual functioning and for communication disability and at the top of a scale which measured liability to and severity of fits causing loss of consciousness.

**Mr. Ewing:** A load of rubbish.

**Mr. Scott:** I hope that the hon. Gentleman, however well he has dined, will listen carefully to the argument. It is a serious matter, which causes great anxiety to the individuals concerned and all those who care for them—I count myself in that company.

What it means in practice is that people who scored at the top of those various scales were liable to behavioural disturbance to such a degree that they might hit other people or injure themselves, were intellectually incapable of most of the very simple tasks that we take for granted in everyday life, were liable to frequent unpredictable fits and could neither understand nor be understood in communication even with people who knew them well.

The computer analysis was designed to eliminate double counting of people who might suffer from more than one of those disabilities. It also eliminated those whose multiple disability extended also to locomotion to an extent that they might in any case qualify for a mobility allowance. The result is an estimate of 125,000 people in the age range 16 to 65 who would need to be accompanied in public and outdoors to the extent of physical control.

The proposers of the amendments say—of course I believe them, and I have met them and discussed their analysis—that they are not aiming at anything like such a large group. I understand that their estimate is derived from studies of the incidence of mental handicap reported in the 1971 White Paper, "Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped". The overall incidence of severe mental handicap—which was then broadly defined as an IQ of less than 50—was reported there as about 120,000, people in total, although with an increasing rate of survival.

Within the total of 120,000, however, the proposers of the amendment say that they are aiming at a smaller group —those with behavioural difficulties requiring constant supervision. However, that is not what the amendment actually says. It says something quite different. The proposers estimate that group to consist of 4,400 people. I am not sure whether that number includes people in hospitals and residential homes, who are, of course, entitled to a mobility allowance without any time limit.

**Mr. Gerald Bermingham** (St. Helens, South): Leaving aside the difference in the figures—I accept his point—the Minister has just told the House that 125,000 people are affected. If the House does not approve the amendment, what help will be offered to those 125,000 people?

**Mr. Scott:** I shall come to that in what I want to say, because I want to deal seriously with the matter. They may, of course, be entitled to disability benefits other than the mobility allowance as a result of their incapacity. The attendance allowance and various other allowances could be available to them. However, we are now talking specifically about the mobility allowance, which was—I remind the House—introduced quite specifically as a replacement for the trike scheme, which was for people who were unable or virtually unable to walk. The question must be whether mobility allowance is the appropriate benefit for that particular group of people who suffer from those disabilities, or only for some of them. That is the question we must address in due course and which it would be inappropriate to address in the context of the Lords amendment.

I am saying in essence that I do not believe that with the best will in the world any statutory formula based on the Lords amendment could be limited to the numbers that those who support the amendment quote. The data of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys show, by contrast, a large number who might qualify not for other disability allowances, but specifically for mobility allowance, if we were to pass the amendment. I emphasise the word "might". I am not saying that 125,000 would necessarily benefit if we were to pass the amendment. I am saying that there is a huge disparity between the estimate we have genuinely tried to make about the possible beneficiaries and the other figure. We arrived at a figure of 125,000, whereas those who urge the amendment have put forward a figure of about 8,000. That is a huge discrepancy. Even if our computer analysis is 100 per cent. out, we are still talking about 60,000 gainers rather than 8,000.

**Mr. Rooker:** So what?

11.30 pm

**Mr. Scott:** It matters in terms of money. *[Interruption.]* Yes. It matters in terms of ensuring that mobility allowance is targeted on those who have real mobility disability and not disability across the spectrum, in which case other benefits may be more appropriate.

**Mr. Harry Ewing:** I am grateful to the Minister. I have resisted asking him to give way for a few minutes because I simply could not make up my mind whether his insult to me about however well I had dined was deliberate and in character for him. I am prepared to be generous to him and say that it was not in character. I have known the Minister for a long time, and I regard that remark as being very insulting.

When the Minister talks about the measurement of whether someone qualifies for mobility allowance, he seems to ignore the stringent tests through which an applicant for mobility allowance is put. I will mention the case of one constituent, who will forgive me for mentioning him. He is Mr. Charles MacKay of Slamannan who, to prove his need for mobility allowance—which he was refused—was made to walk on Renfield street in Glasgow in the view of hundreds of people. I was going to say thousands of people, but I will be moderate and say hundreds. He had to suffer the shame of being made to walk in front of so many people and then he was refused mobility allowance. It is an insult to the 125,000 people about whom the Minister is talking to suggest that somehow they can get mobility allowance easily. It is not easy and the Minister should understand that. I do not ask him to withdraw his insulting remark about me personally, because that is a matter for him, but he should think carefully about those who are entitled to mobility allowance and do not get it.

**Mr. Scott:** I apologise to the hon. Gentleman that I reacted in that way. It was so uncharacteristic of him to harangue me from a sedentary position that I am afraid that I over-reacted. I withdraw my remark.

The hon. Gentleman's comment about the difficulty of qualifying for mobility allowance is hardly borne out by the fact that we have moved from about 100,000 to nearly 600,000 during the 10 years of this Government. Many more people are qualifying. I do not believe that the number of those who are qualified has increased sixfold in that time, but the number of those receiving the benefit has done so, as a result of the factors I announced at the beginning. If the hon. Gentleman wants to write to me particularly about the case of his constituent, I will, of course, ensure that it is drawn to the attention of those responsible for these matters, who make the independent decisions.

I am not necessarily saying that our figures are accurate; I am merely saying that there is a clear body of evidence to suggest that the figures advanced by those who persuaded their Lordships to vote for the amendment represent a gross underestimate of those who would qualify if the amendment were passed. I hope that they will look carefully at the analysis of the OPCS data that I have described. The information is now lodged in the archives of the Economic and Social Research Council in Essex. It is available to bona fide researchers and if those who promoted the amendment would like to send people to look at the information on that basis, I am happy to make it available. Alternatively, I am prepared to make a suitably qualified member of staff of the Department available to discuss with them the basis of our findings and to see whether we can reconcile the two positions. I repeat that at the moment there is a profound disparity in the calculations of those who tabled the amendment in the other place and the Government's serious attempt to calculate the numbers who might be entitled.

**Mr. Robert N. Wareing** (Liverpool, West Derby): Surely the entitlement of people to mobility allowance should not rest on the numbers involved and the fact that it will cost more money. The Minister seems to be saying that there is an alternative to mobility allowance for those thousands of people whose numbers were underestimated in another place. Will the Minister kindly tell the House what he has in mind that might relieve the difficulties and in some cases the real poverty of people who are blind and deaf and who, having had their expectations raised, are now faced with the Government throttling attempts to give them the very aid that they were expecting?

**Mr. Scott:** I say with great respect to the hon. Gentleman, whom I greatly admire, that I do not need lessons in concern for those who are deaf-blind. Since I assumed my responsibilities, the Government have spent rather more than £1 million specifically to help the deaf-blind and to improve the provision that we make for them. I am most conscious of their needs and I am anxious to ensure that their concerns are met.

Having said that, I am trying to resist an attempt to use mobility allowance for a purpose other than that for which it was introduced, as other benefits may be more appropriate for some of those who would be included were the benefit increased.

Setting aside the deaf-blind, there may be people who have suffered from mental handicap and who may have behavioural difficulties that may need constant supervision. It is going a bit far, however, to say that a person who can walk but who needs some sort of physical control —such as having to have his hand held—because of some other problem necessarily falls into the category of qualifying for mobility allowance. That was not the reason for introducing mobility allowance. I shall not quote from former holders of my office who are now in opposition and who took a firm view before we had a change of Government in 1979.

I hope that I can convince the House that we face a real dilemma. I know that a number of my hon. Friends feel very keenly about the matter—as, indeed, do I—and I want to talk a bit about the way ahead as I see it. On Monday, the last of the OPCS reports was published and all the supporting data tapes are now in the ESRC archives. They are available to those who want to inspect and analyse them.

In due course I shall explain how we shall proceed on a wider front. I have already invited comments on each of the reports as they have been published, and I shall seek to balance the conflicting claims of listening carefully to the representations made to me about the reports and the future of benefits for disabled people and of the need not unduly to delay action. Meanwhile, I hope that I can persuade the House that change in mobility allowance ahead of the wider consideration and of the magnitude that I have suggested might be involved——

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): In Committee the Minister prayed in aid the fact that the OPCS reports

*[Mr. Jeremy Corbyn]*

were not complete. He said that once they were complete and published he would make a statement on a number of the representations that we put to him in Committee. One such representation related to the payment of the attendance allowance to the parents of severely disabled children under the age of two. We have heard nothing from the Minister and I wonder whether it would be appropriate for him now to give us some suggestion about when he hopes to make an announcement on that matter.

**Mr. Scott:** I cannot, not least because I want to decide on the way forward in the round. As I said in Committee and previously, that may depend on the rate of progress that we are able to make overall. Some matters might be decided against a faster track than the generality.

**Mr. Corbyn:** What about the Star Chamber?

**Mr. Scott:** This is a serious matter. We are talking about the largest survey ever conducted in this country, possibly in the world, of the extent and nature of disability and the financial circumstances of disabled people. We must look at that survey carefully and make a serious attempt to frame a pattern of disability benefits that will endure for a considerable time. We must do that in a serious and considered way. I recognise that we might have to address some urgent matters more quickly, but until we decide how quickly we shall deal with the whole disability package, it is difficult to say what we shall do with the other cases. I cannot go further than that.

**Mrs. Audrey Wise** (Preston): It will be done in time for the general election, no doubt.

**Mr. Scott:** The hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) supported a Government who conducted a much more limited survey of the disabled which excluded children and large numbers of other disabled people from it. That survey did not approach the situation with the seriousness that we have done.

**Mr. Corbyn** *rose*——

**Mr. Scott:** No, I shall not give way.

The largest survey of the disabled in this country has just been conducted. In the light of all the results we must assess what changes might be necessary in the pattern of benefit and what priority should be accorded to those changes. No doubt some changes may have to be postponed, but, in those circumstances, it would be little short of folly to rush through a potentially major change without properly considering all the issues and their implications for the system.

In those circumstances, it would be wrong to accept the amendment made in the other place and I ask for it to be reversed.

**Mr. John Battle** (Leeds, West): It is worth reminding ourselves that it was not until the Amendment Paper was printed that we learnt of the Government's intention to reverse the Lords amendment.

In the House of Lords there have been other rebuffs to the Government over the Water Bill, the Electricity Bill and the Companies Bill. The Government have reversed some of those amendments, but at least they publicly declared their intention to do so. Perhaps there has been no notice from the Government today because the Minister is too embarrassed to attract attention to the Government's reversal of the Lords amendment on access to mobility allowance.

I understand that, yesterday, the Prime Minister spoke to Conservative peers. Perhaps she humoured them and said that it did not matter what happened in the other place as she could always reverse anything with her supportive vote in this House. That should not be the Government's attitude tonight.

The amendment deals with the existing regulations covering entitlement to mobility allowance and its purpose is to ensure that the regulations cover people with a severe mental handicap and those who may be deaf and blind.

From my experience as a Member of Parliament, I know that the people who are caused the greatest difficulty and heartache are those who go through the processes for applying for mobility allowance. They genuinely believe that they are entitled to it—on the face of it, that may be correct—but they must go through a series of medical appeals and tribunals. The judgments of those tribunals are based on many inconsistent legal rulings stretching back in 10 years of case law. Many of us know of people with profound mental handicap who lack the necessary co-ordination and who need continuous assistance with their walking. Those people must go through the process of medical appeals and tribunals before they have access to the weekly mobility payments. As the Minister reminded us, the primary legislation was set out in 1975. Since that time there has been a bewildering jungle of case law as social security commissioners have considered the need for assistance for people virtually unable to walk.

The Minister referred to this being a case of three steps forward and one back. There has clearly been a lack of consistency in the decisions that have been made and Ministers should have ended any confusion about whether applications could be made in the first place. People have felt a deep sense of injustice when their claims have failed and have seemed to depend solely upon the decision of the commissioner. If the commission decisions were favourable at the time they put in their applications, their cases might have been more favourably assessed than if they had submitted them when commission decisions were unfavourable.

11.45 pm

**Mr. Scott:** When Lord Ennals and the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) introduced the mobility allowance, they were at great pains to make it clear that the decisions should be made by independent authorities. That was the basis upon which the mobility allowance was introduced and it has been maintained on that basis. In the intervening period, case law has provided a more sensible framework within which those adjudicating authorities could make their decisions. I cannot stand behind every decision that they make, but the case law now gives them a much clearer framework than they had when the mobility allowance was introduced.

**Mr. Battle:** I do not want the Minister to get the impression that I am challenging the independence of the commissioners, but the framework is in a bit of a shambles. In 1983 some people who needed support made successful claims, but shortly afterwards another commissioner argued that under the mobility allowance regulations the inability to walk was restricted to the physical inability to move the legs and that any other problems were irrelevant. That decision was upheld in the other place in 1985. The Minister referred to the tribunal decision that followed the Lees case in 1986. The complexity of case law has reached the point at which, to say the least, it is extremely difficult for ordinary claimants or those looking after them to know whether they meet the requirements of mobility allowance regulations. They have become a difficult maze of benefit provision. People need legal advice and representation to stand any chance of receiving mobility allowance.

I accept that, as the Minister said in Committee, the Government are in principle committed to ending the legal wrangling and to codify case law by amending primary legislation. We are suggesting that the Minister takes the opportunity to do that by withdrawing the Government's motion to disagree with the Lords amendment which will ensure access to mobility allowance to a specific group of blind, deaf and severely mentally handicapped people.

In the debate in the other place, Lord Skelmersdale said:

"On the matter of mobility allowance for the deaf/blind and the mentally handicapped I cannot stress too strongly"——

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd):** Order. The hon. Gentleman must not quote directly from the other place. He should paraphrase.

**Mr. Battle:** I was under the impression that I could quote the Under-Secretary of State, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Lord Skelmersdale emphasised that he could not stress too strongly that the Government wanted to act and were willing to act, yet were waiting for still further analysis to explore the data in more detail. Now the Government argue that the computer data tapes are available.

The Minister's figures were interesting because he suggested that 125,000 people might be included by the amendment. The number seems to go up by the week because the figure in the other place a week ago was 100,000. An increase of 25,000 in a week certainly points to a discrepancy in the figures.

The Government seem to have given what could be described as a gross overestimate of the figures and have done that deliberately to undermine the amendment. We should seriously question the Minister's statement about the figures. There is surely not a huge discrepancy with the figures presented by the National Deaf-Blind and Rubella Association. It estimates that 3,200 deaf-blind people are entitled to the benefit. Before the debate started, I understood that that figure was not in question.

The careful Mencap analysis suggested that, at most, 4,404 people with severe mental handicap would be entitled to the benefit. That gives a total of 7,604. Even in the Mencap figure there was an acknowledgement that not everyone in that group would fulfil the age criteria. The answer to the question about discrepancy that the Minister put to the House lies not in the accuracy of the analysis of Mencap and the National Deaf-Blind and Rubella Association. It lies in the Government's rather crude use of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys data.

The OPCS data fail to define the very target group that we are talking about—people with a mental handicap to whom the amendment specifically refers. The figures in the OPCS data include people suffering from mental illness, but any of us dealing with social policy are well aware of a crucial distinction between people who are mentally handicapped and those who suffer from mental illness. That distinction is built into the wording of the amendment.

The Government seem to have gone for rather simplistic arithmetic. They have indiscriminately and insensitively added together a few of the OPCS categories. The Government account seems to have taken the most severe categories of disability from volume 1 using the two top scoring grades with communication difficulties, the two top scoring grades for behaviour, the top scoring grade for intellectual functioning and the top scoring grade for consciousness. However, there has been absolutely no cross-referencing in that analysis of diagnosis or of the cause of disability. The Government have simply made a judgment and I am tempted to say that in practice the computer analysis is really a guesstimate of the number of people who would need to be included. The 13 categories of people with locomotion disability in the OPCS survey do not include those who

"cannot walk without continuous physical control by another person".

There is no method of extraction from the OPCS tables or the data tapes that would enable the Government to distinguish between people who suffer from autism, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or epilepsy. They must all be included in the 125,000 that the Minister has mentioned in an attempt to mislead us.

I suggest that the OPCS survey-questionnaire was not even designed to collect the specific information about the severely handicapped people referred to in the amendment. It is impossible to know from the OPCS data how many people have a mental handicap and require continuous physical assistance with walking. The target group in the amendment cannot possibly be disaggregated from the four categories. The data are not specific to the target group in the amendment which does not include all those who have a mental handicap. The Government have simply added together the four broad categories. They have then subtracted people over the age of 65 and have arrived at a rough guesstimate in an attempt to undermine the amendment. Grossing up the figures in that way simply adds up to a gross argument—an attempt to unleash floodgate fears and to suggest that there will be a great financial burden if the House accepts the Lords amendment. It seems that the Government are addicted to calculation by averages. How many times do we hear of the average wage? The figures are rarely worked through in detail.

During the debate on child benefit, the Secretary of State, who is not with us now, claimed that 70 per cent. of recipients of child benefit are on above-average earnings. I took the trouble to check that assertion with the statisticians in the Library. They could not substantiate it. The figure was corrected when I tabled another parliamentary question. Three times recently I have received follow-up replies that correct the original. It seems that the real figures are hard to get from the Government, and not least the Department of Social Security. The Government seem unable to face up to the real figures. They want to hazard a guess and correct it when press interest has moved on. The Department of Social Security is rapidly becoming the most questionable in regard to basic arithmetic.

The Minister in another place said that the Government are wanting, willing and waiting. We are entitled to ask, "Waiting for what and for how long?" The OPCS work

*[Mr. Battle]*

has been done and published. The data tapes have been available for some time. When the Minister last spoke on this issue, he had to say, as he said tonight, that they cannot do it now. In Committee, on 19 January, he told us:

"there are not many months to go until July."

We are now at the end of July and we are entitled to see some sign of action. He continued:

"We shall then have an unprecedented wealth of information."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F*, 19 January 1989; c. 67.]

We are becoming involved in the absurdity of waiting for Godot on this issue. We have been waiting six months. Lord Skelmersdale said that the Government were embarking on a voyage of discovery. In March 1987, the Minister promised a survey on the matter. We have already had a major revamping of the social security system known as the Fowler review. It was promised then that work to tackle disability would be set in train.

If the Government are suggesting, yet again, that we should set out on uncharted waters, 7,600 people who we estimate should have mobility allowance will be literally left waiting. Unlike the Government on their voyage of discovery, they will go nowhere. How long will they wait? Will they have to wait for a full Bill on disability? There is no sign of one next Session. Will we have to await inclusion of the necessary resources in the Budget? That would push the issue at least two years into the future.

The blind-deaf and the severely mentally handicapped who cannot get about without assistance do not deserve the Government's deliberate dallying and their playing of the crude numbers game. All that is needed is a straightening out of existing social security law.

Why do we not use the Lords amendment as an opportunity to fine-tune primary legislation, and to clarify entitlement to mobility allowance for a specific group of people who really are in need? I am tempted to invite any Tory Members who are still thinking of voting against the Lords amendments to close their eyes, put their hands over their ears and try not to cross the road outside, but to find their way into the Lobby to vote against the motion. I urge the House not to vote against the Lords amendment.

12 midnight

**Mr. John Hannam** (Exeter): I regret the Government's rejection of this much-needed Lords amendment, which would provide financial support to help some 3,200 blind-deaf people and 4,400 severely mentally handicapped people. The amendment does not introduce a new concept, nor extend the mobility allowance to a large group of people. The numbers that I have quoted are the real numbers, based on a careful analysis of the White Paper of 1971. Some deaf-blind and mentally handicapped people with severe mobility or behavioural difficulties receive the mobility allowance, but only after making several appeals, and others have had the allowance refused on reapplication when there has been no basic change in their circumstances. The guidelines are operated differently by different panels of professionals.

Let me quote a case as an illustration, and one that the DSS knows all about. It involves a woman aged 33 with poor dexterity who cannot be left alone for a minute because of danger to herself and those around her. She cannot have a relationship with anyone other than her mother. She cannot walk about without continuous physical assistance and control, has an awkward gait, and cannot get up or down stairs. She cannot communicate verbally, and only grunts, and she understands only food, toys and simple commands, such as no and yes. She is a typical example of someone with a severe mental handicap, who, even on the Department's assessment, was proved to be eligible for the mobility allowance. However, she has been refused by two medical appeal tribunals, despite a successful appeal on a point of law to the social security commissioners.

My right hon. Friend and the Minister in the other place have recently spoken of the figure of 100,000 who would benefit by this amendment, and said that it is based on an analysis of data from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. The figure is so much at variance with all the previously agreed figures, which were all around the 8,000 to 10,000 level, and which were discussed at the various meetings between the all-party disablement group and various successor Ministers responsible for disablement matters that we have been in touch with the Department to find out the basis for the new vast total. The Department had carried out what it called a secondary analysis of the OPCS data tapes, but was not able to give any figures, or even a reliable method of calculating the people in the group defined clearly in the amendment. The person should suffer

"from severe mental handicap such that he is either unable to walk or virtually unable to do so without physical control by another person".

The OPCS survey, which has been used by my right hon. Friend and the Department of Social Security, has included the general term "mental illness", Alzheimer's disease, brain tumour and other behaviour disturbances. It has also used scales for consciousness, which include epilepsy, Parkinson's disease and other conditions. The data did not include the need to be accompanied. Curiously, the 13 categories of locomotion disability in the OPCS's first report do not include the definition

"unable to walk without physical control by another person."

The researchers in the OPCS and the ESRC data archives at Essex university were unable to produce figures or even a reliable method of calculating the people in our target group. I have to challenge the convenient guesstimate figures which have appeared from the Department. I prefer the unchallengeable analysis of Mencap and of the 1971 White Paper, "Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped", which revealed that there would be about 4,400 possible claimants under the proposed amendment. We are talking of those with severe mental illness and behavioural difficulties requiring constant supervision.

**Mr. Scott:** We are discussing an amendment which includes the term

"physical control by another person".

That could amount to the need to hold a hand. The amendment does not refer to constant supervision or physical support, which were the previous criteria. We have to judge the number of people who might be eligible against the exact wording of the amendment, and not that of the 1971 concept which their Lordships now ignore.

**Mr. Hannam:** The Lords amendment has been tightly drawn to ensure that it catches fully the deaf-blind and the mentally handicapped as defined in the 1971 White Paper.

**Mr. Rooker:** If the will had been there and there was doubt about the definition in the amendment, it was open to the Government to table an amendment to the amendment to clarify the definition, to remove any doubt, to introduce precision, to improve targeting and to reduce cost. Why did not the Government do that? Does the hon. Gentleman have an answer to that?

**Mr. Hannam:** This is not an issue that has suddenly descended upon us. It is one that has been discussed over many years. There is no dispute about the number of deaf-blind. Everyone is agreed about that category. We know that there are 3,200, and some of them are already in receipt of the mobility allowance. The fact that they are is the luck of the draw—the accident of living in an area where there is a helpful panel.

This is not a flash-in-the-pan attempt to get some more money out of the Treasury. The all-party group and representatives of the various disablement organisations have had meetings with three Ministers who have been responsible for the disabled since 1985. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster first proposed the allowance for the deaf-blind in a ten-minute Bill 10 years ago. He agreed in 1986, after a meeting, to discuss the matter with his officials to ascertain how a solution could be found at the margin.

In March 1987, the present Chief Secretary to the Treasury, when the Minister with responsibility for the disabled, undertook to carry out a survey of both deaf-blind and mentally-handicapped claimants with a view to wording legislation specifically to identify the groups that needed to be covered. At that time there was never any doubt about the merits of the case. There was merely a practical difficulty in finding the appropriate wording. There was never any doubt about the small numbers involved. Equally, there was an acceptance that case law was confusing rather than clarifying the position and that something needed to be done promptly to relieve the frustration and anguish that many claimants were experiencing.

The argument that we should await the OPCS report, which we now have, and the review of disability benefits before taking action is spurious in that it delays still further the necessary action that we need to take.

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths** (Edinburgh, South): I know that the hon. Gentleman will want to join me and the entire House in congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) on a succinct, balanced and well judged speech in favour of the amendment. Will he join me in advising the Minister that the cost of extending the allowance would be about a quarter of the expenditure on the mobility allowance, and that that expenditure is less than 1·5 per cent. of the general expenditure on social security benefits?

**Mr. Hannam:** I hope to conclude my remarks in a few minutes by pointing out that the expenditure is far less than that.

This is not a fundamental change; it is fine tuning designed to clarify a long-standing problem. That has happened with other provisions in the Bill relating to mobility allowance, such as the raising of the age limit from 75 to 80. That was a piece of fine tuning or tinkering with the system. That is what the House of Lords wishes to achieve with this amendment.

We are talking not about 100,000 or 125,000 people but about the 7,600 who suffer from dreadful mobility problems through being deaf-blind or having severe mental handicaps. The cost, at the current rate, would be less than £10 million. It would not represent a breach of the Treasury dam—or, as some might say, the damned Treasury. If the amendment is rejected, it will be a severe blow to all those who have worked so hard to help the severely handicapped. I hope that my right hon. Friend will give a positive assurance and, to use his words during a recent meeting with our group, put the necessary provisions on the fast track in the mobility disability benefits review.

I shall vote for the Lords amendment, and I hope that all other hon. Members will do the same.

**Mr. Jack Ashley** (Stoke-on-Trent, South): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam), who does such valuable work for the disabled.

The Minister said that he wanted no lessons in conscience, and I do not propose to offer him any. However, the other place followed the example of Lord Carter and have offered a clear and practical lesson. The amendment is specifically designed to give practical and valuable help to a small group. I remind the Minister that soft words and general principles are of no value to the severely disabled who desperately need the mobility allowance.

The crux of the debate is numbers. The Opposition and some Conservative Members believe the number to be tiny—fewer than 8,000. The disability organisations also believe that. The Minister came up with a figure of 100,000 people who may be affected by the amendment. I ask Conservative Members to bear in mind the methods that he used to come up with that figure. He simply extrapolated certain figures from the OPCS survey and said that 100,000 people would benefit from the amendment. There can be no justification for that conclusion, and the Minister knows that.

I can only tell the Minister—and I am being kind to him—that it is disgraceful to assume that the number of people who would be affected by the amendment is anything like 100,000. He knows that it will affect fewer than 8,000 people, a strictly limited number. He is in statistically dangerous waters in presuming that so many people will be affected; they will not.

We are trying to help people who are both deaf and blind or who are mentally handicapped. If we cannot cast our votes to obtain a few million pounds to help those people, we will never pass the stage of saying, "Not tonight." Perhaps tonight Conservative Members will take hold of their courage and their conscience and join us in the Lobby to vote to help those in desperate need.

**Mr. Peter Thurnham** (Bolton, North-East): In Committee, the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) put the case for such an amendment well enough to graduate to the Opposition Front Bench tonight. However, I take exception to some of his points. He argues that the worst cases are of people who fail to obtain mobility allowance, but the worst cases are those who received mobility allowance in the past but who are unable to continue doing so.

The hon. Member for Leeds, West wants an end to confusion, but it will only add to confusion if the House agrees to Lords amendment No. 2, because the number of persons affected by it is not accurately known. The hon. Gentleman claims that the Mencap analysis is tightly figured, whereas the Government's estimate is crude.

*[Mr. Peter Thurnham]*

However, we know that Mencap's figures are only based on extrapolations of 1971 statistics—and the OPCS survey reveals that earlier estimates were very inaccurate.

12.15 am

The best estimate of the number of handicapped children in institutional care available before the OPCS survey was published was only half the OPCS figure of 5,500. We must conclude that the OPCS estimate is far more accurate than any earlier figures. The figure of 3,200 deaf-blind is not in question, but that of 4,000 mentally handicapped suggested by Mencap is. Although Mencap attempted to ensure the accuracy of its figures, they must be called into question when compared with the OPCS estimates.

My right hon. Friend the Minister was unsure whether Mencap's figures include people in institutional care. On the basis of Mencap's statistics, clearly they do. But the numbers are so small that they should be checked. Mencap's figures show no children at all aged 0 to 14 in residential care, and only five aged 15-plus in hospital or residential care. However, we know from OPCS surveys that more than 100,000 people are in category 10, in institutional care. I appreciate that category 10 cannot be considered in isolation, but that single statistic illustrates the difference in magnitude between the OPCS figure of 100,000 in care and Mencap's figure of a mere five.

If the House agrees to the Lords amendment, it will add to the confusion that the hon. Member for Leeds, West seeks to reduce. Right hon. and hon. Members in all parts of the House want to help the people who are the subject of the amendment, but they will be helped by a reduction in confusion, not an increase. I ask the Government to get a move on, undertake the review, and then make their proposals. The figures are available, so let the Government run the computer tape and present their proposals by the autumn. The Opposition argue that it will be five years before the Government make up their mind. I do not believe that that is true. The Government could make proper proposals at an early date.

I urge the House to reject the Lords amendment, but to press the Government to make clear suggestions to reduce confusion among the very people we want to help.

**Mr. Alfred Morris** (Manchester, Wythenshawe): In welcoming Lords amendment No. 2, I speak, as the House knows, as the basic author of the mobility allowance and also, as the originator soon afterwards, of the proposal to set up the motability scheme. I could not, as Minister, apply the mobility allowance at once to all the eligible groups. They had to be phased into the scheme over a period of time. I readily concede that its benefits have been extended to more people since then. From the inception, as the Minister will know, that was always the plan.

The Lords amendment is of the first importance to thousands of the most severely disabled people in Britain today. It would give much needed help to disabled people with the dual handicap of deafness and blindness, and to those in need of constant supervision due to severe mental handicap and behavioural difficulties.

To be both deaf and blind is a devastating handicap whose effects on mobility are extremely serious. The Lords amendment has been called the Helen Keller amendment, but in fact some of the people it seeks to help are even more severely disabled than Helen Keller in that, unlike her, prelingual deafness has left them without speech in addition to being both deaf and blind.

The mentally handicapped people, including many children, who would be helped by the amendment are also, by common consent, very severely disabled. To help both groups, at a cost of £10 million—which is an increase of less than 2 per cent. in spending on the mobility allowance —is a modest proposal that the Government ought to be able to accept in advance of their disability benefits review. It is an urgent proposal of help that merits the same measure of all-party support that it was given in another place.

The Government's position is hard to follow, even for the most well-informed people in this policy area. In fact, Ministers have been flatly contradicting each other. When the Bill was in Committee in the Commons, the Minister for the Disabled said that he felt that case law was dealing already—to a considerable extent—with the aim of the amendment. He reiterated this at a meeting of the all-party disablement group in January 1989, when he said—I quote from the group's minutes—

> "Case law is beginning to move in the right direction and define the law on this issue."

So the Minister's position has been that the law as it stands can deal with the aim of the amendment.

By contrast—as my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) recalled—Lord Skelmersdale, speaking on the amendment, said:

> "On this matter of mobility allowance for the deaf-blind and the mentally handicapped I cannot stress too strongly that they were wanting to act, willing to act, but waiting to act."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 12 July 1989; Vol. 510, c.268.]

Thus the position of Lord Skelmersdale—also speaking for the Government—is that the aim of the amendment cannot be dealt with by the law as it stands, and that the Government are willing to act, but waiting to act to change the law.

Even if the Minister for the Disabled had been correct in Committee and when addressing the all-party disablement group, he could not gainsay the truth of what my noble Friend Lord Carter has said about the preventable suffering inflicted on the relatives and other carers of severely disabled people by the "harrowing and lengthy" task of going through the appeal procedure. Lord Allen of Abbeydale said that the changes proposed by the amendment would do much to ease despair and frustration. They would save many appeals and much expense; they would simplify the task of the adjudicators, and would show that Parliament cared.

Let me give brief details of the cases of two disabled people who would be helped by the amendment. The first is that of a young woman who is totally deaf, totally blind and has a mental handicap that causes behavioural problems. All her disabilities are due to rubella. It took four years to secure the mobility allowance for her. She cannot walk alone; indeed, she will not take even a single step alone.

The allowance was first claimed in 1984. It was initially refused, but then awarded on appeal to a medical board. The Secretary of State, clearly unhappy about the award, then referred the board's decision to a medical appeal tribunal, which refused the allowance. That case shows how extremely important it is for this House to make entitlement irrefutably clear.

The second case is that of a girl of 14. She has severe mental handicap, and also suffers from petit mal epilepsy. She "walks" on her toes with her feet turned inwards, and frequently falls. Mobility allowance was first applied for in 1985 and awarded for three years, but on the renewal claim in 1988 it was refused.

How is it possible, then, for the Minister to argue that the law as it stands is dealing already with the aim of the amendment? Again, how can he possibly defend the Government's absurd exaggerations about the cost of the amendment? Mencap, Sense and the Disability Alliance have very carefully researched the cost of the amendment and have dismissed the Government's talk of an additional cost of £100 million. The truth seems to be that the right hon. Gentleman has lost a battle with the Treasury to secure a much lower sum.

The Government stand accused of using a very crude method of "analysis" by simply adding together a few different categories of disabled people covered by reports from the OPCS. The Lords amendment is very tightly drawn to ensure that it includes only the deaf-blind and the mentally handicapped who require physical control by another person. Very few hon. Members will want to question their compelling claims to help, and I hope that we shall indeed show that this House cares by approving the amendment tonight.

**Mr. John Greenway** (Ryedale): I think that I speak for many of my hon. Friends when I say that, although I do not take a detailed interest in social security matters, I have considered them in depth after having received deeply moving letters during the last few days from such admirable charities as Mencap and Sense. All hon. Members have experience of cases where appeals appear not to have been dealt with satisfactorily. I do not, however, intend to detain the House by citing examples from my constituency.

There is considerable doubt about the number of people who would be affected by the Lords amendment. I am less concerned about the cost of the proposed provision. I am much more concerned about ending the confusion and the degrading arrangements that lead to appeal after appeal by these people, many of whom have the duel sensory disability of blindness and deafness as well as being severely mentally handicapped. We must end that confusion.

The OPCS survey provides a springboard for action. We must ensure, whether the number is 8,000 or 125,000, that we provide the right framework of benefits for these people. As my right hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security said, none of us knows whether the mobility allowance is the right benefit for some of the folk whom the OPCS survey highlighted as being in need of benefit beyond the level that has already been suggested.

I come to the House not having made up my mind whether to vote for the Lords amendment or to support the Government. It is largely because of my right hon. Friend's fine record as Minister of State in the Department of Social Security that I trust implicitly his commitment at the Dispatch Box tonight to do whatever he can to ensure that that is put right. It must be done this autumn. My right hon. Friend has a particularly fine record in respect of the deaf and the blind. In addition, the Government have a fine record in respect of the mobility allowance. During the last 10 years they have increased it sixfold. During the debate we have heard about the number of people who now receive it. However, we must not let this opportunity pass without saying to the Government and to the Treasury that the matter, along with other matters, must be addressed in next autumn's Social Security Bill.

**Mr. William Ross** (Londonderry, East): I have an interest in the allowance for two reasons. The first is strictly personal. In my own family circle I have a sister who was stricken by polio in 1950. She now spends most of her time in a wheelchair. I also have a nephew who is blind. Therefore, I have personal experience of disability in the home and what it means to those who have to care for the disabled.

Secondly, I have constituency knowledge of the difficulty of obtaining the allowance for those who, to the layman's eye, appear to qualify for it with ease. I came into the Chamber only to listen to the debate, but, as all too often happened when the Minister held a different ministerial post, I felt that I had to speak because of the Minister's attitude.

The hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) said that many of the problems are due to inconsistent legal decisions. I put it to him that many of our constituency problems arise even more from inconsistent medical opinions. We have all heard that doctors differ and patients die. Because that is so, whenever someone says to me that his relation has been refused that benefit, I advise him to do as Robert the Bruce did—"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Like Robert the Bruce, people succeed. They do so because they get a different doctor to examine them.

12.30 am

The medical decisions have created not a fuzzy borderline but a broad fuzzy band. It is difficult to know who will fall on one side or who will fall on the other. Like the rest of the House, I waited in vain for the Minister to say that he would try to clarify the degree of disability that was necessary before people could get the allowance.

I listened also to the Minister's explanation of how he arrived at the figure of 125,000 people compared with the caring charities' figure of only 8,000. I heard the Minister say plainly that the Government were not prepared to fund 125,000 new people. I failed to hear him say that the Government would not fund 8,000 people. He seemed anxious to avoid getting an accurate figure. For that reason, my hon. Friends and I will support the Lords amendment.

**Mr. Harry Ewing:** The House is anxious to come to a decision. I have known the Minister in a previous incarnation in the Northern Ireland Office and now in the Department of Social Security. I say, without being patronising, that I respect him. I am grateful to him for his generosity and his profound apology to me for his rather insulting remark against the background of my sedentary intervention. I apologise for that intervention.

This has been a debate about numbers. In deciding the fate of the Lords amendment, the House will not decide whether it is 125,000, 7,500 or 4,500 people. That will be decided by the tribunals to which the new group of people apply for mobility allowance. The amendment is not about whether it is 125,000, 7,500 or 4,500 people but about opening a door for a new group of people, those who are profoundly disabled and deaf. The Minister went over the

*[Mr. Harry Ewing]*

top a wee bit in talking about those who need constant attention, including holding their hands. That simplified matters to the extent of insulting those people.

The amendment would enable that new group of people to apply for mobility allowance. The tribunals, or doctors, to whom the applications are made will decide the numbers. The Minister should admit that this is all about money. My position is clear. Until my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) said that he was the architect of the scheme, I did not realise that it was his brainchild. I was on the Labour ministerial team that put it together. I do not care whether it is 125,000. If 125,000 people require mobility allowance, so be it—we should accept that responsibility. I believe that the Minister in his heart of hearts would like to concede that, but he has been told by the Treasury that he cannot.

I am saying to the Minister's right hon. and hon. Friends on the Back Benches that we have a chance tonight—I am not being emotional, but I am appealing to their humanity—through the amendment, to say to the Government, "Look, you open up the avenue for this new group of people to apply for mobility allowance." Whether they get a mobility allowance is a matter not for the House, but for the statutory authorities to which we have delegated the powers to decide those matters. But we must say to the Government that that new group must have the ability to apply for that mobility allowance. I am saying in all sincerity to Conservative Members that everything is to be gained by accepting the amendment from the other place; everything is to be lost by defeating it. I plead with Conservative Members to join us in the Lobby and to support the amendment.

**Mr. Scott:** I sense that the House wants to reach a decision, so I shall make just four brief points.

Of course, in any system that is run by independent authorities, there will be some people who will feel that they are hard done by when they are turned down for an allowance, whether it be attendance or mobility allowance. However, the fact that the numbers have gone up from 95,000 to 580,000 under the Government hardly suggests that we are being unduly restrictive about the criteria that are being applied to the mobility allowance.

My hon. Friends the Members for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) and for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway), both of whom take a close interest in these matters, urge me to early action. I must say, however, that others outside urge me to have a large-scale, long-term review of the whole nature of disability benefits. I reiterate that I seek to balance careful consideration and listening to the views of people outside with not delaying unduly appropriate action. It was said that we are in statistical deep water in this area. There is no argument about the number of deaf-blind, but I cannot agree that the amendment that their Lordships have sent down to us is sufficiently tightly drawn to limit the numbers to the extent that they calculate. I believe that our figures are likely to be more accurate.

I shall finish by quoting what the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) said in an oral answer when he held the post that I hold at present. He said:

"In reviewing their public expenditure programme, the Government keep constantly in mind all claims for extending the scope of this important new allowance . . . every claim for improvement in the scheme must be weighed both against other proposals for adding to the Government's present level of help for disabled people and all other proposals for increases in public expenditure."—[*Official Report*, 11 July 1978; Vol. 953, c. 1226.]

I ask nothing more than to be allowed the same right, to look at all this in the round and to weigh these priorities. I ask the House to reverse the amendment.

*Question put*, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 299, Noes 219.

**Divison No. 311]** **[12.38 am**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*

Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Sir Hal
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Tom Sackville.

### NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hannam, John
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McFall, John

McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Allen McKay.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendment No. 2 disagreed to.*

*Lords amendment No. 3 agreed to.*

Committee appointed to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to their amendments Nos. 1 and 2: Mr. John Battle, Mrs. Margaret Beckett, Mr. Michael Fallon, Mr. Peter Lloyd and Mr. Nicholas Scott. Three to be the quorum.—*[Mr. John M. Taylor.]*

*To withdraw immediately.*

*Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Lords amendments reported, and agreed to: to be communicated to the Lords.*

## Transport (Scotland) Bill

*Lords amendments considered.*

### Clause 7

### TRANSFER OF SHIPPING COMPANIES

*Lords amendment:* No. 1, in page 5, line 4, at end insert—

"(2A) An order appointing a day under subsection (2) above may make such amendments or repeals of any enactment (including an enactment contained in a local or private Act and any order, regulation or other instrument having effect by virtue of an Act) pertaining to the Group as appear to the Secretary of State to be necessary or expedient in consequence of the transfer."

12.51 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton):** I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos 2 to 4.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The main purpose of Lords amendment No. 1 is to ensure that the existing powers vested in the Scottish Transport Group to act as a harbour authority may be vested in Caledonian MacBrayne when it is transferred to the Secretary of State's ownership. At present the STG is the formally appointed harbour authority for a number of ferry terminals, although day-to-day functions are carried out by CalMac. It would be anomalous to leave the STG with harbour powers when it was no longer responsible for shipping services.

Lords amendment No. 2 relates to parliamentary procedure for an order appointing a day for the transfer of the securities of the shipping companies to the Secretary of State. The amendment is a purely drafting one and its purpose is to bring the wording of the relevant provision into line with normal practice in references in legislation to such parliamentary procedure.

Lords amendment No. 3 provides that the making of an order to wind up the STG should be made by statutory instrument. That will ensure that such an order is brought to the attention of Parliament and published. The main purpose of Lords amendment No. 4 is to ensure that any remaining powers vested in the STG to act as a harbour authority may be provided for after the group is dissolved. I have already said that it is intended to transfer those powers to CalMac under clause 7 when the company is transferred to the Secretary of State's ownership. Should, however, this not be done for any reason or if there were any other outstanding matters in private or secondary legislation pertaining to the STG for the time of dissolution, the amendment will ensure that appropriate provision may be made.

**Mr. Brian Wilson** (Cunninghame, North): This debate will be short and sharp. I need hardly say that we regret that the amendments before the House are so few and so lacking in content. It is worth noting that they are the only amendments that have been made to the Bill during its entire progress through both Houses of Parliament. They do not add up to very much in terms of altering the substance of the legislation.

It would be appropriate to ask the Minister if he could spell out, in some detail, the timetable that he now envisages in relation to the amendment dealing with the winding up of the STG. When will the bus company sales take place and when will CalMac be handed over to its new auspices, however they turn out to be defined?

I seek clarification of the amendment dealing with harbour powers. We all know that, in recent months, in the Western Isles the question of who controls harbours has given rise to some controversy. Clearly it is a matter of interest to the House. Is the STG's control over harbours purely a nominal matter or does it maintain the effective operation of some of the harbours in the ports that it serves? If so, are those to be handed over to the new Caledonian MacBrayne board or will they reside with the various local authorities and other bodies that own the piers in the areas served by Caledonian MacBrayne? The Minister's assistance in clearing up those points tonight would be appreciated.

As we conclude the parliamentary consideration of the Bill, I suggest that its main thrust, the dividing up and selling off of the Scottish Bus Group, is a matter of Scottish Office honour. It has told us that it wants management-worker buy-outs to succeed, but it has written nothing into the Bill that makes it likely that they will succeed. It has insisted that it is opposed to asset-stripping of the huge property wealth which goes with the sales, but it has adamantly refused to include anything in the Bill which would prevent it. It has deplored the prospect of predatory takeover bids within a short time of the sell-offs, but it has declined to legislate for safeguards against them occurring.

The Opposition will keep close tabs on the course of events following the sell-off of the companies which are at present part of the Scottish Bus Group. If this ends up as a bonanza for private bus companies and property speculators, we shall ensure that the Government are made to pay a political price for double-dealing. If genuine buy-outs succeed, we shall wish them well.

The city centre bus stations in our major Scottish towns and cities would represent particularly attractive targets for speculators. If they are valued and sold as bus stations and then put on the market for quite different purposes, as happened in many parts of England, the Scottish Office will bear a heavy responsibility.

Some good could come of the legislation if the buy-outs succeed and if the Scottish Office turns into deeds some of the words spoken by the Minister at various stages of the legislation's progress. In that spirit, we shall not divide the House, but I would be grateful for the Minister's clarification on the points that I have raised.

**Mrs. Ray Michie** (Argyll and Bute): Lords amendment No. 3 provides for the order to be made by statutory instrument. Like the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson), I hope that the Minister will say when that can be brought forward. What is the timetable for the dissolution of the Scottish Transport Group, to which the amendment refers? There is a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety about the future, not least among the bus companies in rural areas which believe, following a report by the National Audit Office, that the Government are considering the withdrawal or the reallocation of fuel duty rebate. That rebate enables some otherwise uneconomic services to be run on a commercial basis. Its withdrawal or reduction could mean such routes becoming deregistered, leading to an added burden on regional councils to subsidise them and a probable cut in services.

The uncertainty about the future is most obvious with Caledonian MacBrayne on the Wemyss Bay-Rothesay ferry service, which faces considerable problems because of the inability to provide a proper service during the peak summer season. Often passengers and cars are left on the piers. Any decision on a much-needed larger or second vessel now faces a long delay until the new board is functioning and can deliberate on the situation. Meanwhile, the business community particularly suffers increasing disruption. I hope that the Minister can say when the board will be able to deliberate on that matter.

Amendment No. 4 refers to the transfer of powers from the Scottish Transport Group as a harbour authority to Caledonian MacBrayne. As the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North said, there may be problems about the ownership of piers. I am doubtful about this transfer of the harbour authority to Caledonian MacBrayne.

1 am

No doubt the Minister is aware that my party has always been in favour of road equivalent tariffs. Of course, that would make the piers part of the road network and they would be under the jurisdiction of the local regional authority. The piers in my constituency belong either to Strathclyde or Caledonian MacBrayne. That company recently acquired the pier at Colonsay and could have a monopoly on usage. Presumably it would be able to charge pier dues, and they might be unacceptably high. It would be able to deny berthing to fishermen, especially inshore fishermen, and perhaps to cargo boats and yachts.

The toilet facilities at Colonsay pier are of extreme importance to the people of Colonsay and especially to visitors. Facilities are available only when the ship is in harbour. At Port Ellen on Islay the local community council wants to build a marina, but instead of having to apply to the local authority, it has to go through Caledonian MacBrayne. I am worried about the restrictions that Caledonian MacBrayne may put on other users of the piers. I hope that the Minister can give some direction about that.

We have reached the final stage of the Transport (Scotland) Bill. I hate to see Scotland in brackets. It is unfortunate but inevitable that once again we are debating Scottish business early in the morning. I hope that the Minister will be able to answer the questions that I have posed.

**Mr. John Home Robertson** (East Lothian): We gather from the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) that the Social and Liberal Democrats, or whatever else they are called——

**Mrs. Ray Michie:** Liberal Democrats will do.

**Mr. Home Robertson** —are returning to community politics with a vengeance by bringing to the House a debate on the lavatory at Colonsay harbour. I appreciate the genuine importance of that, but I am filled with alarm because in a few weeks I am taking my family on holiday to the hon. Lady's constituency and we shall visit some of the islands about which she spoke. I sincerely hope that the hon. Lady was exaggerating.

I agree with the hon. Lady that it is completely inappropriate for legislation that relates exclusively to

*[Mr. Home Robertson]*

Scotland to be dealt with in this Chamber, let alone at this hour. Legislation affecting Scotland should be dealt with in a Scottish Parliament, as it will be.

Amendment No. 3 provides for an order to be made by statutory instrument to wind up the Scottish Transport Group. That is of considerable importance because winding up would follow immediately the privatisation of the Scottish bus companies, including the Lowland Scottish and the Eastern Scottish bus companies which serve my constituency. That is of great concern to the management and employees of those companies who between them are hoping to buy out at least one of those companies. It is also of concern to the passengers and the local authorities that have to subsidise them.

These are matters which should be given further consideration by the representatives of the people who are affected. Will these statutory instruments be made by the affirmative or the negative procedure? It is important that hon. Members who represent Scottish constituencies should have an opportunity to debate these affairs further before the Scottish Transport Group can be wound down.

**Mr. John McAllion** (Dundee, East): Will the Minister comment on the changed circumstances in Tayside? He will be aware that, since we last debated this matter, the Tayside public transport company has expressed its intention to seek a management-employee buy-out from Tayside regional council. It could succeed before Strathtay has a chance to succeed with its management-employee buy-out as part of the disposal programme that has been organised by the Secretary of State for Scotland.

I hope that the Minister will take this opportunity to give an assurance that, whatever decision is arrived at between Tayside regional council and the transport company, it will in no way prejudice the application by Strathtay's management and employees for a buy-out of their company. It should not make any difference whether the public transport company's application is made before or after Strathtay's. Equal consideration should be given to the merits of each. Strathtay's application should not be prejudiced in any way by the fact that the public transport company is to go into the private sector.

As the main objective of the disposal programme is to sustain fair competition, the Minister will know that the public transport company in Tayside, Strathtay and Stagecoach carry 80 per cent. of traffic in the region. Will he give an assurance that, when they are all in the private sector, no one of them will be able to take over or merge with either of the other two, and that the Government will ensure that all three will remain separate and independent and provide real choice for consumers in Tayside?

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** With the leave of the House, I should like to reply to the debate.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson), but he was not correct when he said that we did not accept any Opposition amendments. We accepted a significant amendment on page 2 of the Bill. The word "may" was changed to "shall". The significance of that is that the disposal programme will be published —the preferences to be given to management-employee buy-outs will be spelt out.

The hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) asked about Tayside transport. It is likely that Tayside regional council will shortly seek the Secretary of State's approval, and my right hon. and learned Friend will consider the case on the same basis on which approval was given to the Grampian regional transport buy-out earlier this year—that the price paid should reflect the market value of the assets.

**Mr. McAllion:** I understand that the Secretary of State will give the same consideration to Tayside as he gave to Grampian. The assurance that I am seeking is that, if that decision favours the Tayside management-employee buy-out, that will in no way prejudice the Seccretary of State's consideration of Strathtay's bid to have a management-employee buy-out. Tayside's winning a successful management-employee buy-out should not in any way tell against the workers in Strathtay who are seeking the same type of solution.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** It could not possibly tell against them. The hon. Gentleman may be reassured on that point.

I was asked about the timetable. The earliest possible start to the sales, assuming that the Bill completes its parliamentary stages before the summer recess, will be later this year. The legislation will come into force two months after it is passed. Although some work has begun, further work will be needed to prepare and publish the disposal programme. The earliest that companies could be advertised for sale is about November or December, the first sale being completed in early 1990. It is expected that a series of sales will take place over a period of time and that the programme will take about one year to complete.

In due course, information, including memorandums and financial and other information about companies, will be made available to prospective purchasers when the companies are being offered for sale.

I was asked, in regard to CalMac, when the Scottish Transport Group would be dissolved, and about the setting up of the CalMac board. The time-scale for this cannot be determined precisely at this stage, but the board will be appointed in due course, perhaps before very long.

The hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) was particularly interested in the CalMac harbour powers. These are exercised by the STG and they relate to the piers owned by the STG and operated by CalMac. It is appropriate that these powers should be transferred to Caledonian MacBrayne and they relate to the ferry terminals of Castlebay in Barra, Scalasaig in Colonsay, east Loch Tarbert in Harris, Oban, Port Ellen in Islay, Gourock, Wemyss bay and Largs.

I was asked about the monopoly on the usage of piers, and this is an important point. Competition law provides safeguards against monopoly and anti-competitive practices, and it is open to anyone concerned about a potential anti-competitive practice to make a complaint to the Office of Fair Trading.

I was also asked about the Wemyss bay and Rothesay services. There is no doubt that the present situation on the Gourock-Dunoon crossing is anomalous. There is an unsubsidised private sector crossing competing with a subsidised public sector crossing on similar routes. The vessels which provide this crossing are shared with the Wemyss bay-Rothesay crossing and are interchangeable. There, therefore, seems a good case for the private sector to take on these crossings. These are operated by Western Ferries in Gourock and Dunoon. We shall be asking the new board to investigate with the private sector the possibility of transferring these routes to that sector. Obviously these discussions would have to cover the basis on which the routes would continue to be provided, and the Government's commitment to island services must be fulfilled.

**Mrs. Ray Michie:** The Minister may have misunderstood what I was saying. I was talking not about the transfer of the route to the private sector but about how, because of the delay, no decision will be made on the need for a second ship or a larger vessel. That has been discussed for a number of years as a requirement for that route.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The only requirement is for setting up the CalMac board without undue delay, and we shall take note of what the hon. Lady says.

**Mr. Wilson:** I want to be clear about the transfer of the harbour powers. Will exactly the same powers relating to exactly the same harbours be transferred from the STG to the new board of Caledonian MacBrayne?

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** There is nothing more complex than that. The hon. Gentleman raised the significant matter of asset stripping. I shall not spell out in great detail all the points that I made in Committee about the four options, but I shall say this. We shall consider all those options carefully so as to avoid asset stripping, in the light of the advice from the Scottish Transport Group, which it will also be getting from its property advisers. We shall be taking that seriously into account.

The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) spoke about the procedure for making a dissolution order under clause 14. Clause 14 as amended by Lords amendment No. 3 provides that the order dissolving the STG shall be made by statutory instrument. The clause does not specify any parliamentary procedure for the order. This means that it is not subject to the parliamentary control, but it will be published and brought to the attention of Parliament. It is not considered necessary to lay down a parliamentary procedure for the order as it will essentially be a consequential measure needed to dissolve the STG once its operating subsidiaries have been disposed of.

**Mr. Home Robertson:** Will the Minister confirm that this will not be a statutory instrument as we normally understand it, but simply yet another Scottish Office edict?

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** It will be published and put in the Library, but is a consequential measure.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 4 agreed to.*

## Statutory Instruments, &c.

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).*

### CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

**That the Customs duties (ECSC) (Amendment No. 4) Order 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1088), dated 29th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 30th June, be approved.—*[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory.]***

*Question agreed to.*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Motions 19 to 27 deal with urban development, and with the leave of the House I shall put them together.

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).*

### URBAN DEVELOPMENT

**That the London Docklands Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Port of London Authority and London Borough of Newham) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.**

**That the Black Country Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Borough of Walsall) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.**

**That the Black Country Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (General) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.**

**That the London Docklands Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Thames Water Authority) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.**

**That the Merseyside Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (General) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.**

**That the Merseyside Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Transport Land) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.**

**That the Sheffield Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (British Railways Board) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.**

**That the Black Country Developmnt Corporation (Vesting of Land) (British Railways Board) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.**

**That the Black Country Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Central Electricity Generating Board) Order 1989, dated 21st June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 22nd June, be approved.—*[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory.]***

*Question agreed to.*

## Petition

## Concessionary Television Licences

1.14 am

**Mr. Elliot Morley** (Glanford and Scunthorpe): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition which was organised by Mrs. Joan Davies of 25, Stow road, Scunthorpe on concessionary television licences. Mrs. Davies has attracted considerable support in Scunthorpe and the surrounding area for her idea of extending concessionary television licences to all pensioners irrespective of whether they live in sheltered accommodation.

The present position, of which you may be aware, Mr. Speaker, is that pensioners who live in certain forms of sheltered accommodation have concessionary licences. When they leave that accommodation, the new tenants do not enjoy those licences. This has led to unfairness. For example, one sheltered housing tenant, who lived in an upstairs flat, moved to a downstairs flat when she became increasingly frail. She was told that she no longer qualified for a concessionary television licence and she lost it.

*[Mr. Elliot Morley]*

It is argued by Mrs. Davies—I wholeheartedly agree with her—that many pensioners receive benefits such as concessionary travel as of right when they reach pensionable age. There seems no reason why the right to a concessionary licence should not be extended to all pensioners. After all, all pensioners have contributed throughout their lives, whether working or not, to the good of our country. The least that we can give them is a concessionary licence.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall read the petition:

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The Humble Petition of the people of Scunthorpe showeth that there is a need to change the rules concerning concessionary TV licences.

Wherefore your petitioners pray that your honourable House will agree to grant a concessionary TV licence to all people of pensionable age as of right.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

*To lie upon the Table.*

## Swansea (Submarine Base)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory.]*

1.16 am

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): The Ministry of Defence has decided to make the port of Swansea a Z-base for berthing and servicing nuclear submarines—or has it? It has never officially admitted this. It has never officially told any of the local councils—the county council or Swansea city council—although we understand that a committee of experts has given the green light to the scheme. The members of the committee are faceless people with no interest in or commitment to the port of Swansea. Local people have no confidence in the decision of the committee of experts.

I suspect that the Ministry of Defence is saying that this is a tiresome debate raised by local Members on the basis of "not in my back yard". There is an element of that approach. My right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) and I represent the strongly held views of the people of Swansea in this respect, but I believe that there are strong objective factors for rejecting the Ministry's proposal, if it be a proposal. I shall try to smoke out the truth from the Minister with a series of questions and set out why the designation should not take place.

In my judgment, there is a real danger of blighting Swansea at a time when it is seeking to shed the vestiges of pollution and industrialisation. With vision and imagination, it is seeking to upgrade the city. It is appropriate that the debate takes place in a week when yet again there has been an accident in a submarine, albeit a Soviet one. It has happened several times in the past couple of years.

I shall invite the Minister to visit the port of Swansea to see the position for himself. My constituency is to the east of the docks entrance and my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West, who represents the constituency on the other side of the river, has an equal interest in the possibility of a nuclear base being established. St. Thomas is a highly populated and self-contained community, and the port is on the doorstep of the proposed development. I was there on Friday and I heard the anger and frustration of local people. My family has close links with the docks and with St. Thomas. My great-grandfather worked in the docks, my grandfather worked on the railways in the docks and my father worked as a fitter on the Graigola wharf—the very wharf where the berth is likely to be established.

If the Minister came to Swansea he would see on the west bank of the Tawe, in my right hon. Friend's constituency, the imaginative development of the marina, where derelict port and railway areas have been transformed into a leisure, recreation and residential complex. A similar scheme was proposed by Associated British Ports for the east bank, which is on my side of the river, but the proposed Ministry of Defence designation can have only a negative effect on that proposal.

There are great fears about safety if the designation goes ahead. The relevant Navy personnel in Wales have given bland assurances, but they would, wouldn't they? If there was an accident there would be a substantial risk to local people. Whatever may be in such a designation for the Ministry, there is nothing in it for the port of Swansea. It is negative—there is no new employment or investment. All that faces the port of Swansea is a possible blight.

There has been no consultation with the local authority. It is all very undemocratic. Did the experts who made this informed decision—I understand that they are mostly people linked with the Ministry—visit the port of Swansea? Were they there with the group on 11 July? Are there any Welsh people on that committee? Have any members of the committee ever been elected to anything? To my knowledge, there has been no contact with the county council since November last year. Can the Minister confirm that? The local Associated British Ports management has not been party to any decision.

Is it right that the Ministry of Defence has decided to relocate from Cardiff on the basis that the Cardiff bay development makes the designation there inappropriate? Has it considered the fact that there are similar, imaginative developments in Swansea? Swansea will not be a soft touch for the defence bureaucrats. What is the proposed timetable for the development and the safety plan that will be linked with it? Has the Ministry considered as relevant the fact that because of shallow water the submarines cannot submerge until they are several miles out in the channel?

The Ministry's only argument in favour of designating the port of Swansea as a Z-berth is that it wants more civilian ports for the nuclear submarines to visit. We understand that they might visit Swansea only once or twice a year—and at what cost? Potentially the cost is great, with no compensating factors for the citizens of Swansea. Public opinion is mightily against the proposal, as I witnessed when I visited St. Thomas.

An editorial in the local paper said:

> "Only an unusual sort of person would welcome nuclear submarines to Swansea . . . But history shows that accidents do happen and it is difficult to feel any happier about this development than we would if it was decided to build a small nuclear power station here.
>
> Why Swansea has been nominated to replace Cardiff as a Z-Berth is not entirely clear. Perhaps it is simply that Swansea is also in South Wales.
>
> If that is so, there would be more sense in selecting Milford Haven, which is a far less densely populated area and which, unlike tidal Swansea, has a deep water harbour. It also has the merit of being closer to the open sea."

There is total opposition within the port of Swansea.

Swansea has always given a traditional, warm welcome to visiting naval ships and personnel—but there will be no welcome for those nuclear submarines. If the Ministry of Defence has any regard for its own public relations, it will go elsewhere, away from the centres of population, where the risk, and the blight, will be less.

1.25 am

**Mr. Alan Williams** (Swansea, West): I support my hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) in everything that he said. We are perturbed by the difficulty that we have encountered in obtaining information—particularly about the committee that apparently made the decision. I tabled a question to the Minister on whether the local council has been officially informed of the decision —and if so, when. I thought that it would be the simplest of questions to answer, but I received from the Minister only a holding reply.

The argument goes beyond nuclear submarines, to questions of accountability, answerability and whether local democracy is to be recognised. The Ministry's decision can only be described as arbitrary. It was taken by an anonymous quango. The Minister himself refuses even to name the committee's members. The committee is unaccountable, faceless and, I suggest, rigged—as I hope to prove.

The district and county councils and the two local Members of Parliament are all bitterly opposed to the proposal. Theirs is not just a quirkish attitude, because they are all equally opposed to the development of the Hinkley point nuclear power station further along the Bristol channel. In the midst of fighting that campaign, we discover that the Ministry of Defence is, without any consultation, imposing a mobile nuclear reactor at the centre of our community.

Despite the existence of the nuclear warships safety committee, there is no debate, discussion or explanation. The committee owes no one an argument. No attempt is made to explain in detail the factors that led to the committee's decision to pick on Swansea for the berth. Nor has there been any voting on the matter. I repeat that the decision was made arbitrarily—yet the Minister states that the committee is independent.

The committee enjoys a very strange form of independence. The Ministry of Defence pays its costs which, at the very least, places in some doubt the degree of its independence. We know also that of the committee's 23 permanent members, five are serving Ministry of Defence officials and another five are former Ministry officials. Almost half the committee's membership is accounted for by former or serving members of the Ministry's own staff, who can hardly be expected to be open-minded about such an issue.

In addition, the Ministry has the power to appoint an additional seven members when issues relevant to the Ministry are discussed. Therefore, the Minister can pack the committee with officials to ensure the result that he wants.

I trust that the Minister accepts that I mean in no way to impugn his honour, because he is a fair-minded man. Nevertheless, we have not been given the explanations that we want locally. In a parliamentary answer, the Minister states that the Ministry of Defence

"has always followed its"—

the committee's—

"advice."—[*Official Report*, 3 July 1989; Vol. 156, c. *29*.]

That is not surprising: it is the Ministry of Defence advising the Ministry of Defence. It would be astonishing if it did not accept the findings and recommendations.

Are there any representatives of environmental interests? Is the Welsh Office the Department involved, or the Scottish Office, or the Northern Ireland Office? What we know is that of the 23 permanent members who are not ex-officials, eight—as the Minister has said in another answer—are full-time employees of public bodies. I assume that they are organisations such as the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority. They are hardly free-minded individuals. The Minister may tell me that completely different organisations are involved; up to now, we have been given no information.

We would also like to know whether the council has any power to refuse, on behalf of residents, the establishment of this berth. None of us wants to scaremonger, but this is an unnecessary risk. As my hon. Friend said, in the space of about six weeks three Soviet submarines have been involved in fires. I am glad to learn of the good record that the Minister claims for British submarines in the detailed reply that he provided—I am grateful for that detail. But we must bear it in mind that Chernobyl and Three Mile

*[Mr. Alan Williams]*

Island "could never happen", and that the soldiers exposed to radiation in Australia were so exposed on the best scientific advice of that time, because it was believed that they would be safe. The assessment of safety is mobile and flexible.

The Minister says that submarines want to visit civil ports, and that such ports are very important to good relations between the Royal Navy and the community. In fact, they are counterproductive in that respect: far from creating good relations, they are creating animosity.

We would like some clarification on the 550-metre safety area, which seems ludicrously inadequate. When Welsh sheep have been irradiated by the Chernobyl incident, it is very difficult for us to convince our constituents that the military radiation risk is limited to 550 metres. If anything went wrong, who would meet the cost? Would it be the Ministry of Defence? Would our constituents have any rights? Would they be entitled to any compensation and, if so, from whom? What are the procedures? None of that is clear to us at present, and we want the answers for our constituents.

1.32 am

**The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Archie Hamilton):** I congratulate the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) on his success in securing the Adjournment debate. I must confess that I cannot congratulate him on much else. I do not think that I have heard two more whingeing, scaremongering speeches in all my life, and I think it very unfortunate that the constituents of Swansea must have such representatives. The reality is that the safety record of the Royal Navy is second to none.

**Mr. Alan Williams:** I think that the Minister should accept that Adjournment debates are normally not times for indulging in personal attacks of the sort in which he has just indulged, because time is so limited. If that is the way in which he wants to conduct the campaign, however, I promise him that we can conduct it in the same manner. We tried to avoid personal acrimony; we went out of our way to pay personal tribute to him, whatever our real feelings may have been, and I bitterly resent his comments.

**Mr. Hamilton:** We have heard very misleading information tonight, and it is a pity that such misleading information has been put about. The Labour defence policy review, which has just been produced, has changed attitudes on nuclear weapons slightly, but in practice we have, I think, seen one unilateral policy replaced by another.

The Labour party claims that it is committed to conventional defence. It is extraordinary that it should adopt such an attitude towards nuclear-powered submarines. They are an essential part of our conventional capability. The capacity of the Royal Navy to fight wars would be seriously damaged if it did not have nuclear-powered submarines.

The hon. Member for Swansea, East said that he had never been told officially about the decision. A regional naval officer will be approaching the chief executive of the local county council. He would not be doing so if a decision had not been taken by the nuclear powered warships safety committee.

**Mr. Anderson:** When is that to be?

**Mr. Hamilton:** It will happen shortly.

Swansea is not replacing Cardiff. Visits to Cardiff will continue to take place. As the hon. Member for Swansea, East said, there have been a number of visits by Royal Navy ships to Swansea. They have been extremely popular. I see absolutely no reason why visits by a nuclear-powered submarine should not be extremely popular, too.

I welcome the opportunity to put the record straight on the safety of Royal Navy nuclear-powered submarines and to dispel some of the understandable but unfounded fears that have been expressed about the proposal that they should visit Swansea for rest and recreation. As I said earlier, the Royal Navy's safety record in operating nuclear submarines is second to none and is the result of meticulous care and planning in every aspect of the design and operation of nuclear reactors. For comparisons to be made with Soviet submarines is deeply insulting to the Royal Navy.

I should like to explain the vital role that nuclear submarines play in the defence of this country and the West and why visits to civil ports are so essential. In wartime, the Royal Navy would have a number of tasks, including the defence of shipping, the interception and containment of Soviet forces in the North sea and the provision of anti-submarine protection for NATO's Atlantic fleet.

The particular capability of the Royal Navy's nuclear-powered submarines would be critical to the United Kingdom's and NATO's ability to carry out those tasks. Nuclear-powered submarines are especially potent weapons in anti-submarine warfare. They have played an increasingly important role in the Royal Navy since the early 1960s. They will continue to be an essential part of any future fleet. The continued high morale of crews is a vital factor in the effective operation of all naval vessels, but that is particularly true of submarines whose crews have to spend long periods in a confined environment. Visits to civil ports for rest and recreation have an important part to play in maintaining morale. They also help to foster good relations between the Royal Navy and the community that it serves, which is of benefit to both.

**Mr. Anderson:** Does the Minister claim that there is any advantage at all to the citizens of Swansea from visits on perhaps two occasions a year?

**Mr. Hamilton:** In the past, Royal Navy visits to Swansea have been extremely popular. That is why I do not think that what we have heard from the hon. Member for Swansea, East and the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) is representative of the views of the people of Swansea at large. They enjoy having Royal Navy personnel ashore. Their visits have gone down extremely well. I do not believe that their attitude will change just because we are talking about a nuclear-powered submarine rather than a surface ship.

It is important not to forget the economic benefits that such visits bring. Crew members who are not on duty will stay in local hotels and will, of course, make use of local entertainment facilities. There have been many successful visits in the past by Royal Navy nuclear submarines to commercial ports such as Liverpool, Cardiff, Barry and Southampton. In the past 12 months there have been 13 such visits.

At present, there are only a small number of civil ports with berths that have been cleared to receive nuclear-powered submarines, and there are obvious advantages in having a wider variety. Moreover, as the number of submarines in service has increased, so has the need for port visits. Added to this has been our reluctant decision to discontinue vists to Hull because of navigational problems and, for the time being, to Barry, because we anticipated difficulties in maintaining the water level there at low tide. Swansea has been visited for many years by conventionally powered vessels and has always been very popular with the Royal Navy. For all these reasons, we decided to examine the possibility of nuclear-powered submarine visits to Swansea.

After preliminary discussions with port and local authorities, the Royal Navy carried out a feasibility study, which was approved by the nuclear-powered warships safety committee. The results of that study showed that the berth would be suitable for visits of nuclear-powered warships, and my officials will soon approach the chief executive of West Glamorgan county council to begin further discussion which will concentrate on safety matters.

I must stress that the visits will be only for the purposes of rest and recreation for the crews. There is no question of nuclear-powered submarines undergoing any kind of servicing or refuelling during their visits to Swansea. The submarines will be prohibited from discharging any radioactive material into the environment during the visits, and the fears tht submarines will pollute the environment around Swansea are entirely groundless.

The Royal Navy has placed the greatest emphasis on ensuring that we have never had an accident involving the reactor of a nuclear-powered submarine. Our safety standards for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of nuclear reactors and their associated systems are extremely rigorous, and we are continually seeking to improve them still further. All processes are carefully monitored and recorded, and there is a thorough system of checks at every stage, from initial design through to operation.

In addition to the several Ministry of Defence organisations that oversee nuclear safety matters, an independent committee—I emphasise that it is independent—known as the nuclear-powered warships safety committee advises my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and other Ministers on all public safety measures concerned with the construction, operation and maintenance of nuclear-powered warships.

**Mr. Alan Williams:** Who appoints them?

**Mr. Hamilton:** Although the committee has no executive powers, in practice this Ministry has always followed its advice on matters which fall within its terms of reference. Eighteen of the 23 permanent members of the nuclear-powered warships safety committee are from outside the Ministry of Defence. They include experts from the National Radiological Protection Board, the Department of Health, Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, the nuclear installations inspectorate and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, as well as academic experts in the nuclear field.

It is not right to describe these people as faceless. I do not name them, for security reasons. They have expertise in nuclear matters. It is not good casting aspersions on their integrity. They act independently. We take heed of their advice.

**Mr. Alan Williams:** Will the hon. Gentleman answer a simple question: who has decided the composition of the committee? The hon. Gentleman has said in an answer that his Department meets the committee's costs. Who has decided whence the membership should be drawn and who are the appropriate people to be represented on that committee?

**Mr. Hamilton:** I suspect that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State makes that decision. These people know about nuclear matters. It is important that people with that skill and understanding of nuclear matters are put on the committee. It makes no sense to go miles outside the nuclear world. These are complicated and difficult matters and it is important that people who understand nuclear matters are on the committee. The committee has carefully examined the public safety aspects of the proposed Z-berth at Swansea, and has decided that the berth is suitable for use by nuclear-powered submarines.

The best testament to the Royal Navy's safety precautions is its excellent record. During the period of almost 30 years for which we have been operating nuclear-powered submarines, there has not been a single incident which has endangered a reactor, or caused a radiological hazard to service men, base personnel or members of the public. It would be useful if the right hon. Member for Swansea, West and the hon. Member for Swansea, East made these points to their constituents. The Royal Navy's concentration on safety measures has been responsible for this record, which is second to none.

Clearly, though, we must not be complacent. The probability of accidents and their possible consequences have been examined in great detail and the accuracy of the calculations checked by independent assessors. We maintain comprehensive plans to react to any accident involving the reactor of a Royal Navy submarine, and test them regularly in exercises. Every civil port where Royal Navy nuclear-powered submarines are allowed to berth is covered by a special safety scheme, prepared in full consultation with all the relevant county, city and local councils and local emergency services.

Those are constantly reviewed and revised when necessary. The purpose of the schemes is to co-ordinate the various agencies involved in protecting public safety in the unlikely event of a nuclear accident.

**Mr. Anderson:** Is the Minister saying that the decision has in effect been taken without asking local safety experts about it?

**Mr. Hamilton:** We are saying that the recommendation from the nuclear safety committee is that we should use Swansea. We will now consult with the county council, and a decision will probably be made after that.

**Mr. Alan Williams:** What will the consultation cover?

**Mr. Hamilton:** The consultation will cover the tying in of the whole business of safety precautions and exercises that will be done with the local authorities. They are, of course complimentary to the Royal Navy plans that deal with the reactor itself. A special safety scheme will be

*[Mr. Hamilton]*

prepared for the berth at Swansea and copies will be available in public libraries. My officials intend to raise the subject with the local authorities as soon as possible.

Special safety schemes contain predictions of the probability and consequences of accidents which are based on our best and most up-to-date technical advice and are carried out in line with the recommendations laid down by the International Commission for Radiological Protection. Those predictions, which are scrutinised by external consultants, show not only that the possibility of an accident involving the reactor of a Royal Navy nuclear-powered submarine is remote, but that, even if such an accident did occur while a submarine was in port, the chances of any significant radiological hazard to the local population are still slim. That is partly because of the strong containment provided by the hull of a submarine, and partly because we choose the location of berths carefully to ensure that they are as far away as possible from homes and schools.

Local authorities are informed three weeks in advance of all nuclear-powered warship visits, and for the duration of each visit a naval emergency monitoring team, a MOD health physicist and a naval incident commander are located at the port concerned as a precautionary measure.

*The motion having been made after Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour,* MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order.*

*Adjourned at fourteen minutes to Two o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Thursday 20 July 1989*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

St. George's Hill, Weybridge, Estate Bill

International Westminster Bank Bill *(By Order)*
*Orders read for consideration of Lords amendments.*
*To be considered on Thursday 27 July.*

Associated British Ports (No. 2) Bill *(By Order)*
*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question —[23 May]*—That the Bill be now read the Third time.
*Debate to be resumed on Thursday 27 July.*

British Railways (Penalty Fares) Bill *[Lords] (By Order)*
*Order for further consideration, as amended, read.*
*To be further considered on Thursday 27 July.*

Buckinghamshire County Council Bill *[Lords] (By Order)*

London Local Authorities Bill *[Lords] (By Order)*

London Regional Transport (Penalty Fares) Bill *[Lords] (By Order)*

British Railways Bill *(By Order)*

Bromley London Borough Council (Crystal Palace) Bill *(By Order)*
*Orders for consideration, as amended, read.*
*To be considered on Thursday 27 July.*

London Underground (Victoria) Bill *(By Order)*

British Film Institute Southbank Bill *(By Order)*

Vale of Glamorgan (Barry Harbour) Bill *[Lords] (By Order)*
*Orders for Second Reading read.*
*To be read a Second time on Thursday 27 July.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Security

1. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland.

5. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the current security situation.

**The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King):** Since I last answered questions on 22 June there have been four deaths in Northern Ireland arising from the security situation. In addition, the Provisional IRA has claimed that it murdered the business man abducted in county Louth on 16 July.

The security threat remains at a high level, but the resolute efforts of the security forces continue to yield results. So far this year, 161 people have been charged with serious offences, including 18 with murder and 31 with attempted murder. More than 200 weapons, almost 27,000 rounds of ammunition and approximately 600 lbs of explosives have been recovered in Northern Ireland. I understand that the Garda Siochana has recovered 60 weapons, approximately 15,000 rounds of ammunition and a substantial quantity of explosives.

The House will be aware of recent arrests which flowed directly from the close international co-operation with the Irish, French and United States authorities, and for which we are most grateful.

**Mr. Duffy:** The Secretary of State should be congratulated on his humanity and political courage in announcing the release of 19 paramilitaries on licence over the next nine months. Can he offer any hope to the families of those not included? Does he think that a similar move by the Republic in respect of Portlaoise might be helpful, and will he consider mentioning that to the new Irish Foreign Minister, Mr. Collins, when he next meets him?

**Mr. King:** I think that that was a two-part question. In response to the first part, I hope that hope is offered to other families by the actions that we have proposed in respect of these prisoners. Those familiar with prison matters will know of the significant impact of the Christmas leave arrangements, and we are examining the matter carefully to see whether that approach can offer further possibilities. I should like to think that there has been a significant impact from that and from our announcements about releasing some people on licence. I take a very sympathetic view towards some of the young people who got caught up in such activities early in their lives and who are serving substantial sentences. I have a very unsympathetic view of those who re-offend and become re-involved. They cannot expect the same sort of sympathy.

I shall not answer the second part of the hon. Gentleman's question, in which he invited me to advise the Irish Government on their prisons policy, although I note that there have been some comments in Irish newspapers.

Obviously, every case is different. I know how difficult the cases are and I know that the Irish Government are aware of our approach in these matters.

**Mr. Bellingham:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the recent arrests in America, France and Dublin may represent a fresh resolve in those countries to combat terrorism? Does he also agree that the recent murder of Mr. McAnulty—presumably because he refused to pay protection money—was particularly vile and evil? Is it not heartening that that incident was condemned by so many people in South Armagh, including Thomas O'Fiaich?

**Mr. King:** That illustrates clearly our common interest in defeating the evil of terrorism. That gentleman was abducted in the Republic and almost certainly murdered in the Republic, and his body was then dumped north of the border, to cause maximum difficulties for the RUC and the Garda in the investigation of and prosecution of those responsible for the crime. I certainly join my hon. Friend in condemning that appalling crime. I welcome too, the very rapid condemnation that came from all concerned. The hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon), Cardinal O'Fiaich and a whole range of other people were outspoken in their disgust at that murder.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for what he said about the value of international co-operation. I have had to stand at the Dispatch Box for long enough being jeered at by people who said that no one would co-operate with us, especially the Irish Government. I had hoped that some of those people, who were so ready to criticise, would be prepared to stand up today and admit the value of that co-operation and the real contribution of the Irish Garda, not only in arrests, but in the speed of the transfer of information to the French authorities. We are also grateful for the speed of their reaction.

**Mr. Molyneaux:** In view of the 50 per cent. increase in serious terrorist offences in the frontier zone covered by 3 brigade in the year since that brigade was formed, will the Secretary of State consider increasing the numerical strength of all arms of the security forces in that zone?

**Mr. King:** I do not recognise the statistics that the right hon. Gentleman has chosen to quote. However, I would have hoped that, in response to what I have said, he would feel able to pay tribute to the valuable co-operation, which has undoubtedly contributed significantly to the saving of lives of his constituents and many others. One cannot over estimate the value of that co-operation, which is important if we are to defeat the evil of terrorism that is a threat to people north and south of the border.

**Rev. Ian Paisley:** Will not the Secretary of State admit that it is the duty of every democratic Government to co-operate in the fight against terrorism? No democratic Government should think that they are going out of their way or should get laurels for so doing.

Is the Secretary of State aware of the serious concern of ordinary individuals in the neighbourhood about the removal of the Army post at Lacky Bridge which was promised to widows who visited the Prime Minister some 11 years ago? Did the Royal Ulster Constabulary agree to the removal of that Army post? If so, is it the beginning of the removal of other posts in that border area?

**Mr. King:** As the hon. Gentleman knows very well, I have made it clear that there are no proposals for any further removals of vehicle border checkpoints of that kind. Those are operational matters; the decision was taken by the security forces and has been implemented. We are certainly keen to ensure the best possible protection for everyone in the Province against the danger of terrorism.

On the value of international co-operation—I am not talking just about the Irish Government, but about the United States Government, too—it is no good saying, "Keep a checkpoint", and ensuring that we stay as we are. It is also important to find the terrorists and to discover their lines of supply. It is important to stop any technical developments that may be a direct threat to all the security forces in Northern Ireland, and to the hon. Gentleman's constituents, in the battle that we fight. I would have hoped to hear him, too, pay some tribute to the value of international co-operation.

**Mr. Mallon:** Is the Secretary of State aware that senior officers of the Ulster Defence Regiment are using a public relations and information video which is explicitly critical of my party? Does he agree that no section of Government information services should be used in such an overtly party political way? Will he assure the House that that video will be removed from use?

**Mr. King:** I have no knowledge of the video to which the hon. Gentleman refers, but in general I do not dissent from the proposition that he has put forward. I shall certainly have the matter looked into.

## Republic of Ireland

2. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what subjects he expects to discuss at his next meeting with representatives of the Government of the Republic of Ireland.

**Mr. Tom King:** The agenda for the next meeting of the conference has not yet been finalised, but I expect it to include security matters; recent and forthcoming events; the scope for greater cross-border economic co-operation; the progress made on fair employment; and other matters.

**Mr. Canavan:** What is the likely effect on the British-Irish talks and on Britain's reputation throughout the world when the British soldier who killed an innocent young man, Aidan McAnespie, is simply given a token fine and returned to normal duties, and when the British Government refuse reasonable demands from respectable organisations such as Amnesty International for a full judicial inquiry into that disputed killing and into the SAS killings of three unarmed people in Gibraltar?

**Mr. King:** I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman bothered to study the facts before seeking to make such outrageous allegations. He may not be aware that the matter was investigated, not only as the absolute requirement on which I insist and as the absolute practice, by the RUC in a full criminal investigation, but on this occasion by the deputy commissioner, now the commissioner, of the Garda on behalf of the Irish Government. On this exceptional occasion, they wished to investigate, too. As no evidence was forthcoming, on either side of the border, that the incident was anything other than an accident, I am appalled that the hon. Gentleman chooses to raise the matter in this way.

**Mr. William Ross:** As Mr. Haughey has just made it plain that he is not very much in favour of summits of any sort, does the Secretary of State consider it advisable to follow his admirable advice and example?

**Mr. King:** The Taoiseach said that he found meeting the Prime Minister twice a year, on the occasions of the normal European summits, to be a perfectly satisfactory arrangement. That is sensible because we now have a close working relationship. Here we go again. On the very day when any sensible person can see, before his or her eyes, the obvious benefits of co-operation in the fight against terrorism, there is a deliberate determination not to do anything except to frustrate co-operation. The backwoodsmen are coming out from the Opposition Back Benches with their reactionary views.

**Mr. Gow:** What objections do Ministers in the Irish Government have to conferring modest additional powers on the 26 district councils, to setting up a regional council with widely devolved powers over local matters and to legislating in this House for Northern Ireland in the same way as we legislate for the rest of the kingdom?

**Mr. King:** These are internal matters for the Republic. In the Dail yesterday, the Taoiseach made it clear that matters relating to the administration and government of Northern Ireland are primarily for the parties in Northern Ireland to determine. Although I have some sympathy with looking further at some of my hon. Friend's ideas on giving greater powers to local authorities, I must advise him that the behaviour of one or two councils—Belfast is one—does not encourage one down that route.

**Mr. McNamara:** The Secretary of State sounds remarkably demob-happy this afternoon. We do not dissent from many of the opinions that he has expressed. Although I did not intervene on the previous question to comment on his important statement about international co-operation in the fight against terrorism, I am sure that hon. Members of all parties will warmly welcome it.

I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman about the Anglo-Irish review. We do not know how many further intergovernmental conferences the right hon. Gentleman will be attending, but he mentioned a number of important items that are likely to be on the agenda, not least economic co-operation on both sides of the border. Does the Secretary of State think that both Governments might consider issuing position papers or Green Papers so that there can be a general informed debate on both sides of the border among people who might not otherwise want to be associated with the Anglo-Irish review, but who should at least know what is going on so that there can be input from all sides?

**Mr. King:** In response to the hon. Gentleman's first point, I knew that, whatever my aspect at the Dispatch Box, somebody would read something into it. If I sound enthusiastic about the progress that we are making in international co-operation in the fight against terrorism, perhaps some hon. Members will understand just how important were the arrests made during the weekend. I cannot overstate that, and I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for what he said about it.

I am ready to support sensible discussion on making political progress by means of background papers and so on, but we have made it clear that the first stage must be discussion with elected people within Northern Ireland to establish the most promising areas for development.

## Student Loans

3. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the progress of the introduction of student loans.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Dr. Brian Mawhinney):** Arrangements for the introduction of top-up loans for Northern Ireland students are proceeding in parallel to those in Great Britain.

**Mr. Barron:** Does the Minister share the view of the Secretary of State for Education and Science that student loans are excellent and offer good value for money? If so, what does he think of the estimate of the Government's consultants, Price Waterhouse, that the scheme will cost £100 per debtor to administer, and the estimate made by Dr. Nick Barr of the London School of Economics that it will take 100 years before the cost of the scheme is recouped?

**Dr. Mawhinney:** Of course, I agree with my right hon. Friend. As the hon. Gentleman takes an interest in these matters, he will know that those views are not shared by the Department of Education and Science.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** What proportion of the extra 200,000 students in higher education now, compared with in 1979, come from Northern Ireland, and how much does the average student in higher education in Northern Ireland borrow?

**Dr. Mawhinney:** There has been an increase in university students in Northern Ireland and my hon. Friend will be pleased to know that the participation rate in Northern Ireland universities is 20 per cent., compared with 15 per cent. in Great Britain. That is a reflection of the high standing of Queens university and the university of Ulster.

**Mr. Beggs:** I congratulate the Secretary of State on the confidence that he exhibited at the Dispatch Box today, which may be due to the recent success, but one swallow does not make a summer. Perhaps, there are promises of promotion in the wind. However, the right hon. Gentleman is to be congratulated on his performance so far.

Is the Minister aware of the widespread concern in Northern Ireland that many able students may not benefit from higher education because of the freezing of the student grant and the introduction of the loans scheme? There is particular concern among medical students, who study for 45 weeks of the year for five or six years, with little time to work in the holidays to earn additional income. I hope that the Government will reconsider the scheme and encourage the thrifty use of grants rather than introduce students to the burden of debt and the further anxiety that that would entail.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** We are the only developed country with no system of top-up loans alongside grants. The Government have a responsibility to find a balance between benefits to students and the cost to the taxpayer. In 1984, the latest year for which figures are available, support for students in the United Kingdom cost about £750 per annum. In France it was £180; in West Germany, £70; and in Japan, £30. If that does not represent a disincentive in those countries, I fail to see why there should be any disincentive in the United Kingdom or in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. John Marshall:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the loans scheme will be particularly welcome to students who do not receive the full assessed parental contribution? Does he also agree that since graduates can look forward to much larger incomes than the community at large, it is only right that they should repay to society part of the benefits that they are getting from their university education?

**Dr. Mawhinney:** My hon. Friend is right on both points. About 120,000 university students receive no grant at all because they are means-tested out. About 50,000 receive no mandatory grant and about 160,000 receive only partial grants. All those students stand to benefit from the introduction of top-up loans. My hon. Friend will agree that the introduction of those loans at a nil real interest rate is a further incentive.

**Mr. Flannery:** Does the Minister realise that the introduction of loans will be a disincentive to entering higher education? The last time that Britain had a loan system was before the war. We do not have to follow blindly countries such as West Germany, because we have about £100 billion from North sea oil. Will not many young people be detered from becoming students? If they become students will they not leave their studentship in debt? It took me four years to pay back my debt.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** I know that the hon. Gentleman finds facts uncomfortable, but nevertheless the fact is that loan schemes do not act as disincentives in other countries. The hon. Gentleman fails to make an argument for why this country should be any different.

**Ms. Mowlam:** Is it not difficult for the Minister to accept facts? Does he accept that the study by Dr. Barr mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) stated clearly that when students complete a three-year course they will have a minimum debt of £7,000? Does not the study by Price Waterhouse which was commissioned by the Government show that when half the students graduate by 1995 they will either default or defer on their debts? Is that opening up higher education and increasing access, or will it achieve the exact opposite?

**Dr. Mawhinney:** Norway has a default rate of 1 per cent. and Sweden and Japan a default rate of 2 per cent. Although there is no loan system at present, the statistics show that the projected levels of borrowing outlined in the White Paper are less than the exact borrowing figures in countries that have loan schemes. The hon. Lady's information and facts simply do not impress me.

## Single European Market

4. **Mr. Ashdown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provisions the Government are making for the impact of 1992 on the economy of Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Viggers):** The Government have promoted and supported a wide range of measures intended to inform Northern Ireland business of the challenges and the opportunities which arise from the creation of the single European market.

**Mr. Ashdown:** As the Secretary of State's ebullience at the Dispatch Box appears to be a feature of questions, may I say that if he were not to be at Northern Ireland questions in the future, I and many hon. Members would want to express our admiration for the way that he has done his job over the years?

Does the Minister agree that there is widespread anxiety in Northern Ireland, and in Ireland as a whole, that closer integration following 1992 may cause problems for the Irish economies, as they are positioned on the peripheries of the European Community? That may be exacerbated by the Channel tunnel if there is no infrastructure to back it—*[Interruption.]* Would it be worth while—[HON. MEMBERS: "Question."]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I think that the right hon. Gentleman is coming to his question.

**Mr. Ashdown:** As the constitutional parties appear reluctant to discuss political matters, but keen to discuss economic matters, could the Government facilitate a round table discussion on how Northern Ireland might face the challenges and opportunities of Europe in 1992?

**Mr. Viggers:** I do not share the right hon. Gentleman's gloom. Northern Ireland has many attributes, including the availability of a young, well-educated work force, the quality of its infrastructure and telecommunications and the quality of its environment, all of which have been recognised by a number of prospective inward investors. We have persuaded inward investors from inside and outside Europe to invest in Northern Ireland, and I think especially of Montupet of France and Daewoo from South Korea.

We had useful discussions with the Republic of Ireland at a round table meeting during the Louvain conference in Belgium in September 1988. I was thinking of suggesting a further conference along those lines.

**Mr. Kilfedder:** Although business progress and prosperity are important in Northern Ireland, is the Minister aware that the cost of living is higher there than in the rest of the United Kingdom, as exemplified by Northern Ireland's high cost of transport, food, bread and electricity? That makes life difficult for many people in Northern Ireland—particularly poor, old age pensioners. What improvements will be made before 1992?

**Mr. Viggers:** The hon. Gentleman would want the record to be complete. Some items are much cheaper in Northern Ireland than elsewhere in the United Kingdom. I am thinking particularly of housing. The hon. Gentleman's point about bread is well taken. Recently, there was an in-depth study of that issue, and I believe that the hon. Gentleman has a question about it on the Order Paper, albeit to another Minister. I share his view that the high price of bread in Northern Ireland should cause us concern. We encourage the availability of competitive bakery products, to ensure that the consumer has the best choice.

**Mr. Hume:** Does the Minister agree that the major economic impact of 1992 on Northern Ireland will be the five-year strategic plan funded by the EEC, which is already the subject of detailed discussions between the Government and the authorities in Brussels? When do the Government intend to let the Northern Ireland public and local interests know about the specific projects contained in that plan, so that there can be proper and thorough public discussion and consultation?

**Mr. Viggers:** The Northern Ireland regional development plan was submitted in March to the European community and—bearing in mind that Northern Ireland is an objective 1 region in Europe, and therefore will be given a degree of priority—we have made further proposals. One area of priority is support for port, airport, rail and road facilities, to ensure that Northern Ireland does not miss out in 1992.

**Mr. Nicholas Baker:** What substantial extra provision for hospitals, industry, schools and so on, will the Government need to make for the impact of 1992 on Northern Ireland's economy if Northern Ireland accepts its share of the 3·25 million Hong Kong Chinese that the right hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) wants the United Kingdom to admit under his misguided proposals?

**Mr. Viggers:** If my answer were to go into great detail, I suspect that I would be out of order. A notable contribution to Northern Ireland's economy has been made by the immigrant community, particularly the Indians and Chinese. We make no secret of the fact that we welcome inward investment in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Clifford Forsythe:** What action is the Minister taking to improve the marketing of Northern Ireland products in the EEC?

**Mr. Viggers:** There has been a considerable switch of emphasis away from standard capital grants and the availability of standard grants to selective financial assistance, which takes the form not only of the aptly named selective financial aid within the Industrial Development Board but a range of marketing schemes—particularly the 40/30 and the 40/60 schemes available from the IDB and the Local Enterprise Development Unit. Northern Ireland's best companies are excellent at marketing, but others must be encouraged to sink more effort into marketing outside Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Hayes:** Is my hon. Friend greatly encouraged that unemployment in the Province continues to fall? Will he continue to convey loud and clear the message to potential investors that, despite the troubles, the Province is still the most law-abiding part of the United Kingdom, that it is a great place in which to invest, and that it will offer great opportunities to all in 1992?

**Mr. Viggers:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks, and I endorse them all. We are delighted that unemployment has fallen so much. At 104,000, it is still far too high, but it is way below the headline figure of 134,998 in October 1986. We have persuaded inward investors that Northern Ireland is a good place to do business, and those already there like it very much.

**Mr. Jim Marshall:** Does the Minister agree that there are obvious attractions in treating the island of Ireland as a single economic entity? When will he make a statement on the Government's discussions with the Republic on co-operation in the sphere of tourism? Does he expect that the Government will encourage further co-operation between the Province and the Republic in agriculture?

**Mr. Viggers:** I made a statement on tourism some two weeks ago in which I explained that there is indeed co-operation between the Government, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Bord Failté. It would be foolish of us not to co-operate, bearing in mind that only one in 15 of visitors to the Republic go up to Northern Ireland and it would be easy to encourage more to do so.

I have no further announcement to make on tourism co-operation, nor am I in a position to comment on agriculture, which is outside the remit of this question.

## Short Brothers

6. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a further statement on the privatisation of Short Brothers plc.

**Mr. Viggers:** Since the announcement on 7 June of heads of agreement whereby Bombardier of Canada will acquire Shorts, good progress has been made on the necessary legal documentation. I am pleased to inform the House today that approval to the terms of the transaction has been given by the European Commission. It is our intention to complete the transaction in September.

**Mr. Cran:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the public purse facilitated—quite rightly—the takeover of Shorts by Bombardier, in the form of sales worth £762 million, and that the quid pro quo is that the House and the taxpayer are entitled to know how much Bombardier will contribute towards investment in the company? Can my hon. Friend tell us the amount specified in the corporate plan? If he cannot be specific, why?

**Mr. Viggers:** The details of the agreement between the Government, Shorts and Bombardier are matters of commercial confidentiality. I can, however, tell my hon. Friend that Bombardier will be making a substantial investment in Shorts—supported, of course, by Government assistance. The cost of the transaction, some £750 million, has been projected by some as the cost of privatisation, but I think that my hon. Friend will realise that the reverse is true. All but £115 million is the cost of the company in public ownership and the cost of outstanding contracts. That sum will go to support further investment in Shorts.

**Mr. A. Cecil Walker:** Is the Minister aware of the deep public concern in Northern Ireland about job losses that have occurred at Harland and Wolff since privatisation? Can he give us any assurance that such job losses will not occur in the privatisation of Short Brothers, and can he give us any guarantee that jobs there will be secure?

**Mr. Viggers:** The long-term future of employment at Shorts will depend on the profitability of the company and on its ability to deliver, on time, high-quality products that people wish to buy. I believe that the deal between Shorts and Bombardier is the best possible framework for that to happen.

I can assure the hon. Gentleman that there are no plans for further redundancies at this point. Let me draw to his attention the fact that when Bombardier acquired

Canadair it acquired a loss-making company with 5,000 employees; it now owns a profitable company employing 6,500. We hope that the same will apply at Shorts.

**Mr. Peter Robinson:** What share might Shorts expect of the Canadian company's regional debt programme?

**Mr. Viggers:** I cannot answer that question precisely, but I can assure the hon. Gentleman that, having visited Bombardier in Montreal last month, I am very impressed by the fit between Shorts and Bombardier. I will write to the hon. Gentleman on the details.

**Mr. McGrady:** While all the communities in Northern Ireland welcome this vast investment in Shorts, it is important that both communities share in that prosperity. Is the Minister aware that the rate of recruitment from the Catholic population fell from 17 per cent. in the second monitoring period in 1983 to 14 per cent. in the third monitoring period of 1984? That trend is not welcomed by those whom we represent. Will the Minister ensure that the new company adopts proper recruitment procedures based on fair employment principles?

**Mr. Viggers:** The new company will indeed respect the application of fair employment in Northern Ireland. I can update the hon. Gentleman's information by telling him that the latest available figures for 1988 show that 19 per cent. of Short's recruits were Catholics. *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I ask hon. Members to desist from private conversations in the middle of these important questions.

## Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Act

7. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has yet considered implementation dates for the Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1989; and if he will make a statement.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Richard Needham):** The Act will be implemented in stages as resources become available.

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** In so far as we have combined health and social services boards has the Minister any plans to implement those stages faster in Northern Ireland than they have been implemented in the rest of Britian, especially in the light of recent changes?

**Mr. Needham:** We start three years behind the Act here, and we shall implement it as quickly as we can. We look to implement sections 9, 10 and 11, except (4) and section 12 by the end of this year. We shall implement section 4, except (b), sections 5, 6, 8 (1) and section 11 (4) as soon into next year as we can. We shall have to consider with the Boards the cost implications of remaining sections.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Is my hon. Friend aware that in the rest of the United Kingdom disabled people are looked after substantially by local authorities? If Rangers can sign a Catholic football player, is it not about time that we gave Northern Ireland the same local government as the rest of the United Kingdom?

**Mr. Needham:** We have for a long time had integrated social services and health boards. That system is working extremely well. We are spending considerable sums on community care and we shall continue to operate an integrated system which works satisfactorily for the community in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** While congratulate the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) on piloting such an important Act on to the statute book, will the Minister offer inspiration to the rest of the United Kingdom by ensuring that the Act is properly and fully implemented and in so doing that community care ceases to be community neglect?

**Mr. Needham:** I always like to offer inspiration to everyone. We are implementing the Act in Northern Ireland as fast as we can. We started behind and we have to work out with the boards exactly what the costs are. At present I cannot go further than that.

**Mr. Alton:** Given the Government's ability to publish figures about the denominational make-up of employees in Shorts, does the Minister think that it is reasonable to publish figures for the number of disabled people working in the Northern Ireland Office and in local government in the Province? Can he tell the House how many disabled people are employed by the NIO?

**Mr. Needham:** I cannot, but I shall find out and write to the hon. Gentleman. Our policy on disablement in Northern Ireland bears cognisance and competition with any other part of the United Kingdom and we are extremely proud of it.

## Colin Wallace

8. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if in the light of allegations in the book "Who Framed Colin Wallace?", he will allow independent inspection on Privy Councillor terms of the records of his Office relating to contacts with Colin Wallace.

**The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. Ian Stewart):** No, Sir.

**Mr. Dalyell:** What on earth is there to hide from Privy Councillors? Did the Minister notice that in the review by R. W. Johnson, a fellow of Magdalen college, Oxford, it was highlighted that Colin Wallace offered to give evidence to the Hughes inquiry on condition of immunity from prosecution under the Official Secrets Act and, according to that fellow of Magdalen, it was turned down by the Prime Minister personally? Will the Minister ask the Prime Minister whether that is true? She is sitting next to him.

**Mr. Stewart:** Mr. Wallace was given assurances that he would not be prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act if he gave evidence to the Terry and Hughes inquiries. No matter how many questions the hon. Gentleman asks, no evidence has been found in many thorough investigations of the case to substantiate the allegations which Mr. Wallace has made over many years.

## Republic of Ireland

10. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will make a statement on his most recent discussions with Ministers of the Republic of Ireland.

**Mr. Tom King:** I last met representatives of the Government of the Republic of Ireland at the meeting of the intergovernmental conference in Belfast on 24 May. At that meeting, we completed the review of the working of the conference. Copies of the joint statement issued afterwards and the communiqué were placed in the Library.

**Mr. Latham:** Is it not significant—and may this not arise as a result of the better relations with the Government of the Repulic—that there was a sharp fall in the vote for Sinn Fein in recent elections in both north and southern Ireland?

**Mr. King:** It is significant that the vote for Sinn Fein in the Republic fell from 1·9 to 1·2 per cent., and in the European elections in Northern Ireland, the vote of the Sinn Fein candidate almost halved. Those are significant developments. On the political and security fronts, as well in the economic sphere, we see the value of working together. The events of the last weekend show all too clearly the value of having the closest possible co-operation in the security sphere.

**Ms. Short:** Does the Secretary of State believe that in the current situation in Ireland it might be possible to obtain a ceasefire? Does he agree that that would be the biggest gain for the people of Ireland, in the North and the South, and will he have serious discussions with the Irish Government about the possibility of achieving that?

**Mr. King:** The ending of violence in the island of Ireland is the greatest ambition that anybody could possibly have. One side is perpetrating the violence. There is an easy way to achieve the hon. Lady's request, and that is to desist from the use of violence. There is one way by which the desire for it could be publicly tested. It is clear, as the elections in the Republic showed, that Left-wing parties can secure a substantial number of votes if they repudiate violence. Those who insist on perpetrating violence were repudiated by the electors, north and south of the border.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Health and Safety

Q2. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding health and safety legislation.

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** Our excellent legislation has provided a model for many European Community proposals. On the latest available figures, standards of enforcement in the United Kingdom are among the highest in Europe, and the level of accidents among the lowest.

**Mr. Powell:** Will my right hon. Friend confirm that according to the latest figures available, the number of fatalities in industry in Britain is the second lowest after the Netherlands of EEC countries, that our record is four times better than that of France, six times better than that of West Germany and more than seven times better than that of Italy? Does that not suggest to my right hon. Friend that they may have something to learn from what is taking place in this area in this country?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. On the latest available figures, our record in health and safety is extremely good. So also is that of the Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium. Other countries are not quite so good as ours. We are proud of our record and when I took our social charter to Europe, I had some material information about our record on health and safety and it was very favourably received.

**Mr. Bell:** Is the Prime Minister aware that during the current docks dispute, middle management on Teesside are driving cranes and in doing so may be in breach of health and safety regulations applying to the docks? Is she aware that representations have been made to the docks inspectorate about the matter? Does she agree that it would be wrong for people seeking to break a strike to break the health and safety regulations at the same time? Which comes first, safety or strike-breaking?

**The Prime Minister:** As the hon. Gentleman knows full well, health and safety always come first. If he has evidence, I am sure that he will give it to the inspectors so that they can take the necessary action.

**Mr. Marlow:** What action is being taken by Her Majesty's Government to ensure that those decisions which should be taken on health and safety within the United Kingdom, and not at the European level, are in future taken within the United Kingdom? For example, what has it got to do with the European Commission as to the quality of water that comes out of the taps in Northampton, Sunderland and in other parts of the United Kingdom?

**The Prime Minister:** As my hon. Friend will know, under the Single European Act, certain directives and decisions can be taken by majority. It is in our interests that some decisions should be taken by majority because we have been able to ensure that other countries accept standards which they might not wish to have applied by outvoting them.

As for the water measures, we are coming up to most of the standards, as my hon. Friend will be aware. Indeed, the Secretary of State for the Environment has done a superlative job of work on water legislation and standards.

### Engagements

Q3. **Mr. Mallon:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 July.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

**Mr. Mallon:** I am sure that many right hon. and hon. Members will agree with me that the French Prime Minister, Michel Rocard, got it wrong when he accused the Prime Minister of social cruelty. When the right hon. Lady comes to assess the effects of chronic unemployment, the poll tax, the Government's butchery of the Health Service and the cuts in social security, which she has presided over like a latter day Marie Antoinette, will she be able to accept that the phrase "social cruelty" was a mild understatement which should have read "social butchery"?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Gentleman is aware that the Health Service in Northern Ireland is far better than it has ever been under any Administration—far, far better. It is a pity that hon. Members are not prepared to recognise the facts. For every £1 spent under Labour, £3 is spent on the Health Service under the Conservatives, and last year an extra £2 billion was allocated to it.

The community charge is a far fairer way of paying for a proportion of local government expenditure than any rating revaluation since 1972 would have been, and it is far fairer than the Opposition's alternative of capital valuation accompanied by local income tax which would be infinitely worse for everyone.

## Civil Defence

Q4. **Mr. John Browne:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding civil defence.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government receive, representations about civil defence from time to time. Civil defence is a basic duty of any responsible Government. Since 1986, Government grant-aided civil defence expenditure by local authorities has risen from just over £15 million to £23 million, a significant real increase.

**Mr. Browne:** Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that the recent Government announcement on planning for emergencies in peacetime will in no way change their attitude to civil defence in time of war?

**The Prime Minister:** It will not, because of course, as I said in my original reply, we have a basic duty to provide civil defence. Although we hope that East-West relations will improve, it would be very wrong to retreat from that basic duty. I have seen, at first hand, the need for excellent services in emergencies and disasters, and what the civil defence people can do to help. We are anxious to do everything that we can, on a national basis, to take all practical steps to help our emergency services meet the demands upon them. The measures that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary recently announced about a civil emergencies adviser will lead to clear improvements in our capacity to respond to those tragedies.

**Mr. Spearing:** Can the Prime Minister tell us why she has abandoned the long-established and successful means of raising local revenue to pay for civil defence? Why, as the high priestess of market forces, has she managed to persuade her right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, the high priest of market forces, to take on the ill-formed plans of the former Secretary of State for the Environment, the present Secretary of State for Education and Science? Surely a much better way of raising revenue for civil defence and all local services would be a tax on property, based on either rental or freehold value?

**Mr. Speaker:** Briefly, please.

**Mr. Spearing:** That would be much better than her present plan.

**The Prime Minister:** The question was about civil defence, and I pointed out that since 1986 Government grant-aided civil defence expenditure by local authorities has risen from just over £15 million to £23 million. The hon. Gentleman asked about the community charge, which is by far the fairest way in England to raise 25 per cent. of local government expenditure, in Wales to raise only 18 per cent. of local authority expenditure and in Scotland to raise only 14 per cent. of local authority expenditure.

## Engagements

Q5. **Mr. Bendall:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Bendall:** In view of the continued rail strike, and the inconvenience being caused to commuters, will the Government consider bringing in legislation to outlaw one-day strikes, such as other European countries are considering? What encouragement will the Government give to trade unions and employers to rationalise affairs so that there is one union for one industry?

**The Prime Minister:** I think that it is tragic that there has been no settlement in the rail dispute, especially as two unions accepted the award of the independent arbitration tribunal. Only one, the NUR, decided not to and prefers to put the public—the customers, who will retreat from using rail if they are treated like this—to great inconvenience once again.

We are looking at the possibility of further legislation and examining European legislation which usually includes some protection against unions in the public sector going on strike. European legislation and history tend to be very different from ours, but we are looking at it all to see whether we can learn something from it. With due respect, I do not think that it would make much difference to have only one union. It is much more complicated than that, but I hope to bring forward in the future any proposals that we may have.

**Mr. Kinnock:** May I congratulate the Prime Minister on the characteristic generosity that she showed yesterday by staying away from the poll tax statement so that her Secretary of State for the Environment——

**Hon. Members:** Where is he?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We have only three more minutes.

**Mr. Kinnock** —so that her Secretary of State could gain all the glory and the credit for himself? How does the Prime Minister think—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Mr. Kinnock.

**Mr. Kinnock:** How does the Prime Minister think she can duly reward the memorable performance of the Secretary of State in the very near future?

**The Prime Minister:** I note once again that the right hon. Gentleman resorts to personal criticism because he has neither the intellect nor the guts to ask a real question about the community charge which he knows will show up —when in operation—high-spending local authorities for what they are: extravagant expenders of taxpayers' money.

**Mr. Kinnock:** Can the Prime Minister show the intellect or the guts to say whether she thinks that those of her hon. Friends who are calling for the Secretary of State's rightful dismissal are wrong?

**The Prime Minister:** Once again the right hon. Gentleman resorts to personal abuse because he cannot do anything else. I have the greatest confidence in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, and, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, the community charge is a way of asking people to pay for what they vote for, and when they do, they will vote against Labour authorities.

Q6. **Mr. Neil Hamilton:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Hamilton:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that more and more dockers are sensibly defying the strike leaders and returning to work? Is she aware that many former registered dockers have entered into new and more flexible practices with the port employers, which will ensure prosperity for those ports and jobs for those dockers and many others? Does not their forward-looking behaviour contrast markedly with the last twitchings of bonehead trade unionism, as on the railways?

**The Prime Minister:** I agree that many dockers and most people are coming to realise that the end of the dock work labour scheme and that monopoly means a much more prosperous future for those ports and for the industries in the hinterland that they serve. Many dockers are steadily going back to work, and I hope that they will continue.

We have yet to know whether the Opposition will support the NUR, which did not follow the established procedures, does not think of the customers, or support those unions that wisely follow the established procedures and think more of their customers and of travellers than of themselves.

## Business of the House

3.30 pm

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): May I ask the Leader of the House to state the business for next week?

**The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham):** The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 24 JULY—Completion of Consideration of Lords amendments to the Electricity Bill.

Afterwards there will be a debate on parliamentary pensions on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

TUESDAY 25 JULY—Opposition Day (18th Allotted Day). Until about seven o'clock, there will be a debate entitled "The Practical Implications of the Poll Tax for the People". Afterwards there will be a debate on a subject to be announced. Both debates will arise on Opposition motions.

Motion to take note of EC documents on road safety. Details will be given in the *Official Report.*

Motion to take note of EC document on freedom of movement for workers. Details will be given in the *Official Report.*

WEDNESDAY 26 JULY—Until about seven o'clock motions on Social Security regulations. Details will be given in the *Official Report.*

Consideration of Lords amendments to the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Bill

Proceedings on the Extradition Bill *[Lords]*, which is a consolidation measure.

Remaining stages of the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill *[Lords]*.

Proceedings on the Continental Shelf Bill *[Lords]*.

THURSDAY 27 JULY—Motion for the summer Adjournment.

Proceedings on the Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill

FRIDAY 28 JULY—Debates on the motion for the Adjournment.

*[Tuesday 25 July*

*(1) Relevant European Community Documents*

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|---|---|
| *(a) 4303/89* | *Road safety* |
| *(b) 9228/88* | *Compulsory use of seat belts in road vehicles* |
| *(c) 4252/89* | *Alcohol level for drivers* |
| *(d) 4305/89* | *Vehicle speed limits* |
| *(e) 4156/87* | *Road speed limits* |

*Relevant Reports of European Legislation Committee*

*(a) HC 15-xv (1988-89) para 4.*
*(b) HC 15-vi (1988-89) para 2.*
*(c) HC 15-xiv (1988-89) para 3.*
*(d) HC 15-xiv (1988-89) para 4.*
*(e) HC 22-xii (1986-87) para 2.*

*The Minutes of Evidence taken before the Sub-Committee of the Select Committee on European Legislation HC 507-i and HC 15-xxxi (1988-89).*

*(2) Relevant European Community Document*

| | |
|---|---|
| *5786/89* | *Freedom of movement and rights of residence* |

*Relevant Report of European Legislation Committee*
*HC 15-xxi (1988-89) para 4.*

*Wednesday 26 July*

*Affirmative Regulations made under the Social Security Act 1989:*

*Community Charge Benefits (General) Regulations.*
*Social Security (Unemployment, Sickness and Invalidity Benefit) Amendment No. 2 Regulations.*
*Income Support (General) Amendment No. 2 Regulations.]*

**Mr. Dobson:** I thank the Leader of the House for his statement.

Do the Government propose changing the business for next week to give the House the opportunity to debate the general practitioners' overwhelming rejection, in a ballot, of the contract that the Government wanted them to accept? When deciding what to do, will the right hon. Gentleman recall that, after the Secretary of State for Health thought that he had reached an agreement, he rushed to the House on Friday 5 May like a dog with two tails? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman come back to the House now that the doctors have docked the tail? He said that the agreement that he thought that he had reached was

> "a very significant step in the development of the family doctor service".—[*Official Report, 5 May 1989; Vol. 152, c.* 480.]

Clearly that step has been halted and the House is entitled to know what the right hon. and learned Gentleman intends doing next.

Moving from health generally to health in Wales, the Leader of the House will recall that my right hon. and hon. Friends from Wales have been pressing for a statement on the impact of the National Health Service review on Wales, or a debate in the House or the Welsh Grand Committee. Has any progress been made?

When are we likely to get the long-promised debate on the Government's proposal to substitute student loans for student grants?

Whether or not the Leader of the House is with us in this incarnation next Thursday, can he tell us whether he has made some progress towards establishing a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, to which the people of Scotland are entitled both by right and by our Standing Orders? If the right hon. Gentleman will not be in that incarnation next Thursday, will he tell his successor that Scottish Members will not rest satisfied until they have such a Select Committee?

**Mr. Wakeham:** The hon. Gentleman asked me four questions about next week's business. First, he asked me whether my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health would be making a statement about the general practitioner contract ballot result. The answer is no. My right hon. and learned Friend regrets the GPs' decision not to support their own negotiators and to reject the contract agreed with the BMA on 4 May. Those negotiations were hard fought and concessions were made by both sides to ensure a fair deal which could bring forward further improvements to patient care. My right hon. and learned Friend is consulting the BMA's general medical services committee leaders on detailed regulations to implement the contract agreed on 4 May and will lay those before Parliament in the autumn. Good GPs have nothing to fear from the new contract which will reward doctors who provide the service that patients want and need.

A number of right hon. and hon. Gentlemen have asked questions about the National Health Service in Wales. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and officials in his Department have had extensive discussions with a wide range of interests on the White Paper "Working for Patients" and in particular on the Welsh chapter. My right hon. Friend will be writing soon to health interests in Wales reporting on the outcome of the discussions and the next steps. He will make that publicly available. That is the procedure adopted by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health.

On top-up loans for students, we made it clear that we would be happy for the House to debate the Government's plans and the Opposition's pledge to deprive students of the opportunity to add to their resources. The timing of such a debate is a matter for discussion through the usual channels.

The hon. Gentleman knows that the question of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs is difficult. I have nothing further to add to what I said a little while ago.

**Sir Bernard Braine** (Castle Point): Does my right hon. Friend recollect that it is some years since the Warnock committee reported in favour of embryo experimentation although, of course, a substantial minority reported against it? That experimentation is continuing without the proper protection of the law passed by the House. The Government have promised that there will be legislation in the next Session. Can my right hon. Friend confirm that, and, at the same time, ensure that such legislation comes first to this House?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I know that my right hon. Friend has taken a deep interest in these matters over many years. It was probably a slip of the tongue when he said that the Government have promised to legislate in the next Session. The Government promised to legislate in the course of this Parliament. I cannot, of course, discuss at the moment what is in next Session's legislative programme.

**Mr. James Wallace** (Orkney and Shetland): Does the Leader of the House accept that people north of the border and Scottish Members have been incredulous about the squeals of protest coming from his right hon. and hon. Friends about the impact of the poll tax, as for the past two years, his hon. Friends have unthinkingly walked into the Lobbies to impose both primary and secondary poll tax legislation on the Scottish people? Given that such hon. Members are so out of touch with what the people want, can we expect a statement from the Secretary of State for Scotland next week announcing the Government's participation in the Scottish convention with a view to setting up a Scottish parliament within the United Kingdom?

**Mr. Wakeham:** No, the hon. Gentleman cannot expect that next week. I agree with him in part that some of us are a bit incredulous about some of the exclamations over the introduction of the community charge, because any reasonable person who examines the alternatives proposed by his party or the Labour party will recognise that the community charge, with all its transitional difficulties, is an infinitely better alternative than anything proposed by Opposition parties.

**Sir Dudley Smith** (Warwick and Leamington): I ask my right hon. Friend to look at yesterday's *Hansard*, where he will see some interesting exchanges about the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. In view of the great deal of controversy about the efficacy of that organisation, does he not think that it is time we had a debate on the whole subject, especially bearing in mind the developments taking place in 1992?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I agree that this is an important subject. I cannot promise my hon. Friend a debate on it next week, but, as he will be aware, there are many opportunities for him to seek to raise the matter during next week. There are at least three separate occasions on which he might try his luck.

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South): Could we have a debate next week on community care, which has been the subject of recent statements allowing only limited opportunity for debate? A debate is important because of the need to retain hospitals for mentally handicapped people, such as the Westwood hospital in my constituency. As it is set in attractive surroundings, it is feared that moves could be made to sell the land to private development speculators. In such a debate we could emphasise the concept of a village community and how the facilities for mentally handicapped people can be retained and developed.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I do not accept the premise of the hon. Gentleman's question, although he raises an important issue. As I said last week, the Government will publish a White Paper early in the autumn, and it would be most appropriate to have a debate on the subject then.

**Mr. Greg Knight** (Derby, North): Are we likely to have a debate in the foreseeable future on the working practices of the House? If so, has my right hon. Friend seen the Labour party's policy review report which recommends that the House sits for three days a week and has 15 weeks holiday a year? Does he agree that the document is nothing more than a slackers' charter and will he confirm that he has no intention of implementing its recommendations?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I thought that the document showed that the Labour party might have to work harder in future than it has in the past. I have no time for a debate on the subject next week.

**Mr. Michael Foot** (Blaenau Gwent): Will the Leader of the House reconsider the announcement that he apparently made a few minutes ago that the Secretary of State for Health intends to impose the doctors' contract without the House having a chance to comment on it? As the doctors have voted by about three to one against accepting the contract, is that not an appalling way to treat a great profession? Will he seriously consider allowing the House to debate the matter before the Government proceed?

**Mr. Wakeham:** The negotiators have been rejected by their members. The Government have negotiated with the BMA on this and the right course of action is to get on with it.

**Mr. Bob Dunn** (Dartford): Will my right hon. Friend give an undertaking that on our return in the autumn he will announce an early debate on the opportunities for private enterprise to take over transport activities? Is he aware that the strikes by British Rail employees have thrown into focus a tremendous weakness in the south-east in people's opportunities and options to gain access to

*[Mr. Bob Dunn]*

their place of work in the capital city? Does he agree that we need an injection of cash from the private sector to provide alternative forms of transport into London?

**Mr. Wakeham:** My hon. Friend is right to raise those important issues. It would be helpful to have a debate, but it is difficult for me to promise one in the immediate future.

**Mr. Merlyn Rees** (Morley and Leeds, South): The Leader of the House will remember that this time last week I complained that there were to be 15 statutory instruments before the House, all relating to development corporations, which remove powers from local authorities and make it difficult for people to raise locally issues which previously they could deal with at town halls. I am grateful to him for removing the Leeds orders which will be debated next Tuesday. Does he accept that we can raise issues relating to development corporations only in the House and that they cannot be dealt with locally? Should we not have a Committee of the House on the development corporations similar to the Committee on Northern Ireland legislation, following the removal of local authority powers there, so that we can raise issues with Ministers regularly? We cannot do so locally because local authority powers have been removed.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I am grateful for the right hon. Gentleman's comments about the changes that I made, after I had agreed with him that the arrangements that had been made were not satisfactory. With regard to his wider suggestion, of course I take seriously any suggestion from someone with the experience of the right hon. Gentleman. Perhaps the best plan is for us to have a discussion to see whether we can come up with any ideas to put to other people.

**Mr. Alistair Burt** (Bury, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the rather desperate situation affecting local government in my constituency? Last night, a full scheduled meeting of the local council was cancelled on the mere say-so of the local NALGO representative, who asked the council leader to abandon it, which he agreed to do. Is it not important to have a debate so that hon. Members' views on such anti-democratic practices, which are damaging local authority services, can be tested in public?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I agree that it would be helpful to have such a debate, but I cannot promise one. It would be helpful if the unions involved could reach agreement with employers and cease putting the public to such inconvenience.

**Mr. Pat Wall** (Bradford, North): No doubt the Leader of the House has seen reports in the press about the return of a Chinese dissident, Mr. Xu Hai Ning. He is a Chinese journalist with the New China Press Agency in Hong Kong. He came to Britain after making statements condemning the assassinations in Beijing and was granted leave to stay until 30 June 1990. According to statements, he returned to Hong Kong voluntarily. This case raises disturbing aspects: first, the appearance of threatening advertisements in the Chinese business newspaper that is published in Soho; secondly, the disclosure of escape routes of Hong Kong dissidents that will result from his return to Hong Kong; and thirdly, the fear that it will create among the Chinese community in Britain. I interviewed this gentleman last week, and he was nervous and distraught about his status in this country and his lack of a travel document. In those circumstances, does the Leader of the House agree that the Minister of State, Home Office should make a statement about his return and its consequences for the Chinese community in Britain and other dissidents?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I recognise that the hon. Gentleman raises an important matter. The gentleman concerned, who is a Chinese national, was granted leave to enter the United Kingdom on 30 June. On 17 July, he contacted his embassy in London and asked to return to China. On his departure from the United Kingdom he was interviewed in private by an immigration officer, when he confirmed that he was returning to China of his own free will. He appeared calm and well and expressed himself clearly. There was, therefore, neither power nor reason to prevent this gentleman's departure.

**Mr. Ivor Stanbrook** (Orpington): Will my right hon. Friend consider, together with the usual channels, the sending of an official British parliamentary team of observers to the independence elections in Namibia? The need to ensure that its elections are fair and free is just as great as when we similarly sent an official team of observers to represent Parliament in Rhodesia—Zimbabwe in 1980.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I recognise the importance of the issue that my hon. Friend raises. I am not in a position to give him a full answer, but I shall refer the matter to those who will be able to give him a better answer.

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing** (Moray): The Leader of the House will no doubt remember that in response to an earlier question he said that Scotland was experiencing transitional difficulties as a result of the implementation of the poll tax. While experimentation might be a better description of what is happening in Scotland, has he had an opportunity to study early-day motion 1177, in the name of the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing)?

*[That this House calls upon the Secretary of State for Scotland to introduce an amendment to the Abolition of Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act in order to ensure that the practice of the next of kin of a deceased person receiving an account for the outstanding amount of poll tax payable to the date of death is ended forthwith; and urges the Secretary of State to recognise that at a time of such family trauma the receipt of such an account causes great distress and to further recognise that this is not a matter for regional and islands councils but is a legislative matter for Her Majesty's Government.]*

May we expect an early statement from the Secretary of State for Scotland about stopping the obscene practice of levying the poll tax on the relatives of the recently deceased?

**Mr. Wakeham:** The position on the transitional arrangements for the community charge is this. When the Government end a system that has for years been unfair in certain areas, and there is a transitional arrangement, there are always difficulties because those who have been unfairly treated for a long time do not feel that they are getting the benefits to which they are entitled as quickly as they should. That is the essence of the problem of the safety net.

**Sir Philip Goodhart** (Beckenham): Is my right hon. Friend aware that many thousands of my constituents are without piped water and face a weekend without piped water as a result of the incredible ineffeciency of Thames Water? As many hundreds of thousands of people in south London are faced with a serious water shortage this weekend, may we have an urgent ministerial statement, as a considerable health hazard is involved?

**Mr. Wakeham:** Thames Water very much regrets the considerable inconvenience caused to consumers and assures us that it is doing all that it can to restore normal supplies as quickly as possible. I understand that the reasons for the lack of mains water supply in my hon. Friend's constituency and in other parts of London are the exceptionally high demand for water resulting from the hot weather and a substantial reduction in capacity from the Hampton water treatment works. Consumers are being informed and alternative water supplies are being provided. Essential users such as hospitals are being given priority.

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): Is the Leader of the House aware that I am one of the two objectors to the accounts of Westminster city council, tabling as I did last year some 83 objections? Is he not outraged by the allegations last night on "Panorama" that personal files are being kept on councillors and their friends, wards are being gerrymandered for electoral benefit, and that officials of the council are being intimidated? What will the Government do about this? Is pressure being exerted on Lady Porter to resign, because what she is doing is nothing less than municipal fascism and the British people do not want it?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman should ask his question in such an intemperate fashion. There are proper ways to investigate any allegations of irregularities, and trial by television or accusations in the House by the hon. Gentleman under privilege are not a proper way to deal with them. Any allegations of misuse or improper use of ratepayers' money will be examined in the first instance by the auditor as part of his normal duties. That is the proper way to investigate this matter.

**Mr. James Hill** (Southampton, Test): Has my right hon. Friend read the debate on foreign affairs last Friday? If he did so, he would see that there is terrific lack of knowledge of the workings not only of the international side of the Council of Europe, but of the Western European Union. Some unnecessary things were said in that debate, trying to denigrate the 23-nation Council of Europe, while at the same time casting doubt on the valuable work that that body does. I wish to bring to the attention of my right hon. Friend that it contains the Court of Human Rights and has brought documents——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman should be asking for a debate.

**Mr. Hill:** It contains much informative documentation. Now that Mr. Gorbachev has spoken to the Council of Europe, and that we have many guest advisers from the USSR, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Poland, should not the House, once and for all, have a debate of some international significance on these two important institutions?

**Mr. Wakeham:** In spite of the very busy time of year I arranged debates on China and Hong Kong last Thursday and on foreign affairs last Friday. I cannot be held responsible for everything that is said in such debates, although I am sorry if the very valuable work in which I know my hon. Friend has played a large part for a good many years was not properly recognised. I remind my hon. Friend that there are a number of occasions next week on which he might wish to raise the subject and put the record straight.

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): Further to what my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) said, does the Leader of the House realise that the serious malpractices of Westminster city council are scandalous and that Lady Porter has undoubtedly shown herself to be totally unfit to hold any kind of public office whatever?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The same rules must apply to the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick). These are business questions and we are dealing with the business for next week.

**Mr. Winnick:** I did ask for a debate, Mr. Speaker.

In case this is the last appearance by the present Leader of the House, may I thank him for the courteous way in which he has tried to answer our questions, but wonder why under this Government everyone who has held his position has ended up being sacked?

**Mr. Wakeham:** It was a member of the hon. Gentleman's own party who said that he was the stupidest man in the House. That was many years ago and the hon. Gentleman is even more stupid now than he was then. None the less, I thank him for his expressions of goodwill.

**Mr. Robert Adley** (Christchurch): I have a slight cold, so I may not have heard properly at Question Time today. I heard the Leader of the Opposition accuse my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister of not having been here for yesterday's statement, but I did not hear the Leader of the Opposition or the shadow Leader of the House mention the rail strike. Perhaps my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House can tell me whether my hearing is defective. Does my right hon. Friend agree that this is a matter of great concern and that if we had a statement next week, it might quietly enable leading members of the Labour party to seek to use their influence to get the National Union of Railwaymen to see sense? Will my right hon. Friend use his best offices somehow through the usual channels to provide a forum for an exchange at the Dispatch Box next week so that all of us can send a message to the NUR saying, "Please go back to work"?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I understand the Opposition's difficulty, because they do not know whether to support the unions that have accepted the agreement through the proper negotiating machinery or the union that has not. The sooner they make up their minds, the better it will be for all of us. The strike and the inconvenience to the travelling public must be brought to an end soon.

**Mr. Dave Nellist** (Coventry, South-East): May I back up the request made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, North (Mr. Wall) for a debate, or preferably a statement, later today about the case of Mr. Xu Hai Ning, about which I, too, made several telephone calls to the Home Office and the Foreign Office on Tuesday?

*[Mr. Dave Nellist]*

Should not the House and the people of Britain be concerned that the visit on 17 July, which the right hon. Gentleman mentioned, was the fourth visit that Mr. Xu Hai Ning had made to the embassy? On three occasions he had changed his mind about returning to China. It was the pressure of advertisements in the Chinese business press and the harassment and threats to his family that finally forced him to return.

Should not the Home Office be concerned that the safe houses provided by the Chinese Solidarity Campaign—which I thought the Government would have contacted on this case—have not only been broken into, but have been visited by Chinese secret service personnel? What hope can people of Chinese extraction have that this country will act as a place of refuge if someone can be forced to return under duress by the tactics used on Mr. Xu Hai Ning? Should not we have a statement on this matter?

**Mr. Wakeham:** The hon. Gentleman will be aware that I came to the House with a prepared Home Office brief and, therefore, I think that I speak with some authority on the matter. The information given to me does not coincide with the information that the hon. Gentleman has given the House. This gentleman, a Chinese national, was interviewed in private by an immigration officer and he confirmed that he was returning to China of his own free will. As is reported, he appeared calm and well and expressed himself clearly. There was, therefore, no power or reason to prevent his departure.

**Mr. Michael Marshall** (Arundel): My right hon. Friend knows my interest in this matter. When does he hope there may be time for a debate on the report on telecommunications of the Services Committee, which affects the provision of services in the House, particularly in view of the decision to extend for a further 12 months the opportunity for competitive services in telecommunications in Parliament, as opposed to Whitehall?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I agree that it is a suitable subject for debate, but, as my hon. Friend knows, the report has only just been published. It would probably be more valuable if we considered the report before having a debate.

**Mr. Roy Hughes** (Newport, East): May we have a debate next week on the Government's proposal, which was announced some months ago, to double tolls on the Severn bridge? Does he appreciate that there were many objections to the proposal and that an inquiry was held? The commissioner's report has been in the hands of the Secretary of State for Transport for some weeks, but he is sitting on it. Presumably his intention is to announce his findings a day or so before Parliament adjourns for the summer recess. Does not the Leader of the House think that that is sharp practice?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I do not think that it is sharp practice. One man sitting on it is another man considering it. My right hon. Friend has the report and, as the hon. Gentleman said, he is considering the matter.

**Mr. Andrews Rowe** (Mid-Kent): I believe that my right hon. Friend is aware that many people in Kent are interested in railways. Given that British Rail is trying hard to get a private Bill ready by mid-November and that the consultation period with the public will end during the summer recess, does my right hon. Friend agree that it would be appropriate to have a debate in October on that important subject before the Bill is brought to the House, because that would exclude a debate until about April?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I recognise the strength of feeling of my hon. Friend and a number of my hon. Friends from Kent and of their constituents. I understand, however, that British Rail is considering promoting a private Bill to seek to do what it needs to do. There will be plenty of opportunity for that matter to be debated when it comes before the House. I do not, therefore, feel able to offer my hon. Friend a special debate on the subject.

**Mr. John Hughes** (Coventry, North-East): May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 1172, which requests the Secretary of State for Health to make a statement on the Birmingham children's hospital?

*[That this House is seriously concerned at the irresponsible statement which the Minister of State for Health made to the National Association of Health Authorities, that a 900,000 hospital waiting list could be attributed to surgeons not doing as much work as they should; considers that sweeping statement an affront to the young surgeons at the Birmingham Children's Hospital whose revolutionary techniques have reduced the time babies spend in intensive care from days to hours, giving the surgical team the capability of carrying out 380 operations annually; and in the light of the Minister's categorical assurance that, regardless of cost, patients would get the treatment they required, believes he should make a statement to the House countermanding the Central Health Authority's restriction, which is putting at risk the lives of 140 babies waiting for open heart surgery, thereby allowing the surgeons to work to their maximum capacity of 380 operations and disband the special committee set up illogically to investigate why a surgeon in the process of saving babies lives exceeded the Central Health Authority's restriction quota.]*

I ask the right hon. Gentleman to include in that statement an investigation into the Central Birmingham health authority's threat to dismiss surgeons who exceed the restriction of 320 patients which has been placed on them by that authority.

**Mr. Wakeham:** On the position of the Birmingham children's hospital, my hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State referred to a waiting list total of 691,000 in September 1988 and not 900,000. He referred to the findings of a study into 22 districts with problem waiting lists, which showed, among other factors, that some surgeons' workloads were below the level of most surgeons and those recommended by their professional bodies. My hon. and learned Friend drew attention to those other factors, too. The motion's criticism of his speech, which was well received and extensively reported, is entirely unfounded. The vast majority of surgeons work hard and conscientiously. For example, the planned level of 320 open heart operations at Birmingham children's hospital this year is more than double that of the year 1987-88.

**Mr. David Sumberg** (Bury, South): I support the plea of my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) for an early debate on the abject surrender by the Labour leader of Bury council to the demand of the National Association of Local Government Officers that the council meeting last night be cancelled. Would a debate not show that it is an absolute sham for the Labour party to come here and talk about local government accountability, while at the same time denying local democracy to my constituents?

**Mr. Wakeham:** My hon. Friend is right. I suggest that, if he wants to raise the matter, he will have the opportunity next week.

**Mr. Bob Clay** (Sunderland, North): Does the Leader of the House accept that there is a strong case for a debate next week on a major constitutional issue? The Prime Minister should come to the House and explain why, in spite of all the rhetoric of the Bruges speech and subsequent postures, she is allowing the European Commission to prevent the reopening of the most modern shipyards in Europe, which are situated in my constituency, which have buyers who require no public funds or ongoing subsidy and who have immediate ships to build there. Is the Prime Minister to continue to allow that massacre of jobs in a great British industry, and may we have an urgent debate next week?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I disagree with the premise of the hon. Gentleman's question. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has spoken and written to the hon. Gentleman about this and has discussed the matter in the House. I repeat that I do not accept the premise of the question.

**Mr. Roger King** (Birmingham, Northfield): Can my right hon. Friend help me? During his enunciation of next week's business, I thought I heard that the Opposition had run out of things to debate for the second debate to be launched by them, yet we have had a torrent of suggestions from Opposition Members about what they should debate in Government time. Can my right hon. Friend help the Leader of the Opposition in arriving at a subject for debate next Tuesday? If the Opposition cannot come forward with ideas, should we not impose a subject for debate on them, such as the rail strike?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I have enough responsibilities without having to choose subjects for Opposition Supply days. My hon. Friend is not necessarily right in saying that the Opposition have not thought of a subject for debate. It is possible that they are having a little quarrel among themselves about which one to choose.

**Mr. Doug Hoyle** (Warrington, North): May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 1176?

*[That this House condemns the extravagant and obscene pay increases awarded to the chairmen of former publicly owned assets since their privatisation by the present Government; notes that the percentage pay increases of the chairmen of the following companies since privatisation have been for British Aerospace 440·4 per cent. since 1980, British Airports Authority 111·7 per cent. since 1986, British Airways 631 per cent. since 1987, British Gas 91·8 per cent. since 1987, British Steel 28·7 per cent. since 1988, British Telecom 154 per cent. since 1985, Cable and Wireless 113·3 per cent. since 1985, and Rolls Royce 29·6 per cent. since 1987; and believes that these increases are an insult to the public and the low paid and show that privatisation results in private profit rather than public service.]*

The motion relates to the pay rises of the chairmen of privatised companies and has been signed by 74 hon. Members. It describes the rises as "extravagant and obscene". Will the Leader of the House condemn those pay increases and arrange for a statement to be made next week on this important matter?

**Mr. Wakeham:** The Government do not support unjustified pay increases at any level. Pay is for the parties directly concerned to determine, taking into account performance and labour market conditions. It is not for me to comment on any individual case.

**Mr. Spencer Batiste** (Elmet): My right hon. Friend will be aware that the publication yesterday of the White Paper on the reform of the legal profession has been greeted with fairly broadly based and widespread support on the basis of the balanced compromise that has been reached. Nevertheless, the House has not yet had an opportunity to debate the important issues involved. Is it my right hon. Friend's intention to give the House the chance for a debate before legislation is brought before us?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I recognise that it would have been much better if I had found time for a debate. I am still looking to see whether I can find the time for a debate. However, I assure my hon. Friend that we shall have plenty of opportunity to discuss these important issues.

**Mr. Dennis Turner** (Wolverhampton, South-East): May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 1187?

*[That this House expresses concern that the answer given by the Prime Minister to the honourable Member for Wolverhampton South East on 18th July, Official Report, column 218, was in complete contradiction to the advice received by the honourable Member for Wolverhampton South East from a senior Training Agency Manager in Wolverhampton, which indicated that information on Employment Training filled places statistics should not be given to the Member of Parliament, and therefore demands that an investigation be made in order to ascertain on whose authority the instruction was given.]*

The motion brings into question the answer that the Prime Minister gave to me on Tuesday at Prime Minister's Question Time about the availability of information on employment training. In the light of the answer that the Prime Minister gave me and the evidence that I was flatly refused that information at local level, will the Leader of the House ask his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment to come to the House to make a statement, because the rights and responsibilities of Members of Parliament are at stake? We need some clarification about whether that information can be made available to Members of Parliament.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I thought for one minute that the hon. Gentleman was about to announce the second subject for debate on the Opposition day next week, but apparently not.

On the subect of early-day motion 1187, it is very definitely not the Government's policy to withhold from Members of Parliament information about how ET is performing. Evidence for that is the enormous amount of information that is being given in answer to written questions. I am delighted to announce that there are now

*[Mr. Wakeham]*

virtually 200,000 trainees on employment training. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will wish to join me in congratulating the programme on its outstanding success.

**Mr. James Cran** (Beverley): Will my right hon. Friend find time for the House to discuss the vexed problem of child cancer clusters in the United Kingdom, which is a matter of concern not only to the parents and certainly to the children involved, but to every Member of the House of Commons? Such a debate would allow those of us who are interested to assess what the Government are doing —which is not inconsiderable—to assess what other agencies are doing and perhaps also to discuss the fact that there are far too many reports of child cancer clusters in this country, but not enough research into the epidemiology of leukaemia.

**Mr Wakeham:** I recognise the concern and interest that my hon. Friend has taken in that subject. I understand that Dr. Cartwright's report has been referred for independent medical assessment, the results of which are expected shortly. I cannot comment on Dr. Cartwright's report until I have seen the results. The Government are funding several other studies on the incidence of childhood leukaemia and the Department of Health will continue to monitor closely the results of those studies and of other national and international work.

**Mr. Ray Powell** (Ogmore): Will the Leader of the House reconsider his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on the business for next week? Next week will be the last week of business before the summer recess. In the past consecutive four weeks we have made temperate requests for a debate in the Welsh Grand Committee on the Health Service in Wales. The right hon. Gentleman will appreciate that some of us are becoming as intemperate as my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), who asked a question earlier. We are sick and tired of asking the Secretary of State to come to the House or to the Welsh Grand Committee to debate the emotive subject of the Health Service in Wales. It is no good his having consultations with others in Wales if he is not prepared to answer questions from elected Members of Parliament. I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, will agree that the Leader of the House—I have always thought of him as a temperate person and I do not share the views expressed by some of his colleagues, and even the Prime Minister, who might be getting the knife out—should give time for such a debate and put pressure on the Secretary of State for Wales, who is sitting round the corner, to come to the House before the end of the Session for that purpose.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I shall resist repeating that when there was an opportunity for a debate on the Health Service the Opposition did not want it and they did not have it.

**Mr. Allan Rogers** (Rhondda): That is a lie.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I ask the hon. Gentleman to withdraw that. Yesterday that word was bandied about the Chamber. We have strict standards and we do not accuse each other of lying. Will the hon. Gentleman, who is a Front-Bench spokesman, withdraw that?

**Mr. Rogers:** I withdraw the fact that I called the Leader of the House a liar. When you, Mr. Speaker, chastised me some weeks ago on the same issue, I said that the Leader of the House was misleading the House in saying that the matter had not been brought before the Welsh Grand Committee because of the Opposition's objection to it, and you allowed that. It really is shabby for the Leader of the House to come here——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. As the hon. Gentleman has said, this is an emotive subject, but we must keep up our standards in the House.

**Mr. Wakeham:** The subject for debate in the Welsh Grand Committee in June was chosen by the Government's supporters and they properly chose the valleys initiative, an important subject. I hope that the next meeting of the Welsh Grand Committee will take place in October when the Opposition will be able to choose the subject. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales would very much welcome a debate on the Health Service in Wales on that occasion.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett** (Pembroke): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the Health Service in Wales has been considerably disrupted in the past few weeks by the rail strikes which have meant that our constituents have not been able to get to hospital, but there has not been one word of condemnation from Opposition Members to reflect the views that I have heard from the elderly and the infirm? Will my right hon. Friend use his offices to persuade the Opposition to use their second debate on Tuesday to consider the rail strike so that we can get them off the fence and on to the side of the public, not the strikers?

**Mr. Wakeham:** My hon. Friend must be fair. Some Opposition Members are looking tired and it is time that they were at the seaside with their buckets and spades.

**Mr. Greville Janner** (Leicester, West): Will the Leader of the House arrange an early debate on the unsatisfactory nature of the law relating to the camping of itinerants in public parks and on public land? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I have a petition signed by more than 370 people living on the Braunstone estate in my constituency? Is he further aware that I have also received complaints from constituents in Western Park, Beaumont Leys and other areas about gipsy encampments in parks, which are a danger to the environment and to public health and order at any time, but especially during hot weather and school holidays?

Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that such a debate covers the question of how permanent sites might be provided so that those people can have the privacy to which they are entitled, well away from others who are also entitled to privacy and peace? In the meantime, will he please refer the matter to the Law Officers and the Home Secretary so that the law may be recognised and the police and local authorities given the powers necessary to deal with this growing and very serious problem?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I recognise the difficulty of the problem especially as, from time to time, my constituency suffers from it. The Department of the Environment also has an interest in the matter. I know of no proposals for changes in the law. However, it is a perfectly sensible subject for the hon. and learned Gentleman to raise and to which a Minister can respond. I shall refer his concern to the appropriate Ministers.

**Mr. Harry Greenway** (Ealing, North): Will my right hon. Friend think again about his answers to my many hon. Friends who asked for a debate or statement on the rail strike? Is he aware that it is causing enormous inconvenience throughout the country, but especially to commuter constituencies such as mine? Is not the National Union of Railwaymen, apparently supported by the Opposition, depriving many people of their living on strike days? They cannot get to work and so have to stay at home and get no pay. That is a very serious matter because individuals and families are suffering greatly. Is it not time that the House debated the matter and flushed out the whole question?

**Mr. Wakeham:** Refusing, or simply being unable, to provide time for a debate in the near future does not in any way lessen the concern that I share with my hon. Friend about this matter. Strikes are always damaging. They do harm to businesses and services and are bound to put jobs at risk, as well as causing great inconvenience to commuters. There is no need for a debate on this matter because the issue is quite clear. The NUR should take the same line as the other unions, accept the generous offer made to it and return to work.

**Mr. John McAllion** (Dundee, East): The Leader of the House said that he had nothing to add about the difficult question of the setting up of a Scottish Select Committee. Is he aware that the Scottish people have a great deal more to say, as was shown in the recent European elections when Scotland was made a Tory-free zone? If the right hon. Gentleman is genuinely concerned to tackle undemocratic practices, when will he change the Government's undemocratic stance and announce that Scotland is to have the Select Committee that it not only demands, but which is its right under the Standing Orders of this House?

**Mr. Wakeham:** The hon. Gentleman has a weird idea of democratic arrangements. The House determined that that Committee should not be set up and there was a majority for the line that I am taking. The hon. Gentleman is in the minority. Nevertheless, I am seeking a way to set up a Scottish Affairs Select Committee, and I shall continue to do so although, as the hon. Gentleman is well aware, certain difficulties are involved.

**Mr. Alan W. Williams** (Carmarthen): Will the Leader of the House arrange a debate on the Welsh Development Agency, a matter raised by several Members during Welsh questions on Monday, and to which there was an unsatisfactory response from the Secretary of State for Wales?

Has the right hon. Gentleman seen early-day motion 1194, which draws attention to our concern about this matter?

*[That this House expresses its deep concern on the future of the Welsh Development Agency; notes that legal, press and information services have already been contracted-out; seeks clarification as to whether the growth of private sector funding will infringe the statutory obligation of the Welsh Development Agency; expresses its deep concern that discussions have taken place between the Finance Director of the Welsh Development Agency and the privatised National Freight Corporation; calls on the Secretary of State to clarify the reasons for the week-long meeting which he did not when asked by honourable Members during Welsh Questions on 17th July; expresses serious concern at the detailed discussions between a leading merchant bank and officers of the Welsh Development Agency; can only conclude that the Government is undertaking a policy of privatisation by stealth; further, expresses its deep concern that the Secretary of State for Wales claims not to have known that such important and detailed discussions on the future of the Welsh Development Agency were taking place; asks why, if a number of Welsh Office officials knew of the proposals as the Secretary of State admitted during Welsh Questions, they did not come to the attention of the Secretary of State; and also asks how many other radical alterations to bodies under his reponsibility are being planned, which he currently does not know about.]*

We are aware that the WDA is contracting out legal services, publicity and information. It has had talks with the National Freight Corporation about privatisation and about how that company was privatised. There have been long discussions with Barclays de Zoete Wedd, the merchant bank, and the WDA in Cardiff. During the past six months there have been many comings and goings that make us suspect that there is a policy of privatisation by stealth. May we please have a debate on these matters?

**Mr. Wakeham:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales has already answered a large number of parliamentary questions on that subject, and I have nothing to add. There are no plans to privatise the Welsh Development Agency, but, as my right hon. Friend told the House, the agency is perfectly free to explore any ways of bringing more private sector funding into its activities. If it does so, the Government would expect the agency to hold whatever discussions are appropriate with outside interests and advisers.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Will the Leader of the House reconsider his decision on a debate about the activities of Lady Porter and Westminster city council.? Is he aware that as a result of last night's "Panorama" programme on BBC television, the public are demanding that the matter be raised in Parliament? If Parliament is not for debating matters of extreme public interest, what is it for? I have a special interest in the matter, because of the way in which the Government and the Tories of the time treated my brothers and their colleagues on Clay Cross council, who did nothing other than refuse to raise rents. The Government were also prepared to surcharge Lambeth and Liverpool councillors. Why is it that there is one law for Tory councillors and for friends of the Prime Minister such as Lady Porter, and another law for Labour councillors? The only redeeming feature is that there is a strike at Westminster city council and that the men and women on strike there are, thank God, stopping Lady Porter getting rid of more taxpayers' and ratepayers' money today.

**Mr. Wakeham:** The hon. Gentleman may wax indignant, but whatever may or may not have happened to his brothers and to others in the past, it was the result of the due process of law and not of trial by television, which the hon. Gentleman seems to support. If anything needs to be investigated, it will be investigated by the proper authorities—not in the manner that the hon. Gentleman seems to think is appropriate.

**Mr. Frank Haynes** (Ashfield): I do not mind you, Mr. Speaker, leaving me until last. You know that I am the most patient of all right hon. and hon. Members.

Is the Leader of the House aware that 15 years ago troops from the Turkish mainland invaded the beautiful island of Cyprus? Is he further aware that my hon. Friends the Members for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) and for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) have a particular interest in that event? Is he aware that in the past few hours there has been a serious incident in which more than 100 people were arrested by the Turkish authorities at the green line—females, on the Greek Cypriot side? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware also that I tried and tried, on behalf of my friends, to obtain information about the 1,600 people who disappeared during the 1974 invasion? Will the Leader of the House, in the last week before the recess, get a Foreign Office Minister to the Dispatch Box, to see whether he can help the Greek Cypriots, who are in desperate need?

**Mr. Wakeham:** I cannot promise that, but I can tell the hon. Gentleman—quite exceptionally, because such a matter is not usually noted from this Dispatch Box—that the all-party Cyprus group is currently meeting in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association room and that my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office is addressing it on that very subject. If the hon. Gentleman nips round there quickly, he might be in time to hear her.

## Debates on Adjournment Motions

**Mr. Speaker:** I have a short statement to make about arrangements for the debates on the motion for the Adjournment that will follow the passing of the Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill on Thursday 27 July. Right hon. and hon. Members should submit their subjects to my office not later than 9 am on Wednesday 26 July. A list showing the subjects and the times of the debates will be published later that day.

Normally, the time allotted to each debate will not exceed one and one half hours, but I propose to exercise discretion, to allow one or two debates to continue for rather longer—up to a maximum of three hours. Where identical or similar subjects have been entered for debate by different right hon. and hon. Members whose names are drawn in the ballot, only the first name will be shown on the list. As some debates may not last the full time allotted to them, it will be the responsibility of right hon. and hon. Members, if they are not to miss their turn, to keep in touch with developments.

I remind right hon. and hon. Members that on the motion for the Adjournment of the House on Friday 28 July, up to eight right hon. and hon. Members may raise with Ministers subjects of their own choosing. Applications should reach my office by 10 pm on Monday next. A ballot will be held on Tuesday morning, and the result will be made known as soon as possible thereafter.

## Local Government Finance (Wales)

4.24 pm

**The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Walker):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about local government finance in Wales for 1990-91.

From April 1990, as the House will know, the new local government finance system will be in operation. Domestic rates will have been replaced by the community charge; there will be a national non-domestic rate with a uniform rate poundage throughout the Principality, and there will be a new grant system. In order to assist local authorities in making their plans for the first year of the new system, I am today announcing my proposals for the overall level of support towards local authority revenue expenditure in Wales from grants and non-domestic rates.

My proposals must be seen in the context of local authority spending in 1989-90. For the current year Welsh councils have budgeted to spend £1,850 million—some £42 million, or 2·3 per cent., above the Government's plans. This year-on-year increase in spending of 8 per cent., although closer to plans than that of their English counterparts, is nevertheless too high.

I have taken account of the local authority associations' representations on the pressures for spending in 1990-91—I discussed their views with them in the forum of the Welsh consultative council on local government finance on 12 July—but I have also had regard to the need for authorities to seek and achieve efficiency savings, taking steps to control staffing costs and restricting budget increases to affordable levels.

In the light of all those considerations, I propose that for 1990-91 the total of standard spending—under the new system, this is the amount that I consider appropriate for local authorities to spend in order to deliver a standard level of services—should be set at £2,109 million. That is an increase of £182 million on the comparable figure for 1989-90, and represents an increase of £140 million on authorities' budgeted expenditure for the current year.

I propose to set the level of aggregate external finance—which comprises three component parts: revenue support grant, the distributable amount of national non-domestic rates and certain specific grants towards current expenditure—at £1,733 million. That is an increase of 8·6 per cent. on the equivalent figure for 1989-90, adjusted for changes in functions. In the autumn I shall announce details of the division of aggregate external finance into its three component parts.

Let me now deal with the consequences of the proposals for the individual community charge payer in Wales. The components of aggregate external finance, taken together, will represent some 82 per cent. of total standard spending. After account is taken of community charge benefits, only 15 per cent. of local government spending will be financed by community charges. That broadly maintains the relative shares in the present financial year.

The community charge for standard spending in Wales will be £175, only £4 more than the average rate bill per adult in 1989-90. That reflects my commitment that no resources would be lost to Wales as a result of the change to the new system. Charge payers will quickly understand the reasons for variations from this figure, which—subject to the transitional arrangements that I shall describe in a moment—is achievable by each and every authority that spends in line with the Government's standard spending assessment.

I have considered again the extent to which the effects on charge payers of the change to the new system should be phased in through an appropriate "safety net". In the light of the favourable settlement that I am proposing, I have decided that it would not be right to freeze the position as it was in 1989-90 by using a full safety net: that would delay the benefits of the greater accountability which the new system brings. Instead I propose to introduce a safety net which will move us substantially towards the new system in the first year.

That means that—on the basis of present estimates—in 1990-91 in the Rhondda, for example, charge payers would contribute some £50 less than the Welsh average of £175 towards their council's services. The arrangement will also benefit charge payers in areas such as Newport and Cardiff, who should contribute only around £20 to the cost of the safety net. The proposals strike the right balance between protection for those who, in moving to the new system, face the largest increases, and reasonable contributions from those who stand to gain.

I will inform the House about the position of individual authorities following further consultation with the local authority associations about grant distribution arrangements, including the precise details of the safety net. I agree with the associations that it would be misleading to produce illustrative figures for 1990-91 in advance of that.

**Mr. Allan Rogers** (Rhondda): Speak more slowly.

**Mr. Walker:** I will speak very slowly, as the next passage is of great importance. It concerns the arrangements we have made to assist those on low incomes. Those on the lowest incomes in Wales who qualify for income support will be better off with the community charge than they were under the old rating system, because income support payments will include an amount—which will be the same throughout Great Britain—to help pay the community charge. Owing to the low levels of community charges in Wales, people would actually be better off than they would if they received a 100 per cent. rebate.

A couple on income support paying the community charge for standard spending of £175 each would get the maximum rebate of 80 per cent. leaving them with a combined liability of £70. To help them meet this their income support will have been uprated by an annual amount equivalent to £119·60, leaving them £49·60 in pocket. We estimate that over 300,000 community charge payers in Wales—about 14 per cent.—will qualify for the maximum assistance.

I will be bringing forward more detailed arrangements for all aspects of the settlement in the autumn, following discussions with the local authority associations. But the proposals I have announced today offer charge payers in Wales the prospect of community charges averaging £175 provided that their councils take responsible spending decisions. They offer authorities—particularly those who seek and achieve the efficiency gains which are available—a fair and realistic framework within which to set their budgets for 1990-91. If they budget sensibly, the rewards are self-evident.

**Mr. Barry Jones** (Alyn and Deeside): If the new system is so wonderful, why the eleventh hour acrobatics to alter and improve it? Are they not a tacit admission of its unpleasantness by delaying its impact?

Will the Secretary of State explain why there appears to be a shortfall on the aggregate external finance figure? We note a paucity of the detailed examples that were provided yesterday. On that basis the Secretary of State has made a defective statement. Has not the right hon. Gentleman made inadequate provision for inflation? With the RPI at 8·3 per cent. and pay awards well over 7 per cent., the Government's estimate of the effects of inflation this year is likely to be about 3 per cent. out at outturn. Therefore, many of our councils are cheated of a lot of money.

The statement fails to take full account of the high interest rates on local councils' capital charges. Regarding the Rhondda exemplification, of which the right hon. Gentleman made much in his statement, the House should know that professional opinion is that the right hon. Gentleman is engaged in a doubtful conjuring of the figures. A current ratepayer in the Rhondda faces an average bill of £183. An average poll tax payer in the Rhondda will be paying £50 less than the Welsh average, which amounts to £125. A couple will therefore be paying £250 which is considerably more than £183, and that is before the safety net is removed. The position next year will be bad and in future it will be even worse.

Does the Secretary of State realise that the cost of preparing for and eventually running the poll tax will be at least double that of the current system? Welsh councils expect millions of pounds more to help them over that hurdle.

The statement is a wretched milestone in the history of local government. Does not the poll tax represent reaction, not reform? It is a medieval tax which will hurt ordinary families in Wales. Is it not opposed by almost everyone, except the Government? Will not the poll tax shift the burden of local services on to those least able to pay? Ultimately, the poll tax will hammer the valley communities. It is all very well for the right hon. Gentleman to come here with a masking operation, but will not the poll tax bite most ferociously at the end of the transitional period?

This is a confidence trick. Did not the Scottish Office underestimate its eventual poll tax by 12·5 per cent.? Today we have heard fine words and clever packaging, but it is shaming to see a Secretary of State for Wales as an advocate of a poll tax. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that what he proposes goes against the grain of Wales's concept of fair play? Where is the Government's mandate for this pernicious tax?

What of teacher shortages? Will there be additional funds to secure more modern language, science and maths teachers and more teachers in Welsh? Where are the additional major resources to cover the financial burdens of the Education Act 1988 and the implementation of the national curriculum?

This is the 10th year that a Conservative Secretary of State has stood before the House to make a statement on local government finance. The Government's record has been shabby, with a 12 per cent. real terms cut in money for our councils. In return for tax cuts to the rich, we have poorer services to our local communities, a demoralised education service, a housing crisis and social services stretched to breaking point.

We reject the poll tax even now. Will the right hon. Gentleman withdraw this unwanted tax?

**Mr. Walker:** I congratulate the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) on the thunderous cheers that he received at the end of those remarks. It is easy for someone in his position to say, "What a dreadful thing is being imposed on us." Wales is having 85 per cent. of all local government expenditure being financed by the Government and only 15 per cent. being put on the community charge. That would be the envy of England and Scotland, yet the hon. Gentleman says, "How terrible it is."

Let us consider what the local government associations have said about the talks and so on and about how disappointed they are at the figures. On every occasion —certainly in my lifetime, and I am sure the same is true of the hon. Gentleman—all local authorities under all Governments have been disappointed at the figures. I am sure that in the last few years they have been disappointed while we have been in power, when the support to local authorities has gone up by only a small amount in real terms, and I admit that.

But how they must have felt when the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside was a Minister at the Welsh Office I cannot imagine. In 1976-77, the figure went down by 4 per cent. in real terms; in 1977-78 it went down by 8 per cent.; and in 1978-79 it went down in real terms by 4 per cent. If they are unhappy now, they must have been in tears when Labour was last in office. I suggest, therefore, that the hon. Gentleman should not concentrate on that aspect.

In terms of the retail prices index, it must be remembered that we are referring to the year 1990-91 and that we cannot be certain what the rate of inflation will be at that time. The hon. Gentleman referred to interest rates in relation to inflation. With house mortgage interest rates, it stands at 8·3 per cent., and without them it is 6 per cent.

In terms of local authority interest rates, a great volume of borrowing has been borrowing long, so the average increase in their interest rates is far lower than, for example, the average for house purchase. Thus, without that aspect they are much nearer the 6 per cent. than the 8·3 per cent. now.

I am the first to admit that the standard community charge, with the safety net, will mean an increase for the Rhondda. But I am glad to say that next year Rhondda will remain the lowest community charge authority in Wales—and, if it were in England, it would be the lowest community charge authority in England.

We appreciate that there are many people on low incomes in the Rhondda. The benefits under the rebate system will mean that in the coming year, with the safety net, the average payer in the Rhondda will obtain £72 more in rebate and service charge than he or she will pay in community charge. Therefore, instead of a rebate of 100 per cent. under the rating system, they will be getting a rebate of 130 per cent. under the new system. I hope that hon. Members will ensure that the people of Rhondda are aware of those benefits.

I am glad to say that it is estimated that businesses in the valleys will benefit as a result of the change in the business rate by about £10 million a year.

**Sir Anthony Meyer** (Clwyd, North-West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that I regard the community charge as unfair, unworkable and unwise? However, is he further aware that there will be admiration and amazement throughout Wales at the skill with which he has managed to screw so much money out of the Treasury? There will be no advantage, indeed the reverse, for the poorest, though, and I am not clear what the position is for those just above the income support level. He has also managed to shoot the fox of the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones). Is my right hon. Friend also aware that, by his skill in so lightening the burden, he has gone a long way to demolish the argument for the community charge—that it brings home to people the cost of local services?

**Mr. Walker:** It will mean that any local authority that involves itself in extravagant expenditure will hit community charge payers in that locality. There will, therefore, be a degree of discipline. I am pleased to say that in Wales there is no doubt that low-income families will benefit from the change in the system.

**Mr. Ted Rowlands** (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): Is the Secretary of State aware that, after all the fiddling and fudging, working people in Aberfan, Merthyr Vale and New Tredegar in my constituency, who are home owners but who do not receive benefits and are not likely to get rate rebates of the kind he mentioned, will face almost a doubling of their present rates bills as a result of the community charge?

**Mr. Walker:** In those areas people will still have the enormous advantage of 85 per cent. of all local government expenditure being met by the Government. Because of that, the people the hon. Gentleman has just described, who are on low incomes and not able to take advantage of rate rebates, will be better off. The average for the community charge in Wales will be £175, compared with £275 in England and, last year, £280 in Scotland. The people of Wales should realise that they are considerably better off.

**Mr. Keith Raffan** (Delyn): Is it not very revealing that, when my right hon. Friend reached the section in the statement that concerns the dramatic benefit that it will bring to the 300,000 people in Wales who are on income support, it met with silence from Opposition Members? Is it not also revealing that the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) is as churlish as usual, and cannot pay tribute to my right hon. Friend for what he has done for those who are in real need in our community? It is a tremendous achievement and the Secretary of State deserves our thanks for that.

Returning to the local situation in north-east Wales, I disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer). Does my right hon. Friend agree that Delyn and Rhuddlan borough councils could end up with community charges that are significantly higher than the Welsh average, because Clwyd, which is under Labour control, is a high-spending, improvident and chaotically managed county council?

**Mr. Walker:** As my hon. Friend says, during the past year Clwyd county council increased its expenditure, compared with its budgets and estimates, which was out of line with the majority of Welsh local councils. I hope that it will recognise that, if it continues to do so, that will be a considerable disadvantage to community charge payers in its county. I hope that it will budget and spend prudently during the coming year. As my hon. Friend says, this is a total settlement which is of considerable advantage to the lowest income people in Wales. I am as surprised as he is at the Labour party's reaction to the statement.

**Mr. Richard Livsey** (Brecon and Radnor): Will the Secretary of State note that with the introduction of this iniquitous tax in my constituency—which is a rural area, like many other parts of Wales—the average poll tax of £175 per head will be an increase of £45 per head on the present rating system? Does he agree that his figure of £4 is way out for rural areas? It will be a case of paying Peter or robbing Paul. The non-domestic rate is forecast to increase by 15 per cent., which is double the rate of inflation, and will hit small businesses, which are the backbone of Wales.

**Mr. Walker:** That is not so. Small businesses will not be adversely affected by at last having a system in which the business tax is kept within any increases in inflation. Small and large businesses will prefer to have that stability. I repeat that to have a system where 85 per cent. of all local government expenditure is paid for by the Government is of considerable advantage to rural and urban areas in the Principality.

**Mr. Gwilym Jones** (Cardiff, North): I welcome the easing of the safety net arrangements which otherwise would have been more disadvantageous for the people of Cardiff. Can my right hon. Friend say whether, with the safety net, there will be lower transfers of funds between councils than there is with the existing rate equalisation mechanisms, that the safety net represents a lower amount of the help that will be received through income support, and that, at last, with the introduction of the far fairer community charge, every citizen in Wales will be able to measure his council against the all-Wales average of £175? If it comes to pass, as has been threatened in Cardiff, that we have a community charge of £275 or more, the responsibility will lie with the local councils who are making a direct attack on the least well off.

**Mr. Walker:** I think that it will have the result that fewer local authorities will be imprudent. In general, over the years, Welsh local authorities have been prudent compared with those in other parts of the United Kingdom. If individual local authorities decide to break with that, they will impose a considerable burden. Considering the system in terms of Wales as a whole, I decided to reduce the safety net provisions, and having obtained a settlement where 85 per cent. of finance comes from central Government, I considered it right to proceed as quickly as possible to get the full system into operation.

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): The Secretary of State gave the example of the relief to people on income support. Will he consider the gross injustice to those who are just above income support? I shall give him an example. In Landore, in my constituency, where the average rates are rather less than £200, a pensioner couple with a small private income from a works pension will probably have to pay more than double that. That has nothing to do with accountability. Surely the Secretary of State recognises that this is a gross injustice to people who are just above the level of income support.

**Mr. Walker:** When we finally agree the specific needs element with the local authorities and the figures are finally published, couples in Swansea who have been paying rates,

*[Mr. Walker]*

and who will pay the community charge, will, if anything, pay less than they do under the rating system. It is all very well to talk about injustice, but quite a few of the hon. Gentleman's constituents in that income bracket who have been widowed or who live alone have been adversely affected by the rating system.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett** (Pembroke): Is my right hon. Friend aware that there will be much envy among English colleagues about the fact that he has, once again, secured a much better settlement for Wales than is the case for the rest of the United Kingdom? I assure him that my constituents will welcome the community charge because it is workable and fair. At the moment, only 50 per cent. of my constituents pay towards the services provided by their local authorities which they all enjoy and for which they have a vote. Under the new system, everybody will look to local authorities to be truly accountable for the services that they provide.

**Mr. Walker:** I think that there will be a clearer indication of local authorities' performance. There are problems associated with changing any system. There is no perfect system of local government—none has been advocated by any political party. In Wales, we felt that this system, in which we have to meet 15 per cent. of local authority expenditure through the community charge, and which includes rebates for low incomes, will produce both accountability for local authorities and a better deal for people on low incomes.

**Mr. Alan Williams** (Swansea, West): I now understand why the Secretary of State gabbled so much when he made his statement. Will he confirm that, on the figures that he just announced, our beleagured councils will receive £14 million less than is necessary just to manage the cost of living increase, and £50 million less than is necessary to match the increase in their costs? After all his fine words, does not this mean that our councils will have to impose cuts in services or increase the poll tax—not to the £175 that the right hon. Gentleman mentioned, but by at least £20 beyond that, so that the true figure will be nearer £200?

**Mr. Walker:** If there is an increase of more than 7 per cent. on local governments' budgets for last year, it is very difficult to argue that they cannot prudently and sensibly meet their obligations.

I have already given the figures. Local authorities are treated much better now than they were during the time when the right hon. Gentleman was at the Welsh Office.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I say to the two hon. Members who have been rising and who represent English constituencies that this is the United Kingdom Parliament and that they will be called, but I propose to give precedence to Welsh Members because this statement primarily affects Wales.

**Mr. Allan Rogers** (Rhondda): May I point out to the Secretary of State that the illustration he used—it was pointed out by his hon. Friend the Member for Delyn (Mr. Raffan)—of Clwyd county council concerned the budget for last year, which was set by a Conservative and independent-controlled council, and that a Labour authority took charge of the council only this year?

Local authorities in Wales will view this settlement of only £182 million in standard spending with dismay. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) said, it will mean real cuts in social services, education and housing.

I wish that the Secretary of State would not take the name of the Rhondda in vain. In Rhondda, a couple living with one child in a house will pay three times as much under the community charge as they would under the old rates system. It is wrong of the Secretary of State to suggest to the House and to the public at large that the people of the Rhondda will be better off: they will not be.

**Mr. Walker:** I am glad to say that next year the people of the Rhondda will have the lowest community charge of any area in England or Wales. I do not know how many of the hon. Gentleman's constituents are in receipt of full rate rebate now, but there are 300,000 such people in the whole of Wales, so I guess that there are at least 7,000 or 8,000 in his constituency. In view of all that the hon. Gentleman has said about the community charge, I hope that he will take great care to announce to the 7,000 or 8,000 people in his constituency on the lowest incomes that, instead of receiving 100 per cent. rebates under the rating system, they will receive 130 per cent. rebates under the community charge this year and 114 per cent. thereafter. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will communicate that improvement to his electors.

**Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones** (Ynys Môn): It is a bit much of the Secretary of State to come to the Dispatch Box and give us the average figure for Welsh local authorities and then proceed to give us three examples of authorities that he says will benefit next year, since he gave us no examples of local authorities that will not benefit and in which consequently people will pay more than the average standard poll tax. The right hon. Gentleman should do his duty to the House and the people of Wales and publish a list, authority by authority, telling us how much people in each will pay—and how much people in the Anglesey borough council area will pay next year.

**Mr. Walker:** I have already published a list based on last year's, figures since when I have adjusted the safety net. We still have to agree the final distribution with the local authority associations, and I hope to do that in the near future. It was the local authority associations—they are not, in the main, under my party's political control —which asked that no indicative figures should be issued until the figures are finalised. When they are, I shall be delighted to send out the details.

**Mr. Donald Coleman** (Neith): During the past two years, the right hon. Gentleman has had some association with us in Wales. In his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) he seemed to equate home ownership and owner-occupation with income. But many of those who live in these properties are in impoverished circumstances, and the right hon. Gentleman should recognise that.

What are the figures that will affect all of us in all our valley communities? Why has the right hon. Gentleman not brought them here, as his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment did yesterday? Surely this is an incomplete statement. If the right hon. Gentleman does not have the figures, he should not have come here and made it.

**Mr. Walker:** I shall convey the hon. Gentleman's remarks to the leaders of the Welsh local authority associations, virtually all of whom are of his political persuasion. I shall tell them that they were wrong to demand what they did—if that is the substance of the hon. Gentleman's attack.

A few weeks ago, in reply to a parliamentary question, we published the best estimates available; they are in *Hansard*. As soon as we have agreed more detailed and accurate figures with local authorities, I shall be happy to issue them. They tell a good story: when the Government are paying 85 per cent. of all local government expenditure, that is something to be proud of——

**Mr. Rhodri Morgan** (Cardiff, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Would it not be better if the hon. Gentleman raised this in the form of a question? I shall take it if it is a point of order.

**Mr. Morgan:** This is the fourth time since I have been in the Chamber that the Secretary of State—I am sure unintentionally—has misled the House by saying that 85 per cent. of grant will come from central Government. That is not what his statement says——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Minister will have to deal with that.

**Mr. Roy Hughes** (Newport, East): Where are the high-spending, Labour-controlled authorities which the Government have been so busily criticising in recent weeks and months? I venture to suggest that, in Wales, they just do not exist. Our local authorities have had to contend, since the Government were elected in 1979, with the loss of no less than £990 million in rate support grant payments.

When will the right hon. Gentleman recognise that the poll tax is essentially regressive? The poorer sections of the community—people in low rateable value homes—will have to pay the main burden, and the right hon. Gentleman's safety net is not adequate.

**Mr. Walker:** When the system has finally settled down and, at the next general election, the people of Newport are offered the choice of returning to the present rating system or sticking to the poll tax, I have a feeling that the hon. Gentleman will not be eager to proclaim a return to the rating system for Newport.

Three hundred thousand of the lowest income group will directly benefit by the proposals.

I have already paid tribute to Welsh local authorities. One of the important reasons why I have been able to negotiate the sort of settlement that I have is that I have been able to show that local authorities in Wales have acted responsibly and prudently under the system that they have enjoyed in the past.

**Mr. Alan W. Williams** (Carmarthen): How many gainers and how many losers will there be when the poll tax is introduced? In particular, who are the losers? I grant the right hon. Gentleman that the bottom 14 per cent., on income support, will benefit from the rebate, but the next 30 or 40 per cent., on below average pay, in low rateable value houses will be hit hard.

**Mr. Walker:** The 80 per cent. rebate for 300,000 people goes to the lowest income group, but the rebate system deals with many more people on lower incomes than I have mentioned. Many single people, widows and so on will benefit. Households that include three or four adults will be at a disadvantage if they earn tolerable levels of income. That is the nature of the mixture.

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** (Tatton): As one born, bred and educated in Wales, and representing a constituency only 16 miles from the Welsh border, I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the characteristic dexterity with which he presented his statement today, and I counsel him not to be too savagely destructive of the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones), because my right hon. Friend may be in danger of creating a residual sympathy for the hon. Gentleman which might not otherwise exist.

In due course, my right hon. Friend may face some criticism from authorities and from Members representing constituencies which will pay into the safety net during the coming year. I ask my right hon. Friend on the whole to disregard these criticisms because people in the vast majority of these areas will pay no more than they would otherwise have paid under the rating system, and by and large they will benefit significantly in the future.

**Mr. Walker:** I agree with my hon. Friend that, once the safety provisions have come to an end and the whole system is in operation, many parts of the Principality will have considerable benefits from the change in the system.

**Mr. Geraint Howells** (Ceredigion and Pembroke, North): Having listened to the comments of hon. Members on both sides of the House, does the right hon. Gentleman think that the Government made the wrong decision to impose the poll tax on the people of Wales?

**Mr. Walker:** The measures and the terms of the settlement which we announced are good for Wales, Welsh industry and Welsh business.

**Dr. John Marek** (Wrexham): I hope that, on reflection, the Secratary of State will admit that he has done a disservice to the House by making a statement and allowing questions to be asked without the facts and the details being available to any Member. I hope that he will accept that this is not a good practice and that it should not be followed in future years.

Can the right hon. Gentleman tell me about the 100 per cent. rebate for people on income support? Are there any areas in Wales where the 20 per cent. increase that those on income support will have to pay will not be completely rebated?

**Mr. Walker:** I know that the hon. Gentleman will be delighted to hear that no one in Wales will be in that category. All the people will be net beneficiaries.

**Mr. Ron Davies** (Caerphilly): I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you have noted our complaints about the inadequacy of the statement. I hope that, when the detailed information is available on a district-by-district basis, you will be responsive to any requests for a further opportunity to question the Secretary of State—whoever it may be—on those arrangements.

Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that the safety net is nothing more than a temporary, hidden subsidy and that, when it is removed, the poll tax will be revealed as having a built-in mechanism to levy increases year by year on Welsh communities?

Will the right hon. Gentleman acknowledge a point that has been made by several of my hon. Friends? We

*[Mr. Ron Davies]*

obviously welcome the fact that 14 per cent. of the population will receive a full rebate, but that rebate will be raised at the expense of people on low incomes. Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that he is making the poverty trap which applies to many of our low-income earners considerably greater? In publishing the district-by-district basis of the poll tax, will the right hon. Gentleman take it upon himself also to publish a table showing the impact of this new poverty trap on our Welsh communities?

**Mr. Walker:** The information to which the hon. Gentleman refers has been made available in considerable detail in reply to parliamentary questions. The updated information has not been issued, at the request of local authority associations, and they were probably quite right to make that request. That information will not be available until the final settlement is reached.

The hon. Gentleman talked about the rebate. I cannot do this through the political party machine or through the Government machine, but I shall do my best to ensure that the Conservative party in the hon. Gentleman's constituency distributes to every household the leaflet on the poll tax which he issued and compares the outrageous predictions that he made to low-income people, which must have scared the life out of them, with what will happen.

**Mr. John P. Smith** (Vale of Glamorgan): Does not the Secretary of State recognise that the overwhelming majority of poll tax payers in Wales who will benefit are the people who need help the least? That is why this tax is so obviously unfair. That is why it was rejected so decisively in the Vale of Glamorgan, which is one of the most affluent constituencies in Wales.

**Mr. Walker:** In fairness, I thought that at the time the hon. Gentleman gave a number of other reasons why he managed to succeed in the Vale of Glamorgan. If that was the reason, I hope that when the community charge is fully implemented in the Vale of Glamorgan he will make it clear to the electors well before the next general election that he would prefer to return to the present rating system or the system that the Labour party advocates. That will help us considerably in winning back the seat.

**Mr. Win Griffiths** (Bridgend): To follow the theme of other questions that the Secretary of State has not yet answered successfully, will he confirm that the principal gainers will be those on high incomes and the principal losers will be those on low incomes but who are above any income support level? Many people on high incomes in my constituency are totally against the imposition of the poll tax, and I would be willing to say that in any election manifesto at the next election.

**Mr. Walker:** When the hon. Gentleman meets those people, he should explain that at least in Wales 85 per cent. of local government expenditure is financed by the taxpayers. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman's argument does not prevail when only 15 per cent. of all the costs are met out of the community charge and 85 per cent. are met by the taxpayer.

**Mr. Paul Flynn** (Newport, West): We have had another piece of meaningless trumpeting by the Secretary of State in his abuse of statistics again and his claim that those on income support will benefit in some way from the Government's actions. He says, wrongly, that payments will include certain amounts, but people on income support—it is a miserable level—already receive those amounts and have no idea that there is meant to be compensation.

It may be true that certain couples will gain, by a few pence, because of the quality of local government in Wales and their prudent and good running of local matters over the years. Where is the trumpeting when people on income support in Wales lose out more than those on income support in the rest of the country? Where was the trumpeting when there were cuts of £650 million in housing benefit and when people lost out on transitional payments? Half a million pensioners in this country, many of them in Wales, had not a penny increase in 1987 or 1988 and may well go on through the next year and the year after without a penny increase. It is an outrage for anyone to suggest that the Government's actions are helping people on income support, whose income has been cut year after year by the Government.

**Mr. Walker:** The hon. Gentleman's argument that the 20 per cent. rebate has been paid before the community charge has been introduced and therefore should be discontinued gives us a good insight into how the Labour party will attempt to play this matter. As the hon. Gentleman knows, this system for people on low incomes is far better than the rating system.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): Speaking as the husband of a Welsh woman, should it not be a matter of shame to every decent Welsh woman and Welsh man that, when my right hon. Friend announces a settlement whereby a couple in the Rhonnda will pay signficantly less than the average individual in England and 7,000 or 8,000 people in the Rhonnda will pay about 70p a week and, as my right hon. Friend said, be better off, all that the Labour Front-Bench spokesman can do is whinge? Is it not the case that in Wales the average person will pay £3·50 a week and 300,000 people will pay a mere 70p a week for the whole range of local government services? Are they not getting an incredibly good buy?

**Mr. Walker:** The people of Wales have a considerable advantage under this settlement, with so much of it centrally financed. Wales has considerable problems because a large number of people are on very low incomes. This will be a far better system for them than the rating system.

**Mr. Alun Michael** (Cardiff, South and Penarth): I was interested in the right hon. Gentleman's answer to the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Vale of Glamorgan (Mr. Smith). Does not the right hon. Gentleman accept that the poll tax is equally unpopular in Penarth, which is the other part of the Vale of Glamorgan and which falls in my constituency, because even gainers regard it as unfair and unacceptable? That is why we are not whingeing but winning.

The right hon. Gentleman is patronising and unfair to local authorities when he says that they are spending above the planned level. Does he accept that, with 4 per cent. inflation as the level projected when the budget was set, with poll tax preparation costs and with central Government decisions creating extra costs in preparing for education reform, increased demand on social services and so on, local authorities are showing remarkable restraint as well as making positive contributions to efficiency reviews in which the right hon. Gentleman, like Oliver Twist, is always asking for more?

Perhaps we should commiserate today with the Secretary of State who has had another bad afternoon. Will he accept that the statement lacks content, facts, figures and reality for those of us who have knowledge and experience of local government finance? Will he accept that under the smooth surface lurks a heavy burden for many of the low paid and especially for those who fall into the poverty trap, which is the Government's particular creation?

**Mr. Walker:** I only hope that I shall have many more afternoons as bad as this afternoon. The sight of Labour Members, having heard the degree to which those on low incomes in Wales will benefit, is a sight that I wish could have been televised. When, in a rather speedier time than anticipated, the system is operating fully in Cardiff, I shall be interested to see how many of the hon. Gentleman's constituents want to go over to the old system or the incredibly ridiculous system his party advocates at present.

# Education (No. 2) Act 1986

5.10 pm

**Mr. Alan Williams** (Swansea, West): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration.

It is certainly specific, as you know, Mr. Speaker, because I sent you a copy of this letter. It is a preposterous letter which has been issued by Conservative Central Office, setting out its plans to subvert the Government's own education legislation, which forbids political indoctrination in our schools. In this context, it is worth bearing in mind the intervention of my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw), the shadow Education spokesman, during the European elections, to stop the circulation of certain Conservative documents to our schools.

The matter is important because section 44 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, which was introduced by this Government, states categorically:

"the governing body and head teacher"—

and I emphasise those posts—

"of the school shall forbid . . . the pursuit of partisan political activities . . . and the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching in the school."

Yet in this letter, of which I gave you a copy Mr. Speaker, from Conservative Central Office, a Mr. John Spiers says that he has been appointed to edit, at the request of the deputy chairman of the Conservative party who is a Minister in this Government, a journal for Conservative school governors.

I want to quote one sentence from the letter. It says:

"We hope that it will equip Governors"—

those who are supposed to be monitoring political activity—

"to manage schools so that head teachers"—

who also have the same responsibility—

"and teachers are motivated to make a Conservative"—

and I emphasise that it is spelled with a capital "C"—

"educational agenda effective in their day-to-day work".

Clearly, the letter must be important because the heads of Conservative Central Office—the chairman and vice-chairman of the Conservative party—are both appointed by the Prime Minister. It is important because both were Ministers at the time when the legislation was passed and it is important because they are both Ministers now. It is also important because it aims to subvert and pressurise the very people the Act forbids to allow any partisan politics in our schools and because we need to know exactly how this vindictive and malevolent Government intend to motivate teachers to carry out their political dirty work in schools.

I suggest that it is urgent because on Monday it is quite likely that the present Secretary of State for Education may himself be chairman of the Conservative party and he could be presiding over this attempt to create a Conservative fifth column in our schools.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Three minutes, please.

**Mr. Williams:** I am making my final point, Mr. Speaker. The matter is urgent because we go into recess next week and it will be three months before we have a chance to discuss it.

**Mr. Speaker:** The right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) asks leave to move the Adjournment

*[Mr. Speaker]*

of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the implementation of section 44 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986."

As the House knows, under Standing Order No. 20, I have to take into account the requirements of the order and to announce my decision without giving reason to the House. I have listened with care to what the right hon. Gentleman has said, but I regret that the matter he has raised does not meet the requirements of Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

**Mr. Jack Straw** (Blackburn): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Your ruling is, of course, accepted by the whole House, but as the matter is plainly unlawful in the light of section 44 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, as it invites Governments to ensure that head teachers are motivated to make a Conservative education agenda effective in their day-to-day work and as the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, the hon. Member for Coventry, South-West (Mr. Butcher) is in his place, can he be invited to make a statement as to whether the letter has the support of Government Ministers?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is not a matter for me. We have a heavy day ahead of us.

## BILL PRESENTED

### TELECOMMUNICATIONS (PREMIUM RATE SERVICES AND CONSUMER REPRESENTATION)

Mr. Terry Lewis presented a Bill to amend the Telecommunications Act 1984 with respect to the provision of advice about premium rate services and to provide for consumer representation on advisory committees: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Thursday 27 July and to be printed. [Bill 191.]

# Orders of the Day

## Electricity Bill

*Lords amendments considered.*

5.15 pm

*Ordered,*

That the Lords Amendments to the Electricity Bill be considered in the following order, namely, Nos. 4, 5, 9, 10, 95, 14, 101 to 108, 22, 25, 26, 51, 52, 55, 56, 129, 140, 27, 108A to 114, 118, 3, 2, 100, 62 to 65, 6, 90, 7, 119 to 128, 130 to 139, 141 to 143, 11 to 13, 15, 16 to 20, 115 to 117, 53, 54, 57, 58, 59 to 61, 66, 67, 68, 69 to 74, 75 to 77, 144 to 153, 174, 154 to 157, 80, 163 to 167, 91, 92, 168, 93, 94, 169, 170 to 173, 175 to 178, 179 to 181, 96 to 99, 158 to 162, 21, 81 to 89, 28 to 50, 78, 79, 1, 8, 23 and 24—*[Mr. Michael Spicer.]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** I have to advise the House that Lords amendment No. 10 involves privilege.

*Lords amendments Nos. 4, 5, 9, 10, 95, 14, 101 to 108, 22, 25, 26, 51, 52, 55, 56, 129, 140, 27, 108A, 109, 109A, 110 to 114 and 118 agreed to.*

*Lords amendment:* No. 3, before clause 3, insert the following new clause—*Promotion of efficient use of electricity*—

" . The Secretary of State and the Director shall require each of the public electricity suppliers to make and produce evidence to the Director showing that he has made such arrangements as will promote the efficient use of electricity and may direct any public electricity supplier to take specific action in this area and, if appropriate, may refuse or amend any application for tariff increases or major capital projects."

**The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Cecil Parkinson):** I beg to move, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to discuss Government amendment (a), a new clause—*'Promotion of efficient use of electricity*—

(1) The Director may, after consultation with public electricity suppliers and with persons or bodies appearing to him to be representative of persons likely to be affected, from time to time—

(a) determine such standards of performance in connection with the promotion of the efficient use of electricity by consumers as, in his opinion, ought to be achieved by such suppliers; and

(b) arrange for the publication, in such form and in such manner as he considers appropriate, of the standards so determined.

(2) Different standards may be determined under this section for different public electricity suppliers.'.

The following amendments to amendment (a): (i) in line 1, leave out 'may' and insert 'shall'.

(ii) in line 5, leave out

'as in his opinion ought to'

and insert 'which shall'.

(iii) in line 11, at end insert

'and

(c) shall set a date by which these standards must be achieved and shall apply such sanctions as appears necessary should these standards not be met.'.

Government amendments (b) to (e).

**Mr. Parkinson:** At present, the only duty that rests on anyone to promote energy efficiency is the duty on the Secretary of State. As a result of the Bill, the range of responsibilities for promoting energy efficiency will be widened and strengthened considerably. The statutory duty will still remain on the Secretary of State, but, in addition, the new Office of Electricity Supply, which will be a very powerful body, and its regulator will also have a statutory duty to promote energy efficiency and for the first time the area boards will have a duty to publish information about energy efficiency and to make it available to their customers. These duties all deal with the consumption of electricity, and with the saving of electricity and energy by users.

However, there is a fourth important pressure built into the Bill and into the structure created as a result of the Bill. It is a major pressure to produce electricity more efficiently. At present, we have a Central Electricity Generating Board which has monopoly powers and operates on a strictly cost-plus basis. Whatever its costs are, it simply passes them through to the customer.

Under the new structure there will be substantial competition from day one for the business of the area boards in both England and Scotland. The Scots are only just finding out that that is a serious possibility. *[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) will listen, he may get a surprise.

PowerGen has just written to every major company in Scotland offering to supply them with electricity. National Power is following suit. For the first time major companies and boards in Scotland are being pursued by generators seeking their business. Therefore, there is competition in generation. As fuel represents 60 per cent. of the cost of all electricity generation, the pressure is on generators to compete by using fuel efficiently.

**Mr. John Maxton** (Glasgow, Cathcart): Will the Secretary of State give way?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I shall not give way because we have agreed to make short speeches as the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) is under the weather.

People used to say, "Where there's muck there's money", but pollution in electricity production is extremely expensive because the less efficiently fuel is used and the worse the technology, the greater the pollution and expense. Therefore, competition and efficient use of fuel run hand in hand with conserving fuel and reducing pollution. That is an important aspect of the new structure that the Bill creates. The company that uses fuel efficiently will have an advantage over its competitors and there will be real pressure for efficient production of electricity.

Their Lordships felt that more should be done and they amended the Bill. I ask the House to reject their amendments and replace them with our new clause. It is not disputed that their Lordships' proposals are defective. The person who proposed them has accepted that. The subsequent amendments only made matters worse. The

*[Mr. Parkinson]*

Select Committee has confirmed that the amendments are unworkable and unsatisfactory, and nobody in the House will be tempted to dispute that.

The amendments are ineffective because they were based on American experience and were designed to discipline a system that we do not have here. They are an attempt to import into this country a set of rules and regulations designed for an over-regulated, vertically integrated industry. Their Lordships' failure to understand that has led them to produce this dog's breakfast of amendments. Everyone accepts that they are ineffective and unworkable.

I wish to give the House some of the reasons why the amendments are ineffective. First, they are built round the concept that the Secretary of State or the director general has the power to approve tariff increases and major capital projects. Nowhere in the Bill do we have that power. Moreover, because it is assumed that it is a vertically integrated monopoly the amendments assume that generation is part of distribution. In fact, they are separate. The generators will build the new capacity. The amendments do not include any arrangements to deal with that, but deal exclusively with public electricity suppliers, who will not produce new capacity.

We recognise their Lordships' desire to see the commitment to energy efficiency in the Bill strengthened and we recognise that my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam) and others agree with that. Although they think that least-cost planning would be a mistake, they want the Bill to be more specific about how the new duties will be carried out.

In the new clause and in the two revised conditions to the licence we spell out exactly how the director general will carry out his new duties to promote energy efficiency. Each public electricity supplier will have a duty to set performance standards for the promotion of energy efficiency. He will monitor performance and ensure that the standards are met.

Condition 17 supports the new clause and binds the company in the licence to meet the standards set by the director general. Condition 18 spells out clearly how the public electricity supplier will have to carry out his duty to make information available to the customer. In a code of practice which will be part of condition 18 we shall spell out how the public electricity supplier must meet his obligation to provide information. It will be specific and will include the need to maintain a telephone answering service and an office or bureau to supply information. It will give flesh to the commitment that the Bill imposes on the public electricity supplier to provide information.

The new clause spells out clearly the two new specific duties imposed on both the regulator and the public elecricity supplier. Specific action will be taken to set standards, collect information and enforce the standards.

The hon. Member for Sedgefield has conducted a campaign inspired by Mr. Mandelson. He used Mr. Mandelson's Monday morning spot on the "Today" programme to push out his half-thought-out ideas. He made great play of the fact that gas regulators have duties but have not carried them out. We have had discussions with the Director General of Ofgas, who finds his powers too vague and general. He believes that the powers spelt out in our amendments and in the Bill would enable him effectively to promote energy efficiency and he intends to seek such powers. He recognises that his present powers are inadequate and need to be strengthened and that the powers set out in this Bill would enormously improve his position.

The hon. Gentleman and some of his hon. Friends have suddenly discovered least-cost planning. They see it as the answer to their predicament of having no energy policy and are suddenly rushing madly towards it. Yesterday the hon. Gentleman gave a series of quotations, all garnered from regulators in America. In America the people who have this overweaning power claim that they use it extremely well. The hon. Gentleman said that that proved conclusively that least-cost planning is widely accepted and admired in America, but it has far more critics than supporters. Its supporters are mainly people who enjoy using the powers and its critics are mainly those who suffer under them. I could give many more quotations than the hon. Gentleman gave yesterday.

I shall read some evidence given by Professor Joskow, who is a highly respected professor of economics at the Massachusetts institute of technology to the House of Representatives sub-committee on energy and power in March 1988. He said:

> "My analysis leads me to conclude that the broad implications of this proposal is likely to lead to several undesirable outcomes. In particular, it could result in higher energy prices, inequitable . . . electricity rates and incentives for inefficient conservation investments. My testimony does not argue that there is no role for utilities in encouraging conservation. The main point is that this proposal is the wrong way to identify and implement fair and efficient energy conservation programmes."

Let us hear no more nonsense about that system being universally admired throughout the United States. It has been adopted by only three states that have competition in generation. It has been ignored by more than 40 states and is widely regarded by many people as a disaster and a further strengthening of a deeply over-regulated regime.

5.30 pm

**Mr. Tony Blair** (Sedgefield) *rose*——

**Mr. Parkinson:** The hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) can make his speech in a couple of minutes. This is not the Old Bailey. The hon. Gentleman is not Rumpole and I am not in the dock. He will have an opportunity to make his speech in a moment.

**Mr. Alexander Eadie** (Midlothian): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Lords amendment No. 3 is important. The arrogance of the Secretary of State in refusing to give way is almost unknown. The Secretary of State should be informed that he is a servant of the House, not the master of it.

**Mr. Parkinson:** The hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie), not for the first time, is misinformed. I was asked, on behalf of the hon. Member for Sedgefield, to keep my speech short because he was feeling under the weather. He therefore wanted me to make a short speech, which is why I am not giving way. Perhaps the hon. Member for Midlothian should break the habit of a lifetime by thinking before he speaks.

**Mr. Blair:** I am happy for the debate to continue. It is absurd for the Secretary of State to say that he will not give way in a debate on a Lords amendment. I ask him to give way on the point that he is making.

**Mr. Parkinson:** I thought that I was helping the hon. Member for Sedgefield. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not forget that I shall be replying to the debate and shall therefore be able to answer his questions. I am happy to give way to the hon. Gentleman; I thought that I was being helpful.

**Mr. Blair:** The Secretary of State said that the view in the United States is that least-cost planning does not work. Regulators in 29 different states apply least-cost planning, including California, which is the largest state. The only effect of Lords amendment No. 3 is to allow the regulator, if he wishes, to introduce such a concept. It does not oblige him to introduce such a concept; therefore, the regulator can act accordingly.

**Mr. Parkinson:** Lords amendment No. 3 assumes a power that the regulator and I do not have. If the regulator decided to intervene in tariffs and stop capital development he would be exercising a power that does not exist in the Bill. Therefore, the amendment is fundamentally misconceived. The hon. Member for Sedgefield will recognise that Ministers only have the powers that Parliament gives them.

I am saying not that least-cost planning does not have supporters but that it has many critics and is designed for vertically integrated monopolies, which we are determined to avoid. It is a by-product of the over-regulated and vertically integrated American system. Ironically, because the American system is so strong and based mainly on the rate of return, an incentive is built into it to create over-capacity. Least-cost planning was introduced to correct a distortion that was built into its over-regulated system. Our competitive system of generation and the Government's powerful amendments and new clauses offer a better opportunity of providing worthwhile energy conservation.

Throughout our debates, security of supply has been taken for granted. Conservationists ignore the need to maintain security of supply. The Government do not deny that conservation has a role to play, but we believe that the Bill creates more powers for more people to promote energy efficiency than have existed hitherto. We are not prepared to put the security of the system at risk. Conservation must be balanced with the need to maintain security of supply, which is what the Bill aims to do. Evidence from America shows that one of the by-products of least-cost planning is an increase in the danger of blackouts. We believe that our policy offers a much more balanced and sensible approach.

I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends to reject Lords amendment No. 3 and accept the Government amendments, which recognise the vital importance of energy efficiency and provide the people who can do something about it with the specific powers to do so.

**Mr. Blair:** I shall begin by setting out the matters on which, apart from the Government, we all agree. We agree that the greenhouse effect and global warming is a serious environmental problem—perhaps the most serious that we face. We agree that energy efficiency is the best method of combating it. The question is whether Lords amendment No. 3 or the Government's amendment is the most effective to promote energy efficiency.

There can be no more stark contrast than between the two amendments. Lords amendment No. 3 would impose energy efficiency duties on suppliers and regulators. It would give the regulator freedom to direct suppliers to do whatever is necessary to carry out their duties, and it backs that up with tough new penalties. By contrast, the Government's amendment does not even impose an obligation on the director general; it merely leaves it to his discretion. That power must be exercised from time to time, but no specific penalties are attached to the Government's amendment. The difference in the protection that the two amendments offer is the difference between wrought iron and writing paper. The argument that the Government's amendment is going half or quarter way to meeting the arguments advanced in the other place is absurd. It would surely require powerful arguments for rejecting Lords amendment No. 3 in favour of the weak Government amendment.

The Secretary of State said that everyone concedes that Lords amendment No. 3 is technically unworkable. I do not concede that it is unworkable. It has been changed slightly, and I believe that it could work. If the Secretary of State's only objection to it is that it gives him a power to increase tariffs—the Secretary of State does not have such power under the Bill—it could simply be amended. The idea that the Lords amendment can be entirely ruled out on that basis is absurd. It probably has broader support than any amendment that has come from the other place in recent times. It has the support of almost all the environmental groups, such as the Council for the Protection of Rural England, Friends of the Earth and the World Wildlife Fund. It was supported by the House of Lords Select Committee on Energy, which moved it in the other place. The House of Commons Select Committee, in paragraph 5 of its short but valuable report on the Lords amendment, said:

> "There are a number of basic principles in the Lords Amendment which we believe that the Government should now ensure are inserted into the Electricity Bill. These are:
>
> (a) Public Electricity Suppliers must be under a statutory obligation to promote more efficient electricity use.
>
> (b) That statutory obligation must be reinforced by penalties to ensure that it is met.
>
> (c) The most effective penalty is for tariff increases to be refused, especially where such increases, caused by additional supply investment, could have been avoided by investment in energy efficiency."

At that infamous No. 10 seminar on global warming, energy efficiency was given as the most effective way to combat the greenhouse effect. If the test for the amendment were either public support or scientific support, it would be carried overwhelmingly.

The Government's position has been characterised by a malign reluctance to have anything to do with the notion of energy conservation. When this was first raised months ago, the Government's response was to rubbish it. We were told that conservation was all about turning the lights off and that, in so far as it was relevant, it would be left to market forces, leavened with a little persuasion. The Government were then hoist with their own petard. Having made a big issue of the greenhouse effect, as concern about it grew and it became clear that energy efficiency was the best way to deal with it, and as the inadequacy of mere persuasion of the market forces became self-evident, the Government were forced more and more into having to concede something to salvage their credibility.

In other words, this long tale of Committee stage, Report stage and passage through the other place with amendments from it is not a tale of a Government who are

*[Mr. Blair]*

desperate to carry out the common will and anxious to get first in the field with energy efficiency. They have had to be dragged, kicking and screaming into this position. Driven to it, disbelieving and reluctant, acting from expediency rather than commitment, they have come up with their amendment today.

The Government's amendment imposes no obligation on the regulator—it simply gives him a power. He may use it if he wishes, but he need not if he does not. If the regulator were so minded, he need never use the power. The idea that this amendment matches the seriousness of the problem is absurd. The regulator can do much if he is so minded. He can determine standards of performance in connection with the promotion of the efficient use of electricity by consumers. In other words, he can intervene, but only to set standards by which suppliers must promote the efficient use of electricity by consumers. There is no direct power to make the suppliers do anything.

Would the regulator, under the Government's amendment, be able to set targets for the reduction in energy demand? Would he be able to direct suppliers to use more energy efficient power generation? Would he even be able to order suppliers to provide incentives for customers to purchase more energy efficient equipment? If, as I believe, it is doubtful that he can do any of these things, then we do not have a brand new amendment and new clause designed to put energy conservation and energy efficiency on the energy map; we have simply a round-about way of saying that more and better information should be disseminated, with bigger and better leaflets and more of them. In other words, we shall not have the teeth that the Lords amendment assumes is necessary to promote energy conservation and efficiency. We shall simply have a publicity campaign that may be better than the publicity campaigns that we have had before, but still one that falls woefully short of what is required to do the job.

Many Conservative Members have signed the early-day motion supporting the Lords amendment. They should be aware that the idea that the Government amendment embodies the spirit of the Lords amendment and is almost a redrafting of it—the same spirit but in different words —is fatuous. If we compare it with the Lords amendment, we see immediately that the latter carries an obligation. That is the first difference. It allows interference with tariff increases and hard and harsh penalties. That is the second difference. It allows interference with new capacity, which is the building of new power stations. The Secretary of State may say that least-cost planning does not work in the United States, but many think that it works extremely well. However, the question is whether we should allow the regulator, if he believes that it is right, to interfere with the planning of new capacity if energy conservation would yield better results.

It cannot seriously be said that the Government do not mind taking powers where they are necessary. For example, clause 36 gives the Secretary of State wide powers to manage power stocks at power stations. Clause 38 obliges him to give consent to the new power stations. Clause 41 sets out standards of performance generally. The nuclear levy is the most direct interference with the market that could be imagined. Whatever other reason the Government have for saying that the Lords amendment should not be accepted, it cannot be because they are opposed to intervention.

5.45 pm

The Chairman of the Select Committee said that he believed that we were hanging on by our fingertips in relation to the problems of global warming. If the problem is that serious, should we be afraid of taking powers such as those in the Lords amendment? If it is that serious, can those powers be said to be of a lower order of significance than fuel stocks or the need that the Government see to protect nuclear power, with which they agree although we may not? It is absurd to say that these things are of tremendous importance whereas global warming, which is acknowledged to be the most serious environmental problem that we face, is not.

I do not know whether the director general quite understands the effect of the Government amendments. However, the record of British Gas is an appalling indictment of the power that the Government have given that company. The regulator has not made a single directive concerning British Gas over the years since privatisation. Only four people, although they are good people, work in the marketing division of British Gas, which has a turnover of £7·5 billion, but spends only £4 million on energy conservation.

**Mr. David Clelland** (Tyne Bridge): Is not privatisation of energy industries incompatible with energy conservation and efficiency, as we are now seeing with British Gas? The simple fact is that people will not be interested in investing in a private company that has a statutory duty to encourage its customers not to use the product that it is trying to sell. That is why the Secretary of State will not introduce such statutory duties and the amendment that he has tabled will not work.

**Mr. Blair:** My hon. Friend is right. The Secretary of State seems to believe that the commercial impetus of a privatised electricity system will be to promote energy efficiency and conservation. That is a curious idea. I should have thought that the commercial impetus would be to sell as much electricity as it could. What has happened with British Gas over the past few years makes it difficult to sustain the notion that it sees such a policy as being to its commercial advantage.

The issue of the environment and the central role of energy efficiency in its conservation will not disappear. People will ask why the Government are opposing the Lords amendment when there is so much support for it. The answer is simple. The Government's agenda is privatisation, but the agenda of the British people is the environment. Faced with a choice between the environment and privatisation, the Government have chosen to put privatisation first. There is no more important environmental test of this Parliament than the acceptance of the Lords amendment.

Many of the Conservative Members who have put their names to the early-day motion support the concept of privatisation, whereas Opposition Members believe that the privatisation proposals are one great unedifying shambles. They have already caused higher prices and chaos within the industry, and the provisions on nuclear power have met with condemnation from every quarter. But even if one accepts the principle of privatisation, what possible rational argument can there be for adding to the litany of failure to which the Bill has already given rise by refusing the most coherent and effective method of fighting our common single greatest environmental problem?

I therefore call upon all Conservative Members who acknowledge the seriousness of the problem to support the Lords amendment in the Lobby. It is one thing to sign early-day motions, but they will not bring home to the Government the credibility and seriousness of the threat unless they are prepared to put their votes where their mouths are. The Government may win the vote tonight, but if they do it will be on the basis of arguments that have been universally discredited. They have been given the single most significant environmental test of this Parliament. They have sat that test and they have failed.

**Sir Ian Lloyd** (Havant): I felt that it would probably be less than principled of me if I did not take part in this debate because of the strong position that the Committee of which I am Chairman has taken on the amendment and the views expressed in the report that we published to which the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) referred.

Before I get down to the nuts and bolts of the argument, let me put one thing straight. The hon. Member for Sedgefield referred very generously to the simile that I had used about global warming—that we were clinging by our fingernails to the cliff. As I explained at the press conference, the simile, though a great one, was not mine. It was the fine British historian Arnold Toynbee who said that all civilisations cling to the cliff for one reason or another, and ours is clinging to the cliff because of the complex and dangerous technological fix in which we find ourselves.

The Secretary of State said that the Select Committee had confirmed in its report that the amendment was defective. I must point out that, having accepted that, we said that the objectives that the amendment sought to achieve were most powerful and deserved careful consideration by the Secretary of State and his Department. I adhere to that view, although, broadly speaking, I welcome much that the Secretary of State has done during the passage of the Bill to reflect the Government's concern for energy efficiency and conservation. In the letter that the Secretary of State sent to us this morning, he spelt out several respects in which the Government have developed a very effective approach to the question.

We endorse and accept, for example, the idea of having an independent regulator with a duty to promote the efficient use of energy. We also endorse and accept the fact that the Secretary of State will be required to promote the efficient use of energy. The Secretary of State said in his letter:

> "The licences for electricity distribution companies will require them to advise their customers on the efficient use of energy."

But what happens if they neglect that advice? That is a question to which I shall return.

The Secretary of State continues:

> "The Bill introduces competition in electricity generation".

I share his faith that under the new structure competition will be rigorous and effective, but we do not yet know quite how effective it will be. In the context of the greenhouse effect, unless it is completely effective many other things will have to be done to secure the overall objective.

The Secretary of State said in his letter that the Government have made special provision to encourage the development of renewable sources of energy. I welcome that, but I would argue, as I did the other day, that the scope of renewables is limited. Even with almost zero interest capital investment on the largest scale, we can expect the contribution from that quarter to be comparatively small. I welcome what the Government have done about combined heat and power.

Let us now consider the four specific arguments that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State advanced in his case for rejecting the amendment. The Secretary of State said in his letter that the amendment

> "gives a duty to both the Secretary of State and the Director General of Electricity Supply to promote energy efficiency but does not indicate what should happen in the event of disagreement between them, how they should consult, or what should be the basis of evidence necessary to satisfy their duties".

Surely those are not insuperable problems. A formal quarterly report from the director general to my right hon. Friend would certainly cover the question of how they should consult and of what should be the basis of evidence. The degree of observance of standards could also be incorporated in such a report. Conspicuous failures could also be incorporated, as could applications for new and existing generators in areas where, in the director general's opinion, there is massive scope for increased efficiency in energy use or conservation. I am not terribly convinced by my right hon. Friend's first argument, therefore.

My right hon. Friend then argues that the Bill

> "removes from the Secretary of State the power to fix prices or decide"—

that is the key word—

> "on new capital investment . . . it would be quite wrong for electricity prices to be subject to political interference once the industry is in the private sector."

I do not really believe that we are talking about a decision, though. As I understand it, under the new system, the decision to invest in new generating capacity will be made by existing major companies, by new companies moving in to the industry or by the area boards. The decision to invest will be theirs. What we ask—perhaps we are seeking to transfer American experience here—is that the Secretary of State should retain the power to examine and, if necessary, to reject that decision to invest. As far as I have been able to judge the American experience, the fact that that power has been retained by the public utility commissions has occasionally resulted in a restriction of investment, but it has certainly not resulted in the disappearance of investment in electricity generating capacity in the United States, so I am not altogether impressed by that argument either.

My right hon. Friend then refers to the need to balance energy efficiency against the need for security of supply. That judgment is made repeatedly in arguments between public utility commissions—in the various states of the United States where the structure remains—and those seeking to invest. My right hon. Friend referred to the danger of brownouts, but I do not believe the United States has experienced persistent and threatening brownouts during the past two or three decades. That is not the record in the United States, and it would not necessarily happen here.

Finally, my right hon. Friend argues:

> "the Amendment is illogical since it inhibits the construction of new capacity by the distribution companies".

I found myself unable to understand what my right hon. Friend was driving at there; perhaps he will explain later.

*[Sir Ian Lloyd]*

I come now to what I believe to be the key statement underlining the Government's position—the statement made by my noble Friend Baroness Hooper in the other place:

> "It is in the consumer's own interest to use electricity efficiently."—*[Official Report, House of Lords,* 16 May 1989; Vol. 507, c. 1053.]

Of course it is in the consumer's interest to use energy efficiently. Against that fact, however, we must consider the evidence given to the Committee in the other place, which I found extraordinarily impressive, that, whereas in 1976 the Commission decided that by 1985 we should have endeavoured to achieve a 20 per cent. improvement in energy efficiency, the perceptible improvement eight years later was a mere 3 per cent.

We have now reached a stage at which the difference between the 3 per cent. that has been attained and is demonstrable and the 20 per cent. or more that the Commission thought desirable—the Toronto conference looked at that figure and even bigger figures—has become much more crucial in the light of our enlarged understanding of the fact that our civilisation relies on massive burning of hydrocarbon fuels and that that contributes to global warming and the greenhouse effect.

We must now go further. However important and significant voluntary contributions may be, and however important market forces may be—I do not for one moment underestimate their importance; as I have said elsewhere, I regard them as a necessary condition of our salvation—we must go further than we have gone so far if we are even to begin to achieve the massive shifts in the patterns of energy consumption that we may be asked to undergo in the next five or 10 years.

If such massive shifts are required, the whole ethos of energy conservation and efficiency will have to be looked at, in my humble judgment, in a much more fundamental sense. That is the priority that has dominated my thinking on the matter for some considerable time.

6 pm

I am sure that my right hon. Friend's amendment recognises the problem, as I know that he does from our many formal and informal discussions on the matter. However, I do not believe in my heart of hearts—if I did I would not be standing here—that it contributes significantly to the solution. If I use the word "significantly", that is where I would like the emphasis to lie. I believe it to be anodyne and exhortatory, but I do not believe it to be effective. When hon. Members suggest that this kind of measure produces very little in the way of significant results, I call to mind the experience of California, where we know that the California commission, as a result of measures taken some time ago, managed to achieve savings of $350 million in energy conservation and efficiency. That was the agreed measurement of the Utility Commission.

Bearing in mind the roughly similar scale of the Californian and United Kingdom economies, can my right hon. Friend tell us that we can look forward in the next one, two or three years to energy efficiency savings of the order of $350 million? If we cannot so look forward, why can we not? If we can, why do we not adopt similar measures?

That summarises my position. I shall end with an analogy which this time is completely mine, but is none the less valid. It concerns global warning. We know that some time ago a small capsule known as Challenger exploded on its way into space because of the failure of an O ring. We know that our civilisation is on a somewhat larger capsule in space. We know that the O ring round it is the atmosphere and the ozone layer. When the Challenger exploded, the President of the United States set up an investigatory commission which produced a fine report saying why the O ring had failed and its consequences. If the O ring round this planet fails, there will be no presidential commission; there will be no follow up; there will be no civilisation.

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce** (Gordon): I congratulate the Chairman of the Select Committee on Energy for his two forthright and timely reports on the subject. They have given unequivocal guidance which the Government would be foolish not to accept. After all, that guidance was based not just on the opinion of the Committee, but on universal testimony from a wide variety of sources. It was testimony that I would regard as overwhelming and I find it depressing that the Government seek to dismiss it.

I have a special interest in the clause. Like all hon. Members who recognise the importance, especially, of tackling the greenhouse effect, I believe that the clause is our last chance to convert the Bill from what is effectively a commercial interest measure to an environmental Bill. Although the Government have insisted all the way through that that is not what the Bill is about, they should accept even now that that is what the Bill should be about.

The wording of the Lords amendment, which the Secretary of State criticised so fulsomely, does not fail the test that he suggests. I am a little biased because I had a substantial hand in drafting the amendment. It is based partly on an amendment that I moved in Committee, especially the enforcement element of the clause. For the Government to say that there is a technical deficiency in the amendment and, therefore, reject the whole concept is not very convincing, because the Government could modify the amendment to make it work if they wanted to and were prepared to put the political will behind it.

I and my colleagues have tabled an amendment to the Government's own pathetically weak pusillanimous amendment, which seeks to ensure that enforcement is built into the requirement to promote energy efficiency. Pious declarations of good intent are not good enough. As the hon. Member for Havant (Sir I. Lloyd) said, we have had consistent statements from the Department of Energy, through the Energy Efficiency Office, about the objective of achieving 20 per cent. savings per year. That has been recommended for years, but we have not come anywhere near it. Clearly, publicising the benefits of energy efficiency and advertising the fact that it is in the commercial interest of consumers to take account of energy efficiency are not enough. We are dealing, after all, not just with economics, but with the environment of our planet and ecosystem.

I admit, as have other hon. Members, that the amendment is based on American experience, but I do not accept the Secretary of State's rejection of that experience. I have had discussions with people involved in utilities on both sides of the fence in many states in America, and I do not believe that his statistical rebuttal stands up to examination.

I must stress that the amendment is essential to tackling effectively the greenhouse effect. Untrammelled industrial expansion, which is what we have been experiencing throughout the world in the past 20 years, is now bringing our planet to the boil. The Prime Minister's conversion to concern about the greenhouse effect, heralded in her Royal Society speech, is genuine, but I find it incredible that she does not seem able to grasp the fact that it requires a fundamentally different approach to policy.

Independent assessment suggests that, within existing technology, we can achieve a reduction of more than 20 per cent. in carbon dioxide output by the year 2005 while still sustaining a 2·5 per cent. per annum growth. If that information, which comes from a variety of sources, is anything like true, how can any responsible Government fail to take action to ensure that we secure that benefit? If the Government are really pretending that this pathetic amendment, which is their alternative to the Lords amendment, will go anywhere near achieving that, they are treating us with contempt and as fools. I am not prepared to be treated as a fool by the Government or the Secretary of State.

I do not believe that we will achieve anything like progress towards that essential reduction unless we have a much stronger measure. A Bill about the regulatory framework of the electricity industry is the most appropriate one to contain such a measure.

We in the United Kingdom are major contributors to the greenhouse effect. We cannot hide behind the need to secure international action and use that as an excuse for not taking action on our own behalf—yet that, essentially, is what the Government are doing.

As I understand it, in simple terms, carbon dioxide accounts for about 50 per cent. of the greenhouse effect and 80 per cent. of that carbon dioxide comes from burning fossil fuels. Here in the United Kingdom, with 1 per cent. of the world's population, we are contributing 3 per cent. of the carbon dioxide output. We must, therefore, take action to put our own house in order if we are to make any contribution to solving the global problem.

The problem touched on by the Secretary of State is not confined to the United States industry, which has a tendency, as he put it, to go for overcapacity. I represent a constituency in Scotland and I have never been convinced that we need 105 per cent. extra capacity. If that is not excess capacity, I do not know what is. But even taking the United Kingdom position as a whole, the problem with the electricity industry, as it is presently constituted and as it will be constituted post-privatisation, is that its response to increasing electricity demand is to want to build more power stations, when its response should be to use the capacity that we have substantially more efficiently. That makes economic sense, but, more importantly, it makes environmental sense. The economic arguments have not delivered the goods. We need more action to ensure that we achieve more substantial results.

Our commitment to energy conservation goes back a long way. I was involved in writing a pamphlet in the mid-1970s on the important role of conservation and what it can contribute. I find it depressing to look back over the period of that first oil crisis to see the way in which we were then approaching the issue of energy conservation, and to find out how little progress has been made 15 years on, when we now know that the environmental consequences are far greater than we realised then.

We have tabled amendments which are only fall-back amendments. I believe that the House should agree with the Lords amendment and reject the Government's proposed motion to disagree. The Lords amendment sets the framework which ensures that energy efficiency is not only something that we seek to promote or that we express as being desirable, but something by which we can put teeth behind the Director General of Electricity Supply to ensure that energy efficiency is achieved. So far, we have conspicuously failed in that.

The benefits are not just environmental. The benefits of seeking greater efficiency in energy use are that it will help to alleviate fuel poverty and to improve the competitiveness of our industry. In a sense, we get three benefits in one —a benefit to the consumer, a benefit to industry and a benefit to the civilisation of the earth in ensuring the protection of the environment.

When the Secretary of State replies to the debate, it would be helpful if he could say exactly how the Government will confront the crisis of the greenhouse effect if he does not believe that enforcement of energy conservation has a part to play.

I draw attention to two passages in the report of the Select Committee on Energy, entitled "Energy Policy Implications of the Greenhouse Effect". Paragraph 102 states:

> "the most striking feature of our Enquiry has been the extent to which improvements in energy efficiency—across all sectors of the economy—are almost universally seen as the most obvious and most effective response to the problem of global warming".

That is the Committee's view and it is the view of experts. What is the Government's view? Do the Government agree? If so, what will they do about it? If they do not agree, how do they justify their splendid isolation on that argument? We need to hear answers to those questions.

In paragraph 146 the Committee states:

> "It would be inexcusable if pusillanimity and the inability of the governments of the world to plan long-term allowed irreversible and disastrous global warming to occur for want of the means or political will to take effective action to curb it."

We and the Lords are proposing a way in which the Government could take effective action. The Government amendment is a way of taking no effective action and of ensuring that the problem will continue and get worse and that the civilisation to which we contribute will continue to be damaged. The Government must accept that their amendment is unacceptable and that it will have to be reversed. If this Government will not do that, a future Government must.

The Secretary of State does not have the time that he thinks. Every scientific report suggests that the problem of global warming is becoming more and more urgent. Having just heard the Secretary of State's remarks, I advise him that it is a grave tragedy if he thinks that he and his party can continue to sit on the Government's green Benches and fail to grasp the nettle that the people of this country expect them to grasp. The sooner that he and his party are removed from office, the better. He has shown a total failure to recognise that representing commercial interests in this place is not what he is here for. As Secretary of State for Energy, he has a wider responsibility. His decision to move the motion to reverse the Lords amendment proves that he has failed in that responsibility. People will not forgive him for doing so.

**Mr. Peter Rost** (Erewash): Increasing concern about the threat of global warming is rapidly rising to the top of the world's political agenda. I have attempted to assess the merits of the Government's new clause in that context. I have listened carefully to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, but in my view his approach does not offer an adequate response to what may well be the greatest environmental challenge that has so far threatened mankind.

All the best scientific advice tells us that it may be another five years or more before international research studies can guide world politicians about the causes and effects of global warming. So far, all that we are certain about is that global warming is happening and that it is measurable. What we do not know yet is how much of the global warming is caused by mankind's distortion of the natural balance of global ecological systems.

We do not yet know the likely effect on sea levels, world climate, agriculture or anything else. We do not yet know how much global warming can be expected if we succeed internationally in stabilising carbon dioxide releases. We do not even know how much global warming is in the pipeline, resulting from increased $CO_2$ and other gas emissions over recent decades. We do not know how long the lead time will be. We do not know how serious the threat may be if we succeed and begin to implement the Toronto conference proposal of a 20 per cent. world reduction in greenhouse gases by 2005.

6.15 pm

However, what we do know and what we ignore at our peril is the fact that there is global warming. We also know the overwhelming consensus of scientific advice to us here and now. Until we can predict with more precision what may need to be done to save life on earth, all the authoritative voices are saying that in the meantime, as an insurance policy—even if it is a third-party insurance policy, rather than a comprehensive insurance policy—we need vigorously to promote energy efficiency.

Therefore, I urge my right hon. and hon. Friends to study the report of the Select Committee on Energy. It is all there. I believe that it is the most important report that the Committee has produced to the House in its 10 years' existence. It is by no means the first report in which we have recommended a policy of energy efficiency, but it is the most important report. We have gathered the most wide-ranging expert evidence, including from those scientists and energy experts who participated in the No. 10 Downing street seminar. They all came to the same conclusion—that the priority now should be greater energy efficiency because that is the quickest, least costly and least painful option and the one with the most potential.

Judged against that overriding priority, I am afraid that I must advise my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that the Government's proposal is inadequate. It does not have sanctions and it does not address itself to the priorities. I accept that the Lords amendment has technical flaws and that it might well discourage more efficient investment in power plants, such as combined heat and power even though such new investment would double thermal efficiency and thus make a greater contribution to reducing fuel consumption and pollution than would investing at the consumer end of energy efficiency.

However, I also accept that much of what needs doing cannot be included in this Electricity Bill. The distribution companies can do a great deal and my right hon. Friend's amendment will direct that beginning. However, until the Government provide much stronger market signals for consumers, it will not happen.

What we need is an energy efficiency Bill to meet the real challenge of global warming just as we are promised a green Bill next year. We need an energy efficiency Bill to build on what my right hon. Friend has done. I welcome his announcement this week about stronger building regulations. Such a Bill would at long last deal with a system of energy labelling—the labelling of buildings and energy appliances—which, through incentives and the fiscal system, would send the right signals to consumers. It would be a programme of incentives with some regulation and with a fiscal carrot and stick.

We know that the potential for energy efficiency could replace the equivalent of 12 new large power stations, so reversing the annual increase in global greenhouse gases, and perhaps meeting the Toronto target of a 20 per cent. reduction. We also know that that would be cost effective because it would have a short pay-back period. It would be less costly than meeting the increasing demand with new capacity.

I understand the Government's reluctance to tie the electricity industry with unreasonable regulations. I accept that argument. On the other hand, the Bill provides tough regulations to promote competition so that we can put downward pressure on electricity prices. That will be done through a tough regulatory system. Should we not also accept equally tough regulations to promote greater energy efficiency in order to put downward pressure on global warming?

If the existing consumer signals—the market forces—are enough to provide greater energy efficiency, why has that not happened, particularly in the public sector where the Government's responsibility lies? An energy bill carrying a cost of nearly £2 billion could achieve a saving of 20 per cent. of taxpayers' money with a pay-back period of two to three years. That has not happened.

We need a wider, all-embracing range of measures, putting energy efficiency higher in the Government's overall priorities. We use the tax system to promote high priority objectives in other sectors of the economy. That is why we provide tax incentives to people to buy their homes. It is not suggested that people would not buy homes if we did not provide them with a tax incentive. But we still provide that encouragement. We use the tax system to provide money for grants for urban renewal, industrial training and regional aids. We use the tax system—the carrot and the stick—to promote lead-free petrol, and I congratulate the Government on having done that. We use the tax system in all sorts of ways to intervene in the market place to provide stronger signals to consumers to do certain things. The time has now come—indeed it is long overdue—for us to do the same with a major programme of energy efficiency incentives.

I hope that my right hon. Friend will have the opportunity to stay on at the Department of Energy and that the Department will stay on for just long enough for him to put such a Bill on the statute book next year. Meanwhile, the Lords amendment has technical defects, so I cannot vote for it. But without a satisfactory Government alternative that meets the spirit of that amendment, I cannot go into the Lobby to vote it out of the Bill either.

I am not brave enough to predict how much time we have to tackle the probable threat of global warming. In due course, we shall know. I just hope that by then it will not be too late.

**Mr. Peter Hardy** (Wentworth): I hope that the hon. Member for Erewash (Mr. Rost) will not come to regret that he had not the confidence to carry his argument to a more logical conclusion. However, I congratulate him on having argued the case for energy conservation for 10 years.

**Mr. Rost:** Fifteen.

**Mr. Hardy:** It has been 10 years since the Government took office and for 10 years he and I and a few other hon. Members have been arguing for energy conservation and energy efficiency and we have become increasingly frustrated that the Government have given priority to the service of greed and the exercise of frivolity.

The Government's exercise of frivolity leads me to my next point, which is that my hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) would have spoken today as an active member of the Select Committee with the hon. Members for Erewash and for Havant (Sir I. Lloyd), but he is chairing the Standing Committee on the Football Spectators Bill. He would have made a useful contribution to the debate because the Select Committee offered the House useful advice which I regret that the Government have not taken.

The same applies to the House of Lords Select Committee. Unfortunately, the Government maintain the line that the noble Baroness Hooper, their confident and ebullient spokesman in the other place, adopted in selling the Bill in the other place on Second Reading. The House should pay attention to the words that the noble Baroness Hooper used. In an important presentation of the Government approach she said:

> "The Bill and public electricity supply licence also provide for the promotion of efficiency in electricity use. These are important provisions which wil be of particular interest to your Lordships. They impose a specific duty on the director and the Secretary of State, and public electricity suppliers will be required to provide guidance to their customers on the efficient use of electricity.
>
> The public electricity supply licences require each licensee to provide, within three months of his licence coming into force, information on the efficient use of electricity. Licensees will be required to revise this information as necessary; and also to send information on energy efficiency prepared by the director to every customer, if so asked."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 25 April 1989; Vol. 506, c. 1155.]

The Government will do all those wonderful things so long as the customer knows that he has the right to ask for the information. We have the hon. Member for Havant who recognised the fragility of our planetary system, and the hon. Member for Erewash who has for 10 years or more served the cause of conservation, but we have a Government who are more interested in a Football Spectators Bill and in serving dogma than in contributing to the survival of the planet.

A few moments ago the hon. Member for Erewash expressed anxiety about whether the Department of Energy would survive. The Secretary of State appeared to be complaining that the Opposition did not have an energy policy. But we would have a Department of Energy because we recognise that an energy policy is vital if we are to manage the affairs of our planet in the hope of creating the prospect of survival within the next few decades.

On Monday 17 July, the House debated the Antarctic Minerals Bill. During that debate I made the point that some of the Antarctic pack ice is scores of thousands of years old. In that ancient pack ice, pockets of air have been trapped since its formation. That air has been measured and the proportion of carbon dioxide in the air in that trapped air is half what it is at present in our planet. In the face of that change, a change which is almost certainly accelerating rapidly, the Government have an obligation to seek to contribute to survival. Therefore, it is a pity that we have seen an utterly counter-productive exercise.

In the next few weeks, I understand that hundreds of cups and saucers bearing the mark of the CEGB, or E, representing the publicly-owned electricity company, will go out of use because the private sector cannot possibly allow publicly-owned and publicly-purchased cups and saucers to bear the brand of the publicly-owned industry. It will go out and buy more.

The Minister knows, and the Select Committee recognised, that enough money was spent last year to employ 222 people and this year 749 people, not to contribute to the survival of the planet, but simply to promote the organisation of electricity privatisation. There has been clear evidence of fecklessness and frivolity. It is regrettable that the Secretary of State, rather than seeking a way to make the minor flaws in the amendment acceptable, should prefer to return to the present grossly unsatisfactory position.

6.30 pm

**Mr. Michael Stern** (Bristol, North-West): As I am conscious of the need for brevity, I shall concentrate my remarks on two of the points made by the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair). He began—I believe that it is a frequent trick of members of his profession—by making a statement with which he said everyone would agree. I certainly do not agree. It was that energy efficiency is the best way to combat global warming. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman believes that, but it is rather like the White Queen asking Alice to believe six impossible things before breakfast.

I remind the hon. Gentleman of my comments on Second Reading, when I said that in more than one third of the world the energy intake available to each person was less than one tenth of the energy intake available in the developed world. In those circumstances, I do not understand how anyone could suggest that energy efficiency is a solution to the problems of the world. A reduction in energy production would inevitably mean condemning one third of the world to continuing grinding poverty. Quite frankly, that would be an expression of inhumanity that I had thought that even the Labour party had abandoned. A policy of energy efficiency to solve the problem of global warming would be at such a cost to humanity that most of us would consider it unacceptable.

The second point in the hon. Gentleman's speech which struck me with some horror was when he criticised the Government's amendment because it did not set targets for energy demand. I hate to have to tell the hon. Gentleman this, but it is not a function of the Bill to set targets for energy demand. Indeed, it is not a function of Government to set such targets. We have, thank goodness, moved beyond the days of rationing when a Government could say to ordinary people and to industry, "You may have so much and no more."

*[Mr. Michael Stern]*

The hon. Gentleman might suggest that the amendment should set targets for energy demands, but not have the power to enforce those targets. I would not trust any Government with having that power and never using it. The hon. Gentleman's criticism of the Government's amendment is, therefore, a criticism of the Bill because it does not take us back down the road, which he clearly would prefer, of a controlled economy. The hon. Gentleman's complaint is that it is not a paving stone on the road to state control. As such, not only do I reject the Opposition's criticism but I earnestly commend the Government's amendment to the House.

**Mr. Alex Salmond** (Banff and Buchan): I wish briefly to support my two colleagues on the Select Committee who have already contributed to the debate. The Select Committee strongly supported the principles of the Lords amendment. We wanted an obligation placed on the electricity suppliers to promote energy efficiency, with penalties if that obligation was not met. The Select Committee identified tariff control as the most effective means of imposing penalties. In no way could it be said that the Government's amendment is strong enough to meet those requirements. The Select Committee accepted that the Lords amendment was technically deficient, but it asked that the Government's response to it should reflect

"its intentions as fully as possible."

The Government's amendment certainly does not do that.

I wish to deal specifically with the Scottish position, and I hope that the Secretary of State will pay particular attention because most of his opening remarks were irrelevant to Scotland. Of course, in any electricity industry there must be a balance between security of supply and conservation. However, Scotland has a technical over-capacity of 100 per cent., a duopoly and an integrated structure. I do not think that there will be any competition in the privatised electricity industry in Scotland. Even the Secretary of State will admit that Scotland will have even less competition than England and Wales. In the circumstances of over-capacity and low or no competition, the privatised companies will have the strongest possible motivation for selling as much electricity as possible. Therefore, the regulator will have to have the strongest possible enforcement powers to ensure that the companies meet their energy efficiency obligations.

The Secretary of State did not deal with the circumstances in Scotland and his silent partner, the Minister with responsibility for electricity in Scotland, is not even speaking in the debate. Who, then, could deny the Select Committee's original advice that the distinctive nature of Scotland's electricity system demanded distinctive regulation if the interests of the Scottish people were properly to be protected? Would the Secretary of State like to intervene on this point?

**Mr. Parkinson:** No.

**Mr. Salmond:** I wish that the right hon. Gentleman would intervene. He made no remarks relevant to Scotland in his opening speech, so I hope that he will do so when he replies.

I wish to make a few remarks about the process followed by the Select Committee. There was a difference in emphasis on a number of factors relating to the greenhouse effect, but eventually all members of the Committee agreed on two points. The first was that action had to be taken to deal with the problem of global warming, which we thought to be a serious environmental challenge. The second was that, from the evidence presented to the Select Committee, it was clear that energy efficiency provided the best, quickest and most substantial means of making an impact on the problem.

The Lords amendment has had at least some success because it has persuaded the Government to think about the matter. I hope that the Select Committee's report on the greenhouse effect will make them think rather further than their glib initial response. Given the strength of evidence put before the Select Committee, and given the strength of opinion voiced in the Committee's two reports, we would be selling ourselves short if we accepted the Government's extremely modest amendment as being in any way adequate to deal with the problems.

**Mrs. Teresa Gorman** (Billericay): There is concern that our climate is being substantially altered by an increase in the volume of gases, particularly carbon dioxide, in the atmosphere. However, it should be remembered that at least 99 per cent. of climatic effects are caused not by changes in the atmosphere but by the earth's proximity to the sun and to the effect of sun spots. The contribution made by the atmosphere to climatic changes is relatively minor.

It is also important to remember that the carbon cycle —the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere—is not a one-way traffic. Carbon dioxide is reabsorbed by the soil and oceans, and particularly by plants. Plants usually photosynthesise—and I speak as a biologist—at less than 50 per cent. of their capacity, but the earth's capacity to balance the effects of carbon dioxide is rarely discussed.

Whenever the greenhouse effect is debated, one often has to deal with a cascade of uncertain criteria. We should remember that when we start worrying people about melting ice caps submerging in water not only Southend but London and half of the British Isles. Although it is true that more fossil fuel is used today, the rate at which that use is increasing is dropping substantially. It is said by those who warn of a cataclysm that fossil fuel usage increases by about 4 per cent. annually, whereas the figure is now down to only about 2·75 per cent. There is awareness of the problem, and something is being done about it.

When my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is pressed to make important policy judgments, I urge him to bear in mind the lack of scientific evidence on the true effect of the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. I am not arguing that man's activities have no effect, because they have. If a forest is turned into agricultural land, if a swamp is drained, or if more fossil fuel is burnt, heat and gases are released into the atmosphere. However, I reiterate that the effect is largely self-correcting.

The heat effect is micro-related. Urban areas are heat islands, and their temperatures may vary one or two degrees from that of the surrounding countryside. Nevertheless, that extra heat is quickly dispersed and does not make a significant contribution overall. I urge my right hon. Friend to maintain a balanced view in deciding on future policies until such times that more scientific evidence emerges as to the true nature of the carbon dioxide problem and whether it is already being corrected through our awareness of the potential problem. Even so, that problem is puny by comparison with the massive effect over the millennia of the earth's proximity to the sun and of the way in which the earth relates to the sun and moves around it.

**Mr. David Steel** (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): Having listened to the hon. Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman), I am tempted to inquire of the Secretary of State what he intends doing about the proximity of the earth to the sun. I suspect that the Government have no more policy on that than they have on various other matters.

The debate should confine itself to the serious issue raised by their Lordships. While I am quite prepared to bow to the superior scientific knowledge of the hon. Member for Billericay, I believe that most people in this country assent to the simple proposition that we should use no more energy than we need for our normal daily and commercial lives. If we agree on that simple proposition, we must accept also that we are nowhere near to achieving that desirable objective. The debate in the other place, and public reaction to it, demonstrated widespread anxiety that far higher priority should be given to environmental matters.

The Select Committee chaired by the hon. Member for Havant (Sir I. Lloyd) produced a very cogent report, which received far more public attention than most Select Committee reports for the very reason that it struck an intelligent chord on the same theme. Now that the subject of energy efficiency is before us again tonight, we are obliged to ask ourselves what we can do, as mere legislators, to allay public anxiety and to make sure that in restructuring the electricity industry and the sale and distribution of its product we do not ignore the issues that have been raised. The feeble amendment that the Government invite the House to accept pays lip service to energy conservation but does nothing to promote it.

6.45 pm

The purpose of the Bill is to privatise the manufacture and sale of electricity. I do not claim to be an expert economist, but I understand that those engaged in that process are primarily interested in making a profit. That is the purpose of the Bill, which is one of a whole series of Government measures dedicated to the pursuit of making money. One way of making more money is to expand the market in which one is manufacturing and selling. The legislation has an inbuilt impetus to increase energy consumption, so we must ensure that effective control is written into the Bill.

I agree with the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) that, thanks to the wrong forecasts made by the industry in the 1970s—the hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) will also recall this—on Scotland's future electricity needs, we were sold a pup in having to accept the construction of the Torness power station. The figures were completely bogus. As a consequence, Scotland is littered with mothballed power stations of every conceivable variety. It is not just a question of the Bill encouraging companies to manufacture more electricity but, as was said by the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan, in the case of Scotland, of selling what they are already capable of manufacturing in greater and greater quantities. If nothing is done, that is what will happen. Fortunately, their Lordships have given us a way of doing something by suggesting built-in controls.

The Select Committee commented:

> "Only part of this considerable potential for energy efficiency will be realised if present circumstances and Government policies in particular remain unchanged."

The wording proposed by the Secretary of State means that Government policies will remain unchanged. The Committee's report added:

> "Market mechanisms alone will not produce an adequate response."

I do not see the hon. Member for Havant in the vanguard of those wanting a state-controlled economy, as was suggested by the hon. Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern). Indeed, the hon. Member for Havant is well known in this House for being a market freebooter. Nevertheless, he chaired a Select Committee that undertook a serious investigation of the issues and produced a sensible report. It concluded:

> "A mixture of regulations, penalties and incentives is required to promote energy efficiency, and the Government should bring these forward."

Suddenly a solution lands on the Government's plate in the form of the amendment from another place. The Government did not even have to invent an answer because one was generously and kindly produced for them by the combined might of the minds in the other place, yet they spurn that proposal.

We must honestly admit that our country has not been very successful at, or interested in, energy conservation. Even if the hon. Member for Billericay is right—which I beg leave to doubt—about the minimal effect on the ozone layer of increased energy consumption, and although I am privileged to live in a part of the country that is relatively pollution-free, I noticed when I visited Northampton last weekend, which has beautiful countryside even if it cannot compare with the Scottish borders, that a brown haze of pollution was visible to the naked eye which came from the industrial towns in that part of the country. One does not need to be a scientist to know that that kind of pollution cannot be healthy.

In earlier years, the Government did a great deal through home insulation grants to help energy conservation. In 1987, however, they were stopped for all but those on supplementary benefit. We are no longer providing people with incentives to ensure that private dwellings are as energy-efficient as they should be; nor do we make much effort in the public sector—we need not go far from this place to see that.

I am a new tenant in the parliamentary annexe of the Norman Shaw North building. As my fellow tenants will know, in the dead of winter the place is boiling hot, and there is no control over the temperature. If anyone complains, a member of our efficient staff will come along and put lagging on the pipes, so that the excessive amount of heat that has been generated can in some way be suppressed and prevented from entering our rooms. If we cannot even get the temperature of this place right, what hope have we of sending a call for energy efficiency across the country?

The Government's replacement for their Lordships' proposals simply gives the regulator a possible responsibility—no more than that—to set standards of energy efficiency. Our amendment seeks to rectify that, and we shall divide on it later this evening. As was mentioned earlier, we have a precedent in British Gas. All that British Gas has done, however, is to produce a rather badly printed leaflet—available in some gas showrooms—giving advice on how to promote energy efficiency. The electricity

*[Mr. David Steel]*

industry is desperately in need of more than mere leaflets and advice: its need is much greater than that of the gas industry.

The main failing of the Government's alternative proposal is that, in practice, it would have no teeth. If a supplier fails to comply with the provisions of the Lords amendment, on the other hand, the regulator has two real sanctions, over tariff increases and over permission to construct new plant. I think that those sanctions are essential in the public interest. I know that phrases such as "public interest" and "public service" have rather gone out of fashion in recent years, but I feel that in this context it is time that they became fashionable again.

**Mr. Malcolm Moss** (Cambridgeshire, North-East): As a signatory of the early-day motion to which I am delighted to see that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has responded in the amendment, I—along with others—have sought to express my concern about energy efficiency. We expressed that concern for three reasons: we recognised its contribution to mitigating the greenhouse effect, we saw that it kept a downward pressure on electricity prices and, of course, we knew that it prevented unnecessary generating plant from being built and used.

Let us examine the history of the Central Electricity Generating Board, much beloved by Opposition Members —an example of an American vertically integrated monopoly utility. It built new capacity in the past without too much regard to the ultimate cost, and without any regard—as far as I can determine—to energy efficiency. Yet over the years we have heard nothing from Opposition Members about any of those deficiencies in the present system. To listen to them, one would think that the Government had done nothing.

It is time to put the record straight. Britain's rate of improvement in energy efficiency is now twice that of any other EEC country. We were once the seventh largest energy consumer out of 10 countries, and we are now the fourth largest out of 12, although our gross national product has increased by 25 per cent. in the past 15 years. The carbon dioxide generated from each unit of electricity has been cut by 33 per cent. in the past 30 years. In the past 15 years, energy efficiency measures have saved the country 122 million tonnes of coal equivalent. There is no room for complacency, but that is certainly not the record of a Government who are showing a lack of interest or involvement.

The Electricity Bill contains a large number of measures that seek to develop and promote energy efficiency, including the imposition of a duty of promotion on the director general and the Secretary of State, and licences issued to distribution companies will require them to promote energy efficiency. This could mean a whole new range of activities, as the privatised PLCs will be able to become involved in efficiency, manufacture and sale. The companies will want to keep customers' bills down, and will buy from the cheapest generators—those that employ the most energy-efficient measures in their plant. Competition will mean that new technologies—for example, combined-cycle gas—will come on to the market for the first time. At a meeting yesterday, the new chairman of British Gas told us that he was involved in 20 sets of discussions on that new technology, including discussions with National Power and PowerGen. It is important to remember that gas produces 55 per cent. less carbon dioxide than coal.

The Bill makes special provisions for renewable energy, which produces no carbon dioxide and no pollution. It has been given a market share of some 600 MW. Methane gas contributes 30 times more global heating than carbon dioxide: about 46 land-fill projects produce 41 MW.

Much has been said today about the American model —vertically integrated monopolies whose price increases are strongly regulated. The problem is that we have moved away from vertical integration: we now have a privatised industry on the stocks, and have separated generation and supply. In America, because prices are built into a formula based on the return on assets, there is always pressure on the utility to build new plant and increase the asset base —hence the need to introduce the corrective regulatory system called least-cost planning.

Least-cost planning, as set out in the Lords amendment, would drive a coach and horses through the negotiations in the free market between suppliers and generators. That is unworkable, as the proposers have admitted. The Government's amendment is much more sensible.

**Mr. Rhodri Morgan** (Cardiff, West): We have all had to apply the principles of energy conservation to the length of our speeches. That is particularly difficult for politicians from my part of the world, but I shall do my best to limit my remarks so that we can complete the debate on the original timetable.

That does not mean that this is not an important issue; it is among the most important issues of the current Parliament, and was recognised as such by the Prime Minister when she signed a declaration last Sunday, along with the other six leaders of the Group of Seven advanced industrialised nations. She said that from now on environmental matters would rank equally with economic matters, even at so-called economic summits of the Group of Seven. That illustrates the importance of putting the environment on the agenda: those, at any rate, were the Prime Minister's words.

We do not want to pass any legislation that does not accord with the spirit of that declaration—which the Prime Minister signed in all sincerity, as did her fellow signatories. This is the first opportunity that hon. Members on both sides of the House have had to try to put it into effect, and we should all be conscious of that when we decide how to vote.

As I intend to pass up the opportunity of commenting on hon. Members' speeches in the traditional way, I shall not deal with the rate of improvement in energy efficiency mentioned by the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Moss) or with the interesting idea of the hon. Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) about carbon replacement therapy for the globe. I shall, however, refer to the statesmanlike speech of the hon. Member for Havant (Sir I. Lloyd), the Chairman of the Select Committee. I hope as many of the uncommitted as possible will give it serious thought, and will recognise that if a statesmanlike, experienced Chairman of the Energy Select Committee can regard the issue as important enough for him to criticise the Government's attitude, it bears thinking about on the Back Benches. What the hon. Gentleman was really saying was that when we have all left this place our descendants will ask us, "What did you do in the great war against energy, waste and inefficiency, Daddy?". The hon. Gentleman gave a strong signal that we should all follow.

It is not just a matter of reading early-day motions. That is just the graffiti of the Houses of Parliament. What really counts is which Lobby we choose. When one compares the Government amendment, which is long on bumf and short on statute, with the Lords amendment, which tries to do something about a problem and which is generally recognised as capable of offering a major contribution to the solution of global warming, making better use of financial resources and entering into the spirit of the G7 summit declaration last Sunday, the way in which we should bend our thoughts is clear.

7 pm

Sometimes we reject Lords amendments because we feel that the Lords are talking for the landed interest, but in Lords amendment No. 3 they are talking for the whole country and for what people outside want. With the full authority of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition, I offer an electoral pact to all Conservative Members who signed that early-day motion. If they join us in the Lobby tonight, we will write a letter to the Green party asking its members not to stand against them at the next election. I cannot do better than that. Do we want it said of us, when we consider energy efficiency and conservation, that we accepted the Government's pathetic attempt to replace the Lords amendment, when the Government's sole contribution to energy conservation is to cut down more forests to produce more junk mail, more leaflets, more bumf, more switch-off-something campaigns and more full-page advertisements?

We should remember the Prime Minister's words to the Royal Society when she said that we only have a lease on this planet and we must hand it on to our children in at least as good a state as it was when we took it over. All Conservative Members who are thinking seriously about these issues and about their place in history and not about their relations with their Whips' Office will follow us into the Lobby tonight.

**Mr. Parkinson:** With the leave of the House, I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Moss) for pointing out that, although a number of hon. Members making speeches tonight gave the impression that they had suddently discovered energy efficiency for the first time, over a period of years, as a result of persistent campaigns, Britain has achieved a first-class record of improved performance in the use of energy. My hon. Friend quoted a mass of statistics which I shall not repeat, but they demonstrated that, although Opposition Members have discovered energy efficiency for the first time, British people have been saving energy consistently and well for a long time.

America has been quoted to us as an example, presumably because of its amazing policies, as a country which we should aspire to emulate. Let me point out a few facts. In energy consumption per head, Americans use almost twice as much as we do; in electricity consumption per head they use considerably more than twice the amount we do; in energy consumption per unit of GDP they use nearly twice as much as we do and their emissions of carbon dioxide per head are almost twice as much as ours. The country which we are all being urged to emulate and which, presumably, is on to a lot of secrets to which we have denied ourselves access performs about half as well by any criteria of energy efficiency one cares to name. We had a look at the state of Maine in which the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) has suddenly developed an enormous interest. It has had least-cost planning, so presumably we should see the benefit, but its consumption of electricity is growing faster than ours. I can say only that by their work shall ye know them, and the results of access to the amazing policies which have gripped the imagination of Opposition Members, and some members of the Select Committee, appear not to be showing good results and to be leaving America very near the bottom of any energy efficiency league table that one would care to mention, in stark contrast with Britain.

The hon. Member for Sedgefield talked about 29 states in America. Even the arch-fanatic, Mr. Andrew Warren, has been able to identify only 10 out of 52 states, and admitted that only three of them are states with any remote competition built into their systems. The hon. Member for Sedgefield and the right hon. Member for Tweedale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) mentioned the fact that the word "may" was used. That is a statutory drafting practice where one does not specify in the statute itself exactly the terms which the person has to follow. "May" will be "will". The director general takes this duty extremely seriously, but he has to consult in drawing up the code of practice and performance. He will do that, he will implement it and he will have sanctions.

My hon. Friend the Member for Havant (Sir I. Lloyd) quoted with admiration California, pointed out that it has roughly similar energy consumption to ours, and said that it had saved $350 million a year. Our estimate so far is that our Energy Efficiency Office has helped to produce a saving of £500 million. He also quoted the fourth argument I used in my letter:

> "The Amendment is illogical since it inhibits the construction of new capacity by the distribution companies."

He said that he did not understand what that meant. Perhaps had he read the second half of the sentence:

> "yet it is the generating companies who will be building the lion's share of the new capacity"

it would have become clear to him that to impose a duty on the electricity suppliers—as the Lords amendment does—to inhibit their ability to build new capacity, when the new capacity will be built by the generators not covered by the Lords amendment, makes an enormous hole in the argument which he put forward.

My hon. Friend the Member for Havant was kind enough to say that the Bill contained a considerable number of powers, but he forgot to mention the effect of the new clause and the new licence conditions, which were also ignored by the hon. Member for Sedgefield. The new licence conditions combined with the new clause will give the director general the power to set standards for promoting energy efficiency, and to enforce them; and of course he has available to him the sanctions that anyone in his position would have. If the licence conditions are ignored, he has economic sanctions, he can go to court and get an injunction and he can force the supply companies to honour the code which he sets for them. That is an important sanction. The idea that the public electricity suppliers will behave with ill faith and ignore their legal obligations and that the director general will have no power to do anything about them is quite wrong.

**Mr. Blair:** The Secretary of State well knows that I asked what the standards would consist of. I asked him a

*[Mr. Blair]*

specific question and perhaps he will now answer it. Will the regulator be able to require public electricity suppliers to provide incentives for consumers to use energy more efficiently?

**Mr. Parkinson:** The reason for the "may" is that the director general, after consultation, will draw up codes of practice which will set performance standards. After consultation, bearing in mind the duty that Parliament has placed on him, the prime duty to promote energy efficiency——

**Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie** (Glasgow, Pollok): Answer the question.

**Mr. Parkinson:** I am answering the question, but the hon. Gentleman has not listened to any of the debate and would not recognise a correct answer if I gave one, as I am.

The Bill contains a power and a duty and the revised licence condition defines how that duty will be carried out. The director general will set performance standards and enforce them and he can penalise companies that do not implement them.

The new clause considerably strengthens the energy provisions in the Bill, and I hope that my hon. Friends will remember that, although we have had a wonderful day of bad-mouthing our country, we have a very good record of energy efficiency. Although Opposition Members have come late to it, we have been pursuing it in a very determined way for a long time, and the new clause will continue that good work effectively.

**Mr. James Wallace** (Orkney and Shetland) *rose*——

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd):** Mr. Wallace.

**Mr. Frank Haynes** (Ashfield): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) has not been present for the whole of the debate. May I put it to you that it is not fair that at this stage he should be called to make a speech? We have had a contribution from the Liberal Bench.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) is a Member of the House and I called him to speak.

**Mr. Wallace:** What I have to say will probably not occupy much more than the time it took the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) to make that point of order.

The Secretary of State said that his proposed new clause would strengthen the Bill. That is nonsense. It may represent a strengthening of the measure as it went to the other place, but it has returned from there as an adequate piece of legislation which will have teeth. Our amendment No. (iii) is designed to give teeth to the toothless proposal that the Government have made.

**Mr. Salmond** *rose*——

**Mr. Wallace:** I give way to the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Stern:** On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. If the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) had been here to listen to the debate, he would know that the comments that he is now making have been made at least five times. Does he really have to waste the time of the House?

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order. I repeat, the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland is a Member of the House. When he rises, he is entitled to be called.

**Mr. Salmond:** Did the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) notice that the Secretary of State's reply was as silent on the Scottish issues which he was specifically asked to address as the Minister of State, Scottish Office has been silent virtually throughout the debates on this legislation?

**Mr. Wallace:** Although I may not have been present for the whole of the debate, I had the misfortune to hear the speech of the hon. Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern). I also heard the valid questions that the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) addressed to the Secretary of State but to which he did not get a reply. That is why we shall divide the House on our amendment No. (iii).

*Question put,* That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 310, Noes 216.

**Division No. 312]** **[7.09 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus

Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Galbraith, Sam
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
*Goodhart, Sir Philip*
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*

McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*

Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter

Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Sir Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tom Sackville and
Mr. David Maclean.

## NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy

Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis

Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Nigel Griffiths and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

*Amendment proposed to the Bill in lieu of Lords amendment No. 3 disagreed to, amendment (a), to insert new clause—Promotion of efficient use of electricity—*

'(1) The Director may, after consultation with public electricity suppliers and with persons or bodies appearing to him to be representative of persons likely to be affected, from time to time—

(a) determine such standards of performance in connection with the promotion of the efficient use of electricity by consumers as, in his opinion, ought to be achieved by such suppliers; and

(b) arrange for the publication, in such form and in such manner as he considers appropriate, of the standards so determined.

(2) Different standards may be determined under this section for different public electricity suppliers.'

*Read a Second time.*

*Amendment (iii) proposed to the amendment proposed in lieu of the Lords amendment disagreed to,* in line 11, at end insert

'and

(c) shall set a date by which these standards must be achieved and shall apply such sanctions as appears necessary should these standards not be met.'.—*[Mr. Wallace.]*

*Question put,* That the proposed amendment be made to the amendment proposed in lieu:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 135, Noes 298.

**Division No. 313]** **[7.26 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Eadie, Alexander
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fisher, Mark
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Lamond, James
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart

Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rowlands, Ted
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Straw, Jack
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Archy Kirkwood and
Mr. James Wallace.

### NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Sir Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*

**Warren, Kenneth**
**Watts, John**
**Wells, Bowen**
**Wheeler, John**
**Whitney, Ray**
**Widdecombe, Ann**
**Wiggin, Jerry**
**Wilkinson, John**
**Wilshire, David**
**Winterton, Mrs Ann**
**Winterton, Nicholas**
**Wolfson, Mark**
**Wood, Timothy**
**Woodcock, Dr. Mike**
**Yeo, Tim**
**Young, Sir George *(Acton)***

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. David Maclean.

*Amendment accordingly negatived.*

*Amendment proposed in lieu of the Lords amendment agreed to.*

*Amendments made to the Bill in lieu of Lords amendment No. 3 disagreed to:* (b), in page 32, line 4, leave out 'and'.

(c), in page 32, line 6, at end insert
'and

> (c) the levels of performance achieved by such suppliers in connection with the promotion of the efficient use of electricity by consumers.'.

(d), in page 32, line 14, after '39', insert
'or *(Promotion of efficient use of electricity)*'.

(e), in page 32, line 15, leave out 'overall'.—*[Mr. Michael Spicer.]*

## Clause 2

### CONSUMERS' COMMITTEES

*Lords amendment:* No. 2, in page 2, line 22, leave out subsection (4).

**Mr. Wallace:** I beg to move, as an amendment to the Lords amendment, amendment (a) in line 1, at end add
'and insert

> (4) In appointing a person to be a member of a consumers committee the Director shall have regard to the desirability of appointing a person who has knowledge of the geographical make up of the area.'.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 100 and 62 to 64.

Lords amendment No. 65, after clause 50, insert the following new clause—*National Consumers' Consultative Committee*—

> " .—(1) There shall be a committee, to be known as the National Consumers' Consultative Committee, of which the Director shall be chairman and the ordinary members shall be the persons who for the time being hold office as chairmen of consumers' committees.
>
> (2) The Committee shall meet at least four times a year and shall be under a duty—
>
> (a) to keep under review matters affecting the interests of consumers of electricity generally; and
>
> (b) to facilitate the exchange of information relating to such matters between the Director, the ordinary members and their respective consumers' committees."

Amendment (a) to the proposed Lords amendment, at end add—
'and

> (c) to make a report available to the public at least once a year on matters affecting the interests of consumers generally.'.

**Mr. Wallace:** The Under-Secretary of State may recall that we had a similar debate on Report on an amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) to provide for a geographical link between membership of a consumers' committee and the area in which the committee served. I do not deny that I make this point very much from a Highlands and Islands viewpoint, but I am sure that it has similar consequences in other parts of the country. Issues will arise in a particular geographical area that can best be reflected by people with a knowledge of that area.

The cost of connecting new consumers to the electricity supply has caused considerable controversy in the north of Scotland. The Bill states that the cost of supply will be reasonable in the circumstances. I should welcome the Minister's assurance that the circumstances refer to the consumer as well as to the supplier.

People would certainly not be satisfied if large sums were charged, but it would be more satisfactory if their views were represented on the consumers' committee by people from their area rather than by people from other areas. It is theoretically possible under the Bill for a person from Carlisle who has never set foot in the Highlands and Islands and has no concept of the problems of consumers to represent that area on the committee.

I do not intend to elaborate the point. It is straightforward and very much in the consumers' interest. I cannot see how it compromises what the Government are trying to do in privatising electricity. However, it would mean that the interests of consumers were more likely to be represented by those who knew what those interests were.

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): It may be helpful for me to add an equally short point from a different geographical perspective. A matter that concerns me, and is a regular concern of hon. Members who represent inner cities, is the way in which our fuel industries and the cost of them affect those on the lowest incomes. A quarter of my constituents are pensioners, and the problem of fuel poverty is illustrated most graphically by a simple comparative statistic. In general terms, for people in the middle classes and middle income brackets, fuel bills are on average 5 per cent. or less of their domestic outgoings. For those in the lowest socio-economic groups and those in the bottom 20 per cent. of income groups, the fuel bill is sometimes as high as one quarter of the regular household budget. The Minister will know that the figure is sometimes one fifth, but often rises up to one quarter.

The group made up of pensioners and the poorest in our society needs to be well represented round the table at which consumers' needs and the implementation of supply systems and programmes that affect consumers' needs and the cost of supply will be determined. I must say to the Minister with some strength that I am aware that his Department has regularly monitored the way in which the cost of fuel bites on those who are least able to afford it simply because they have the lowest household income for everything, including fuel. I am aware that the Department knows and agrees that the statistics are often as I have specified and that fuel can use up a substantial part of those household budgets.

In those circumstances, will the Minister give me and those of us who represent areas where there are many on low incomes and many pensioners, including those living alone, some reassurance that the voice of those people will be well and truly represented on the consumers' committees?

**Mr. Thomas McAvoy** (Glasgow, Rutherglen): The Opposition welcome the Government's decision to accept the Lords amendment and I want to spend a couple of minutes outlining the reasons for that. In Committee, we took the view strongly that information is power and that it is essential that there is as wide a spread of information as possible to ensure that the system brought forward by the Government for monitoring the electricity industry is accountable not only to local people, but, more widely, to allow full accountability and scrutiny.

The Government originally outlined a regional set-up which meant that there was no link-up for information to be shared throughout the country and for knowledge to be used to put pressure on the system for the benefit of the consumer. The intention behind the amendments and the reason for our support for them is to ensure that matters that affect the interests of electricity consumers generally, including the important issue of prices, are kept under review at a national level in a formal structure. That would ensure a forum for discussion and the exchange of information relating to national policy for electricity consumers. In Committee, we maintained strongly that the Government's proposals were not enough and that there should be some improvements. We welcome the proposals in the amendments which will ensure that there is a national forum to scrutinise what is happening in the electricity industry.

I always shudder when I quote an hon. Member from a Committee *Hansard* because I think that in future another hon. Member may do the same to me. However, I will take that risk, so here goes. I will quote from a series of debates in which we were putting forward the point that the Government's proposals were not enough. I take some delight at this stage in quoting some of the Minister's comments. He said:

> "The hon. Member for Gordon claimed that our proposals would not allow for comparison or variation of performance between different areas and regions."

That is, of course, the purpose of the amendment. He continued:

> "That is highly unlikely for two reasons. Clause 46(2)(d) provides a statutory duty under which the director general must publish in his annual report 'a general survey of the activities during that year of the consumers' committees'. That applies to all consumers' committees throughout the country. On that basis, people will have the means by which they can compare the advice and activities of the different consumers' committees. That is clearly stated as an obligation in the Bill."

The Minister was saying then that the status quo was fine, yet he is now prepared to accept an amendment that puts forward a principle that he rejected in Committee.

7.45 pm

He also said:

> "It is right that the Bill allows for independent reports to be made more often than annually and on a regional basis. It is also proper that the reporting structure should be encompassed within the new regulatory regime of which the committees will be part. That is the radical new step which I think that hon. Gentlemen will understand if they reflect on it later outside the rhetoric of party confrontation. If they do not, they should have a word with the area councils in their constituencies. The councils are over the moon about the new teeth that we are giving to consumer representatives—*[Interruption.]* I am not exaggerating."

His rhetoric was part of party confrontation and he automatically rejected the Labour amendment. That rhetoric has now been shown to be misplaced and he has accepted the principle that he was attacking then. However, his rhetoric carried him away in Committee. About major improvements for consumers he said:

> "We have given them teeth and made them part of the regulatory body. On that basis, we unashamedly ask Opposition Members to withdraw their amendment. If they do not, we shall triumphantly vote against it."—*[Official Report, Standing Committee E,* 16 February 1989; c. 1033-34.]

We welcome unashamedly the conversion of the Government to our point of view and triumphantly we will not vote against the proposal.

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** I want to speak briefly to amendment (a) to Lords amendment No. 2 which relates to the annual report. It is a matter that we debated fully in Committee, but as the amendment has been selected, it is an appropriate point at which to say to the Minister that the arguments we put in Committee, which the Labour party supported, about the desirability of having an annual report lead me to say that such a provision should be in the Bill. I hope that the Minister will tell us, if he is not prepared to accept the amendment, what assurances he can give.

The hon. Members for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) and for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) said in Committee that over the years much useful information had been contained within the annual reports from consumer bodies. Without an annual report, it is felt that one cannot monitor from year to year how effectively consumer interests are being protected. The objectives may not be set out and the success in meeting objectives may not be recorded from year to year. It remains my view and, I suspect, the view of Labour Members that annual reports are desirable. It is a matter of regret that the Bill does not require them.

I would be delighted if the Minister were to accept the amendment. If he does not, I hope that he will tell us what measures he is likely to take to ensure that, in general, annual reports will be the norm rather than the exception.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Michael Spicer):** I begin by speaking to the Lords amendments, which I ask the House to accept. They deal with a variety of aspects of the new regional consumer committees which will be set up under clause 2 and which will be a key component of the radically new consumer protection arrangements in the Bill. They will be the director general's eyes and ears. For the first time a set of statutory powers and duties will equip the committees with a formidable set of teeth to deal with consumers' concerns. The Government's basic proposals have been widely welcomed by existing consumer bodies.

The amendments address aspects of the committees' make-up and functions in ways which the Government believe will materially improve their effectiveness. There has not been a fundamental change in the Government's policy, as the hon. Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy) implied. These are strengthening amendments. We have listened to what was said in Committee, in the House and in the other place and we have introduced improving amendments which do not go against the concepts that we advanced earlier.

Amendment No. 2 removes the criterion which the director general was required to take into account when appointing members of the consumers' committee. That will increase his flexibility when making appointments to the committee and will help to ensure that the best people are appointed, from whatever background. In answer to the hon. Members for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) and for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), may I say that we are not specifying particular groups, whether on a regional basis or on the basis that they represent poor people or pensioners. They made a good point. It is right that the director general should consider such groups, but

*[Mr. Michael Spicer]*

appointments will be at his discretion. That is right. Above all, he should look for ability. As the committees will be structured regionally, they will have a regional dimension.

In answer to the hon. Member for Rutherglen, may I say that I have never said that meetings of such groups were a bad thing. The Government have never suggested that. We are against reinstituting a completely independent national body such as the electricity consumers council. It is proposed in amendments Nos. 62, 63 and 65 that there should be a national consumers' consultative committee chaired by the director general and composed of the chairmen of the regional consumers' committees. The director general will include in his annual report a general survey of NCCC activities. That, incidentally, partly answers the question about annual reporting raised by the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce).

The committee will meet at least four times a year. It will keep under review matters affecting the interests of consumers of electricity and facilitate the exchange of information between the director general and the consumers' committees. It will be a good forum for the chairmen of the committees to compare notes and for the director general to compare the standards of the committees. We welcome that and I propose that we accept the Lords amendments. The effect will not be the same as setting up a completely independent and different consumers' body, like the present one.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** I sat on the Committee of the Bill to create London Regional Transport in which we had a similar debate about consumers' interests. At the end of the day some concessions were made to include a representative, for example, of the disabled, and undertakings were given that certain matters would be for the director general to consider. Will the Minister go further and say that people representing groups suffering from fuel poverty, whether on a geographic or demographic basis, will be specifically represented?

**Mr. Spicer:** The director general designate will look carefully at what the hon. Gentleman and other hon. Members say about the interests that should be represented on the committee. I am sure that he will take these exchanges seriously when assessing who should be represented. That is different from a statutory requirement to include certain groups. The problem with designating specific interest groups, whether regional, poor people or others, is that one can think of many types of groups. It is completely open-ended. We want an effective group to represent consumers and that can best be done by the director general appointing the members in conjunction with the chairmen.

**Mr. Hughes:** Will the Minister make it clear that it is his view that the issue of fuel poverty must be properly addressed by the representatives chosen by the director general? That is important because it affects the most vulnerable group of consumers. If the Minister can say that, it will confirm the importance of this exchange.

**Mr. Spicer:** I do not want to say anything from the Dispatch Box which gives the impression that the Government are leaning on the director general. Personally, I believe that it is a good idea to accommodate the interests of poor people within the new structure. That is why we have taken so much trouble to introduce licensing conditions on prepayment metering systems and why so much effort has been devoted to the licences. Clearly the interests of poor people will be borne in mind by the director general and in the licensing conditions for prepayment meters. The statutory position is clear. This is a discretionary, not a statutory, power. I am sure that the director will listen carefully to these and other exchanges.

The hon. Member for Gordon wants an annual reporting system. Amendment No. 63 already places a duty on the Director General of Electricity Supply, who will chair the NCCC, to include in his annual report a general survey of its activities during the year. That is in addition to his existing duty to include a general survey of the activities during the year of the regional consumers' committees in his annual report, which will be published. We fully understand the purpose of amendment No. 65(a), but its spirit is accommodated within our amendments and in the Bill.

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** I hear what the Minister says, but he will recall the debate that we had in Committee, when we said that it was not entirely satisfactory that the director was effectively determining what he put in his report rather than putting in what the consumer committee wanted to be said. Will the Minister at least give an assurance that he will monitor the situation if there is any evidence that the consumers' committees are dissatisfied, and that the Government will review the matter if the feeling is that the consumer interest will not be adequately reported?

**Mr. Spicer:** I can speak with authority only to what is in the Bill. I can say authoritatively that we have taken on board many of the arguments made to us in Committee, and that there will be an annual publishing requirement on the various committees and the National Consumers' Consultative Committee as well. The hon. Gentleman has made this good point fairly, but it has been accommodated within the Bill. It would be worthless for me to go further because we are speaking to a future Act of Parliament, and, however many protestations or exhortations I make, that is what will determine what happens. The Bill meets the hon. Gentleman's objection, and I hope that on that basis he will not press his amendment to a vote. However, I urge the House to agree to the Lords amendments.

*Question,* That the amendment to the Lords amendment be made, *put and negatived.*

*Lords amendment No. 2 agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 100 and 62 to 65 agreed to.*

## Clause 3

### GENERAL DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF STATE AND DIRECTOR

*Lords amendment:* No. 6, in page 3, line 24, at end insert—

> "(bb) to promote research into, and the development and use of, new techniques by or on behalf of persons authorised by a licence to generate, transmit or supply electricity;"

8 pm

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment. *[Mr. Michael Spicer.]*

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendment No. 90, to insert the following new clause——

PROMOTION OF NEW TECHNIQUES IN NATIONAL INTEREST

".—(1) The Secretary of State shall exercise the power conferred on him by section 5 of the Science and Technology Act 1965 (expenditure on research and development in science or technology) for the purpose of promoting such research into, and such development of, new techniques relating to the generation, transmission or supply of electricity as appears to him to be necessary in the national interest.

(2) The Secretary of State may, if he considers it expedient for purposes connected with the performance of his duty under this section, serve notice under this subsection on any licence holder or any person who is authorised by an exemption to generate or supply electricity.

(3) A notice under subsection (2) above may require the person on whom it is served to furnish, at a time and place specified in the notice, to the Secretary of State such information about that person's business as may be so specified.

(4) Subsections (3), (5) and (7) to (9) of section 94 above shall apply for the purposes of this section as they apply for the purposes of that section."

*Amendment* (a), in line 15, leave out '(3)'.

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** As the Minister will realise, the purpose of the amendment is to delete subsection (3) of Lords amendment No. 90. It is an attempt to get some clarification from the Minister about what the other place had in mind when it required the person on whom the notice is served

> "to furnish, at a time and place specified in the notice, to the Secretary of State such information about that person's business as may be so specified."

The Minister will understand that, to somebody with my background, that is a rather sweeping statement, which gives ill-defined powers to require information, for no clear purpose. To put it in a more populist expression, the purpose of my probing amendment is to assert the importance of freedom of information.

What information will be sought? Should it not be more clearly defined? What assurances do we have that the notices will not lead to the seeking of information that is not necessary or relevant? There could be an unwarranted interference because the person in question may not wish to disclose the information and may not feel it necessary or relevant. There could be an unwarranted interference because the person in question may not wish to disclose the information and may not feel it necessary to disclose it, but he might be penalised if he does not. This is an attempt to clarify the position. If the Government accept all of the new clause, what does subsection (3) mean? Would not the clause be better without it?

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Amendments Nos. 6 and 90 concern a subject that was discussed at length in Committee—research and development and the impact that the Bill will have on it. The effect of Lords amendment No. 6 is to require the director general and the Secretary of State to take research and development into account when exercising their functions under part I. The essence of the new clause in Lords amendment No. 90, which implements recommendations expressed in another place, is to be found in subsection (1), which places a duty on the Secretary of State to use his powers to support research and development under the Science and Technology Act 1965, for the purpose of promoting research and development of new techniques relating to the generation, transmission or supply of electricity as it appears to him to be necessary in the national interest.

After privatisation, the electricity industry may focus on near market and operational research and development. The practical significance of the new clause will be limited to long-term research and development. That is the first answer to the point put by the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) about how open ended all this is. It will require the Secretary of State to fill in any gaps that he feels should be filled in in the national interest. In order to discharge this duty, the Secretary of State will need to know what the industry is doing, so subsections (2) and (3) provide a reserve information-gathering power to enable the Secretary of State to get information from electricity licensees, or those exempted from the need to have a licence, about their relevant research and development programmes. Subsection (4) deals with the confidentiality of the information so provided and enforcement.

The answer to the hon. Member for Gordon is that there has to be a specific reason why the information should be gathered. That reason is where the Secretary of State believes that there might be a gap affecting the national interest in research and development in the privatised companies, and where he may therefore wish to take decisions that might involve future Government funding. The Government would not be able to collect information without cause and would, if necessary, have to prove what the cause was. That cause is specified, and there is a confidentiality subsection attached to the information-gathering process.

Hon. Members on both sides of the House have said that they are worried about this aspect of long-term research, and the Government are meeting that concern in this way. I hope that I have given the hon. Member for Gordon the assurances that he is seeking and that he will not press what he has already described as a probing amendment. I also hope that he will support the reasons behind the powers that the Government are giving themselves.

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** This part of the clause is less felicitously worded than some of the amendments and new clauses that I have tabled which could have improved the Bill. Therefore, I am surprised by the readiness with which the Minister is prepared to accept the clause, which is woolly, ill defined and sweeping. I accept his assurances, but, as he said earlier, the final authority is the legislation that we are passing. I am uneasy that we are giving the

*[Mr. Malcolm Bruce]*

Secretary of State power to secure quite a lot of information that, at least in theory, could be detrimental to the company concerned—in other words, it could be commercial information.

I note what the Minister said about the confidentiality arrangements. On that basis, I shall let my remarks rest and I hope that I shall never have to refer to them again. I hope that practice does not prove that companies will be asked to divulge information in a way that is not in their interest and is not justified, and that the Secretary of State will not interfere in an unwarranted manner.

**Mr. Kevin Barron** (Rother Valley): I do not share the optimism of the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) about what the Minister has said about Lords amendment No. 6 and the introduction, at long last in the history of this Bill, of a clause that mentions research and development in this industry or industries. I do not share his optimism that mounds of information will be collected, because the obligation that the clause imposes is only that, in the Minister's words, the director general and the Secretary of State must take account of research and development. I am not sure whether taking such considerations into account will result in a lot of gathering of information about these matters.

The official Opposition are at least pleased that in the other place the Government decided to amend the Bill to promote research and development. It is a great pity that on Second Reading, in Committee and on Report the Government chose not to accept new clause 7 which went into detail on how research and development could be protected on behalf of the nation for many years to come. In Committee, the Minister told us that it was not necessary to write in a commitment to research and development because the need to provide a secure supply would be pressure enough on the privatised industry. Other similar unsupported assertions were made. I am glad that the Minister has now at least admitted that near-market considerations are more likely to be taken into account by the generators and others in the industry than the long-term research and development interest for which we argued.

In the same debate the Minister said that the industry should not have to provide information on environmental matters. That was another matter that was to be left completely to regulation. Yet, at this late stage, environmental considerations are being brought into play. Of course they are not the considerations for which my hon. Friends and I argued in the earlier stages of the Bill's passage but the Government are nevertheless admitting at long last that the purely ideological flotation that they planned many months ago is not practicable. The Bill's inadequacies would inevitably have meant that if such matters as research and development were left to the market, Britain's consumers would not have been afforded the protection that they need.

In moving the amendment in the other place, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State said:

> "The new clause will ensure in an explicit and unambiguous way that after privatisation there will be a clearly defined long-stop responsibility for ensuring that R and D which is essential in the national interest is carried out. It will do that by providing statutory underpinning to the present informal arrangements by which National Power and Power Gen, the two main successor power generating companies, will continue to co-operate with ACORD so that the latter can advise the Secretary of State whether there are any research and development gaps which it is essential that he should fill in the national interest. It would then require the Secretary of State to fill those gaps if it appeared to him that they should be filled in the national interest".—[*Official Report, House of Lords,* 5 July 1989; Vol. 509, c. 123-34.]

Does the Under-Secretary agree with what was said in the other place; can he give us an unequivocal yes to that statement? If he does agree, we must go on to ask him —given that we are now dealing with the matter in this place—why we ended up with a provision which, it appears to observers, is unlikely to give us the commitment to R and D that was advocated in the other place.

8.15 pm

It is always interesting to hear this Government acknowledge that the private sector may not meet the needs of the nation and concede that Governments have to intervene from time to time. We must also note, however, that the Government's record in setting priorities and advancing the development of new design and technology in the energy sector has been dismal. They may recognise that the nation's interests must be looked after, but nothing that they have done in the past 10 years proves that they recognise what those needs are.

Let me digress for a moment. I happened to read the report of questions to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in yesterday's *Hansard*. In answer to a question directly related to civil research and development in industry, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs said, I assume speaking on behalf of the Government:

> "We believe, and continue to believe that by having a low tax regime and an environment in which companies can be profitable, we leave the decision on how to invest in their hands, rather than confiscating money from companies through taxation and imposing our decisions on them about how they should invest. That surely makes sense in a vigorous, capitalist economy."—[*Official Report*, 19 July 1989; Vol. 157, c. 335.]

That may make sense to the Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs, but it does not seem to make sense to Ministers in the Department of Energy who have introduced safeguards, however poor, in relation to investment in research and development in the energy sector.

The Government have not been able to get the balance quite right and the reason is only too clear. Parliamentary experts have recently commented in detail on research and development in the sectors covered by the Department of Energy. We need only look at the last two reports of the Select Committee on Energy to see that research and development has fallen by the wayside, and has not been promoted by the Secretary of State as the amendment suggests it should. That means that the national interest has not been served as the other place so rightly said it should be.

The Select Committee's latest report on the greenhouse effect contains an indictment of the way in which the Department has allocated its research budget. Given the urgency of the problem, it is remarkable that the Department's research budget is actually to fall in the near future. Let us compare the sums allocated to research and development by the Department of Energy in the next 12 months, because those figures will affect environmental matters, too. We find that a meagre £2·6 million is to be spent on coal research while a massive £208 million is to be allocated to nuclear research and development. That money is being given to research and development in an industry which everyone, including the Secretary of State for Energy, agrees will not produce more electricity until the end of this century, perhaps well beyond. Moreover, when there is a change of Government, there is likely to be a reduction in the amount that the industry produces. Here we are committing millions of pounds to research and development in an industry which at best will remain static for decades to come and a meagre sum to an industry whose effect on our country is massive.

Is that really setting the priorities of the national interest, given that we use four times more coal than nuclear power in electricity generation and will continue to do so for a very long time to come, if for no other reason than that using coal to generate electricity is about 40 per cent. cheaper than using nuclear power? If the amendment is to mean anything, there must be a realignment of the Department's priorities in relation to the national interest, and of the actions of the Secretary of State for Energy and the director general if the privatisation of our electricity supply goes ahead.

It seems remarkable that we should have such a lack of investment in the right places given that the Secretary of State said in his evidence to the Select Committee:

> "the country cannot afford to turn its back on its largest indigenous source of fuel".

Should he not now be saying that we will promote technologies for the clean burning of coal? We have seen clearly that that cannot be left to the private sector. PowerGen, a CEGB successor company, has a stake in the future of coal burn, but the Secretary of State is saying at this stage that it may contribute only £750,000 to the continuation of the Grimethorpe project for clean coal burning. If that is the first indication of the new generators acting in the national interest, we have a long way to go before we can protect the interests of the nation and the environment in years to come.

Nevertheless, we are still hoping for a positive response from the Government for the continuation of the work on the topping cycle at Grimethorpe. The Government's lack of response to the Select Committee's initial recommendation has prompted an even stronger recommendation in its latest report. I see that my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Illsley), who sits on that Committee, is present in the Chamber. In the latest report, the Committee said:

> "This unique technology may be the only acceptable way forward for coal-fired power production. The Government has a responsibility to help bring it to fruition, and we recommend that it should ensure that the next stage of work at Grimethorpe is completed."

For months we have been waiting for a decision on the granting of a sum of no more than £10 million, which would be spread over three years, but yesterday, when the Government saw the poll tax coming on the horizon for April 1990, they were prepared to come to the House and satisfy the revolt of their Back Benchers with an offer of £100 million. However, they manifestly failed to cure the problem. We saw the early arrival of the Secretary of State for the Environment at Downing street this morning, which was no doubt to discuss where he is likely to be sitting when we return from the summer recess.

**Mr. Morgan:** That explains, perhaps, the difference between R and D, research and development, and B and C, bribery and corruption.

**Mr. Barron:** I cannot comment on that. My hon. Friend may be able to get into the debate and expand on that a little later. I do not know whether I should tempt him to do that, but it would be interesting.

We have a classical situation where for months and months a world-leading area for clean coal burn is waiting for a paltry sum, but the Government are willing to offer large sums when they are trying to keep the peace in the House.

It is clear that in the national interests we should have a final agreement in relation to the topping cycle at the Grimethorpe plant, so that that technology can be developed. Whether it goes into the public or private sector does not matter, it will be a saleable technology and one that will be acceptable to the environment not just in this country but throughout the world.

We should also be taking steps to ensure that the generating companies will retrofit their coal-fired power stations. How can the Minister expect the private generating companies to respond to demands for cleaning up their coal-fired stations through the fitting of FGD when the Government are preventing them from negotiating contracts of more than five years for the electricity that they produce? I understand that that is a hot potato at the present time in the contract working party and elsewhere. The generators are under instruction to clean up the emissions from coal-fired power stations —that was an instruction from Ministers well before we began discussing the Electricity Bill in this place—but, because of the short termism of the contract between the generators and the supply companies, the generators are saying that they cannot enter into those investment programmes to clean up the emissions. I hope that the Minister will give us his observations on what will happen to the retrofitting of FGD at coal-fired power stations and whether the Government are able to do anything about that. Is it not the case that, by threatening the progress in cleaning up the environment in which we all live, we are seeing a neglect of the national interest?

Does it not make nonsense of the assertions made by Ministers in relation to research and development, when we know that the private sector will respond to the short-term interest of its shareholders, not the long-term interests of the nation? I believe the Minister referred to it as the near-market consideration. The Government should step in to ensure that the work is done—by doing it themselves or by sending others to do it. If this technology can be developed and funded for our competitors throughout the world, I do not see why it cannot be done in this country. Other countries recognise the strategic importance of investment in energy research and development and their Governments carry out the necessary long-term research.

Let us compare the Department of Energy's record for expenditure on research and development with that of the United States. Our expenditure on coal research and development was £2·6 million and for nuclear it was more than £200 million. In the United States next year, their spending will be some $924 million on coal research and development and $791 million on nuclear. They clearly see where research and development is needed if the long-term problems are to be sorted out. Not only are those larger sums than the Government will commit, but they indicate a more rational allocation of resources.

We are not confident that the amendment will ensure the promotion of research and development in the national

*[Mr. Barron]*

interest after privatisation when the Government are incapable of it while the industry is in the public sector. Why is the Secretary of State waiting until after the industry has been sold off before taking that action when he could and should be doing it now? It is obvious that a number of state industries that are involved in energy—whether it be British Gas, which was privatised a few years ago, or the electricity supply industry, which is about to be privatised—will not consider the national interest when carrying out their operations in the private sector. Therefore, should we not be ensuring now that we take action so that the benefits of protection for consumers and for the environment can clearly be seen? We cannot take into account the near-market consideration that the Minister mentioned.

**Mr. Eric Illsley** (Barnsley, Central): I rise to make a few brief comments on research and development and Lords amendment No. 6. I shall obviously not go into such detail as my hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron), but I want to comment on a couple of topics that were considered by the Select Committee on Energy, of which I am a member.

I have been bashing away at the Department of Energy over the past few months, together with colleagues from around the area and on the Select Committee, about the development of the topping cycle at the Grimethorpe pressurised fluidised bed combustion plant. When giving evidence to the Select Committee earlier this year, the Secretary of State committed himself to saying that a financial package would be put together to fund the topping cycle later this year. Following that, the Select Committee visited the plant at Grimethorpe, as guests of British Coal. We were then told that an £8 million package had been agreed and that the money would be made available to British Coal, together with private investment that had been raised.

We then returned to London and took evidence from the permanent secretary to the Department, who, surprisingly, informed us that finance for Grimethorpe was still under consideration and a figure had not even been talked about. Hon. Members can imagine the surprise of the members of the Select Committee to hear those words from Sir Peter Gregson, when we had been assured by British Coal that all was well and that all it was waiting for was the signing of the cheque.

A report has been produced by the Select Committee on the greenhouse effect. I do not intend to go into that report in detail, but it is noticeable that it advocates that national Governments—our own and others throughout the world—take some sort of action now in response to global warming. Their action could either be to reduce some of the carbon dioxide emissions or to fund further research to try to determine more exactly the problems of global warming.

The Select Committee had the benefit of a seminar earlier this year at which we were informed that part of the climatic research into global warming had not yet been completed, especially in relation to the effect on the oceans. We were told that funding for that research remained to be considered, but that it should be substantial. As a consequence, the Select Committee advocated that the Government should consider spending a percentage of our gross national product on research into global warming. We felt that it was as serious as that, and that the Government should take a lead in that direction.

8.30 pm

Of course, the Government's research and development programme has been cut in other areas also. Indeed, the Government are looking to the private sector to fund research into all matters relating to energy, such as cold fusion, the fast reactor and the latest one—which is now coming to the fore, but on which there is no commitment to research—super-conductivity at higher temperatures. We were informed as recently as yesterday by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority that it had discontinued its research into cold fusion because it could not reproduce the experiments of professors Fleishmann and Holmes. If the Select Committee is still in being after the recess, and if there is still a Department of Energy for it to shadow, we shall undertake to look into the funding of the fast reactor programme which is another area in which the Government have cut research.

To give the House some idea of the way in which the Department regards the funding of research, I conclude with a few figures. The expenditure estimates of the Department of Energy include the sum of £12 million for the refurbishment of the Department's premises and its move from Millbank to Buckingham gate at a time when the Department's future is under question. No one has yet determined whether the Department will be in being after the next few months. In contrast, the spending on research and development for the current year will be £2·6 million. That compares with at least 20 times that amount being spent on nuclear research and development and it explains why we cannot get a couple of million quid for the Grimethorpe topping cycle.

The estimates paper also contains a section on research and development and on the funds made available to research into the cost of storing petrol rationing coupons. That just about sums up where the Department stands on its allocations of money to its various programmes.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** With the leave of the House, I shall respond to the debate.

The hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron), who has now come back from the gods, said that we would have a short research and development debate. In fact, we have had a short coal research and development debate—*[Interruption.]* Yes, it is fine, but that is what we have had.

The two main contributors to the debate, the hon. Member for Rother Valley and his hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Illsley), made two main points. The first was about Grimethorpe and the research and development expenditure which would be made there. The answer is—*[Interruption.]* Well, Opposition Members will have to wait and see. It is not just perfectly respectable, it is perfectly normal for Governments to enter a cycle of public expenditure reviews as the summer ends and as autumn begins. That is how the parliamentary year and the Government year work. We start our reviews and we work out——

**Mr. Illsley:** I appreciate everything that the Minister has said. He and I have exchanged views on this during the past few months. The point that we have tried to make on behalf of the Select Committee is that by the time the public expenditure round is decided Grimethorpe will have lost all its best scientists and workers. Even now, key workers have been lost from the site. They have gone abroad to work on the schemes being operated in Scandinavia. We should like the Government to give some commitment, not in terms of how much money, but simply to end the confusion that has been caused by the Secretary of State, the permanent secretary and British Coal. We have had three different versions of the Government's position on this money. The Government should come out and say, "We do not know how much, but the money will be available", because that would prevent jobs from being lost at Grimethorpe. That is the key point.

**Mr. Spicer:** To paraphrase the hon. Gentleman, he is saying that the whole thing is falling apart while we wait. However, as he knows, that is not true. Like his hon. Friends who have been assiduous on this matter, the hon. Gentleman knows extremely well that British Coal believes that the position can be held and that the work can continue. The Government are quite properly deciding whether they can put the money behind the project. A public expenditure round is currently under way—I am glad to see the hon. Member for Barnsley, East (Mr. Patchett) in his place because he has taken a great interest in this matter—and public expenditure rounds are the proper way to go about these things.

I repeat that it is not true that the project is falling apart. What is true is that those of us who are concerned about the future of the coal industry—as I am, and I know that Opposition Members are also—must accept that the topping cycle is not likely, on the assumptions that I have seen, to have more than a 15 to 20 per cent. effect on $CO_2$ emissions. We must compare that with the 40 per cent. effect that could be made by a modern gas-fired power station. If one is thinking about $CO_2$ emissions, as we are because that is one of the main considerations, one must keep those figures at the back of one's mind. It is perfectly proper that we should assess any expenditure that we make on the topping cycle in that context.

However, it is wrong to say that the Government are dragging their feet in such a way that the whole project is in danger of coming to a halt. The Government are going through their normal expenditure review processes. That is quite proper. British Coal is clear that the situation can be contained throughout that period and we shall make our decisions at the appropriate moment. We have already said that we are extremely interested in what is coming out of Grimethorpe. I cannot say any more to the hon. Member for Barnsley, Central except that I completely disagree that the position is collapsing and that we have gone beyond——

**Mr. Terry Patchett** (Barnsley, East): Given all that the Minister has said, when does his Department intend making the decision on the Grimethorpe fluidised bed?

**Mr. Spicer:** A proper decision will be made in time which involves——

**Mr. Patchett:** When?

**Mr. Spicer:** —the institution being a going concern. There is no question of our allowing it to run down and then making the decision. The hon. Gentleman is pressing his case, but he is being a little unreasonable. As I have said, it is perfectly proper for the Government, as part of their public expenditure round, to consider whether to spend money on this operation. It would also be perfectly proper for the hon. Gentleman to get excited if the review process was automatically destroying what is going on up at Grimethorpe, but it is not. The operation is capable of continuing at the moment. We shall then make a decision in time——

**Mr. Patchett:** When?

**Mr. Spicer:** —for the operation either to continue or to be closed down, if that were the decision.

I have already told the House that the topping cycle is an extremely interesting piece of research and development —*[Interruption.]* Well, I am saying it now if I have not said it before. There is no question at the moment of the research being wound down or out. I must remind the House that this is only one way—and perhaps a more limited way than can be found with other forms of electricity production—of affecting $CO_2$ emission levels.

The hon. Member for Rother Valley seemed to imply that the Government were dragging their feet on FGD. There is no question but that we shall insist that the industry complies with the EC directive that the United Kingdom should achieve a 60 per cent. reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions by the year 2003 compared with 1980 levels. If one takes into account nitrogen oxide programmes, that will result in expenditure of £2 billion by the industry.

**Mr. Barron:** I am saying not that the Minister is dragging his feet but that the generators say that if the longest contract that they can have with the supply boards is five years their investment in reducing emissions will be in considerable danger because of the time that building takes. I do not know whether this is a matter for the Department of Trade and Industry or the Department of Energy, or a mixture of both with No. 10 Downing street. The generators would like contracts which extended over a period which was long enough to enable them to invest in cleaning up the power stations.

**Mr. Spicer:** I understand the hon. Gentleman's point. We shall ensure that the EC directive and the objectives associated with it in terms of the reduction of sulphur dioxide emissions will be complied with.

**Mr. Barron:** Will the Minister ensure that they start building programmes which are designed to do that? That is the assurance that we and the country need. We need to be assured that building for FGD and the power stations can go ahead without interruption.

**Mr. Spicer:** We shall not be building any power stations because we are privatising the industry, but it is legitimate for the hon. Gentleman to ask how that will be done. The answer is that the industry will have to comply with the EC directive and with the United Kingdom's policy associated with that objective, and it knows that.

The hon. Gentleman asks for an assurance that the Government will ensure that the directive is complied with and I give him that assurance. It is our policy that those emission levels will be reduced.

**Mr. Barron:** Does the Minister agree with the statement that I read out which was made by the noble Baroness Hooper in the other place?

**Mr. Spicer:** My noble Friend's comments in the other place were in line with everything that I have said. My

*[Mr. Spicer]*

noble Friend put her points cogently. I agree with them, and that is why I ask the House to agree with the Lords amendments.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Lords amendment No. 90 agreed to. [Special entry.]*

*Lords amendment:* No. 7, in page 3, line 29, at end insert

"and a duty to take into account, in exercising those functions, the effect on the physical environment of activities connected with the generation, transmission or supply of electricity."

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 119 to 128, 130 to 139 and 141 to 143.

**Mr. Spicer:** When the Bill was being considered in Committee concerns were expressed that its environmental provisions were not strong enough. The Government have considered the matter and we have talked to representatives of environmental groups. The result is a package that the Government are bringing forward under this group of amendments to schedule 9 and clause 3. As I am sure hon. Members know, they have been warmly welcomed.

8.45 pm

A number of changes have been made in the other place, particularly to schedule 9. Licence holders and exempt generators and suppliers will now be under a duty to do what they reasonably can to mitigate the effects which their proposed developments will have on the natural beauty of the countryside and the other features listed. The duties on generators now apply also to subsequent changes in the operation of stations.

The Secretary of State will have a duty to have regard to the extent to which applicants for consents under clauses 38 and 39 have complied with the duties under schedule 9. Licence holders are now required, in consultation with specified environmental bodies, to prepare statements setting out how they will perform their environmental duties.

In response to the strong feeling that there should also be an environmental duty in clause 3, the Government have introduced an amendment which places the Secretary of State and the director general under the duty to have regard, in carrying out their functions, to the effect on the physical environment of activities connected with generation, transmission or supply of electricity. The result is a Bill with rigorous, precise and practical environmental provisions which should commend themselves to the House.

As has been said a number of times, but it bears repeating, the Bill's environmental provisions do not stand alone. There are 15 Acts of Parliament and 14 EC directives which bear on the way in which the electricity industry impinges on the environment. Giving effect to one of the directives are the regulations issued earlier this year which require environmental assessments to be provided for projects likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

From the beginning we have maintained that the Bill will benefit the environment. We have explained that schedule 9 in particular was a more far-reaching provision than had ever existed before. However, we have further strengthened it by those amendments.

The electricity industry is often compared with the water industry. The water industry can positively beautify the land, but, whatever hon. Members' view of the beauty of power stations or overhead lines, it is difficult to imagine building a power station which positively beautifies the countryside.

We have made sure that when power stations are built or overhead lines put up their effect on the environment will be seriously considered. We have gone further than that and said that their effects on the environment should be mitigated.

We are talking not just about the beautification of the countryside but the way in which the industry pollutes the atmosphere, and that is why we are introducing such tight restrictions, particularly on sulphur dioxide emissions.

The electricity industry is different from the water industry and any comparison is inappropriate. We think that we have it about right. We have listened carefully to what has been said by hon. Members on both sides of the House, and I hope that they, and especially the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy), will welcome what we have done.

**Mr. Hardy:** I am afraid that I cannot offer the Minister the congratulations that he appears to be angling for because the Government have, quite simply, been tinkering. When we debated schedule 9 in Committee, the Government would not accept my amendments, even though Conservative Members made one or two noises of approval. Those noises were not translated into votes, but we hoped that they would encourage the Minister to take a more positive view.

I warned the Minister that the House of Lords was not so docile or obedient as his Back Benchers. Indeed, it resisted the blandishments of the noble Lady in charge of the Bill. Earlier this evening I referred to her skilful presentation, which was reflected in her approach to the environment. There were echoes of the Minister's speech in her speech, or perhaps it is the Minister echoing the noble Lady. In that debate on 25 April she said:

"we have a very positive story to tell. I have recently had meetings with representatives of the Nature Conservancy Council, the Countryside Commission, the Council for the Protection of Rural England and Friends of the Earth, and I understand their concerns. I shall of course listen closely to what noble Lords have to say today."—[*Official Report, House of Lords,* 25 April 1989; Vol. 506, c. 1157.]

It might be that the tinkering with the Bill following that Lords debate represents an improvement, but if so it is far too modest. Ministers have not made it clear that the conservation bodies in Britain, which they listed in their accounts of consultation, showed an absence of support and enthusiasm for the measure. Indeed, we may be reaching the point where the House is being misled. That reminds me of a week last Monday, when I switched on the car radio and heard comments by the Secretary of State for the Environment, speaking in Newcastle. He boasted that the Government's record on the environment was superb and that all the green organisations and individuals were guilty of distortion or dishonesty in suggesting that their record was less than satisfactory.

The right hon. Gentleman went even further and announced that the Government were proposing to set up an office to disseminate accurate information about the environment. Ministers have been challenged to give one example of dishonesty, inaccuracy or excessively sweeping statements by the responsible conservation bodies and individuals—but so far they have been unable to find even one.

Because the Government often boast without good reason of a record that is not good enough, we are entitled to be cynical, suspicious and critical of the proposals before us. One reason for my suspicion is that only yesterday I learnt that one large power station intends to cut the number of welders working in teams on a 24-hour shift rotation from 20 to five. That means that four welders will work the day shift, with one working all the anti-social hours. What will happen if something goes wrong? The present publicly owned responsible industry has welders available to deal with any leakage. Very often large power stations are a long way from the homes of its workers—*[Interruption.]* I hope that the Minister is listening because he must tell us what will happen if there is a problem. Some of the workers may live 40 or 50 miles away from the power stations. My hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) represents people who work in power stations that are far away from their homes. If 15 of the 20 welders are to lose their jobs—*[Interruption.]* The Minister's parliamentary private secretary, the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth), seems to think that I am making an inappropriate comment when in fact it goes to the heart of the problem. If 15 of the 20 welders have to go, there will probably be only one or even no welder working at night. The power station may still be operating and any emission, leakage or pollution could be serious because they will have to call out a welder who has probably already done a great deal of work and is entitled to time off.

**Mr. Haynes:** My hon. Friend is talking about safety in the electricity industry. During questions today the Prime Minister was asked about safety in industry and she said that it was the No. 1 priority for the Government. How does that square with what my hon. Friend is saying?

**Mr. Hardy:** My hon. Friend will be aware that the incidence of serious injury and fatal accident in the coal mining industry during the past three or four years, per 100,000 shifts worked, has risen substantially. It is not just the safety factor that is important. My point is that currently Britain's power stations have a sufficiently skilled staff immediately available to deal with any problem, malfunction or breakdown. Under privatisation, they will no longer be available.

I recall that a group of hon. Members, under my chairmanship, visited Hinkley Point power station a number of years ago. An incident occurred during our visit, and I and one or two of my colleagues were castigated by one or two newspapers because we refrained from making any scathing comment. Some equipment had malfunctioned, but we were satisfied that it had nothing to do with the nuclear aspect of the operation. A simple machine broke down and released some non-noxious gases. Having established those facts, we refused to make any public comment—although one or two newspapers wanted us to make some scare talk.

Perhaps the right hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), who now leads the Social and Liberal Democrats, would have welcomed the opportunity to make such comments. We felt that it would be unreasonable to make such comments because the electricity industry dealt immediately with the minor malfunction. It would have been both wrong and impertinent to make some cheap, speculative comments. My point is that at that time we could afford to decline to become involved because we knew that skilled staff were readily available to deal with the problem. We now know that the work force, including fitters and welders, is to be substantially reduced, and that outside the normal day shift there will be only a skeleton staff—if that.

We are surely entitled to be particularly concerned about environmental risks. If a pipe fractures or a machine breaks down, the plant may have to contact a worker in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield or perhaps even in mine. There are living in my constituency power workers who are employed miles and miles from their homes. They will have to travel a great distance to deal with a breakdown at a time when they are supposed to be off duty.

The Government are clearly embarking on the same course that is followed in the steel industry, of relying increasingly on contract labour. The CEGB has a proud record of training, but I suspect that the level of training and the number of apprentices are already falling. In their place, contract labour will grow and the training function will diminish. The labour skills available to the industry will then contract.

With that in mind, the conservation bodies are justified in being highly suspicious of the Government's attitude. The Government know very well that just as privatisation of the electricity industry is particularly unpopular in green and environmental circles, it is not commanding much public support either—despite the blandishments of the Government's very expensive television advertising campaign.

9 pm

Consequentially, the price of the industry's shares may be much lower than the Government originally hoped. It is not only that which worries me. As the flotation approaches, and as the City grows increasingly worried about being left with shares on its hands, City interests and underwriters will run to the Minister to say that the shares are not moving quickly because the Government tightened environmental controls rather more than the City wanted —even though the rest of us realise that those controls are grossly inadequate.

The Minister, in his brief and complacent speech, seemed to suggest that the House should feel grateful to him for his generous and thoughtful consideration of environmental issues. In truth, the Bill is bad, and it has not been improved nearly enough. It is bitterly resented by conservationists. The Minister should have something to say to the people who cannot even wait for the House to complete its consideration of the Lords amendments before telling the skilled workers who made the industry as clean as possible, within the limits of the industry's investment policy, that there will be lots and lots of job losses.

The Minister may think that I am oversuspicious. He may recall that some months ago I spoke in the House about the fears held by many of substantial job losses. I echoed the anxieties and suspicions of the unions representing workers in the industry when I said that I was fearful of substantial redundancies and that the corners of

*[Mr. Hardy]*

safety and of environmental protection would be cut. The Secretary of State assured me that, far from there being fewer jobs, there would be more.

Where are those jobs to come from, when fitters and welders are already being made redundant? Is one contract worker to count as 10 skilled artisans? The situation is such that suspicion is certainly justified. I am still waiting for the Secretary of State to tell me that he made a mistake when he gave an assurance that many more people would be employed in the industry.

The information reaching me even before we complete the first of the two days set aside to consider the Lords amendments leads me to believe that I am entirely justified in expressing our unhappiness at the Minister's proposals and that the changes he makes, and which he believes are of a salutary nature, are mere tinkerings. Certain aspects of the Bill have been given insignificant and grossly inadequate priority. I only wish that the Chamber was completely full, so that I could divide the House and express my opinion more forcibly in that way.

**Mr. Morgan:** My comments are aimed at supporting and amplifying the comprehensive account of the Opposition's considerable concerns for the environment given by my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy). He was reasonably fair to the Minister, who told us of his pride in the amendments presented in the other place, which together write certain environmental protections into the Bill. However, we do not entirely share the Minister's pride.

We have always felt a good deal of respect for the diligence of the junior Minister. We were always able to tell whether it was dinner time by whether the Secretary of State was absent, in which case the "parliamentary Charlie"—as we used to call them when I was a civil servant—had to man the boat, sinking or otherwise.

**Mr. Haynes:** He was manning the boat all the time.

**Mr. Morgan:** As my hon. Friend says, the hours put in by the junior Minister at the Dispatch Box were phenomenal—which clearly implies that those put in by the Secretary of State were not.

Are the powers granted in Lords amendment No. 7 really so great? Let us take a difficult environmental issue such as the decommissioning of a nuclear power station. Is it reasonable for National Power and the Scottish subsidiary company to decide to top it up with concrete and leave it for 100 to 150 years, preferring that course to the Swedish method of de-irradiating and disassembling the thing so that it turns into farmland within 25 to 30 years—that being the shortest period compatible with the safety of the workers who would have the job of removing it? That is probably the largest single job related to the physical environment that the industries will have to face over the next half century, century, or century and a half.

Let us suppose that the Secretary of State, or the director general, suddenly decides that he is not happy with National Power's proposals. Under Lords amendment No. 7, the Secretary of State has a duty to take into account

"the effect on the physical environment of activities connected with generation, transmission or supply".

Will the Secretary of State have the power to say, "I am not happy to allow a power station with a concrete cap and a bit of grass topping to be left for 150 years; I want you to use Swedish technology to get rid of it in a shorter time so that it can return to its previous use"?

We must also consider indirect effects on the physical environment. We have already heard a good deal—today and, from time to time, from the Prime Minister via the usual megaphone—about global warming. Let us say that the global-warming threat, as foreseen by some scientists, turns into a near-market threat confirmed by the vast majority of scientists. If Britain and other advanced industrialised and industrialising countries continue to expand electricity generation at the same pace, the physical environment may be damaged in a way that we can hardly imagine today, with sea levels rising by 7ft or 8ft.

Under the amendment, would the Secretary of State have to deal with that? Would the Government say, "We must do something drastic about carbon dioxide emissions. There must be an international treaty, and Britain must contribute its share"? The Prime Minister has implied that she would almost welcome the opportunity to lead such a crusade, and clearly, if the scientific evidence is corroborated over the next decade, the entire country—indeed, the globe—must face up to the problem.

The Minister has already implied that the powers in the amendment are of huge significance in the context of water privatisation, but are not worth a row of beans when it comes to the electricity industry—which, by its very nature, does not possess the up-country land holdings held by the water industry. It has only lines of pylons and a small number of power stations. The Minister is being terribly static in his thoughts.

My hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Illsley) has already mentioned the immense amount of interest around the world in research and development into superconductivity. As this is probably our only opportunity to consider the reorganisation of the industry over the next 10 or 20 years, if superconductivity were to become a financial reality it is a practical proposition to ask whether we want pylons in our national parks and pleasant countryside or whether we should bury them underground. That would be feasible if the more optimistic views of superconductivity become true. Overhead pylons would no longer be necessary as superconductivity does not need the cooling power of the air and it would be quite possible to put them underground.

Is this the power under which the Secretary of State and the director general could call together those in the industry and say, "Supercondutivity is now an option and we are under pressure from walkers, ramblers and so on"? A practical example which could arise in the next few years, even if superconductivity did not become a reality, involves an issue that has been heavily touted by the Minister and his ministerial colleagues—the Minister of State, Scottish Office is in his place—that of greater Scottish exports of electricity south of the border. I am informed that that can be done by expanding the interconnector where the Scottish and English systems meet, and that a major increase in the north-south line would be needed, and that to avoid brownout there would have to be cross-bracing lines across the famous, or infamous, Harker Stella route around Hadrian's wall. That issue arises every time the legislation has the side effect of expanding the commercial attractiveness of direct export from that massive Scottish surplus of electricity generating capacity, which we keep hearing about, to the power-hungry regions of central and southern England. It cannot be done without cross-bracing lines to cover the north-south lines, otherwise brownouts become a danger as it will be difficult to maintain system stability. All those cross-bracing lines will cross the Pennines and then there will be trouble from the environmentalists.

Is it under Lords amendment No. 7 that the director general and the Secretary of State and his ministerial collegues at the Scottish Office would have to scratch their heads and ask, "What is the price on the environment in the Pennines? How many additional power lines and how much environmental opposition are we willing to brook to facilitate greater Scottish exports?" Would they have to consider how to balance the environmental interests with the economic interests of free trade in electricity between Scotland and England under Lords amendment No. 7?

Finally, I shall make one small point about Wales, as I could hardly discuss Scotland and England without mentioning Wales. Is Lords amendment No. 131 already out of date by virtue of an announcement that has been made since the Lords amendments were printed? The Secretary of State for Wales announced the merging of the regional Nature Conservancy Council, which is part of the Nature Conservancy Council for England and Wales, and the Countryside Commission for Wales which was probably a regional branch of the English organisation, into one separate statutory body which is not mentioned in Lords amendment No. 131. Will the Minister require further to amend the legislation to take account of the alterations that have been announced but obviously have not taken effect yet? Obviously Ministers will have to consider whether the Welsh element now needs a separate mention in Lords amendment No. 131.

The Minister will have realised that we have considerable worries as to exactly what Lords amendment No. 7, of which the Minister is inordinately proud, is intended for, apart from trying to win a few Green votes on the cheap. We should be grateful for any illustrations or any light that he can put on the matter this evening.

9.15 pm

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I will write to the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) on the final point he made about Wales—unless I discover the answer during the evening—because it is a technical and specific issue.

The hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy), who has been interested in the campaign on this subject for a long time, should learn to recognise good news when he hears it. He is familiar with the bodies that are concerned with environmental matters. For example, I have before me a letter written to my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy by Mr. David Astor, the chairman of the Council for the Protection of Rural England, in which he said:

> "We are delighted that you have now accepted the underlying thrust of our arguments."

The deputy chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council, Sir John Burnett, wrote:

> "It is excellent news that nature conservation requirements are now being given statutory force."

There is clearly a difference now—perhaps there always was—between the hon. Member for Wentworth, who is normally very much in touch with these events, and those who are directly responsible for representing the interests of nature conservancy and the countryside. The hon. Gentleman might take note of, and place more emphasis on, what is being said outside the House about the amendments.

The hon. Member for Wentworth spoke at length about safety. The amendments with which we are now concerned are about the environment. There is a lot in the Bill about safety and I urge the hon. Gentleman to consider, for example, clause 3(3)(c) and (d). Those provisions explain the duties that the director and Secretary of State must take into account in terms of the safety of employees and, in subsection (3)(c).

> "to protect the public from dangers arising from the generation, transmission or supply of electricity".

That came about as the result of an amendment made on Report, following much discussion on the issue in Committee. The hon. Gentleman should have recognised that.

**Mr. Hardy:** I have not seen the letters to which the Minister referred, from Mr. Astor or from the deputy chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council. People from the conservation bodies who spoke to me on many occasions at earlier stages of the Bill have not been back to me to express the more approving views to which the Minister referred. I am not casting doubts on the hon. Gentleman's integrity, but he might care to read the remainder of those letters to satisfy himself—and perhaps eventually the House—that the words, which may appear to be complimentary, used at the beginning of the letters are not later qualified by expressions of regret about continuing inadequacy. I did not wish to raise the question of safety. That note was injected into my speech as a result of an intervention by my hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes).

**Mr. Spicer:** Leaving the final part aside, I regarded that as a noble intervention by the hon. Gentleman. He admitted that he was not completely up to date with the latest thinking on the part of those organisations. That was frank and honest of him and there seems to be little between us.

The hon. Member for Cardiff, West spoke in particular about amendment No. 7, which says that in conducting their duties under the Bill the director and the Secretary of State shall take account of the effect on the physical environment of their actions. It means precisely that, and to appreciate the effect of it one needs to consider the duties that they must perform and then read the entire Bill to see how those duties are carried out. As they wade through the Bill carrying out their duties—doing the various things that they can do under the measure—they will have to bear in mind the effects on the environment of those duties. That is not to say that the amendment introduces some great new interventionist facility. The points that the hon. Gentleman made about that come under the normal planning procedures. For example, the question whether Hinkley Point, as against some other construction, is to be built is a matter of detail and planning, and those planning laws are not affected by the Bill.

**Mr. Morgan:** I do not know whether the Minister misheard me or whether my direct questions threw him completely. I was not talking about the building of new nuclear power stations. That is clearly determined by normal planning inquiry procedures.

*[Mr. Morgan]*

I asked about the decommissioning of nuclear power stations. Will the Secretary of State or the director general have the power to question and then to determine whether he is satisfied with a particular form of decommissioning and its effect on the environment? If it is proposed to cap a reactor with a concrete dome for 150 years, could he say, "I am not happy with that" and insist that it be taken away within 25 years? I was talking not about the building of Hinkley Point but of the removal of Berkeley.

**Mr. Spicer:** The hon. Gentleman should read the Bill. I know that he has. I think I have the answer here.

**Mr. Morgan:** What does it say?

**Mr. Spicer:** Well, it does not say an awful lot. I will read it out in a moment. It says that this is for the nuclear installations inspectorate, but I think that I can do better than that.

The hon. Gentleman knows that the regulator, when he carries out his duties under the terms of the Bill, has to consider the price formula. We all have to consider that. When carrying out those assessments, the regulator, if the amendment is accepted, will have to bear in mind—and he can be challenged about it, because it will be in the Act if the House agrees to it—the impact of his decisions and actions on the environment. I think that that gives the hon. Gentleman a precise answer. We would have to debate and discuss the entire Act to see how it would impinge on the decommissioning that the hon. Gentleman raised.

This is an important amendment, which pervades the Bill. Every time the director general considers what he is doing he has to bear in mind the environmental impact.

I think it is perfectly right that the hon. Gentleman should ask these questions, but I think that Opposition Members have been, for want of a better word, churlish. The hon. Member for Wentworth has accepted that he is a bit out of touch with the latest thinking of conservation bodies. It was generous and proper of him to declare that. As I have now informed the House of the latest thinking of the conservation bodies, I hope that it will welcome these amendments with open arms and with approbation. They have been welcomed widely outside the House.

**Mr. Morgan** *rose*——

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order. The House is on consideration of Lords Amendments, and the hon. Gentleman has already spoken.

**Mr. Morgan:** With the leave of the House, I did not want to allow the word "churlish" to pass without some comment. There is a fundamental difference between writing a note to the Countryside Commission asking for a pylon to be moved half a mile to the left, which is one interpretation of the clause, and saying, "No, I am not happy with that nuclear power station being left under a concrete dome for 150 years, even if it costs an extra £1 billion on your cost formula to remove it after 25 years." Nor is that the same as saying that we must take account of the global warming threat, that we are worried that London will be under 6 ft of water and that the only solution is to try breast stroke. Those are quite different considerations.

**Mr. Spicer:** With the leave of the House, I unreservedly withdraw the word "churlish." Perhaps the word "reserved" should be inserted instead.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 119 to 128, 130 to 139, 141 to 143, 11 to 13, 15 to 20, 115 to 117, 53, 54, 57 and 58 agreed to.*

### Clause 45

#### GENERAL FUNCTIONS

*Lords amendment:* No. 59 in page 35, line 33, leave out from "activities" to second "and " in line 34 and insert "to which this subsection applies"

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 60 and 61.

**Mr. Spicer:** The effect of Lords amendments Nos. 59 to 61 is to ensure that, in keeping under review activities connected with the generation, transmission and supply of electricity, the director general should also keep under review, in particular, activities connected with combined heat and power. This will help him in carrying out his other duties under the Bill, such as the duty in new clause 3 to promote competition in the generation and supply of electricity.

Placing the interests of combined heat and power in the Bill must be seen in the context of what the Government are also doing for combined heat and power. We are funding a number of research projects up to £750,000 in total and are giving statutory undertaker powers to CHP operators comparable with other forms of electricity generation. We are putting the rating of CAP on the same level as others. Above all, the Bill is making fundamental changes, taking away the grid from a single generator and giving CHP free and fair access to the system.

The Bill is doing a tremendous amount for CHP, but, to underscore that, we thought that we would accept the Lords amendments. I ask the House to accept them.

**Mr. Barron:** I do not intend to prolong the debate, but we should discuss these amendments for a few minutes. The Opposition are pleased that these provisions are to be included in the Bill. There were lengthy debates in the House, in Committee and on Report about the future of combined heat and power. I was fascinated also to see how the constitution could be so elastic in terms of the ability of the other place to carry on debating changes in our legislation.

Although we do not have combined heat and power in the Bill specifically, as Lord Ezra wanted, I am pleased that there is a reference to cogeneration:

> "heat produced in association with electricity and steam produced from and air and water heated by such heat".

That is exactly what has happened in this cycle. I do not want to go into the technicalities, but it is important to note that the Government are moving in the direction sought for many years by people working in the industry.

It will be one of the general functions under clause 45 that the director should "keep under review" the development of combined heat and power. That takes us no further forward than we have been since the Energy Act 1983, when the Government decided to review the development of combined heat and power. Any advance since then has been despite the Government and not because of them.

9.30 pm

The amendment will not alter the position. I do not share the Minister's confidence that combined heat and power projects will have wide opportunities of getting into the system and being able to take part in the so-called "competition" that we have at present. CHP developments are at a critical stage, yet the Government still take little action. Despite their professed support for CHP, they have not taken the opportunity presented by the Bill to remove the blockages that exist and they have even invented new ones, such as the problem of CHP projects in getting electricity into the system. The electricity boards have failed to negotiate adequate purchase prices for combined heat and power schemes and the Government show no signs of taking effective action to ensure that the blockage is removed.

On Report, the Minister told us how much money was spent on the Leicester combined heat and power scheme, yet the Government have not removed the blockage that could threaten the existence of the CHP scheme in Leicester. The other major threat to CHP from the privatisation of electricity is through the Government-sanctioned secrecy currently surrounding the contracts working party, which looks set to form a cartel. Many people in the Combined Heat and Power Association and people who have been working on CHP schemes for years believe that it will be designed to keep them out, as cartels were designed to keep them out after the 1983 Act had said that we would have the development of CHP schemes in Britain.

The Government's failure to make their intentions clear for CHP is not surprising. In the debates on CHP during the passage of the Bill, I have not been convinced that the Minister understands the issues involved. On Report, the Minister said:

> "The Bill will not only give those wishing to engage in this form of technology free access to the system, but there will now be a duty on public electricity supply companies to buy from the most economic sources. Therefore, if CHP is the most economic source, that duty will take effect."

I am pleased to see that the hon. Member for Erewash (Mr. Rost) is in his place. During the debate, he brought up the point that had been argued for many years by people trying to get combined heat and power into the market place. He argued that the case for CHP was made not on the basis that it would generate electricity cheaply, but that:

> "By using hot water from electricity production instead of throwing it away, we create more diversity, more energy efficiency and we reduce the greenhouse effect."—[*Official Report*, 6 April 1989; Vol. 150, c. 443-46.]

That argument is right, but we must recognise that the hot water is normally taken away from the generation before it would have been if one was just generating electricity. On that basis, the generation of electricity is likely to be more expensive than it would be from conventional plant. That is where the problems lie for CHP in breaking into a competitive market which does not understand the uniqueness of the technology we are proposing to use. As the hon. Member for Erewash rightly said, CHP has an effect on the environment as well. By the more efficient use of energy, it can go some way to help us in dealing with environmental problems.

The Energy Select Committee's recent report on the greenhouse effect highlighted the benefits that efficient power generation by combined heat and power could bring. According to the CEGB, some CHP plants could reduce greenhouse emissions by up to 60 per cent. British Coal is already showing the way forward. The planned circulating fluidised bed CHP schemes at Slouth Estates is a pathfinder. That commitment is far in advance of anything that the electricity supply industry seems prepared even to discuss.

Not too many years ago, I had discussions with the chairman of the CEGB on this unique method of using energy in our communities. I shall never forget his remark that if British Gas were taken out of a place like Leicester, he would go in because he could sell not only electricity but water for space heating and domestic use. For years CHP has had problems getting a foothold in the market. Until we understand that and make special provisions for CHP schemes, we shall have problems developing it.

It is a great shame that the Government have failed to take the opportunity presented by this massive change in the electricity supply industry to give CHP the boost that it needs. I urge the Minister to turn his professed support into practical action in the not-too-distant future. The Bill says nothing more about this technology than was said in the Energy Act 1983. I hope that a future Secretary of State or director general will look seriously at CHP and find a place for it in the market so that it can develop as the amendment proposes.

**Mr. Rost:** I am grateful to the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) for his references to my contribution to debates on this Electricity Bill, and in previous years.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the Leicester combined heat and power schemes. He may not be aware that this afternoon I received by fax—telecommunications technology seems to be moving even into this place—the most alarming news that work on the Leicester project has been suspended. The 110 MW scheme by Leicester Energy has been the showpiece of CHP development. Apart from the Sheffield scheme, it is the only scheme going ahead. It involves a private enterprise consortium of six major companies and I declare an interest as a consultant to one of them. The project has progressed for the past 16 months and negotiations have now come to a conclusion. The talks have collapsed and work on the project has ceased because of the uncertainties surrounding the privatisation of the electricity industry, particularly the contract for the sale of electricity.

I shall not bore the House with the technical details of why the negotiations have broken down, but I use this example to compare what is happening in this country with developments in towns and cities in western Europe. Over 300 already have CHP district heating schemes and many others are being developed. Such schemes have made a huge contribution to reducing fuel consumption and global greenhouse warming. Thermal efficiency has been doubled by using the hot water as well as the electricity from combined production.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will look at the letter that he will have received a couple of days ago from the Leicester combined heat and power company explaining the difficulties that it is having in getting this project further progressed because of the uncertainties of the electricity contract. I hope that he will use this as a reason for giving further thought to the amendment that

*[Mr. Rost]*

my hon. Friends on the Front Bench have proposed to the Bill. I welcome the amendment because it at least opens the door and obliges the director general to monitor progress on combined heat and power. However, monitoring will not be enough when one of the two major projects has come to a halt. What will he monitor? We need a stronger amendment. I regret that none of the three efforts of the other place to change the Bill in this respect have been accepted by the Government. I regret, with a personal interest, that the amendment that I moved on Report was not accepted either.

The Government will have to come back to this, simply because the contribution that the more efficient generation of electricity can make to electricity prices and the environment will oblige them to assist in solving the major problems affecting large-scale city combined heat and power projects. These projects are marginaly economic, but they are more economic than nuclear power. Nuclear power is getting a special and open-ended subsidy in the Government's strategic policy, as is renewable energy. I do not complain about the special help to these two sources of energy, but, like energy efficiency, combined heat and power can make an important contribution not just to strategic diversity of supply but to the relief of environmental pollution and the greenhouse effect, as it is doing increasingly in other countries. It should have been given a more important promotional opportunity in this legislation, as it needs Government help to help it to overcome the high up-front infrastructure costs of laying district heat mains.

Industrial combined heat and power projects are going ahead fast, and all the projects that were held up previously are suddenly taking off. The Government deserve full credit for that because it would not have happened without the privatisation of electricity. This is giving industry the power to set up its own combined heat and power generation by allowing it to get a fairer price for the surplus electricity. These projects are going ahead with a pay-back period on the investment of about three years.

There are still enormous problems with the larger scale schemes, and I hope that the Government will either take note now, or accept that these problems will have to be solved with their help if we are to make a contribution to energy efficiency and the global warming effect.

While I welcome the Lords amendment, it would have been more beneficial if the Government had gone a little further and accepted one of the three amendments that the other place tried to introduce, as they would have given more power to the promotion of this most important technology, which other countries have adopted, which is economic and cost effective and which needs a stronger market stimulus than it is getting at the moment.

9.45 pm

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** My hon. Friend the Member for Erewash (Mr. Rost) has been persistent and effective in arguing the case for combined heat and power. Perhaps my hon. Friend was temporarily away from his place when I explained why the Government wished to accept the amendment which will introduce into the Bill the interests of combined heat and power. That is an important addition.

My hon. Friend mentioned the Leicester scheme. The Government invested £250,000 of taxpayers' money in the initial preparations for that scheme but it would appear that the scheme is not now to go ahead because the contracting parties find that they cannot contract at an economic level. There is nothing much that the Government can do about that.

We certainly believe that—the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) quoted me correctly—combined heat and power should compete fairly with other forms of electricity production. At the beginning of my opening speech I listed the things that the Government have done to ensure that CHP can compete fairly, which it could not do hitherto because of rating, statutory undertaker arrangements and the way in which the industry was structured to inhibit new entrants such as CHP.

Part of the case for CHP must be that it is competitive and economic. That is why it has been so successful in industry, and why it currently produces 2 GW of electricity. We know of a number of schemes for the industrial use of combined heat and power which may result in its producing twice that amount in future.

CHP ought to be able to compete freely and fairly and stand on its own feet——

**Mr. Rost:** My hon. Friend referred to the Leicester scheme and suggested that work had been suspended because the economics were not proving as good as had been expected. I assure my hon. Friend that that is not the case. The brief sent to his Department by Leicester Energy will confirm that. The problem is not that the econonics are not robust but that Leicester Energy needs a long-term contract to make the scheme bankable. The area board is not prepared to offer a long-term contract based upon an escalation clause in respect of the price of gas, although it is a gas turbine scheme. The problem arises from the lack of a long-term contract.

**Mr. Spicer:** My hon. Friend has made the point that I sought to make. The contractual arrangements and negotiations have broken down on the basis of the price that was being requested. The area board took the view that the price was unacceptable. That must be a matter for the contracting parties. If the Government went along with every single proposal put to the area board successor companies, ultimately they would increase the price to the consumer, and the Opposition would be the first to groan and complain and, in this case, they would be right to do so. The industry must take into account the economics of producing energy.

**Mr. Barron:** Will the Minister tell us why he is prepared to ringfence electricity and to guarantee billions of pounds of taxpayers' money, not just in the flotation but in years to come, to clean up the mess that it creates, but he is not prepared to help protect the Government's investment in the combined heat and power scheme in Leicester? The Minister must know that the cost of electricity on a CHP scheme is more expensive than if the industry were just using steam turbines to generate electricity per see. Does he not understand the technology?

**Mr. Spicer:** It is precisely for the same reason that we ringfenced coal at the cost of £10 billion over the past few years. We believe that nuclear power is a fundamental addition to the range of energy supplies which we wish the country to have in order to ensure that the consumers' interests will not be put at risk, as they have been on previous occasions through disruptions in the coal industry——

**Mr. Barron:** Arthur Scargill.

**Mr. Spicer:** The hon. Gentleman made the point himself—Arthur Scargill. I was not going to mention him today to save the hon. Gentleman's blushes. As he has said that, I am quite happy to agree with him when he says that Arthur Scargill is part of the history of the matter, as are some of the disruptions to our oil supplies and the price of those supplies from other countries.

The question of the security of energy supply in this country is fundamentally a different question. That is why we have protected the coal industry so heavily for so many years and why, as a result of protecting it and putting so much money into the industry, it is now, for the first time, able to face competition with some confidence. That is good and something that we have achieved for the coal industry.

I understand the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Erewash. He has made them coherently and cogently over many months and years. His labours have borne fruit because the Bill has on its face the recognition of the importance of CHP, not to mention the panoply of actions that we have taken to ensure that CHP competes fairly in the future in a way that may not have happened up to now. I hope that my hon. Friend and others will accept these Lords amendments.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 60 and 61 agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** I understand that it is the desire of the House to take Lords amendments grouping No. 66 to the grouping No. 163 formally. Is that correct?

**Mr. Hardy:** Would you give me some advice, Mr. Speaker? You were kind enough to select my amendment to Lords amendment No. 155. I would like to say a word or two about that.

**Mr. Speaker:** In that case it would be convenient if we took Lords amendments Nos. 66 to 77 formally.

*Lords amendments Nos. 66 to 77, 144 to 153 and 174 agreed to.*

## Schedule 11

### TAXATION PROVISIONS

*Lords amendment:* No. 154, in page 112, line 23, leave out second "of".

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Michael Spicer.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendment No. 155, in page 114, line 29, at end insert—

"*Transactions effected in pursuance of section (Transfer Schemes under sections 63 and 64) (2)(c)*

4A.—(1) Sub-paragraph (2) below applies to any disposal (within the meaning of the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979) which is effected, and sub-paragraphs (3) and (4) below apply to any lease which is granted, in pursuance of a provision included in a transfer scheme by virtue of section *(Transfer schemes under sections 63 and 64)*(2)(c) of this Act.

(2) A disposal to which this sub-paragraph applies shall be taken for the purposes of the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979 to be effected for a consideration of such amount as would secure that on the disposal neither a gain nor a loss would accrue to the disponer.

(3) Subsection (6)(a) of section 37 of the Finance Act 1978 (capital allowances; long leases) shall not prevent the application of that section in any case where the lease is a lease to which this sub-paragraph applies.

(4) Where, in the case of any machinery or plant which is a fixture and on the provision of which for the purposes of the transferor's trade the transferor incurred capital expenditure, a lease of the relevant land (with or without other land) is a lease to which this sub-paragraph applies—

- (a) the lessor shall not be required to bring the disposal value of the machinery or plant into account in accordance with section 44 of the Finance Act 1971 (writing down allowances and balancing adjustments); and
- (b) so far as relating to the bringing of disposal values into account, that section and Schedule 17 to the Finance Act 1985 (capital allowances for fixtures) shall have effect as if—
  - (i) the capital expenditure incurred by the transferor had been incurred by the lessee on the provision of the machinery or plant wholly and exclusively for the purposes of the lessee's trade; and
  - (ii) the machinery or plant had become a fixture, immediately after the grant of the lease.

(5) In sub-paragraph (4) above "the transferor" means the transferor under the transfer scheme in question and expressions which are used in Schedule 17 to the Finance Act 1985 have the same meaning as in that Schedule; and in construing that sub-paragraph the provisions of section 511(2) of the 1988 Act and the corresponding earlier enactments shall be disregarded."

Amendment (a), to the Lords amendment, to leave out sub-paragraphs (1) and (2).

Lords amendments Nos. 156 and 157.

**Mr. Hardy:** I shall not detain the House for long, Mr. Speaker, but, as you know, I am interested in the protection of the rare species. When I saw the word "disponer", which I had never seen in a Bill before, I thought it reasonable to table an amendment to the Lords amendment to give the Minister the opportunity of explaining it.

However, I also have a suspicious mind and the other day I asked a supplementary question when the Minister told the House that he had saved the public a lot of money by prosecuting people who had disgracefully and fraudulently falsely claimed unemployment benefit. I suggested that the same resources and the same energy would have yielded a greater harvest if the Government had gone after the tax dodgers. When I read Lords amendment No. 155 and saw a reference to capital gains and the proposal that the disposal should produce

"neither a gain nor a loss",

it occurred to me that sometimes a capital gains loss is an asset.

I hope that the Minister will find my illustration interesting. Let us suppose that a writer of modern novels manages to produce one which is sufficiently salacious as to become a best seller. That property may be purchased for film rights, in which case there is a substantial capital gain. If the writer is allowed to set that capital gain against a loss, which could be an entirely notional loss, as a result of this privatisation exercise, he could be a considerable gainer, whether he were a disponer or not.

I shall not seek to press my amendment to a vote, but the Minister should offer us some reassurance and explanation. I have tabled the amendment partly because I want to know why the word "disponer" is included in Lords amendment No. 155 and partly because I want the Minister to give the House an assurance. Since those who

*[Mr. Hardy]*

have wished to evade income tax or many other forms of sometimes burdensome taxation have received a great deal of assistance during the past 10 years, I want to be absolutely sure that the privatisation of electricity will not also be possibly helpful in the longer term to those who are fortunate enough to select the small number of boards that might be successful and make a capital gain at the same time.

As I have said, I do not wish to detain the House or to force a Division on this matter, but we are entitled to a degree of reassurance and explanation from the Minister, which I am sure that he would wish to offer in view of the possibility of self-interest arising.

**Mr Michael Spicer:** It is perfectly fair game for the hon. Gentleman to start picking up words with junior Ministers at this time of night and to ask what they mean. That is a well known and legitimate game, and it is fine. The answer to the hon. Gentleman's questions may be coming from the Box, but I think and hope that I know it before it does.

These provisions are all about the transfer of assets and about disposals. They relate to people receiving new assets because of the schemes that will be coming forward. Through these technical and very neutral amendments, in which there is no question of tax breaks or of anybody gaining, the Government are allowing the transfer schemes made by the Central Electricity Generating Board, the Electricity Council or the Scottish boards to impose on one successor company an obligation to enter into agreements with another. In the case of the CEGB, I refer, for example, to a long-term lease in respect of land within the perimeter of a power station. The purpose of the amendment is simply to ensure that the fulfilment of such an obligation is tax neutral. The implications of that are dealt with in detail. If the hon. Gentleman is worried that gains could be set off against some future losses, the answer is that that could not happen. There is no question of any clever tax manipulation being permitted. The total effect is tax neutral.

**Mr. Hardy:** I am grateful to the Minister for that explanation.

*It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.*

*Ordered,*

That, at this day's sitting, the Electricity Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. John M. Taylor.]*

*Question again proposed,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 155 to 157, 80, and 163 to 167 agreed to. [One with Special Entry.]*

*Lords amendment:* No. 91, before clause 99, insert the following new clause—*Amendment etc. of Electricity Supply Pension Scheme*—

" . The provisions of Schedule *(The Electricity Supply Pension Scheme)* to this Act (which provide for amending the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme and for giving special protection to certain persons who have or may acquire rights under that scheme) shall have effect."

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take amendments Nos. 92, 168 and Government amendment (a).

**Mr. Frank Doran** (Aberdeen, South): The amendments relate to pension and superannuation schemes, which, at the moment, are on a statutory basis. It is unfortunate that pension arrangements did not receive much consideration in Committee. However, I appreciate that that was partly due to the fact that negotiations were continuing with the electricity boards' employers and trades unions and the amendments are the result of those negotiations.

The points that I am about to make relate to this and the subsequent group of amendments. What protection is there for members of existing pension schemes after privatisation? Paragraph 1(5) of new schedule 13 provides that regulations under that paragraph which provide some form of protection can be made only up to the new vesting day. Exactly the same applies to the pension schemes of the Scottish boards. We shall have to see those regulations when they are published, but what protection will there be after vesting day?

My constituents have already raised with me their fears in relation to the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board pension fund which is already embarking on a contributions holiday. I should declare an interest because I am still a member of that fund, having worked for the board for about five years.

Contributors to that board's pension fund and others are worried that employers are taking a contribution holiday. I have had experience of private employers who have tended to see the pension fund almost as an asset of the business rather than as an asset of the members of the fund, and I should like some clarification and assurances from the Minister of exactly what protections are on offer once those industries are privatised.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran) is right to say that the amendments have been brought forward at this stage as a result of consultations with those concerned. My hon. Friend the Minister of State, Scottish Office will answer his specific point on Scotland when he deals with the next group of amendments.

During our discussions of clause 99 in Committee, I gave an undertaking to bring forward an amendment to protect the pension rights of employees transferred to successor companies, in the event of the electricity supply pension scheme being wound up. This provision would replace the existing "no worsenment" protection under section 54 of the 1947 Act. My officials subsequently had long and detailed consultation with the industry and the electricity supply trade union council on the formulation of the no worsenment protection, which was the subject of a great deal of debate in Committee.

As a result of those discussions, the Government tabled amendments in another place to provide the framework for the continuing pension protection for existing employees, pensioners, dependants and frozen-benefit-holders on the transfer date. The Secretary of State is empowered to make regulations to place a duty on employers that such protected persons shall not be placed in any worse position because of the winding-up of the electricity supply pension scheme or through other specified circumstances, including transfers within the industry with continuity of employment. The regulations will enable any disputes arising in respect of the no worsenment provisions to be referred to arbitration.

Because the provisions became so long and so complex, they were transferred into a schedule, together with the original contents of clause 99.

I hope that hon. Members are satisfied that that meets our commitment given in Committee to introduce protections for pensions.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Lords amendment No. 92 agreed to.*

*Lords amendment No. 168, as amended, agreed to.*

*Lords amendment:* No. 93, before clause 100, insert the following new clause—

" . The provisions of Schedule *(The Scottish Pension Schemes)* to this Act (which provide for amending the Hydroboard Superannuation Fund and the South of Scotland Electricity Board's Superannuation Scheme and for giving special protection to certain persons who have or may acquire rights under those schemes) shall have effect."

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** With this we can discuss Lords amendments Nos. 94 and 169.

**Mr. Doran:** I should like the Minister to tell me about protection for the pension funds of Scottish boards.

**The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang):** It might be helpful if I said a brief word about the amendments. They transfer the contents of clause 100, which gives the Secretary of State power to amend the Scottish pension schemes, into a new schedule. They also introduce into the schedule new provisions relating to the protection of pension rights for certain persons. They have been prepared along similar lines to the amendment just introduced in relation to the electricity supply pension scheme in England and Wales. Like that amendment, it has two effects. First, it gives the Secretary of State for Scotland power to make regulations amending the two Scottish schemes. Secondly, it gives him the power to make regulations for protecting certain persons against any deterioration of their pension rights under the schemes. The amendments were introduced with the agreement of the Scottish boards and the trade unions in the industry in Scotland.

As I heard the question asked by the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran) in the last debate, I can save him from having to get to his feet. I understand his anxiety on behalf of some of the employees of the hydro board about the security of their pensions under the new arrangements. Privatisation brings no change to the arrangement; the trustees are still subject to the same obligations. If any trustees act fraudulently they will be subject to prosecution. Obviously, trustees must take decisions about investments in funds, and in so doing they take professional advice. Regular actuarial reviews are required by law to ensure that the trustees are aware of the value of the funds in relation to their liabilities. The hon. Gentleman mentioned trustees taking a contribution holiday, but that practice is by no means unusual—especially in recent years. Pension funds have substantial surpluses, and for that reason trustees feel able to take a holiday.

Paragraph 2(1) states:

"The Secretary of State may make regulations for the purpose of securing that . . .

(a) no person to whom paragraph 3(1) or (2) below applies"—

which, for the purposes of the provision, is an employee—

"is placed in any worst position by reason of . . . (ii) any amendment of a relevant scheme which results in benefits under that scheme being reduced, or contributions by employees being increased, and is made otherwise than in such circumstances as may be prescribed".

In other words, the purpose of that paragraph is to protect employees' rights, and the trade unions are well content with those arrangements.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 94, 169 to 173, 175 to 181 and 96 to 99 agreed to. [One with Special Entry.]*

Further consideration of Lords amendments adjourned.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

*To be further considered tomorrow.*

# Education (Assisted Places)

10.11 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. John Butcher):** I beg to move,

That the draft Education (Assisted Places) Regulations 1989, which were laid before this House on 26th June, be approved.

The draft regulations consolidate with certain small amendments, which I will describe, the Education (Assisted Places) Regulations 1985 as amended in 1986, 1987 and 1988.

The assisted places scheme was established in 1981 for the purpose of widening the educational opportunities of able children from less well-off families. It provides their parents with assistance towards the fees of some of the best independent schools in the country. The assistance is on a sliding scale based on parental income, and the principal changes embodied in the consolidating regulations are concerned with the annual revision of that scale.

In past years there have also been technical amendments to keep the definition of "total parental income" for the purposes of the scheme constant as tax legislation changes. This year, one such amendment takes account of the position of assisted places scheme—APS—parents who either receive or pay maintenance payments. But I venture to suggest that all of the amendments, which I shall describe in a moment, are straightforward.

Part I of the draft regulations deals with citation, commencement, application and interpretation. By virtue of draft regulation 1, the regulations are to come into force on 12 August 1989. Part II of the draft regulations deals with eligibility for assisted places, and is unchanged from earlier years.

Part III deals with remission of fees. Draft regulation 11 of part III has been amended to increase from £950 to £1,000 the amount that may be deducted from the relevant total income of an assisted place holder's parents in respect of each child or dependent relative other than the assisted place holder. Parts IV and V cover administrative arrangements and miscellaneous requirements and are unchanged.

Schedule 1 provides for parents' income for the purposes of the scheme to be computed on the basis of their "total income", as defined with reference to tax legislation in regulation 11. The provisions of paragraph 5 of schedule 1 ensure that, despite changes in the taxable status of maintenance payments introduced in the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988, APS parents making maintenance payments will continue to be able to offset them against their "relevant income". The provisions also ensure that APS parents receiving such payments will continue to count them as part of "relevant income". The provisions, however, only preserve the status quo as far as the assisted places scheme is concerned.

Draft schedule 2 sets out the income scale used for assessing parents' contributions towards fees. As usual, this has been uprated to take account of movements in the retail prices index. The threshold at or below which parents pay nothing towards fees is raised from £7,258 to £7,584. Draft schedule 3 revokes the 1985 regulations and the regulations amending them.

The provisions and amendments that I have described will ensure the continued smooth running of the assisted places scheme, and I trust that they will find favour with hon. Members on both sides of the House.

10.15 pm

**Ms. Hilary Armstrong** (Durham, North-West): This debate gives us an opportunity to review the workings of the scheme that the Government brought into effect during the passage of the Education Act 1980. It has given me a chance to read some of the *Hansard* reports of the time, and very interesting reading they made. I have been able to re-examine the Government's intentions in introducing the scheme. The Secretary of State said in October 1980 that the scheme would lead to a greater social mix within independent schools. I have tried to find evidence of the fulfilment of that criterion, but I have to say that the evidence is very thin. It is true that each year almost exactly 40 per cent. of APS pupils have been entitled to free places, and over half have come from families with incomes below the national average. We must, however, ask ourselves whether that constitutes a social mix.

A research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council showed that over 50 per cent. of pupils had fathers from professional and managerial occupations: only 7 per cent. came from families with manual working backgrounds. The research also found that 68 per cent. of pupils' mothers and 51 per cent. of their fathers had attended selective or independent schools. Very few represented the kind of able working class child whom, according to the initial publicity, the scheme would rescue from inadequate inner city comprehensives.

That is the problem with which we are dealing: those whom the scheme has helped are those who would probably have attended such schools in any case, and whose parents—despite having fallen on hard times, often through divorce—wanted to ensure that their children went to the kind of schools that they had been to.

My predecessor in the constituency of Durham, North-West said in the 1980 debate:

> "It is unique to this country that we seem to believe that our top civil servants, top management, those who are to be leaders of the community have to be educated in separate schools, having been taken away from the rest of society and moved into a secluded quarter."

So many people who have aspirations towards independent schools see themselves as separate—and wish to separate their children—from the ordinary, everyday stream of life. That is a sad indictment of our society. The assisted places scheme has not led to a greater social mix in independent schools; it has enabled the existing mix to continue.

The Government's second intention was that the scheme would increase the number of working-class children going on to higher education. It is well known that I have been a strong advocate of providing such opportunities. However, the figures and what has happened under the scheme show that the take-up of sixth-form places has never risen much above 75 per cent. and some 60 schools have consistently recruited below their quota. Almost two thirds of those taking up places under the scheme for the first time at 16 are already fee-paying pupils in independent schools. The regulations, in spirit if not in letter, provide that more than 60 per cent. of assisted pupils should be recruited from the maintained sector. It is clear from recruitment to sixth forms that assisted pupils are coming from the rest of the independent sector. Those two factors mean that the scheme is not providing access to higher education for working-class young people.

A recently published general household survey carried out in 1986 shows that the daughters of unskilled workers proved to be testimony to the belief. It shows that the number of daughters of unskilled workers going to university was less than 0·5 per cent.

The Government's third aim was that the scheme would not be aimed at sustaining the independent sector. That has made the Labour party somewhat cynical. How can a school continue to call itself independent when 40 per cent. of its pupils are there because of public funding through the assisted places scheme? The estimated cost of the scheme in the current financial year is £59 million. That is a substantial public contribution to the so-called independent sector. Clearly and inevitably many schools would be in great difficulty if that money were withdrawn from them. However, they need to prepare for a Labour Government withdrawing that money from them.

The fourth aim that the Government had in mind was to provide academic training for working-class young people. The implication was that the Government did not believe that such academic training could be provided in the maintained sector. Let us consider the criteria for what is academic. This year, the Government are adding another 52 schools to the list of schools to which the assisted places scheme will apply. That is partly to redress the regional imbalances. Of the 470 schools that made provisional offers of places on the scheme in 1981, its first year, more than 200 were discarded by the Department of Education and Science as unsuitable for such an academic scheme.

The 1989 newcomers to the list include several schools that were accepted by the DES then, but changed their minds about participating in the scheme. Clearly there are others that would have been acceptable had they applied. But the list includes a number that would almost certainly not have met the 1981 criteria. More than half the new schools have fewer than 400 pupils. How can the Government reassure anyone that those schools would be likely to offer the wide range of A-level subjects taught to viable groups in the way that the 1981 criteria required? Some lack any proven record of achievement in sending pupils forward to higher education. The Government have clearly abandoned the initial aims of the scheme as described to us.

I return to the subject of regional inequalities. The Government said that the scheme could be regarded as a national scholarship scheme for bright children from modest backgrounds. Indeed, the measure refers to the desirability of securing an equitable distribution of assisted places throughout the country and between boys and girls.

It does not need great brain power to appreciate that there is an uneven distribution nationally in the independent sector, particularly of schools that are called academically excellent, to which the scheme was supposed to relate. There is certainly an uneven distribution among those willing to offer substantial numbers of assisted places.

In 1988, for example, there were 464 new places available in Greater Manchester, 346 in the Liverpool and Birkenhead area and 225 in Bristol and Bath. By contrast, there were 70 in Nottingham, 55 in Leeds, 16 in Sheffield and none in Leicester. I give those figures simply to demonstrate that the Government have failed, even on their own criteria, to ensure an equal distribution of resources.

As I have shown, the Government have failed to meet the intentions of which they spoke when they introduced the scheme in 1980. In addition, the costings have been startling. We are lectured daily by the Government on the need for economy. We are now being lectured about the need to be careful with public spending because, they say, high public spending is the cause of rocketing inflation.

If that is so, we must look carefully at the rising costs in the assisted places scheme. In 10 years, Government expenditure per pupil has increased by 275 per cent., which is certainly more than the rise in Government expenditure in the maintained sector. Indeed, if public spending in that sector had gone up by 275 per cent., we would probably not be suffering now from some of the problems that exist, but I will not embarrass the Government by dwelling on those problems.

It is clear from the figures that in the last four years 50 additional pupils have been covered by the scheme, for an extra £1,700,000. I appreciate the problems that the Government are facing in relation to inflation, but figures of that sort go beyond reality and sensibility.

Where is the public accountability in those rising costs? Who is in control of the expenditure? Who are, and where are, those publicly elected people who are determining fees? We are witnessing inefficiency. How can the Government guarantee value for money when they do not know what is happening and when they have no involvement in the setting of fees or in the development of the nature of schools? They have even opted out of any responsibility for the curriculum. We return to a point that we have talked about before. When the House was considering the Education Reform Bill, the Opposition were bemused that the Government could talk about a national curriculum yet exclude independent schools. Are they saying that people in independent schools are not part of the British nation?

**Mr. Gerald Howarth** (Cannock and Burntwood): The hon. Lady does not understand how the system works. In the independent sector, parents vote with their feet and, if the curriculum is inadequate, they take their children away. In the maintained sector, until the reforms introduced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, people had no choice. No choice is the Labour party's policy.

**Ms. Armstrong:** It is late at night, so I will forgive the hon. Gentleman for his inaccuracies. We are talking about public money. It is not a matter of parents making an automatic choice. All they can do is send their child to a school that is part of the assisted places scheme. Conservative Members know that parents do not move kids around as though they were pounds of butter and that they have consideration for their children, even if Conservative Members have not. Whatever the arguments about choice, this is public money and there should be public accountability. Those young people have the right to be treated as part of the national curriculum.

It is interesting that this legislation comes at the end of a week in which hon. Members and people outside the House have been much concerned about the Government's education policy and where it has taken children. People have talked about the massive problems

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for children who cannot get a place in any school because there is no teacher. When will the Government take the education of all Britain's children seriously? When will they take their commitment to children in Tower Hamlets, who have no access to school because there is no teacher, as seriously as they take throwing money at the independent sector?

This week, there has been public criticism of the money that the Government have thrown at city technology colleges, a system which is meant to create different groups of children. The Government are doing that with public money. It is used to justify the Government's ideological dogma. The Government are denying opportunities to children and know that they cannot deliver the national curriculum to some children this September.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman** (Lancaster) *rose*——

**Ms. Armstrong:** They are making families pay for children—

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman** *rose*——

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett** (Pembroke) *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. It is clear that the hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong) is not giving way.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman** *rose*——

**Ms. Armstrong:** The hon. Lady was not present at the beginning of my speech. Therefore, I am not prepared to give way.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. It is clear that the hon. Member for Durham, North-West is not giving way.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was not asking the hon. Lady to give way; I was raising a point of order. Is it in order for her to say that this is public money, when it is money raised from industry?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** That is a matter for debate, not a point of order.

**Ms. Armstrong:** The hon. Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) should examine the amount of capital investment that the Department of Education and Science puts into city technology colleges.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** When the hon. Lady was challenged by my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth), who asked her whether Labour was in favour of the assisted places scheme, she did not answer the question. Will she not come clean and admit that the Labour party intends to get rid of choice altogether? The Labour party does not believe in the assisted places scheme. It has said that it will remove the charitable status of the independent sector, and that it will get rid of the city technology colleges and the grant-maintained schools. The Labour party proposes a statist education system with no choice at all, in which everyone has to be educated under the control of the state. Why does she not come clean on that and admit that the consumerism in which the Labour party pretends to believe does not really exist?

**Ms. Armstrong:** I know that it is late. The hon. Gentleman understands what I am saying, although he pretends to misunderstand. I am in favour of choice, but I am as much in favour of choice for those kids in Tower Hamlets as I am for those who get into Cheltenham ladies college. Those children in Tower Hamlets, who are going into primary schools in which teachers have had no opportunity to update themselves in science, deserve choice as much as children whose parents decide that they want an independent education for them. I am not against people having choice, but I want choice for all people and not just some.

**Mr. Michael Jack** (Fylde): Will the hon. Lady give way?

**Ms. Armstrong:** No. I promised the Minister that I would speak for only 15 minutes.

**Mr. Jack:** Will the hon. Lady give way on that point?

**Ms. Armstrong:** No, because the hon. Gentleman was not here at the beginning of the debate.

The Government are denying opportunity to the majority of children. They are demonstrating that they care about the few and that they believe that one can give a good education only to a few. We do not believe that, and we are not prepared to accept that. As a result, we will oppose the regulations.

10.37 pm

**Mr. Bob Dunn** (Dartford): I am delighted to take part in this short debate, and I welcome the Government's determination to continue to support and extend the assisted places scheme. I recollect that the last occasion on which I spoke as a Minister, on 5 July 1988, was in support of changes in the regulations on assisted places. I remember quoting the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and I think that it is worth repeating his words today. He said in *The Guardian* on 23 March:

> "First, we must recognise that a nation of consumers enjoying relatively high living standards becomes literally much more choosy, much more interested in choice and variety."

He said that then, and as far as I know, for he is an honourable man, he has not rescinded that comment or changed the interpretation I chose to give those words at the time.

It was clear from the speech of the hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong)—and I welcomed her comments about her distinguished predecessor, thereby reminding us of her commitment to the hereditary principle—that we have been debating over some eight years this scheme which gives many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds an opportunity to seek and benefit from an education in good schools in the independent sector.

When the education spokesmen of the Labour party, starting with the hon. Member for Blackburn and going on to the hon. Members for Durham, North-West and for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith), talk about the needs of working class children, I want to reach for my political gun. There they sit, products of the British middle class, trying to dictate to the House what they believe are the needs and aspirations of working class children. The truth is that the Labour party has always regarded members of the alleged working class as political pawns in the sense of being members of the tied cottage culture. When we decide to extend the chance to create a ladder of opportunity, for children who in themselves——

**Mr. Frank Haynes** (Ashfield): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Dunn:** I will give way in time, but not in the middle of my best point. I will determine the debate when I have the floor. I certainly do not intend to give way to the middle class Members of Parliament sitting on the Opposition Front Bench who tell the House what needs to be done for children who, until now, had access only to that neighbourhood school that their local authority had dictated that they should attend.

The hon. Member for Durham, North-West asked why the Conservative party believed in the principle of the assisted places scheme.

**Mr. Haynes:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Dunn:** I will give way in time, but the hon. Gentleman must learn to be patient. Patience is a virtue seldom exercised by the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) and, in the dying time that he is in the House, he should learn it. He has become an institute—the parliamentary foghorn of the Labour party—but he is now to hand in his bell and retire to Derbyshire, or some place like that.

The hon. Member for Durham, North-West asked why we were in favour of the scheme. The answer is simply because it provides a ladder of opportunity that was destroyed by the consensus of both Governments in the past, which destroyed many excellent schools in pursuit of the peculiar notion of egalitarianism.

The hon. Member for Ashfield has been extremely virtuous, so I shall now give way to him, but let me remind him that I am not deaf.

**Mr. Haynes:** Earlier today I told Mr. Speaker that he called me last in business questions because I am the most patient of hon. Members. I have a thick skin, and the hon. Gentleman can throw whatever he likes at me. He spoke about the middle class Members on the Opposition Front Bench, but I was born in poverty and worked for 35 years in the pit before I came to this place. He can put that in his pipe and smoke it.

**Mr. Dunn:** As I understand it, the hon. Gentleman is not a Labour party spokesman on education. I was referring to those who exercise that peculiar privilege at the moment.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** Had the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) lived in Lancaster, whatever background he came from, he could have gone to the Lancaster Royal grammar school, had he the ability, which many of my hon. Friends have. The Labour party destroyed the chances of people like the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Dunn:** There is no doubt that my hon. Friend has made an important point.

I was speaking about the logic behind setting up the scheme in 1981. I welcome the extension of choice, and I welcome the decision of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to extend into the list a further 52 schools. I also welcome regulation 18 in part V, which deals with the publication of information. I hope that in time the Government will give us some idea of how those children who started off in the scheme in the early 1980s and who must now be entering higher and continuing education have been performing, given the good start that they received.

The point of the debate is simply to remind the House that the scheme exists and that the scheme is working. Of course, I believe that we should do more to make it more accessible to many more children in other parts of the country. I welcome the support of the hon. Member for Durham, North-West, implicit in what she said about the denial of places in the city of Leicester. If the hon. Lady asks us for assisted places in Leicester, who are we to deny that opportunity to the people of Leicester?

I will say to the hon. Lady that it was a good try, but that she has remained wholly unconvincing in the case that she has set out. She has continued to be an ideologue—I think that it is an insult to be called an ideologue—in what she seeks to achieve. Self-congratulation is the prerogative of the Labour party, and every July when we debate the assisted places regulations Labour Members prove that they know nothing about working class aspirations and that they care even less.

10.46 pm

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): The hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn) was on his best form, berating the Labour party from a position of small influence, just as he used to do as a former member of Southwark council—a council of 64 on which the Tories have but seven members.

I want to say two main things about the regulations, as the latest in a succession of my hon. Friends who have spoken in these debates since 1980. The first is that the Government's scheme is unprincipled and the second is that it is inconsistent.

The assisted places scheme is unprincipled because it denies the proper priorities that there should be in the education of our young people.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** What about John Stuart Mill?

**Mr. Hughes:** John Stuart Mill would be completely at one with my argument.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** No, he would not.

**Mr. Hughes:** Yes, he would. I shall deal with that point and a point made earlier by the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) in a moment.

The Conservative party's analysis is flawed for one obvious reason. The lack of principle manifests itself in the evidence that it is a greater Government priority to spend public money on supporting a few—in a system in which it is hoped they will become privileged—than it is to spend more on the public sector, in which lack of funding results in many children's education not moving from the bottom rung. *[Interruption.]* I stress—to the hon. Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) and others—that those of us in whose constituencies education is most in crisis as a result of Government policy and failure to fund see the results clearly. The money is not being spent where it should be spent—to assist needy schools, children and

*[Mr. Hughes]*

teachers. If it were not spent on the assisted places scheme, there might be more money available out of the public purse to help more people.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Hughes:** I shall give way in a second. The hon. Lady's belated arrival was compounded by——

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** I arrived later than I intended.

**Mr. Hughes:** Yes, I know. The hon. Lady's late arrival was compounded by the ignorance displayed in her intervention.

On CTCs, the Government declared that they wished the majority of money to come from industry and the minority from the Department or the Treasury. That has not happened. The Government did not find more than a few people in industry who were prepared to fund CTCs.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** Oh yes, they did.

**Mr. Hughes:** No, what I have said is factually correct, and Ministers would be unable to deny it.

The majority of money has come from the Department of Education and Science—80 per cent. to 20 per cent., the exact opposite of what was the original Government plan. There are two reasons for that. First, much of industry —I have spoken to several people—is not supportive of what they see as a divisive scheme. Secondly, this latest Government initiative that seeks to fund other things rather than the general education system is perceived to be what it is—a tokenist attempt, which, in its tokenism, deprives others of considerable resources where the greater priorities are and the greater money should be spent.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** Having been a social worker in the east end of London, I was well aware of the ability of youngsters who really tried in those areas to get away from their schools and have wider educational opportunities in grammar schools. It is a tragedy that those youngsters are now denied that chance. I believe firmly that the assisted places scheme is giving back to those youngsters from disadvantaged homes the chance of which the Labour party, with the connivance of the Liberal party, deprived them.

**Mr. Hughes:** Last night I was at a farewell party for the head teacher of a primary school in my constituency, where the children speak at home 28 different mother languages. One of the former pupils of that primary school is now at Cambridge, having gone entirely through the county sector, and is expected to get a first-class honours science degree. There is no reason why to have excellence in education one has to perpetuate a system which divided children at 11 years on the basis of a single test which was shown academically to be often inaccurate in assessing people's ability, and cast children into two groups—the sheep and the goats—for good, to the great detriment of many of those who went into the secondary modern as opposed to the grammar school sector.

It is also inconsistent, this year above all, for Government Ministers to argue in favour of a continuation of the assisted places scheme. It is inconsistent because, if the Government are to be believed, their education policy over the past 10 years has been successful—by their argument, the standards have gone up and good reforms have been made. If the county system is so much better now than it was 10 years ago, so much less is there a case for paying people to leave it to go into the independent sector. Even less so for the reason that this year, as a result of the Education Reform Act 1988, we will see the national curriculum in place. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear".] I agree entirely—hear, hear—and I am supportive of the objectives of a national curriculum. However, I hope that the Minister of State at the Home Office who assented to the support for the national curriculum will agree with the hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong) and me that it is entirely inconsistent that it should not also apply to certain schools —those very schools to which the Government fund children to go. The private sector, which is free from any national curriculum and which can sometimes teach very poorly, is funded by the taxpayer and the public purse to ensure that certain children get on to what clearly is a ladder, not necessarily of opportunity for academic excellence, but of opportunity to become more privileged because of the result that the private education system often produces.

The inconsistency is that in the year when we have the introduction of the national curriculum, instead of saying, "Our education reforms have been so good and we now have the national curriculum which will be so much better, so we do not need the assisted places scheme any more", the Government are saying, "We still need and we still want to encourage more and more people to leave the public sector and to go into the private sector of education, funded by the public purse".

The hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood said that the merit of the market place was that the parents, in choosing independent schools, vote with their feet. They do not—they vote with their wallets. The difference is that many people do not have anything in their wallets with which to vote. By picking just a few of the many hundreds of thousands of children whose parents do not have anything in their wallets, one is not changing the fundamental inequality that exists. One is not changing that inequality if some people can buy their way into the private sector and if the private sector is supported by a few others who have their places provided out of public funds when that is not an option for the majority of people in this country.

I am not in favour of a monopoly of county or state education; I am in favour of independent schools—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."]—but I am not in favour of independent fee-paying schools in which some people have the right to buy their way into a position of advantage for their child when another child has no such advantage.

**Mr. Gerald Howarth:** The hon. Gentleman must realise that the downward pressure on fees in the independent sector is due to the fact that parents do not have unlimited wallets. If the hon. Gentleman took the time to study the parents who send their children to independent schools, he would find that they are not often "rich"; they are simply parents who are making the most enormous sacrifices to send their children to such schools because they believe them to be better. The fact that it is their money—and that they are careful about how they spend their money— means that they do vote with their feet. If a school is inadequate they will not send their child to that school, they will withdraw the child and send him or her somewhere else. It is wholly untrue that independent schools are acting in a vacuum; they are subject to the schools inspectorate like the whole of the maintained sector, so there is some kind of supervision.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** Of course, there is some kind of supervision. However, I am very aware that, as the hon. Gentleman well knows, it is not the same kind of supervision. I am also aware of the pattern of and the trends in the people who send their children to private schools. In constituencies such as mine where, in general, the secondary education provided by the local authority is poor, some parents make great sacrifices to buy their children out of that system—and I understand that. Often those parents do so because they think that it will give their children an advantage. Sometimes it does, but sometimes it does not. However, those parents do not do so necessarily or normally because the private system provides better educational standards, but because they believe that, all things taken together, it will give their children an advantage at the end of their schooling.

A far better system would be to ensure that there is indeed choice, but choice that is not determined by whether one can pay to exercise it and that is not precluded from those who cannot pay but still wish to exercise it, and choice across a whole range of options in which money is not the object.

I had hoped that when introducing the debate the Minister would say how the assisted places scheme was achieving the objectives that he and his predecessors had set for it. He explained the changes in the regulations, but, as the hon. Member for Durham, North-West said at the beginning of her speech, over the eight or nine years that the system has been operating, there is no evidence that it has achieved the objectives originally set for it. The only evidence that exists is that the Government have continued to spend a proportion of taxpayers' money when increasingly over that time the greater priorities have been elsewhere. When a Government do not have the courage to put their money where their priorities should be, it is a sad day for education.

10.58 pm

**Mr. Butcher:** First, I give my hon. Friend the Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn) the assurance that we shall be looking at the outcome of the scheme. It is right that we should follow up and examine the achievements of those who pass through the assisted places scheme as they move into higher education or careers.

The speech of the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) was pretty mixed up. There was a time when the Liberal party was committed to pluralism and believed in choice, but the moment the hon. Gentleman was tested on that point, he implied that he believed in independent schools, but not in fee-paying independent schools. If that is his position, I assume that he really means that he likes independent schools which have free places. Therefore, can I assume that the hon. Gentleman is in favour of grant-maintained schools?

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** There should be plurality and diversity in education in all sorts of schools, but the criteria for getting there should not be the ability to pay.

**Mr. Butcher:** That is, I think, an interesting commitment from the Liberal party to grant-maintained schools, and I am grateful for that. If the hon. Gentleman is to stay true to his logic, I hope that he will declare his commitment to city technology colleges. I understand that he runs with both the hare and the hounds in his constituency on that matter.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** I think that the hon. Gentleman knows that I am a governor of a school in Southwark that is going through the process of deciding whether it should be a CTC. I voted against the proposal because for the Government to refuse that school £1·5 million to be relocated and rebuilt on a different site and then to bribe the school by offering it £10 million to become a CTC was completely inappropriate and against the wishes of the community, the parents and all locally-elected representatives. I do not believe in that sort of selective pressure on the local education system.

**Mr. Butcher:** The Liberal party is clearly all over the place and that explains why it is no longer concerned about policy formation and is descending into the sort of agitprop irrelevancies which now pose as policy in that party.

**Mr. Derek Fatchett** (Leeds, Central): Let me provide the Minister with some information because he did not take part in the debates last year on the Education Reform Bill and he will have missed the strong and fundamental opposition to grant-maintained schools offered by the then education spokesperson for what was then the Liberal party who is now the leader of the Social and Liberal Democrats. When the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) says that the SLD believes in pluralism, he really means that he has one policy and his leader has another.

**Mr. Butcher:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. It is at this point that the cross-party consensus comes into question.

The hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong) began by talking about the social mix in independent schools which take pupils under the approved places scheme. I thought that she was leaning towards the proposition that in order to improve the social mix in her terms, and even in the Government's terms, to get more young people from low-income families into those schools, we should increase the number of assisted places available. If she is true to her logic she should support us in increasing the number of places and we shall then only have to agree by how many the current number of 35,000 places must be increased. Then we would get the sort of social mix for which I thought that she was arguing.

But matters get much worse. We are fortunate tonight in having all the members of the Labour party's education team on parade on the Opposition Front Bench. The hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) went to Reading grammar school, a selective school. The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) went to Lincoln school, a selective school in his time. The hon. Member for Durham, North-West is the only one, consistent with her principles, who went to a non-selective school. The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) attended Brentwood school, now in the assisted places scheme. So far so good. In his time it was a direct grant school, which he attended from 1957 to 1964. I wish that I had had that advantage. I went to a common or garden grammar school.

**Mr. Jack Straw** (Blackburn): It shows.

**Mr. Butcher:** Under the direct grant arrangements a capitation fee was paid by the DES on behalf of every pupil. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman, laugh as he may at the moment, was the beneficiary of state assistance to attend a selective school. Why is it that tonight he and his privileged team of colleagues, who are perched on the Opposition Front Bench like starlings, wish to say to Brentwood school, the old school of the hon. Member for Blackburn, "You can't do it under the APS"? Why is the hon. Gentleman saying that parents on low incomes should not have the same opportunities that his parents had? It seems that they are not to have that choice if he has his way. If he is to be consistent with his philosophy, he should support the Government.

**Mr. Straw:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for informing the House of what could be read in any of the reference works of the past 15 years. I am not in the least ashamed of where my parents happened to arrange for me to go to school. None of us is responsible for where we went to school. Instead we are responsible for where our children go to school. When we went to school, there were no comprehensive schools. All schools were selective. As the Minister wishes to trade family histories, he should be made aware that my youngest sister failed the 11-plus. It was only because comprehensive education was available in the adjoining education division that she had the chance to take advantage of higher education. The Labour party is concerned that there should be real choice for everyone and not merely for a privileged few. That is why we have pushed for the comprehensive principle throughout the country.

**Mr. Butcher:** The hon. Gentleman has done nothing to persuade me or, I think, the House that the inconsistency embodied in his own career does not remain strong. The privileged bunch on the Opposition Front Bench is saying that it will deny opportunities to children of poor and less well-off families through the APS. It is a scheme which benefited one of the bunch directly. Two more of its members enjoyed privilege with state funding in a selective system. I find its position difficult to contemplate.

Why do we help children whose parents are on low incomes? I shall use some real examples. The Labour party has been pretty good of late—let us pay it the compliment—of taking individual cases and making general points from them. I shall take the opportunity of taking some individual cases and making general points from them. I shall present real examples of pupils who have done well against the odds through the APS. There was the girl suffering from cystic fibrosis whose widowed mother put her through an APS school in Surrey. Last year, she left that school with one A and two B grades at A-level and she is now studying law at university.

**Ms. Armstrong:** Will the Minister give way?

**Mr. Butcher:** Let me finish.

There was the Coventry boy whose four A grades and one B at A-level won him a place at Oxford, where he is now reading mathematics. I am sure that his father, an unemployed labourer, is rightly proud. There was the London assisted pupil who achieved two As and a C at A-level last year. Both parents are blind. I am sure that with that handicap bringing up children can be a monumental struggle. If the assisted place gave those parents the reassurance that their child was being educated according to their wishes, who would begrudge them that? We believe that they should have that choice. If the local neighbourhood comprehensive school is not to their choice, they should have the opportunity to send their child elsewhere.

**Ms. Armstrong:** Is the Minister really saying that that opportunity should be available only to those on the assisted places scheme? Is he saying that such an opportunity could not be made available in the local comprehensive? Is he saying that he is not committed to ensuring that that opportunity is available in every comprehensive school in the country, for every child?

**Mr. Butcher:** No, I am not saying any of those things. The hon. Lady has just dug herself a very deep hole. If she examines the Education Reform Act 1988, which she opposed root and branch, she will find that a theme runs through it. It will be seen that in the case both of grant-maintained schools and CTCs the Government will be giving the independent sector real competition and a real run for its money—because we have expectations of the state's free system that are the same as those that we have in respect of the independent system. The Government are giving real choice in those terms.

The examples I gave related to people who opted for a certain ethos. We say that that same ethos can come through in our state systems, through the grant-maintained schools and through the CTCs. We are the friends of the underprivileged in that regard.

**Mr. Dunn:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the Opposition's contribution is quite bizarre? They are saying that because something cannot be available to all, it should not be available to anyone. Presumably the same applies, in the Opposition's view, to those people who cannot afford to buy their own house—and the Opposition would argue also that because some people cannot afford to buy a car, no one should own a car. That is the logic of the politics of envy.

**Mr. Butcher:** My hon. Friend the Whip advised me not to prolong the debate, and in order to put Labour out of its misery we should not do so. We have been given enough material tonight to keep us going until the next general election.

Labour has been exposed as the party not of equality and opportunity but of dull uniformity and mediocrity. That is Labour's game. It believes in equality—full stop. We believe in true equality of opportunity. I shall sit down and challenge the Opposition to undertake a little research. They have not done much, and they ought to do more.

We know which schools the members of the Shadow Cabinet attended. My estimate is that one third of them attended independent schools. I say to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) that they are a tough bunch, are they not? They are a privileged lot. One third of their number attended independent schools, and another third attended selective schools—and only one third of them shared the hon. Lady's lonely new tradition of attending a comprehensive school.

**Ms. Armstrong:** I am amazed at the Minister's ignorance of educational history. It took Labour Governments to introduce comprehensive education. I confess to attending a selective school after I took the 11 plus. My predecessor as Member of Parliament for my constituency was chairman of the education committee and took that school out of selectivity and made it a comprehensive school, which was an enlightening and uplifting experience for me.

The Minister should know and understand that it took legislation in this House to move towards non-selective education, and that his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, when Education Secretary, took more schools out of selection than any previous Secretary of State for Education.

**Mr. Butcher:** I have had quite enough fun tonight, and I commend the regulations to the House.

*Question put:—*

*The House divided:* Ayes 93, Noes 17.

**Division No. 314]** **[11.14 pm**

AYES

Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Aspinwall, Jack
Baldry, Tony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Fallon, Michael
Forman, Nigel
Fox, Sir Marcus
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Maclean, David
Mans, Keith
Miller, Sir Hal
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Heathcote-Amory and Mr. John M. Taylor.

NOES

Armstrong, Hilary
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Fatchett, Derek
Foster, Derek
Hood, Jimmy
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
McWilliam, John
Pike, Peter L.
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Straw, Jack
Wallace, James
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and Mr. Dennis Skinner.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the draft Education (Assisted Places) Regulations 1989, which were laid before this House on 26th June, be approved.

## Mr. Jens Soering

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

11.25 pm

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** (Southend, East): I wish to raise an important constitutional issue and, as is the case with so many important constitutional issues—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. Will hon. Members who are not staying for the Adjournment debate please leave the Chamber quietly?

**Mr. Taylor:** The matter that I raise tonight is important and fundamental for British sovereignty. Sadly, many of these issues arise late at night when few people notice them. It is, however, important that I get the facts of the case on the record.

I am grateful for this opportunity to raise the implications of an instruction from the European Court in Strasbourg that the United Kingdom should not fulfil its extradition arrangements with the United States and return Mr. Jens Soering to Virginia to face charges of his involvement in a horrific double murder.

The decision of the court appears to involve an astonishing extension of the powers of the court, a major insult to the free democracy of the United States and dangerous implications for our national security and for the rights of Parliament. It is obvious that the European Court in Strasbourg has been extending its power, as is invariably the case with European institutions. The scope of its present jurisdiction seems to go far beyond the tight and specific articles which were laid down in the convention of 1953.

In this case, hon. Members will recall that, because the original signatories were determined that the court should have no power to interfere with capital punishment authorised by national Parliaments, article 2(1) of the convention stated:

> "No-one shall be deprived of his life intentionally, save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which the penalty is provided by law."

Nothing could be clearer. If it was a question of capital punishment, the court could not interfere. But despite that clear statement and guidance, the court has instructed Britain not to extradite a person who was to face a charge of involvement in one of the most brutal, evil and monstrous murders ever committed.

The facts of the murder are abundantly clear. Jens Soering is accused of slashing Derek Hayson, aged 72, and his wife, Nancy, in the throat in March 1985 and then of stabbing them repeatedly in their Virginia home in circumstances with black magic overtones. The walls of that elderly man's house were daubed with blood and the number 666, which is allegedly the sign of the devil, was gouged out of the floorboards. Bloody footprints suggested that the alleged killers danced in the couples' blood.

After the killings, Mr. Soering and the couple's daughter, Elizabeth, left America and arrived in Britain in January 1986 with false documents. They were arrested and gaoled for 12 months at Kingston Crown court. Police found wigs, false moustaches and bogus driving licences in their bedsit.

After her sentence, Miss Hayson returned to Virginia, where she was sentenced to 90 years' imprisonment as an accessory to a double murder. She did not fight extradition but simply went back to America to face the charge.

However, rather than face similar charges, Mr. Soering has been experiencing the judicial delights of the European Court in Strasbourg and, in consequence of its astonishing generosity of spirit, can presumably now remain in Britain or elsewhere in Europe for the rest of his life and not be required to return to the United States to face the charge of bloody murder.

The British courts require him to return to the United States of America, although, for reasons which I hope that the Home Secretary will explain, it was made clear that the United Kingdom did not wish Mr. Soering to face capital punishment in the United States of America if he were found guilty. I hope that the Minister will say why that was said. Capital punishment has always been a free vote issue in this House and I do not believe that there is any Government policy to communicate on such matters.

Do the Government intend to accept the European Court's decision? Are they worried about what seems to be a huge extension of the powers seized by the court? The court has argued that the time taken in the United States of America for appeals could be so lengthy that it would inflict unreasonable degradation and inhumanity on Mr. Soering if he were found guilty.

The Government have the power, if they wish to use it, to tell the European Court to jump in the lake. It is not part of the Common Market and it is not the European Court of Justice, but the European Court of Human Rights. When the court made another remarkable decision last year on the rights of alleged terrorists to appear before a judge at an early stage in the tension, the Home Secretary made it clear in Parliament on 6 December, as reported in column 211 of *Hansard,* that we could decide to derogate under article 15. More fundamentally, he suggested that we could decide to withdraw from the court's jurisdiction.

The Home Secretary should be aware that, if he goes along with the court's decision, he will inflict a massive injury and insult on the United States of America, which is a democratic ally which never fails to help Britain in the battles against international crime and terrorism. It would also be a moral crime inflicted on the relatives of the murdered elderly couple to fail to send to the courts in Virginia a person accused of the killings.

What will the Government do? The European Court judgment also affects the rights of Parliament. If Parliament decided in future to reintroduce capital punishment for murder or terrorism the decision would be an ineffective joke, unless we could satisfy the European Court of the acceptability of our appeal mechanism.

There is a rising tide of concern in the Conservative party, in Parliament and in Britain generally about the extent to which non-elected European bodies are seizing the rights of our elected Parliament, elected Government and respected courts of law. At some stage we must make a stand. I believe that the time has come in the shameful case of the Strasbourg decision on Jens Soering.

What will happen to Mr. Soering? Can he stay in Britain for the rest of his life and, presumably, with our European Community arrangements, go to Germany or anywhere and live on social security for the rest of his life, if he wants, and no doubt be the first of many? What are the rights of Parliament? What is our attitude to the European Court if it constantly extends its powers? The

Minister must be aware that the European Court of Justice is extending its powers as well as the European Court in Strasbourg.

I can think of no issue more serious for our constitution or relations with our friends in the United States of America. I hope that the Minister will bear in mind the fact that they help us enormously, for example, to deal with terrorism and the IRA. This is a serious case. I know the Minister's conscientious attitude to justice and of the great work that he does at the Home Office. I hope that he will give some hope to those who are acutely worried by this dreadful case.

11.33 pm

**The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten):** I hope that I can give some hope to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) and to others who are worried about this case. I congratulate him on bringing it to the attention of the House.

I listened extremely carefully and take my hon. Friend's comments seriously. He described the dreadful murders so graphically that they bear no repetition by me, and he spoke of the constitutional powers of courts outside the United Kingdom. My hon. Friend and I take the constitutional issue seriously, as I hope the whole House does, as it affects the powers of this place. We must keep it in mind. My hon. Friend does the House a service by keeping it before us.

I hope that I shall be able to reply directly to every question that my hon. Friend asked, but if he feels that I have missed anything, I shall be only too pleased to give way to him at the end of my speech. I shall not trouble the House further with the detailed background to the case except to say that one person involved returned of her own free will to the United States and is now serving a 90-year gaol term in the state of Virginia.

The background is contained in the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. The salient facts should, however, be brought to the House's attention. Soering's extradition was sought, in 1986, by the United States authorities on a capital murder charge. Soering is a German national. The German authorities have also sought his extradition as they have jurisdiction over offences committed by their nationals abroad. They have rather more jurisdiction than United Kingdom courts, although our courts have such powers in the case of murder and one or two other offences.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, having received requests from the United States and a request from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, has taken the view that the proper course is to continue with the United States extradition request although the German request is still extant. If he so decides, my right hon. Friend can at any time act on that request.

My hon. Friend is concerned to know why we had any inhibitions about returning someone, provided that the facts of the case were clear and justice was done, to a jurisdiction where a person might face a capital sentence. The extradition treaty between the United Kingdom and the United States of America provides for a discretion on surrender if the relevant offence is punishable by death under the relevant United States law. For better or for worse—I dare say that my hon. Friend feels that it is for the worse—that is written into United States treaty. It also provides for the giving of assurances satisfactory to the requested party that the death penalty will not be carried out.

In this case, the Virginian authorities gave an undertaking that, if Soering were convicted of murder, a representation would be made in the name of the United Kingdom to the judge at the time of sentencing that it was the wish of the United Kingdom that the death penalty should not be imposed or carried out. What has happened since then is a process of appeal.

Soering sought first to challenge the decision to extradite him to America. He did that in the domestic courts in Britain and then by application to the European Commission of Human Rights. Before the Commission, Soering's principal contention was that, if he was surrendered to the United States, there was serious reason to believe that he would be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in contravention of article 3 of the convention. This would arise, he suggested, from the exceptional and inordinate delay before carrying out the death penalty in Virginia. In a number of cases in that state's jurisdiction, delay has been substantial—five to eight years.

The Government acceded to the request of the President of the Commission not to remove Soering while it considered his application on this ground.

What happened is now history and is in the judgment, which is in the Library. The Commission decided by a narrow margin that the extradition of Soering to the United States of America would not give rise to a breach of the convention. The case was then referred to the court by the Commission and subsequently by the United Kingdom Government and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. The judgment of the court was delivered on 7 July. The court held unanimously that Soering's extradition would violate article 3 of the convention.

It is worth spending a brief moment on the court's judgment. In reaching its conclusion, the court was at pains to make it clear that the death penalty as such was not contrary to the convention—the court said that in its judgment—nor was it seeking to apply the convention to a state that was not a party to the convention. The court explicitly acknowledged the democractic character of the Virginian legal system and stressed that Virginian trial, sentencing and appeal procedures were beyond doubt. The machinery of justice to which Soering would be subject in the United States was in itself neither arbitrary nor unreasonable. Additionally, and happily from the point of view of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General and myself, the court acknowledged the good faith of the United Kingdom Government in their approach to this case.

The court considered, however, that the nature of the assurance received in this case were open to doubt. The court found that it was not open to it to conclude that there were "no substantial grounds" for believing that the applicant faced a real risk of a death sentence. That led the court to consider what has become known as the "Death row phenomenon". It accepted that some delay between sentence and its execution was inevitable—up to 90 days when we had the capital sentence—but it had regard to the very long period likely to be spent awaiting execution in Virginia, which could be five to eight years, with the ever-present and mounting anguish of awaiting execution.

*[Mr. John Patten]*

The court took account also of Soering's personal circumstances—his age and mental state at the time of the offence and so on.

In the light of this, it concluded that there would be a real risk of exposing him to treatment going beyond the threshold set by article 3. A further consideration was that in this particular instance the legitimate purpose of extradition could be achieved by another means which would not involve suffering of such intensity and duration —his return to Germany for trial.

Since receipt of the judgment earlier this month, the Government have been seriously considering its implications and the courses of action that are now open to us. While that process is continuing, I hope that my hon. Friend will appreciate why I cannot predict what the outcome of this case will be.

I want to respond, however, to the specific points raised by my hon. Friend. He suggested in particular that the United Kingdom should simply ignore the views of the European Court of Human Rights—tell it to "jump in the lake" was his graphic phrase. But we are talking of international obligations binding upon the United Kingdom. Each of the parties to the European convention of human rights has undertaken to abide by the decision of the court in any case to which they are parties. The House will recall that this country took a leading role in the evolution of the convention, and successive Governments have been scrupulous in complying with the judgments of the court.

My hon. Friend also referred implicity to a recent case in which the United Kingdom felt obliged to derogate from the convention, following a judgment of the court. I want to point out why derogation was correct in that case and would not be correct in the case that my hon. Friend has raised. The circumstances were very different. That case concerned detention in Northern Ireland under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974. In that case, we derogated from our obligations under article 5 of the convention. Derogation in respect of particular articles of the convention is expressly provided for in article 15, which states:

"in time of war or other public emergency threatening the life of the nation."

We believe that there is an emergency in the Northern Ireland case. That is not the position in the case we are discussing tonight.

I must also point out to my hon. Friend that no derogation is permitted from certain articles of the convention, including article 3 on inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Under the convention, we cannot derogate in the same way as we are able to derogate in the case to which my hon. Friend referred.

Having made those points and answered those questions, I want to underline certain key issues raised by the case. The first is the importance that the United Kingdom attaches to its extradition agreements. They are a major factor in our responses to serious crime and we are committed to the principle of co-operation between jurisdictions. We welcome the strong and close co-operation that we have with the United States, to which my hon. Friend referred so warmly and which will be greatly appreciated by the United States Goverment who, I am sure, will pay attention to our proceedings tonight. A key objective throughout our handling of these issues has been to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of our extradition arrangements with the other countries concerned. That is clearly in our best interests.

Secondly, I want to stress that the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights centred on the fact that Soering was at risk of experiencing the "Death row phenomenon" if he were to be extradited to the United States in the present circumstances. That is to say, it is extradition while the threat of a death sentence remains that led the court to declare a breach of the convention. I ask my hon. Friend to reflect on what I am about to say. It follows from that that if the threat of a death sentence were to be removed, no question of a breach of the convention would arise from extradition to the United States.

Thirdly, I can tell my hon. Friend and the House tonight that Her Majesty's Government remain committed to ensuring that Soering should stand trial for the offences that have been alleged against him. If the threat of a death sentence in the United States cannot be removed, there remains the clear option of returning Soering to stand trial in Germany—rather than maintaining his freedom in the United Kingdom—in the way in which my hon. Friend thought might have been possible under certain circumstances.

I assure my hon. Friend, whom I hold in great respect because of his strong and passionate interest in law and order and the constitutional integrity of the kingdom, that we have not been idle since receiving the Strasbourg judgment three weeks ago and we have not ignored the importance of this case to our relationship with the United States and the Federal Republic, and to the integrity and good working of our extradition arrangements with those two countries. We have been in discussions with the American and German Governments since the judgment, although the House will appreciate why it would not be appropriate for me to go into details of those exchanges tonight.

I hope that what I have said will convince my hon. Friend that we are treating this case as one of the utmost seriousness. We are faced with allegations of very serious offences and our objective has been to honour our international obligations and to ensure that the case comes to trial.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** With the leave of the House. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for the serious reply that he has given to my questions. I am delighted to hear that it is his intention that Soering should face trial. In view of the importance of the relations between Britain and the United States, I ask him to send a copy of the *Hansard* that includes his excellent speech to the governor of Virginia, or some other similar person, with his fraternal good wishes and the respect of Parliament.

**Mr. Patten:** With the leave of the House. I shall certainly ensure that as soon as they are available, copies of *Hansard* are sent, through the usual channels, in the direction that my hon. Friend has suggested.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at eleven minutes to Twelve o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Friday 21 July 1989*

*The House met at half-past Nine o'clock*

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PETITIONS

## Roads (Streatham)

9.34 am

**Sir William Shelton** (Streatham): It is with great pleasure that I present a petition with more than 15,000 signatures collected in not many weeks in my constituency by an organisation called Streatham Against the Roads, which is also known as STAR. I congratulate that organisation and the people who signed the petition. It demonstrates a vast revulsion against road building. It is a movement by people to protect their homes and environment. As the petition shows, there are better ways of solving the traffic problem.

The petition states:

> Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House will reject any proposals from the Travers Morgan and Mott, Hay and Anderson Stage 26 Road Assessment Study Reports which will involve road-building or road-widening, and consider instead alternative solutions to the traffic problem, with particular emphasis on measures to deal with illegal parking, traffic management schemes and schemes to improve public transport.

*To lie upon the Table.*

## Pensioners

9.36 am

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** (Great Grimsby): I have the pleasure to present two petitions from Grimsby relating to pensioners and the plight of pensioners. Society owes a fair deal to those who brought us through the hard times. They should be rewarded in the better times, but the contrary has happened. The tie between pensions and earnings was cut in 1979, and pensioners have been left behind. Single pensioners are losing £11 a week and a couple are losing £17·50 a week because pensions were not uplifted.

The petitions deal with the other problem under the new social security system that those with quite pathetically small occupational pensions are losing disproportionate amounts of benefit, which makes life a continuous struggle againt debt, something that they are experiencing for the first time and with great dismay. I have a small pile of letters testifying to that.

The first petition was organised by Mrs. Dryden of Grimsby, and it states:

> The Humble Petition of the residents of Great Grimsby and District showeth that we the undersigned are concerned about the misery and deprivation forced on pensioners by the alterations in the benefit system which claw back any increase in their income from small occupational pensions.
>
> Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House relax these rules to give pensioners a fair standard of living and that pensions should also be increased to the same end.

That petition has 1,000 signatures.

The second petition states:

> The Humble Petition of the undersigned Retirement Pensioners and others in Great Britain showeth that sections of the community in receipt of the state retirement pension are suffering hardship on account of the increase in the cost of living.
>
> Wherefore your petitioners pray that the link between pensions and average earnings be restored, thus giving pensioners a standard of living sufficient to enable them to meet the full necessities of life.

That petition has 100 signatures.

*To lie upon the Table.*

## BILL PRESENTED

### POLL TAX (ILLEGAL FORMS)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths, supported by Mr. John McAllion, Mr. Harry Ewing, Mr. John McFall, Mr. Calum Macdonald, Mr. Frank Doran and Mrs. Maria Fyfe, presented a Bill to remove the requirement for community charge registration officers to collect the date of birth of adults registered for the community charge: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Monday 24 July and to be printed. [Bill 192.]

## Drug and Alcohol Abuse

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

9.39 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. John Butcher):** It is unusual to be able to begin a debate with a statement that I believe every hon. Member will support: educating our young people to be alert to the dangers of drugs and alcohol, and to be able to resist them, is a necessary and important aspect of what our schools do today. But before addressing myself to the work schools are doing, and the way the Government are supporting them, I should like to take a moment to examine some of the reasons why good health education is so necessary.

That I can do so in no more than a few moments is because the facts speak for themselves. Here are just a few. It has been estimated that three quarters of a million people in the United Kingdom may have a serious drink problem. In 1987, there were more than 40,000 convictions for drunkenness; nearly a quarter of all road accidents in 1987 involved people whose blood alcohol level was above the legal limit; it is estimated that more than 100,000 people die each year as a result of smoking tobacco, and that between 75,000 and 150,000 people misused notifiable drugs in 1986—probably as many again were misusing other drugs—and in 1987, it was estimated that up to 10,000 injecting drug users were infected with the human immunodeficiency virus.

That information relates to people of all ages. Let us look for a moment at some facts about young people. A survey of more than 18,000 young people in 1987 indicated that around 70 per cent. of fifth-year pupils had drunk at least one alcoholic drink during the previous week. The same survey showed that around 13 per cent. of young people reported that they had been offered cannabis or other drugs during their teens.

I do not think that I need go on. That, in outline, is why we need good, effective health education, and why it is important that it should start in schools.

But first, we must be clear on one point—health education alone cannot solve the problem. Schools cannot be expected to put right the ills of society all by themselves. Schools are, after all, a part of society as a whole; they do not function in isolation. Our young people are sharp enough to spot any conflicts between what they are being taught explicitly in schools and the messages that are tacitly conveyed by the way in which we behave and the actions we condone or admire in others. I am saying clearly that the schools cannot do it all. They have a key role, but it is incumbent on all of us to support them. We are all involved—parents and communities.

**Sir William Shelton** (Streatham): My hon. Friend mentioned the role of parents. Does he have plans to instruct parents on how they may best identify youngsters who are drinking or taking drugs?

**Mr. Butcher:** In a few moments I shall be talking about a 10-point plan, which I have put together with the help of officials and advisers from various groups. In the middle of that plan, there is a statement about getting more information to parents. I believe entirely—if I am understanding my hon. Friend correctly—that, when getting awareness of the problem to parents, we have to be very subtle and perceptive in how that is done. Getting information to parents is important and I hope that my hon. Friend will be encouraged by the fact that that is incorporated in the 10-point plan.

I make no apology for prefacing my account of what the Department, and the schools, are doing to equip children with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they will need to lead healthy lives with a plea to parents and others in positions of influence. They have a responsibility, too. If that means exercising some self-discipline, they should remember that that is no more than they are expecting of our young people.

How can education help? Education can do a very great deal. Good, positive health education in schools can lay a firm foundation of knowledge, skills and attitudes which can help young people to lead healthier lives. I must stress that all three of those elements are crucial. Of course, young people need to know what the effects of drinking or taking drugs will be. But that is not enough. They also need the skills to enable them to act on that knowledge.

However much young people know about the way drinking or drug taking muddles their thinking and slows down their reactions, and the long-term damage that it will do, they can still find it very hard to resist a skilful sales pitch, or a free offer from someone who may pose as a "friend". They need to know how to stand up to that sort of pressure without losing face among their friends. Of course, they need, too, to see good health in a positive way, not simply as an aggregation of "thou shalt nots". If they understand that staying healthy is something to enjoy, something that can unlock doors to other enjoyable activities, they are much more likely to go for it than if it seems to be nothing more than a series of prohibitions.

So the emphasis in good health education is on the promotion of good health. Experience shows that it is very much more productive to stress activities that are beneficial and enjoyable than to issue doom-laden or scary warnings about forbidden ones. Indeed, that sort of approach in the classroom is a pretty effective way of making them that much more attractive.

That, then, put very briefly, is what schools are aiming to do in their programmes of health education. The Government have given, and continue to give, very high priority to providing support and encouragement of good-quality, effective health education.

I shall be looking in some detail at the role of the drug education co-ordinators, but I should also like to pay tribute to the many bodies throughout the country which are involved in that campaign. There are such organisations as the Life education centres, which have impressed many of us, and TACADE, which has given immense help to the co-ordinators and to those who are charged with making policy. I hope that, my having made contacts with those two organisations and, indeed, others, such as Re-Solv, they will continue to meet myself and others in the hope that we can continue with what I believe is a strongly developing consensus on the way in which we tackle the drug and alcohol abuse problem.

**Mr. Andrew Rowe** (Mid-Kent): Those voluntary organisations are, of course, most useful, and there is an organisation funded by the Government called Alcohol Concern, which has also done enormously good work. However, is my hon. Friend aware that, at the end of July, it is still waiting to know what money it will get for this financial year?

**Mr. Butcher:** I thank my hon. Friend for putting forward a timely reminder. I can reassure him that Alcohol Concern will have a response shortly.

I shall turn now to the drug education co-ordinators and my Department's support for in-service training. We have, since 1986, provided through the education support grant arrangements funding for local education authorities' activities in relation to education about drugs. That has enabled local education authorities to put in place drugs education co-ordinators—usually seconded teachers —whose task it is to stimulate education about drugs in their areas, to help co-ordinate activities by the various local agencies involved, and to provide advice, training and updating for teachers and youth workers. To support that last activity, the Department has also given priority to providing grant support for in-service training about drugs.

Since 1986, my Department has given grant on expenditure of more than £11·6 million under those schemes. We estimate that during that time training will have been provided for approaching 100,000 teachers, advisers and youth workers. An evaluation of the drugs education co-ordinators' work, which was undertaken for the Department by Southampton university, attests to their success in stimulating and supporting local activities and establishing effective local networks.

We are now ready to build on that success. We recognised some time ago that it is unrealistic to limit the drugs education co-ordinators' work to illicit drugs and solvents alone. I have already made it clear that effective health education has, as its starting point, the promotion of generally positive attitudes towards health. The message is the same, whether we are talking about drugs, alcohol, AIDS or whatever. What it boils down to is, "Stay healthy, stay in control."

We have therefore, decided that from next year we shall extend the coverage of both the education support grant and the LEA training grant scheme funding. In future, all aspects of health promotion activities within schools, colleges and the youth service will be eligible for grant. At the same time, we are increasing very substantially the amount of expenditure that can be supported. In 1990-91, we shall pay education support grant on £4 million of expenditure by LEAs, and a further £3 million of expenditure on in-service training can be supported by grant. That total of £7 million is fully £3·2 million higher —in cash terms—than the figure for the current year.

**Mr. John Bowis** (Battersea): Will some of the funds be directed at teachers to help to wean them off their drug dependency, particularly in terms of smoking? If not, it will be difficult for them to act as role models for children in schools and to get the message across.

**Mr. Butcher:** I would not want to create the impression that the money is simply for supporting the activities of the co-ordinators, their salaries and associated costs or simply just for training. We have stated clearly that we must give more resources for the training of teachers. I shall not barge into the area into which my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) invites me about the job of teachers as role models. I do not believe that they need any lecturing about that. We should be extremely satisfied that 99·9 per cent. of our teachers take that part of their job seriously. I assure my hon. Friend that within the £7 million there will be room for spending on materials and on other support activities undertaken by the LEAs.

As we receive the bids from the LEAs in the coming months they may well want to do more than simply have a more intensive programme for the training of teachers and support from the ESG. They may want to adopt their own policy regarding the problems in their localities and they may have their own opinions about how their local programmes should proceed. Flexibility is therefore built in. I know that that is not the main point raised by my hon. Friend, but I believe that it meets the central issue behind his question.

I pay tribute to the drug education co-ordinators. I first came in contact with them just before Christmas and I immediately decided—I hope with their positive help and contentment—to chair workshops in which, together, we could examine the database and produce policy. I hope that the co-ordinators have been encouraged by the fact that the implementers of the measures outside are involved in the policy formation process. It is important that those who implement the measures and who seek to achieve the objectives day in, day out should feel that they can come to Whitehall and say directly to a Minister what they see going on outside and what they would like to see by way of policy initiatives.

I met those co-ordinators yesterday, but, unfortunately, I was unable to chair the full meeting because I had to be in the House in the afternoon. They made a number of suggestions, including the need to update some of the curriculum material with reference to particular substances. I readily accepted that suggestion. My officials will brief me at the end of this debate on the further outcomes of that meeting and, if need be, I can report back to the House on them.

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): I understand that a report from the cross-curricula working party on health education will be published in the summer and will cover the matters that we are discussing. When is the report likely to be published and what is its relationship to this debate? The Minister may intend to mention that report and I apologise if that is the case.

**Mr. Butcher:** The hon. Gentleman is anticipating, and rightly so, another major aspect of this debate, which is what we say within the overt and hidden curriculum and across those curricula covering personal and social education. I shall deal with that point in a few moments.

The work of the drug education co-ordinators with schools, and of course the work of the teachers themselves, is at the heart of our strategy on health education, but we are underpinning their activities in a number of ways—the point raised by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). Right at the beginning of the Education Reform Act 1988—in section 1 of chapter 1 of part I—we have made it clear that the curriculum offered by schools must fulfil two basic requirements: it must promote

> "the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils"

and it must prepare those pupils

> "for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life".

That means that all schools must make sure that, either through the foundation subjects of the national curriculum or, if they so choose, by other means, young

*[Mr. Butcher]*

people are given the knowledge, attitudes and skills they will need to lead healthy lives. The importance that we attach to this was reflected in my right hon. Friend's request to the National Curriculum Council to offer advice on the place of personal and social education, including health education, in the curriculum. In due course, the NCC will offer schools guidance on this. I shall try to answer the question from the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey about the timing of that proces later.

Of course, many of the requirements relating to the foundation subjects will also contribute towards those broad objectives. For example, under the science curriculum, which all schools will start to teach this autumn, young people will learn, as appropriate for their age and level of understanding, about the effects of drugs on their bodies and their minds.

The Department has also provided information and help for the schools in relation to particular topics. The booklet, "Drug Misuse and the Young", produced in 1985 as a guide to teachers and youth workers, has proved a valuable source of information and advice and we intend to update it shortly to take account of recent developments.

The resource pack, "Your Choice for Life",—I have an example available—which incorporated a video and handbook for schools to use in teaching 14 to 16-year-olds about AIDS, was distributed to all schools with students in that age range in December 1987. Its use in schools is currently being evaluated by Bristol polytechnic for the Department. In the light of that evaluation, we shall be considering whether there is further support and help that the Department might provide to help schools get across the important messages that everyone needs to understand about HIV and AIDS.

The Department has also supported the development of curriculum materials where a need has been identified. The substantial package tabled today of curriculum materials, entitled "Drugwise", was produced by TACADE and the Health Education Authority with funding from the Department and from the Scottish Health Education Group.

The pack provides help for teachers in teaching about drugs, alcohol and other mood-altering substances. It includes learning materials, from which teachers can choose the most suitable approach for their pupils, and suggestions about tackling various issues connected with drugs; a curriculum guide to help those responsible for co-ordinating and organising curriculum content; and a training manual which can be used either in a workshop setting or by individuals. I am glad to be able to report that, since its publication at the end of 1986, more than 5,000 of these packs have been issued to secondary schools.

The Department has also taken other opportunities to raise the awareness of schools, and of young people themselves, to issues relating to drug and alcohol abuse. As an example, a conference in February, organised by the Department with the support of the Scotch Whisky Association, brought together students, parents and teachers from 29 secondary schools to examine some of the reasons for alcohol abuse by young people, and to consider what might be done to counteract it. I was very impressed by the thoughtfulness with which the young people who were there approached the topic; we took careful note of what they had to say, and we are looking carefully at some of their suggestions.

So far, I have spoken generally about drug and alcohol misuse; and I have explained that we believe that the most effective line that schools can take is to approach these issues within the context of an overall programme of health education, emphasising the positive benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Drug-specific, shock-horror approaches in the classroom really do not seem to work. But I do not believe that it is possible to address this general topic at the moment without mentioning one specific drug in particular. As hon. Members may surmise, that drug is, of course, crack.

I do not need to tell this House how much of a problem crack is in the United States. We know all too well that it has spread in less than five years from being a little-used and little-known drug to one which is at the root of major problems in a substantial number of American cities. That must not happen here. We must learn all the lessons we can from the American experience and make sure, as much as we can, that it does not happen here.

The all-party committee on drug misuse has, I understand, received a copy of a paper which has become known as the "Stutman lecture". I understand that in his capacity as chairman of that all-party committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) may wish to make a few observations on that. I emphasise that the lecture was candid and probably off the cuff. It was delivered in London in a positive and helpful frame of mind, which seems typically American in wanting to help the United Kingdom to share the American knowledge of this matter.

Bearing in mind that it is not an academic paper—it is very much about the American experience—and that it is not an official document—I feel that while others outside the House are discussing the document, we in the House should at least be able to refer to some of the observations made in it. Obviously, we have to stay close to our own advisers and produce our own policies. However, if only a fraction of what Mr. Stutman has said is applicable to this country, we should at least take the document seriously, as a part of the input to our policy formation process. I do not know whether hon. Members have seen the document, but if not, under the clear caveat I have given about it, I am perfectly happy to place a copy in the Library, if hon. Members feel that advisable.

I turn now to some of the points made in the Stutman lecture of which we should be aware. Some may not have had much publicity in the context of crack, but, bearing in mind what I said earlier, that what we say and do in the classroom must be non-drug specific, we as legislators, opinion—formers and policy—makers must have a clear perception of what we are dealing with if we are to help those in the classroom in the best way possible and if we are to help the co-ordinators and the voluntary bodies and to act on the advice that they are giving us about the English approach to the American experience.

Among other things, Mr. Stutman stated:

> "Crack . . . is a drug that affects females as much as males. In the United States of America about 80 per cent. of our heroin addicts are males and it has traditionally been that way. We are now finding in the United States that of all the crack addicts we have seen, about 50 per cent. of them are female. Now what does that mean if you live in a big city. It means very simply the following—that at least in the United States most inner cities families are matriarchal in nature—

they are run by women. These are the same women who here, before, had been fairly oblivious, not touched by the heroin epidemic. They are today becoming crack addicts. And, therefore, the last vestiges of family life in the inner city, certainly in New York and in most other major cities in the United States are beginning to disappear."

Mr. Stutman then deals with child abuse and states:

"child abuse cases in New York City have gone in 1986 from 2,200 reported cases to 1988, 8,000 reported cases. It has almost gone up by 400 per cent., almost all of them are the children of cocaine-crack-using parents . . . in New York City all of the children who died because of battering, child abuse, where parents literally beat their kids to death . . . 73 per cent. were the children of cocaine-crack-using parents. It is a drug that produces violence . . . In a survey of 17,000 crack users in the United States the 'Cocaine Hotline' is going to point out that:— 47 per cent. of those crack users had actually been involved, this is all under the influence of crack, in a physical fight: 35 per cent. had been involved in assaults with weapons, 12 per cent. had been involved in child abuse and 1 per cent. had actually been involved in murders. That is a drug that, unlike any other drug that we have ever seen, produces those kind of numbers."

There is a considerable debate in the United States and in this country about the methodology of addiction to that substance. I appreciate that the debate is intense and I offer no view of my own at this stage about who is correct. I should simply like to report the view of Mr. Stutman, who is a drug enforcement agency officer. He stated:

"of all those people who try crack three times or more, 75 per cent. will become physically addicted at the end of the third time. It is pointed out now that in most treatment centres in New York City the average crack addict is addicted within five weeks of first use."

More chillingly, the drug enforcement agency officer continues:

"Right now in the United States of America every major treatment centre will agree with the following statement and, in fact, the *New York Times* recently did a survey in which they talked to the head of every major treatment centre in the United States. Right now in the United States crack is considered a virtually incurable addiction. Statistically, there are no treatment centres that will show any long-term remission of any statistically significant number of crack addicts . . . So it is considered an incurable addiction in our country and yet it is a drug that of those people who try it three times, 75 per cent. become addicted. You don't have to be a mathematician to figure out you've a hell of a problem when you've got a drug like that."

I now come to the point about the lessons for us. Mr. Stutman states:

"The New York City Police Department has 29,000 police officers, about the same as the Metropolitan Police of London. When crack first started, they had about 600 officers working full time on drugs. The New York City Police Department now has 2,700 full time drug officers, just in New York City. Last year the New York Police Department and DEA, in New York City . . . made 90,000 drug arrests. Last year in New York City our office, just the Drug Enforcement Administration in New York City seized 9,000 kilos of cocaine. . . Now the next question is, did all of those seizures and all of those arrests make one bit of difference, and the answer is absolutely not. There is not one single corner in New York where you can't purchase crack or cocaine. Our mistake, in New York, was very simply the following. We didn't see the problem early enough and we didn't get a jump on it."

So, with the generosity and candour that I referred to earlier, Mr. Stutman said to a British audience:

"The only thing I would ask you is the following: learn from our mistakes. We have screwed up enough times to write 10,000 books, but I would hope all of you don't have to go through the same thing that we went through. Don't be like the people in Kansas, in Texas and california who said, 'It can't happen here.' I will make a prediction and as you all know about predictions in this business, you have got to be crazy to make them. I will personally guarantee you that two years from now you will have a serious crack problem, because as the gentleman before me said, we are so saturated in the United States with cocaine, there ain't enough noses left to use the cocaine that's coming in . . . I repeat, the only thing I would ask you is the following, learn from our mistakes."

I hope that we will do so. I look forward to hearing the remarks of my hon. Friends, and I believe that we still have an opportunity that the New Yorkers no longer have—an opportunity that may also have been lost in other parts of the United States that felt that they would never have a problem.

I hope that this debate will join with the growing national consensus on our methods of ensuring that our young people do not go through misery.

**Mr. Tony Baldry** (Banbury): I thank my hon. Friend for reporting so fully on first-hand experience, but his remarks perhaps do not sufficiently illuminate one important aspect. Much of America's crack problem originated in New York's black community, from the West Indies, and so on. We should acknowledge that not all communities are from the start equally vulnerable. Perhaps people in Kansas and Texas, and in other states, were lulled into the belief that crack was a problem of the inner cities only. Therefore, we must ensure that the most vulnerable of our communities are those best prepared to deal with the problem at the earliest possible moment. That will involve us all in difficult work. We must ensure that it is not thought that because the crack problem is tackled in black communities, they are the cause of it.

**Mr. Butcher:** Earlier, I remarked that we must be cautious in interpreting and examining the American experience. Almost any generalisation is dangerous, and we should not debate the question in terms of particular sections of the community. As the Americans so openly comment, one may start with the belief that it is an inner-city problem, but in truth it rapidly affects the whole cross-section of society. I shall refer shortly to the means by which we shall stay true to our approach in the schools —the non-drug specific, stay healthy, stay in control approach. However, for the past three weeks I have been talking about the intensification of messages that we know work as the kind of defence mechanisms that our young people need.

The work already under way in our schools will provide a firm foundation for the further efforts we must make to keep crack at bay. We shall build on that foundation to ensure that schools are fully aware of the threat and are fully prepared to equip young people with the skills that they need to resist the lure of crack.

I stress that I am not advocating a different approach to crack. I am convinced that if one were to launch a specific anti-crack campaign in the classroom, one could simply be doing the pushers' job for them. Rather, we must intensify all our existing messages in the areas where young people are at risk, and ensure that schools play their part in the efforts of the community as a whole to stop crack gaining a foothold in this country.

Having briefly summarised the Government's action so far in stimulating, encouraging and supporting the development of effective drug and alcohol education in our schools, I turn to the future.

**Mr. Tim Rathbone** (Lewes): Perhaps my hon. Friend will allow me to intervene before he leaves that point. It may have been just his delivery, but I detected in his remarks an accent on the word "classroom", in relation to

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there not being crack-specific campaigns. I hope that he accepts that there should not be crack-specific campaigns of any sort in the classroom or elsewhere.

**Mr. Butcher:** Yes, I do accept that. My hon. Friend was right to interpret my remarks as emphasising the work done in the classroom in particular, but when dealing with the attitudes of young people, one must bear in mind also the youth and community service—which is, in my view, a very underestimated resource. Many of our advisers and others dealing with drug policy acknowledge that one cannot reach some people through the classroom or even through the youth and community service. Those who are not visible in that way may be members of the groups most at risk. However, I entirely agree with my hon. Friend that we are talking about a non-drug specific message, whatever the nature of the young or youngish group of people involved.

There is reason for us to be proud of our achievements. Of course there will always be exceptions, and they hit the headlines. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that the majority of young people take a sensible and responsible attitude to alcohol and drugs. In my preliminary remarks to outline the scale of the problem, I quoted figures suggesting that perhaps 13 per cent. of young people are offered illicit drugs at some time during their teens. The good news is that the majority of that 13 per cent. are able to turn down that offer. I am convinced that that encouraging fact owes greatly to the work that is now under way in our schools.

I repeat that 100,000 practitioners of one form or another have received awareness or training programmes and know more or less what they are doing. However, we must not be complacent. They need more assistance, and we must learn from new data as they arrive. But that is not a bad record for a western European country to have achieved.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** Can the Minister give an assurance that data will be kept up to date? Earlier this week, in our debate on teacher shortages it was accepted by his Department that until very recently, data on that issue were lagging considerably behind. Given the frequently changing pattern of drug use and abuse, it is vital that up-to-date data are available to make social policy judgments. How can other Departments help to ensure that such information is kept as up to date as possible?

**Mr. Butcher:** We have various sources of information. My colleagues at the Department of Health sponsor a major survey of the attitudes of school children that is undertaken through the Health Education Authority and Mr. John Balding in Exeter, covering about 17,000 young people a year. It monitors their changing attitudes on an annual basis, and therefore represents a very large and useful database for spotting trends and developments. As the hon. Gentleman rightly says, the situation can change very rapidly.

The hon. Gentleman implies that we should make available as much information as possible to the House. We all have our own sources of information, but, given that we are all united in the objective and that the only question remaining is how it can be achieved, the availability of that up-to-date database to right hon. and hon. Members is also important. I give the hon. Gentleman an undertaking that I shall do my best to ensure that it is made available.

As many hon. Members wish to contribute to the debate, I shall briefly report to the House the existence of a 10-point plan that the Department devised. I commented that we must maintain the momentum and do everything we can to equip our young people with a mature understanding of the importance of taking a responsible approach to their own health and well-being. Therefore, our future work will be just as important as the action that we have already taken. Our 10-point plan will serve as the framework for the Department's activities over the coming year.

We shall examine, with a number of interested organisations, the possibility of providing information for parents, with the aim of engaging their interest in and support for the work undertaken by schools.

We want to look closely at the effectiveness of health education, to see whether the right messages are getting across.

We shall ensure that appropriate health education messages are integrated into the national curriculum.

We shall look closely at what has happened in other countries and see what lessons we can learn from others' successes and, indeed, their failures.

We shall look into the possibility of mobilising the private sector in support of our efforts.

We shall consider means of incorporating health education issues in courses of initial teacher training.

We shall consider whether teachers need further curriculum materials.

We shall consider how to get better information on the health-related behaviour of young people.

We shall consider, with the Department of Health, whether we can define clearer messages for young people, taking account of their varying levels of risk. For example, a different approach may be necessary for those who are known already to drink alcohol to excess.

The final point is the one on which I would like to end, although I hope to catch your eye later, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We owe it to our young people to make sure that they understand both the why and the how of a positive, healthy outlook on life. We must all do everything that we can and take every opportunity to get across to young people the vital message that if they are to get the most out of life, they must stay healthy and stay in control.

10.21 am

**Mr. Derek Fatchett** (Leeds, Central): I thank the Government for providing time for this important debate on an issue that clearly unites the House. We have had two education debates this week and we have sharp ideological differences on several issues. There has been substantial criticism of the way in which the Government have handled a range of problems, but, as the Minister rightly said, on this issue we have a common objective. There are limited differences between us about the means of achieving that objective, but we all want to see the problems dealt with effectively.

As the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) and the Minister have acknowledged, there are serious difficulties in collecting and interpreting statistics in this area. Some of them are raw, sharp and unpleasant, and others are more difficult to interpret.

The Minister referred to the work of Mr. John Balding of Exeter university today, and in an Adjournment debate on 4 May. It may be worthwhile quoting his speech to show the extent of the problem. The 1987 figures, based on a survey of more than 18,000 youngsters, revealed that

"over 74 per cent. of fifth-year boys and 65 per cent. of fifth-year girls had consumed alcohol in the past week, with over 10 per cent. of the boys consuming the equivalent of more than 10 pints of beer. The same surveys revealed that up to 12 per cent. of fifth-year boys and 14 per cent. of girls had been offered cannabis or other more harmful drugs at some time during their teens."—[*Official Report*, 4 May 1989; Vol. 152, c. 453.]

The Minister picked up the important point that the figures show the extent to which youngsters are offered drugs, but not the substantial extent to which they have the courage and common sense to turn down the offer.

It is difficult to interpret the figures on alcohol. Last Christmas I had the rare experience of taking part in a Radio 1 programme called "Rhythm and Booze". It was a serious attempt to discuss alcohol problems among young people, but it was a classic piece of BBC misorganisation. Perhaps I should not have said that because I might never again be invited to take part in a BBC programme. The programme was to be recorded one Friday night in a night club in Manchester. We arrived about one and a half hours before the disc jockey who was to chair the discussion. One of the wonderful features of disc jockeys is that they have a Peter Pan youth which makes us all appear younger. He arrived late and the BBC provided free drinks for our young audience. By the time that the programme was recorded, I suspect that one or two people may have taken advantage of the BBC's generosity, and some of the comments were made out of bravado. The programme showed clearly some of the risks involved.

What was encouraging in the discussion and is shown in the data is that many youngsters are now more likely to drink non-alcholic drinks and to be responsible about consuming alcohol and driving. There is a difference between generations here. Youngsters are much more likely to be sensible and socially mature than many older people.

The Minister concentrated mainly on drugs. He made a powerful contribution about the American experience with crack. However, it is worth reminding ourselves that alcohol abuse counts for 10 times as many deaths among young people as drug abuse. That is not to say that one is not a problem, but simply that there is a difference of scale. Both are serious.

**Mr. David Wilshire** (Spelthorne): Before the hon. Gentleman leaves the subject of data, does he agree that one of the more alarming pieces of information revealed by the survey was that about 20 per cent. of 13-year-olds have experienced a hangover?

**Mr. Fatchett:** To go a stage further, another fact which should worry all of us who are parents and which shows us our responsibilities is that the major initial source of alcohol for youngsters is the parents. While the initial source of drugs is usually somebody whose is motivated by profit, youngsters are usually introduced to alcohol by parents, who are not maliciously motivated. That is a lesson for us all.

I shall concentrate on alcohol abuse, which illustrates a broad point about the role of schools in fighting drug and alcohol abuse. The Minister rightly said that schools are a reflection of society. We cannot expect schools to heal the problems of society, nor do we blame schools for causing them.

For many years I have been worried about the image of alcohol that is portrayed and the problems that that causes for young people. The positive image creates expectations in and temptations for young people. One has only to turn on the television or look at the newspapers to see that advertising projects a positive image of the use of alcohol and suggests certain social attributes. It often creates the impression that young men who drink are more likely to be successful with young women and that alcohol increases sexual activity. It is suggested that people need to drink to score and achieve. That damaging and dangerous image tempts many youngsters to drink alcohol.

The working group on young people and alcohol has said that advertising is undoubtedly influential in shaping attitudes, and made serious recommendations about the need to change the images and restrict the breadth of advertising.

A report in *The Guardian* at the end of last year showed that young people can recognise alcohol advertising at an early age. They know the brands, and can identify with the images that are created. All that creates potential difficulties.

We are told that the Brewers Society does not consider the extent of alcohol advertising a serious problem, viewing advertising as being aimed at product differentiation rather than at increasing overall alcohol consumption. In its evidence to the working group, the society said:

"there is no evidence that alcohol advertising increases the consumption of alcohol".

As an outsider in the advertising world, I regard that statement with scepticism and with some contempt. If the brewers are prepared to spend so much on advertising, they must want to sell more of their product and hence increase consumption. At some stage the House and the Government must recognise the need to control alcohol advertising, as it is clear that the voluntary code for brewers and advertisers does not work. The harmful images remain the same.

**Mr. Rathbone:** This may be going off at a tangent, but, having spent most of my working life in advertising, I feel that I cannot let what the hon. Gentleman has said go unchallenged. The statement that he quoted is absolutely correct. Alcohol consumption cannot be tied to the amount of advertising, for advertising is not tuned to increased consumption: it is a battle between the brands. That is true of almost any well-branded, well-established market. It is just as true of alcohol as it is of cigarettes, cars and cereals.

**Mr. Fatchett:** I hear what the hon. Gentleman says. May I put an alternative hypothesis to him? I appreciate his interest in such issues, and I am not making a personal criticism. Is it not possible, however, that alcohol advertising, while it may not increase the level of consumption, makes it difficult to lower that level, as it runs counter to the other messages to which the Minister has referred—the "keep healthy" messages? I think that it would be better for our television screens to show that well-known young international athletes, for instance, do not use alcohol as part of the preparation for their feats, for obvious reasons. If some of the time used by the

*[Mr. Fatchett]*

brewers to sell their products were used to get that message across, the positive image of health would be much more effective.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** This is, I think, an important part of our debate. I speak as the son and grandson of a brewer, but also as a former youth worker. Does the hon. Gentleman accept that there is a problem with the simple analysis that alcohol advertising is a battle of the brands? The reality is that it produces a greater cumulative effect which marks up alcohol as desirable. The amount of investment in alcohol consumption is in no way comparable.

The Government's legislation on broadcasting poses the danger that we shall have a much freer market next year, with more and more competition on radio and television as well as in the press. None of the competitors will want to make their products less socially desirable. There is no guarantee that the Government—for it will have to be the Government—will put up equal amounts to transmit the alternative message, which the hon. Gentleman and others may regard as the most effective solution. Unless that alternative message is broadcast—that people do not need to drink or smoke to be healthy —the competition is not fair and advertising is harmful rather than beneficial.

**Mr. Fatchett:** The hon. Gentleman has made a good point. I, too, have a confession: my parents were pub landlords, so I have seen the business from the other side of the counter. I will not say that my almost first-hand experience turned me against alcohol, but it confirmed my view that the images presented by the brewers are positive and are deeply ingrained in the minds of young people, who retain them throughout adolescence and into adult life.

Living in a public house, I saw young people who had been badly affected by alcohol. The images that they in turn create are not very positive, and in their more sober moments they would not necessarily wish to convey them to their peers. The hon. Gentleman is right. I do not decry for a moment the £7 million that the Minister has said will be made available in education support grant for 1990 and 1991, but the difference between the scale of expenditure on alcohol advertising and the amount spent on health promotion is such that it is hard to get the positive, healthy images across. I hope that the Minister will talk to the brewers and the advertisers about the persuasive impact of advertising.

**Mr. Butcher:** General promotion of health images is the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health. Let me assure the hon. Gentleman, however, that the Under-Secretary of State for Health and I talk regularly about the need to ensure that any programmes that the Department launches in the future will be dovetailed with the health education programmes for schools. We shall aim for consistency in advertising directed at both the general public and the classroom.

**Mr. Fatchett:** I welcome what the Minister has said, and hope that he will refer to his colleagues some of the comments made today about alcohol advertising. I have laboured the point somewhat to show that the role of society in general is crucial to the way in which schools perform their task of education.

I welcome the Minister's comments about involving the drug education co-ordinators in policy making. Perhaps that involves a broader principle that Ministers could apply in other contexts. Without wishing to make any criticism, I nevertheless consider it essential that those with first-hand knowledge are brought into the policy-making process, and I was glad that the Minister mentioned that.

There is always an opportunity for Oppositions to say that they would like more money to be spent, but I think that it would be foolish and premature to say that in response to the news that £7 million is to be spent in 1990-91. There is a danger of money being wasted because we do not yet fully understand the scale and the nature of the problems, and how best to tackle them. I see the £7 million, and the previous expenditure, very much as a pump-priming mechanism, and I have no doubt that the Government will make more money available if research and experience show directly that it is needed. I am sure that the Minister will not hesitate to give that commitment.

There is also a danger, if we talk about substantial amounts of money being spent, that we shall become alarmist about the statistic and the problems. I think that the Minister stressed that it would be foolish and counterproductive to be alarmist. There are serious problems that have to be tackled, but if one tackles them in an alarmist fashion it becomes difficult to define the targets and to deal effectively with them. The Government's approach has so far allowed a cool appraisal of the difficulties.

The Minister emphasised that to tackle the problem we must not use the shock horror approach and images that were used in the early days. We must use images that present a positive message about health and say no to certain forms of temptation. I think that that is the correct approach.

I was pleased that the Minister said that there would not be a specific anti-crack campaign in schools or more broadly but that the message is to be about the ability to say no, and promoting a positive, healthy image. Health education has to get that message across to young people.

From our experience, as the Minister quite rightly said, we know that the alarmist message is likely to attract youngsters towards particular drugs and practices rather than to deter them. There is always a great temptation to go for an alarmist message. It seems to be a quick way to frighten people off, but it does not work. It is better to have a slow, sure process which will have long-lasting effects. That is the best method and the one that the Minister underlined in his speech.

The Minister also said that we have to give young people hope for the future. Defining hope is always difficult. It does not always depend on material things, although housing in the inner cities and the availability of leisure facilities and of decent employment and education are clearly material. One thinks about young people who are homeless and sleeping rough in our inner cities. The Government's policies must be directed towards such matters. They are extremely relevant when dealing with the problems of drug and alcohol abuse, although the Minister did not mention them. We have to create hope and the expectation that life has something worthwhile to offer young people. Then drugs and alcohol are less of a temptation.

The problem is not always material. Drug and alcohol abuse are not limited to one class or to one income bracket. We need to offer hope in personal terms. We must create a positive image. It would have been helpful to the debate if the Minister had talked about some of these broader issues because they have a bearing upon the way in which society helps young people to achieve their full potential and to develop.

The Minister referred to the development of personal and social education, to the role of the drug education co-ordinators and to the impact on the national curriculum. He is right to remind us that the Education Reform Act 1988 imposes certain duties and defines the national curriculum, but he must know that there is concern among drug education co-ordinators, in schools and at local authority level, that the development of the national curriculum will squeeze out the important work that has started in these areas. That is not an argument against the national curriculum, but I think that there must be a balance that allows personal and social education work and the work of the drug education co-ordinators to develop as part of the curriculum in schools.

In his response to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), the Minister referred to the working party. He said that later in the debate he would update us on its timetable. I emphasise to the Minister that we are dealing with important cross-curricula themes, and it is crucial that they are not lost from the national curriculum. There is no reason why that should happen. All we need from Ministers is a commitment to ensure that cross-curricula themes do not disappear from the timetable. If that happens, the money that has been spent on them so far will have been wasted. The Minister will understand our fears about this.

In the Southampton university report on the work of the drug eduation co-ordinators, the theory is expressed that, because of falling rolls, competition may force heads to drop drug education programmes as they may be perceived to be an admission that the school has a drug problem. I hope that the developments in the Education Reform Act 1988, some of which we opposed, do not work in that way. It is important that the Minister should stress that the work of the drug education co-ordinators and the broader work of personal and social education should be an activity in all schools and that it is not an indication of a drug problem but shows that the school wants to present its youngsters with a positive health image. That is a natural part of the curriculum for any school.

There are one or two more items that should have been on the agenda and in the Minister's opening speech. I was disappointed that he made no reference to tobacco and cigarette smoking. All the evidence shows that that is still a significant cause of death, of poor health and of people being unable to perform physically and mentally to their full capacity. Perhaps the Minister will comment on that later, but I hope that the work of the drug education units and that personal and social education in schools will place some emphasis on the detrimental effect of tobacco. We know that tobacco is an addictive drug and its cost to the National Health Service and to many thousands of people throughout the country. I hope that the Minister will make some reference to that in his winding-up speech.

The Minister did not refer—I am not surprised—to a problem that is beginning to develop and may well be an opportunity for alcohol abuse and drug peddling and trafficking. In the Adjournment debate on 4 May, when the Minister replied to the hon. Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson), there was a reference to the development of amusement and gaming arcades. I have held the view for some time—there is evidence to support it—that the proliferation of arcades in inner cities has enticed many youngsters into truancy, drinking and drug taking. It does not happen to all youngsters, but it happens to a percentage of them. The Home Office has dismissed the evidence. I think that the case that has been presented in a fairly systematic way by several newspapers and brought together by other researchers shows that there is a real problem and a risk associated with arcades.

**Mr. David Lightbown (Lord Commissioner to the Treasury):** Not those that are properly run.

**Mr. Fatchett:** There is a problem, and I will come back to it later. It is unfair to allow Government Whips to open their mouths. Usually they have a much more sophisticated job which involves the use of silence and pressure. Perhaps the intellectual demands are such that it becomes difficult to open one's mouth after such a long period of silence.

Local authorities do not necessarily have the ability to stop the proliferation of gaming and amusement arcades. The regulations in terms of licensing are such that local authorities have little power and their planning controls are limited. It is possible that a local authority, with a wide range of community support, will feel that additional gaming and amusement arcades are not necessary, but it would have little or no power to stop their development.

The hon. Member for Staffordshire, South-East (Mr. Lightbown) said that there is no difficulty if such places are well managed. The industry has said that it would support self-management and self-regulation. I find that unconvincing in practice. The evidence shows that even if there is a code of self-management and self-regulation and the management says that youngsters under the age of 16 will not be admitted, one can usually find such youngsters in virtually all the large amusement arcades.

The House has a clear responsibility not to leave control to the industry. We have not left the control of alcohol, drugs or betting to their respective industries. We must protect our young people. If we do not, they will be exposed to truancy, alcohol and drugs. That may involve only a small number of young people but their lives are being wasted.

I realise that other hon. Members wish to participate in the debate, so I shall conclude. It is important to recognise the scale of the problem. We should not over-estimate it, but we must not become complacent. If we understand the scale of the problem, we can have a cool analysis that will lead towards effective action. We share a common concern and objective to reduce the level of alcohol and drug abuse and to reduce the dependence on tobacco.

The Minister talked about the evil of crack. It would be a foolish person in the House or any other part of the community who did not recognise the problems and the evil they create. We have to stop youngsters wasting their lives and opportunities because of drugs and alcohol. The Government have started to deal with the problem and we will give them our support, as these issues transcend party

*[Mr. Fatchett]*

politics and go deep into the lives and well-being of individuals. From time to time we shall encourage the Government to do more, but so far the approach is right and the expenditure is in the right direction.

The message of a healthy positive image is one that we support and the Government have got it right. On this occasion I can tell the Minister that we wish the Government well and hope that they are successful. That success is one in which our society will share.

10.53 am

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** (Altrincham and Sale): I understand that there is a private notice question at 11 o'clock and that I shall have to sit down then and resume my speech afterwards.

It is good that there is a degree of unanimity between both sides of the House on this problem. It is a worrying problem and all hon. Members agree that there is a desperate need for action. Statistics have been quoted by my hon. Friend the Minister and by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett). I find it worrying to read a survey that suggests that 70 per cent. of 15 and 16-year-olds have at least one alcoholic drink every week. On 20 June 1989 *The Guardian* stated that one person in two starts on alcohol before the age of 18. Another survey said that one in seven 15 and 16-year-olds has been offered cannabis or another drug at some time. In 1986 a survey showed that one in 10 secondary school children smoked regularly and another showed that one in 20 smoked occasionally.

I have to admit that when I was at school I also smoked because it was regarded as rather daring. Some other people in the class smoked and I smoked along with them as I wanted to be one of the boys. It shows how old I am that in those days one could buy five Woodbine cigarettes for two old pence. Having invested that money we sat in an air raid shelter and puffed away contentedly feeling grown up and sophisticated. However, when I was in the sixth form I was caught smoking by my mother. She said that if I wanted to smoke, I should do so in the house and not sneak round corners. At that time I made 20 cigarettes last for a full week. Because I persevered I gradually increased my intake until I was smoking 20 cigarettes a day. However, I have good news for my hon. Friend the Minister. In 1978 I saw the warning signals and stopped smoking. The withdrawal symptoms were hard to endure and one of the terrible consequences of giving up smoking was that I piled on weight. Instead of having a cigarette I started to eat all sorts of things which may not have done much for my figure but at least I had stopped using nicotine, which must have improved my health.

It is important that in our schools there should be an emphasis on the maintenance of good health promotion. The curriculum can be used to emphasise the dangers of drug use. I am glad that my hon. Friend the Minister has beside him the great package which contains the valuable "Drugwise" curriculum guide. The pack contains certain drug themes that could be used in the curriculum. It is suggested that in English lessons pupils should be asked to read and comprehend various pieces of information on organisations concerned with tobacco, drug and alcohol misuse. They would then be asked to write an appeal letter saying which of the organisations should be the beneficiary of fund-raising events and why. That would satisfy the requirements of an English lesson in terms of comprehension and writing and it would provide information about the help available for drug users. By the pupils' choice of organisation, questions whould be raised about attitudes to drug users.

The same theme could be applied to a history lesson. Pupils could discuss drug use in times of stress and lives and conditions in the trenches during the two world wars. In geography lessons pupils could learn of the way in which drugs affect the economy and of the international trade in legal and illegal drugs. For some Third world countries exports of plant-derived drugs to the West are one of the main ways of generating foreign exchange. Similarly, the West exports alcohol and cigarettes to Third world countries. By using those themes teachers could provide interesting lessons and put across the message of how important it is that children at school do not get hooked on drugs.

I realise the importance of the drugs education co-ordinators referred to by my hon. Friend the Minister. I am glad to say that they are now to be found in every English local education authority. I agree with my hon. Friend that they are doing an excellent job in persuading young people to reject drugs. There is a clear relationship between drugs, alcohol and AIDS and that can be used in a co-ordinated health education programme.

As the hon. Member for Leeds, Central said, my hon. Friend the Minister announced in an Adjournment debate on 4 May a £7 million programme for the years 1990-91. A total of £4 million will be used to support a new broadened remit for drugs education co-ordinators who will be responsible for giving information and advice to schools on alcoholism, AIDS and drugs. The other £3 million will go to the local education authority training grants scheme to fund in-service training of teachers. It will cover the same key areas of health education. I am glad that my hon. Friend the Minister talked about further expansion along those lines. I believe that that is a positive step in the right direction. It is all praiseworthy work and I pay tribute to it, but we could do a little more.

For the past four years I have campaigned for the money confiscated from drug barons to be given over entirely to the fight against drugs. When I raised the subject in an Adjournment debate a few months ago, my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) supported me in that aim. He is one of the most knowledgeable people in the House on the issue. My suggestion is carried out with great effect in the United States. Surely it is justice that the money that has been made from that foul trade should be used in the fight against it. If we confiscate the funds——

*It being Eleven o'clock,* MR. SPEAKER *interrupted the proceedings, pursuant to Standing Order No. 11 (Friday sittings).*

## Water Supply (South London)

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey) *(by private notice):* To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the operational problems in the water industry which have left 500,000 homes in south and south-east London without water; and what steps his Department is taking to avert the impending crisis.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Virginia Bottomley):** This is an operational matter for Thames Water. We have been in touch with Thames Water which is doing all it can to maintain and restore water supplies and to improve the provision of emergency supplies to those who have been cut off. Priority is being given to hospitals and to other special cases.

**Mr. Hughes:** Is the Minister aware that the direct cause of the problem appears to be the infestation of the Hampton plant in Middlesex, which affects seven London boroughs, Dartford and Sevenoaks—a quarter of the capital's water supply? The infestation of larvae has been common in previous years and could have been dealt with by adequate research and development and investment, but this year Thames Water has reduced research and development by 10 per cent., and it reduced infrastructure investment in the previous full financial year by 25 per cent. Is she aware that people are concerned that after privatisation the consequence of cutting costs and cutting investment will put at risk the water supply in times of crisis? Can she explain why, on every occasion when the temperature goes up, the ability to supply water goes down?

Why is it that cumulatively, over the years, we have left our water supply industry in such a bad state that it cannot deliver the goods? Will the hon. Lady tell the House what on earth is the argument for her and her right hon. and hon. Friends planning to sell off the water industry so that in future, when such problems arise, affecting huge numbers of people, nobody will be accountable in the House to answer questions at times of extreme urgency in the capital city?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** As the hon. Gentleman is aware, we have had a period of very hot weather and very high demand. He referred to the difficulties at the Hampton treatment works where remedial maintenance work is taking place. The larvae concerned are quite unacceptable, although they are not in themselves a health hazard.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the vital importance of investing in the water industry. In the particular circumstances in south-east London, I shall not labour the point that under the last Labour Government investment was cut by 30 per cent., and under this Government investment has increased by 50 per cent. The key point is that under privatisation all the water companies will have to draw up long-term investment plans. They will be free to raise capital and borrow appropriately to ensure that, properly and rightly, they can meet customers' demands.

**Sir Philip Goodhart** (Beckenham): Is it not astonishing that Thames Water did not launch a public relations campaign two or three days ago, when it was clear that the crisis was looming, to tell the inhabitants of south-east London that it was critically important to save every bit of water that they could? Is it not astonishing that Thames Water did not inform my local council about the problem until almost midday yesterday, when it must have known 48 hours before that the crisis was looming?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** It is important for consumers to act with restraint. A hosepipe ban will be imposed from midnight tonight. We hope that people will take all possible action in the meantime. Thames Water has set up an emergency response centre on 833 6564. Twenty people are manning the service, and consumers who are worried would be well advised to ring the service. Thames Water is taking a great deal of action and is bringing in static tanks, bowsers and stand pipies. Of course, the situation is serious for those concerned and Thames Water is considering what further steps to take.

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood): We know that the Secretary of State is very doctrinal, but will the Under-Secretary remind him that the diet of worms was a meeting, not a drink? Will she please divert money intended to be spent by Thames Water on floating Thames shares on the watery stock exchange at very great cost to providing a better supply of water in London? Will she confirm that after privatisation there will be no accountability to Members of Parliament if such problems recur?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** The key point is that, under the privatised arrangements, water companies will be required to have long-term investment plans. Thames Water is already investing heavily in the London ring main. That is well advanced and will lead to a long-term improvement in such difficulties.

**Mr. John Bowis** (Battersea): Does my hon. Friend agree that the people of London want water, not political posturing from the Opposition? Does she further agree that something is lacking in the publicity and information being given out by Thames Water? For some time there has been a great deal of confusion in London about where people should be holding back and not using hoses and so on. Is the problem likely to spread to other areas, particularly in south London?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** I understand that the difficulties may well be largely resolved by the end of the weekend, although some may extend into next week. I am advised that consumers throughout London are required to act with restraint, although the hosepipe ban will apply specifically to south-east London. I shall certainly pass on my hon. Friend's remarks about the need for greater clarification in the information that is provided to customers generally, but I remind him that the emergency response centre, which is well manned, can give immediate advice to anybody with a query.

**Ms. Joan Ruddock** (Lewisham, Deptford): Does the Minister accept that what she has said this morning is of no comfort whatsoever to my constituents, who are absolutely fed up with the fact that they have been drinking below-standard water for some time and that there have been pollution incidents which, frankly, are extremely worrying? This is the last straw for people who live in a somewhat inadequate environment.

Will the hon. Lady answer the question about accountability, and will she acknowledge that the events of

*[Ms. Joan Ruddock]*

the past few days have made a farce of the £30 million advertising campaign by the water companies on the merits of their system?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** I would not seek to deny that all those years of under-investment by the Opposition have long-term consequences. Inevitably, when water is in public ownership, it is one of the easiest places to cut back on investment in times of difficulty. Privatisation will ensure that there are proper plans for long-term investment in the water industry. That is the crucial point.

However, I would not seek to minimise the difficulty for people in the hon. Lady's constituency, and in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Minister for Roads and Traffic, the hon. Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley). I make it clear that Thames Water is taking all steps possible to ensure that supplies are brought in by tanker, static tanks, bowsers and stand pipes. The hon. Lady will be reassured to know that hospitals are being given priority.

**Mr. David Wilshire** (Spelthorne): I share with my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) what is becoming the dubious privilege of having treatment works in our constituencies that supply much of London's water: he has the Hampton works, and I have the Ashford works. Will my hon. Friend confirm that larvae's enthusiasm for breeding has everything to do with the hot weather and nothing to do with the Water Act 1989? Will she confirm that, far from doing what Opposition Members suggest, the Water Act 1989 will require the implementation of higher standards and more investment in the future?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** My hon. Friend is right. The key point about the privatisation of the water industry is that in future it will be independently and effectively regulated and information will be made widely available to the public. The difficulty at the Hampton treatment works is unacceptable, but it is not a health risk. It is important to reassure people about that, following the alarmist fears that have been expressed about larvae. Action is being taken and I understand that remedial and maintenance work will be completed before long.

**Mr. Paul Boateng** (Brent, South): Is the Minister aware that the problem has spread to north London? At nine o'clock this morning, numerous instances in the Sudbury hill area of my constituency were reported to me by telephone and in person of the supply being cut off.

Is the Minister aware that the reason why Thames Water is in such a state of complete confusion, without contingency plans or the means to set the minds of the public at rest, is that its senior management and management have spent all their time recently preparing for privatisation? They have been so busy ordering helicopters, executive jets and all the other paraphernalia of big-business management that they have forgotten the consumer. Is the Minister satisfied that those people are fit to manage a privatised industry? The consumers of London think differently. Will she call in the chairman of Thames Water and give him a dressing-down about his failure to meet the water needs of London? Does she recognise the enormous harm and damage being done to communities affected by this disastrous situation?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** If the present situation is so bad, why cannot the Labour party understand why we are so anxious to change? We are quite convinced that the future regime will make substantial improvements. The water industry will be free to invest and will be required to make long-term investment plans. It will improve investment, regulation and the availability of information. Those are the crucial advantages of privatisation.

**Mr. Harry Greenway** (Ealing, North): May I invite my hon. Friend to send a message of comfort to those who fear for the future? While not being complacent, may I say that most of my constituents have had no problems with their water supply or its condition because they are supplied by Rickmansworth water company, which has always been a private——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The private notice question is about Thames Water and south London.

**Mr. Greenway:** I represent a small part of Sudbury and must express my concern about possible damage to its supply from Thames Water. Perhaps the supply will be better when it is run in the same way as Rickmansworth water company.

**Mrs. Bottomley:** My hon. Friend is right to remind the House of the long-standing existence of many private water companies. About 25 per cent. of the water supplied in this country is supplied by private statutory water companies. Although my hon. Friend's constituents have not been affected so far, I remind him and others that in one hour a hosepipe uses the same amount of water as a family of four uses in a week. With this hot weather, many people would be well advised to be cautious about their use of water. The current difficulties are long standing; in times of high demand and hot weather, difficulties of supply are not unprecedented. I recognise that the problem is quite worrying for hon. Members' constituents in south London. Thames Water is taking all possible steps to remedy it at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): Is the Minister aware that the water supply in some parts of London is so polluted that it can be chewed rather than drunk? I am surprised that the Secretary of State has not told Thames Water to charge for the extra rations that are being delivered.

Will the Minister explain why, when we have a heavy downpour in London, the sewers break, but that when we have a bit of sun we have a drought on our hands? Is that not an indictment of the Government's 10 years of under-investment in the water industry in London and the rest of the country? Would it not be better if Thames Water diverted the money that it is wasting on its ridiculous advertising campaign on behalf of the Tory party to the infrastructure of the industry, which is what the people of London want and deserve?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** Only the hon. Gentleman, with his quaint attitude to figures, could regard an increase of 50 per cent. in investment as a cut. We have an answer to the problem—the Water Act 1989.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall call the two hon. Members who have been rising to speak, the Front-Bench spokesman for the Labour party and the Minister. I remind hon. Members that we are discussing a problem in south London, not a general matter.

**Mr. Tony Baldry** (Banbury): Has not the Labour party completely missed the point about Thames Water, the present difficulties and the Water Act 1989? Under the Water Act, because standards of service matter, there will be a consumers' charter. The consumer will be offered a discount on his bill every time the water companies fail in their responsibility to connect services to the consumer. That will give the water companies every incentive to get their act together and provide the consumer with a comprehensive service. Far from the Water Act and privatisation making matters more difficult, it will be very much to the advantage of the consumer if it is implemented as quickly as possible.

**Mrs. Bottomley:** My hon. Friend puts it far more effectively than I can.

**Mr. James Wallace** (Orkney and Shetland): Will the Minister answer the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) and the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser), which she has so far avoided? Will she confirm that, once the water industry is in private hands, Ministers will not be accountable to hon. Members when a crisis such as this arises? Will she confirm that the Government are running away from accountability?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** Ministers will not be responsible for the day-to-day management of the water industry. Rightly and properly, that will be a matter for the water companies. Local authorities will have power to check on drinking water quality. A drinking water inspectorate will be created, the findings of which will be publicly available. We think that that is the proper and most appropriate way of supplying water.

**Mr. Derek Fatchett** (Leeds, Central): Does the Minister realise that the only consolation in her statement for water consumers in south London is that it was not made by the Secretary of State? Does she recognise that the problems facing consumers in south London stem from an operational failure by the management of Thames Water? Whatever she says, it is clear from the information that she has provided that Thames Water's management has failed the consumers of south London. How in future can those consumers have any confidence in water when it is privatised because it will have exactly the same management and there will be no accountability to the House? Ministers will be unable to answer about problems such as those that consumers are facing in south London this morning.

The Minister tried to obfuscate about investment figures, but the reality is that Thames Water has had a lower level of investment over the past few years. Consumers in south London are now suffering as a result of that lack of investment. Surely there is no confidence in the management of Thames Water or the stewardship of Ministers. Water consumers in south London and the rest of the country have made it abundantly clear that privatisation will only make the problems worse.

**Mrs. Bottomley:** On the contrary, it is clear that the difficulties have occurred while the water supply is in the public sector. The long-term investment plan and the ability to raise money independently are fundamental to the proposals in the Water Act 1989. We believe strongly that the consumer will benefit greatly from having a separate provision of water services and water regulation.

I regret that Opposition Members must exploit the present very hot weather and high demand in addition to acknowledged maintenance and remedial difficulties at Hampton to make petty party political points. It is clear that the consumers in south-east London are most affected. They need to know that an emergency line is available and that Thames Water is doing all it can to restore supplies and to provide interim supplies. We are confident that moving the water industry into the private sector will be for the long-term benefit of the users of water. That move will ensure high standards, long-term investment and regular supplies.

## Royal Assent

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the Queen has signified Her Royal Assent to the following Acts:

Parking Act 1989
Control of Smoke Pollution Act 1989
Common Land (Rectification of Registers) Act 1989
International Parliamentary Organisations (Registration) Act 1989
Licensing (Amendment) Act 1989
Antarctic Minerals Act 1989
Road Traffic (Driver Licensing and Information Systems) Act 1989
Transport (Scotland) Act 1989
Social Security Act 1989
London Docklands Railway (Beckton) Act 1989

## Drug and Alcohol Abuse

*Question again proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.

11.22 am

**Sir Fergus Montgomery:** The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) in replying to the private notice question said that she felt very sorry for the people who had been cut off. I know exactly how they must feel. I was almost at the end of my speech. If the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) had not interrupted the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) on the pretext of making an intervention, when he actually made quite a long speech, I would have been finished by 11 am. Then I discovered that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey had tabled the private notice question, so he will understand why I am not particularly keen on him this morning.

Before I was interrupted, I was referring to the fact that in America money that is confiscated from drug barons is used in the fight against drugs. Why can we not follow the same line in this country? I have raised the question on many occasions, although I am not sure how much success I have had. However, I promise to persevere. If that can be done in the United States of America, why can it not be done here?

Last year the United States Drug Enforcement Agency urged the Metropolitan police in this country to apply for £32·5 million of drug assets that had been seized with the help of the Metropolitan police's special task force which had been investigating the Brink's-Mat bullion robbery. However, the United States authorities ruled against us. They said that there was no mutual assistance agreement with Britain. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary took prompt action at the time and agreement has now been reached. Did that £32·5 million go straight to the Treasury or was it used in the fight against drugs?

Earlier this year two drug barons went to prison and assets worth £4,300,000 were seized. If that money could be used in the fight against drugs—as I believe it should be—we could do a great deal to provide extra resources to bring home to school children the folly of drug taking. Drug education is a vital programme. All hon. Members would agree that any young person who succumbs to the drug pusher is on a very slippery slope. It is essential that we back the teachers in their fight against the evils of drug and alcohol abuse. I am very glad that there is such agreement between hon. Members on both sides of the House on this very important issue today.

11.24 am

**Mrs. Llin Golding** (Newcastle-under-Lyme): Alcohol and drug misuse are major social problems which place a massive burden on the Health Service and cause accidents, ill health and death. They are also major contributors to problems of law and order, family breakdown and industrial inefficiency.

If we are considering education in connection with those problems we must consider alcohol and drug abuse as separate problems. There has been little research into the effects of alcohol education, but what research there has been suggests that, although education programmes may have had some success in increasing knowledge about alcohol and harmful drinking, there is little evidence that education has altered attitudes or behaviour. That does not mean that we should not continue a programme of alcohol education in schools.

It is necessary to cause young people to reflect on their attitudes towards drink. We should maintain a long-term campaign as part of the usual broad school curriculum. We should use English lessons to show the effects of drink on people's lives as described in novels. We should use health lessons to show the damage that alcohol does to the body. We should use modern studies to show alcohol's influence on the costs to industry, on advertising, the break-up of families, drink-related crime and violence. I strongly believe that we should use films of drunks to show how stupidly they behave and how foolish they look to other people. We should also target different messages in clear and simple language pointing out that it is not necessary to drink excessively to have fun.

We would be naive to expect too great short-term results from alcohol education in schools. The young are always adventurous and they experiment and seize on any oportunity to try something new and to imitate adults. The image that is often presented to young people by television and through their everyday living is that it is grown-up to drink.

Adults are part of children's education. Their image of society reflects strongly what they are taught in schools. If adults cannot maintain a higher standard of responsible drinking, the children's attitude will be that it is another case of, "Do as I say, not as I do." That message will be completely rejected.

I will not deal at length with other issues such as the need to educate adults and I will not explore too far the devastation caused by people drinking or the need to increase the price of drink. Some people believe that it is necessary to label bottles with units per measure so that people understand what they are drinking. There are also issues related to the lack of Government money for education. For example, according to the figures that I have seen, there was a tax yield of £200 a second from alcohol, but only 10p of that was spent on alcohol education.

I want to enter a plea for more and better facilities for 16 and 18-year-olds. That age group is most at risk from excessive and irresponsible drinking. If we provide more facilities for them, we would be better able to keep them out of pubs.

Some time ago I visited part of my constituency and met some young girls sitting on the pavement so I sat down with them. During our conversation I asked them why they were sitting there and they told me that they had nothing better to do. I said, "Yes, but why are you sitting here?" I was told that if they sat there the policeman would come and move them along. They would go to the other end of the village and sit by the health centre and remain there until the policeman came and moved them again. I said, "But you have a very good centre for young people in the village." They said, "We are over 16. We do not want to associate with kid's stuff. We want somewhere of our own." I said, "What would you like?" They said, " All we want is somewhere to go where we can talk to people and where we are not interfered with, pushed around or told to do this, that or the other. We want a place where we can just talk among ourselves, have some coffee or soft drinks, listen to music and just be on our own." I went to the youth centre and asked whether such a place could be provided. It agreed to look into the problem.

A month later, I went to another part of my constituency and met a gang of boys standing outside a shop which had an off-licence. They had been buying some drinks. Those boys had often caused a nuisance to the local people living nearby. I asked the boys why there were there. Their reply was the same: "We have nowhere else to go." I said, "Do you go into pubs?" they replied, "Oh, yes, but we are under 18 and have been thrown out of every pub in the area." I said, "What do you want?" They said, "We want somewhere to be on our own, a coffee bar, where we can talk with our friends in the warm and where no one will interfere with us." I asked the county authorities whether such a place could be provided under a new scheme that was being set up in my constituency. They replied, "We are making ample provision. There are football grounds and trampolining and flower arranging" and other such things. I thought that there was no way that I could see those lads arranging flowers. They consider themselves young adults, but we do not treat them as such. When we do not treat them in that way, we cause them to go into pubs, cause trouble and drink irresponsibly. I make a strong plea that we consider young people as young adults, not people to be slotted into categories in youth centres.

I turn to the difficulty of educating young people against the problem of drug abuse. Alcohol is a bigger problem than drugs because it is more easily acceptable and accessible. Education against drugs needs to strike a fine balance between warning and exciting young people's curiosity. It needs to consider what kinds of drugs are available in each part of the country. It is not possible to carry out a blanket campaign on drugs, as can be done with alcohol, because different parts of the country have different problems with different drugs.

A shock-horror campaign in the schools could turn away from drugs young people who were unlikely to have experimented with them anyway, but it could excite the interest of those young people who are most at risk and who have already experimented with drugs—those who, as they would say, "mess around" with drugs or solvents once or twice a month but do not see it as a problem. It is something they do out of curiosity and a sense of adventure.

Like many other people, I think that the answer must be a low-key approach, presenting facts, answering questions and saying, "This is what it does. This is how it affects your health and your family." Perhaps that could be done through an educational film that does not preach, by getting young people to talk about it as they watch and consider the problems for themselves in a quiet, responsible way—education by accepting, by saying, "Yes, drugs exist", but also by pointing out reasonably and calmly the dangers and destructive nature of drugs.

The evidence of the national anti-heroin campaign shows that it was unsuccessful in that the people on the posters looked so horrible that young people said, "My friends do not look like that", and could not relate to the warning. I am told that the posters have become collectors' items for young people. There is a need for young people to have someone in their school to whom they can talk, who would help without preaching and tell them about the local drug line and the national needle schemes, such as the one that we run in north Staffordshire. The health authorities there have pinpointed six pharmacies where a pack of five needles, syringes and three condoms can be given out together with advice leaflets. The object is to prevent infection and prevent the spread of AIDS. The youngsters are not asked to give their names but are issued a number on a card and are urged to return all the needles to the chemist for replacement. The campaign costs £15,000 a year—money that is exceedingly well spent. There is no evidence to show that making syringes and needles freely available increases drug use.

The "no names, no questions asked" policy ensures that the idea works because people feel free to make the exchange in safety. A logo in a chemist's window identifies where the scheme operates and prevents young people hanging around outside pharmacies afraid of being picked up by the police. The scheme will provide vital information on how many people use drugs while encouraging them to ring the druglink line for help and advice.

Above all, young people on drugs need help, and so do their families. I have heard of a family with five children one of whom started taking drugs about five years ago. He started with glue sniffing, went on to petrol sniffing and is now on lighter fuel. A few years ago, when glue sniffing was at its height, I went into a major store in my constituency and discovered a large display of glue and I also found a small shop that was selling glue and plastic bags to go with it. That was very irresponsible.

We as adults have much to answer for. The youngster who started in that way has caused his family great heartache. He is the quietest of the five children and is a very nice lad, but he gets a terrible urge to sniff those products. He takes money, buys lighter fuel, goes out into a field, where he will sleep rough for a number of days to be away from his family, and then returns to his home looking devastated. His mother is at her wits' end. She does not know how she can help him. If more young people realised what can happen so easily as a result of starting to sniff glue, fewer young people would be encouraged to experiment just once or twice a month.

There should be a national evaluation scheme that considers reports from all education agencies. We should devote much more time, effort and money to the well-being of our children. We should educate them in school for life, for the problems that they will face in the outside grown-up world and for the temptations that will face them. Above all, we should give them the strength of character and the knowledge to make the right choices.

11.37 am

**Mr. Tim Rathbone** (Lewes): I welcome the debate. I do not believe that any other hon. Members have as yet said so specifically. This debate on an extremely important subject is taking place in Government time. No subject bearing on any aspect of life is more important than the prevention of alcohol and drug misuse.

I commend the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) on his support for the Government's activities and on his commendable restraint in not falling into the trap, into which we all fall from time to time, of asking indiscriminately for more Government cash. The hon. Gentleman made an important point when he said that alcohol misuse might now be less threatening among the young. I hope that he is right, but I feel from personal observation—which is not like a statistical base—that he may be over-optimistic.

It is certainly true that smoking is growing among the young. If we have a few contemporaries in for a few drinks

*[Mr. Tim Rathbone]*

or dinner at our home, there is hardly a stub in an ash tray, but if we have young people in for drinks and dinner, there is not an ash tray that is not chock-a-block.

Among the young, there is also the growing threat of drug misuse, which seems to be growing every day.

**Mr. Fatchett:** I hope that I am not being over-optimistic. I realise that the figures are short term and may be contradicted as time goes on, but there is some evidence of an increase in the consumption of non-alcoholic drinks and good evidence that young people do not feel that it is wrong to consume non-alcoholic drinks in pubs. That is positive. On the down side—and the hon. Gentleman may refer to this later—there is a practice building up, in contradistinction, that young people go out to consume a great amount of beer and get drunk, and they may also get drunk on odd combinations of drink. That is worrying.

**Mr. Rathbone:** We are in accord on that. The consumption of non-alcoholic drinks is, thank goodness, so often tied to a better appreciation of the dangers of mixing any sort of drinking with driving.

The scale of the threat of the problem of drug misuse cannot be over-emphasised. My hon. Friend the Minister referred to the speech given recently by a member of the United States Drug Enforcement Agency at a meeting of the Association of Chief Police Oficers and he extracted some worrying comments and statistics from that speech. I want to refer to it, too, and make two additional comments to illustrate the extent of the threat from that horrible new cocaine derivative, crack. The Drug Enforcement Agency officer said that in the past three and a half years, crack has grown from a drug which was virtually unheard of to the main drug of abuse in the largest cities of the United States. However, it is not confined to the large cities, but affects all kinds of people —black, white, Hispanic, rich and poor. It has moved out of the ghetto and now affects suburban America. Those are the characteristics of the drug which could so easily be found here.

My hon. Friend the Minister quoted part of the speech and it was interesting that he stopped his quotation after making the emphatic point about the threat from cocaine. However, I want to pick up the speech from the end of my hon. Friend's quotation. He ended at the point where the officer said:

> "Our mistake, in New York, was very simply the following. We didn't see the problem early enough and we didn't get a jump on it."

The officer went on:

> "That leads to a very reasonable example of the difference between two cities near New York, Washington DC and Boston Massachusetts, they are both equal distance from New York, 200 miles, they both have large inner city populations, they both have big cocaine users. Three years ago, the Mayor of Boston came to my office. He said "I'm worried about crack." We talked about it, we went up, we trained their police officers, he increased the size of his drug unit, he set up task forces from which information came from the street to the top immediately. They did away with parochialism, they started drug education in school systems and they started community education across the city and today Boston has a very minor crack problem. They have a problem sure, but a very minor one. At the same time we talked to the people in Washington DC and there the answer was—'Don't bother us . . . we can't worry about this crack stuff.'"

We see illustrated vividly how if one takes steps and appreciates the threat early enough, one can intervene in the growth of the use that awful drug. That is a message we must take to heart. Another point to note from that short extract is that of all the actions that the officer identified in Boston, he did not mention any propaganda campaign. The city did not make a self-satisfied, self-gratifying public example of what it was doing. It was precise and targeted its efforts, and tackled the drug menace in that way.

However, we are not talking only about the problems of crack, although drug pushers who traditionally dealt only in marijuana are switching to coke and crack and, of course are still pushing heroin. There was an example in Wembley only yesterday. The drug ecstasy is a home-produced drug. The drugs squad raided a flat in Wembley and found a factory in the kitchen which had created 10,000 pills worth £300,000. In the *Manchester Evening News* earlier this week, there was a report of a young girl of 16 who died after taking ecstasy. The same threat comes from amphetamines, which have not been mentioned in the debate so far. There is not only a growing threat from crack, but an existing threat of hard drugs such as heroin, ecstasy and amphetamines.

The hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding) was the first in this debate to mention glue and the sniffing of solvents. I was talking to a nursery school teacher only last week and she explained that she had noticed that a half-dozen or so children in her nursery class had great blisters on their noses. She talked to the children and obtained their co-operation so that she could go home with them and talk to their parents. Believe it or not, not only could she not get co-operation from the parents, but she could not get them to admit that their children were sniffing glue. She was faced with the visible evidence of what was going on and, she went on to explain, it was peculiar to find half a dozen children in a nursery class zonked out because they had been sniffing glue. In 1987, the latest year for which we have statistics, 111 children died from solvent-related abuse. It is a widespread problem.

Drug abuse is an international problem. The last time we discussed the problem, I drew the House's attention to one aspect of its internationality, which is the job being done in the Council of Europe and in particular, through the Pompidou Group of Ministers. I remind the House and the Minister that the Social, Health and Family Affairs committee of the Council of Europe, of which I am pleased to be a member, requested the Committee of Ministers on 4 October 1988:

> "to step up co-operation in prevention efforts between the Council of Europe, WHO and the European Community, in the framework of pilot projects aimed at health education in schools and the community, while keeping the Assembly duly informed on the progress of these projects".

The Committee of Ministers adopted its reaction to the report in December 1988 and reported back to the Assembly on 3 April 1989. It said:

> "The Committee of Ministers wishes to inform the Assembly . . . that an interim evaluation report has been established on the education for health pilot projects aimed at preventing dependence, which will continue in 1989. The interim report, which is very positive, shows that the model education for health project prepared by the European Health Committee . . . in 1984 is workable and is welcomed by schools and local authorities."

The Committee is to be informed of the Assembly's interest in these projects and in the follow-up to them. I hope that, in drawing up his 10-point plan as an extension of what is already happening in this country the Minister has drawn on whatever wisdom there may be in that report from the Council of Europe.

Although drug and alcohol misuse are international problems, local activity is needed to come to grips with them. I propose to outline the way in which my local county council has tackled the problem. I shall do so with pride and because, having studied the matter extensively, I believe that its approach provides a good example of how to go about things in the right way. It may, therefore, help other hon. Members in discussing their own worries with their county councils.

In 1985, the East Sussex drugs advisory council was founded. It brought together representatives of health, education, social services, the Churches, the police and key voluntary agencies, and it provided a forum for the agreement on the education principles that should be adopted. That was an immensely important step.

The three principles are as follows:

> "(i) substance abuse education should not stand alone but form an integral part of personal, social and health educational programmes"—

that was a thread that ran through the speeches made by my hon. Friend the Minister and the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme—

> "(ii) long-term effectiveness can only come from an encouragement—through this and other educational processes—of self-esteem, respect for self and others, responsible decision making;
>
> (iii) educational programmes must therefore be frank and factual, recognising the counter pressures in society and individuals"

Following the establishment of the ESDAC, in 1986 East Sussex was one of the first authorities to seek and obtain education support grant assistance for the post of a drugs education co-ordinator. It is always invidious to mention individuals by name when it is so much a group effort, but I must mention Jan Masters, who has been our drugs education co-ordinator for a considerable time and has done the most marvellous job. I am sure that in his meeting with drugs education co-ordinators, my hon. Friend the Minister will have been struck by her character and leadership, as all those in East Sussex have been struck by her qualities.

Following that appointment, the county council agreed a year later to appoint an advisory teacher to work in primary schools, and a third person to work in further education and youth matters. The three staff have worked closely together as a team and have delivered extensive programmes of in-service education for teachers across the whole education spectrum. The programmes have been followed up in schools and colleges by the advisory teacher.

The team has recognised that training programmes and methods need to be tailored to individual schools and colleges, but the consistent message remains that successful personal, social, health and substance abuse education can cross traditional subject boundaries and can enhance the quality of subject teaching. That highlights the need to continue to encourage the crossing of traditional subject boundaries. Some 120 primary schools in the county have enthusiastically revised their teaching programmes on health to incorporate consideration of substance abuse, and the demand from teachers to take part in training workshops cannot even be met. Those schools represent approximately 50 per cent. of primary schools in the county and I believe that that compares pretty well with performance elsewhere in the country.

A development that was welcomed by many secondary schools was the introduction into the early years of the secondary curriculum of the skills for adolescents programme of personal education with an emphasis on self-esteem and responsible decision-making. Every secondary school has taken part, with the financial assistance of Lions Club International—an extremely good example of the valuable interest of the voluntary sector in such activities.

All the county's further education colleges have now established health education programmes and are moving steadily towards making health education, including substance abuse education, part of the curriculum of every student. The team has welcomed its inevitable involvement in personal, social and health education generally rather than attempting to deal with substance abuse in isolation. Concern over AIDS and its links with drugs and the place of alcohol in irresponsible behaviour have also been included. Everyone wholeheartedly welcomes the emphasis that is now being given to personal, social and health education in the planning of the national curriculum.

It is interesting to note—I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister will be aware of it—that education has contributed to, as well as benefited from, the function. As one might expect, there was a key educational input into the development of the unique multidisciplinary training package on drugs. More than 300 East Sussex people—youth workers, GPs, nurses, social workers, teachers, probation officers, solicitors, midwives, police officers and many others—have already undertaken the two-day course. The education service has been able to integrate its approach to substance abuse to include alcohol. The pump-priming in relation to drugs, especially in health education, has been invaluable and a parallel agency is now being established to deal with alcohol. There has been wide support from the probation service, the police, the health authority and the county, borough and district councils, although the participants cannot bring the pump-priming spur to joint activity that was available when ESDAC was first set up. The need for new impetus in the training of teachers is ever-present. That is why I was delighted to hear the Minister's announcement of his 10-point plan and of the additional funds that are to be made available.

In my remarks about ESDAC I mentioned some voluntary organisations. I must also mention two other groups of people who have made a contribution. The first is the wine and spirits business. I am sure that I am not alone in having received earlier this week an announcement from International Distillers and Vintners Ltd. of a major initiative by British drink companies to promote the concept of responsible drinking and to help to prevent alcohol misuse. That sounds like a worthwhile initiative. A formal body is to be set up this autumn. Dr. John Rae a former headmaster of Westminster school, has been appointed its director and is taking up his position later this year. The aim of the new body will be:

> "to work closely with the Government, local authorities, the police, and voluntary bodies to research the complex reasons behind alcohol abuse and to advise on practical measures to encourage sensible and responsible drinking."

That is a worthwhile enterprise. The letter continues:

*[Mr. Rathbone]*

> "As a precursor to the formal launch of the new body, we are also announcing a special training initiative for pub licensees and their staff aimed at helping them prevent irresponsible and inappropriate drinking and the problems associated with it, such as rowdy and violent behaviour, under age drinking and drink driving."

That is a worthy initiative and a good illustration of how an industry can make a contribution.

Is the pharmaceutical industry making a suitable contribution? It is an open-ended question, and I do not know the answer. If it is making a contribution, I should like to know more about it. If it is not, perhaps this debate will be a spur to it to do so.

Other organisations such as the Churches are playing a part and are co-operating in organising and operating drug advisory services through boards of social responsibility. I refer to the Jewish Social Workers Association and the Jewish and Christian youth movements. There is a special responsibility to instil traditional values in parents and children in such a way that young people do not feel alienated from society and seek satisfaction in the misuse of legal drugs such as alcohol or illegal drugs across the spectrum from crack to solvents. The Churches are playing a welcome part.

When hon. Members last applied themselves to the subject of drug abuse, I mentioned Life education centres. For the interest of hon. Members, the first Life education centre was established in Australia in 1979. They have more recently come to this country. Life education centres are operating throughout the small area of the Isle of Man, extensively in Essex, and in pilot projects elsewhere in the country. Life education centres offer preventive drug abuse programmes for children from the ages of five to 15. Life education is essentially prevention, not intervention. It is intended to complement existing health educaton in schools. The programme is aimed to educate children in the positive aspects of being alive. Effective drug education cannot be left until adolescence, as children's attitudes are formed long before then.

The programmes relate to all forms of drugs, legal and illegal, and provide children with an awareness of themselves through getting to know the incredible function of the human body, particularly how and why its delicate equilibrium is affected by substances and can quickly be put completely off the rails by them. Life education is a positive approach. Life education centres and others have found that horror tactics are unsuccessful and counterproductive. The Life education philosophy focuses on creating a sensitivity to values and behaviour, which leads to an understanding and appreciation of human life. The programmes develop children's decision-making skills, build self-esteem, assist with values clarification, and develop a variety of skills necessary to the promotion of health education and the prevention of drug abuse.

Life education centres provide a progressively graded series of programmes for children from five to 15. Each programme deals with a different theme, the idea being that a trip to the Life education centre is an integral part of each school year, and the programmes work together as a structured series following a child's mental and social development. Life education involves pupils, teachers and parents in a positive approach to drug education at primary and secondary level. Most important and, perhaps, reassuringly for everybody is that the programmes are continually professionally evaluated, and each evaluation has shown exciting and positive results. The evaluations are available for hon. Members who are interested to see them. I will ask the Library staff whether they will store information on Life education centres so that hon. Members can use them as a point of reference.

As my hon. Friend the Minister appreciates, Life education centres can make a dramatic contribution to drug education programmes in this country and most particularly to the carefully targeted programmes that the Government are now planning to meet and counter the threat of crack.

I commend the Government's commitment to the fight against drug misuse, production and trafficking, and their efforts in encouraging prevention and improving treatment. I also commend the Minister's vigorous contribution to that fight in the important battlefield of the health education of our young. I welcome his 10-point plan and the extra moneys that he has announced today. I hope that he will take back to the interdepartmental ministerial meetings that he will attend—I believe that there is to be another meeting next week—the comments that have been made in this debate and the importance that the House attaches to education. Unless we win the battle and reduce and, eventually, eliminate demand for illicit drugs, the fabric of our society, our values, our relationships and even our freedoms will remain at risk. That is the true importance of the debate.

12.6 pm

**Mr. Tony Worthington** (Clydebank and Milngavie): My comments will directly follow those of the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone). I will talk mainly about crack and other illicit drugs, drawing heavily upon the experience of the Home Affairs Select Committee which recently visited Washington and El Paso to see the American experience, and highlighting the threat that we face.

There is no doubt that the battle against drugs can be won only through education. I am sure that the hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) will also refer to this matter. Our visit to the Mexican border vividly illustrated to us what is happening in America. A strange tourist attraction is to see illegal immigrants crossing the border. It is an admission that there can be no containment. The Americans and the Mexicans have come to an informal agreement that a certain number of holes will be left in the border fence. If the Americans continue to seal the fence where the wire cutters have been, the maintenance costs would become too great. Whatever was in the illegal immigrants' lunch boxes was nothing compared with the container lorry loads parked just across the border. There is no mechanism for adequately checking what is in the containers.

The problem in America was illustrated to us also by the head of the United States coast guard which, to my amazement, is the twelfth largest navy in the world. We were told, "All we have is two four-hour planes. When those planes come down, the illicit planes fly in or drop boats. There is nothing that we can do. All we are about is containment-plus. We cannot stop the supply." Nothing adequate can be done in countries such as Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia. People talk about getting rid of the coca plant, but there are considerable problems in doing that. Many drug-growing areas are not under the control of Governments. We are talking about valleys the size of Wales producing coca.

There are enormous environmental problems about a herbicide war on the coca plant. Some economies learnt to depend on illicit drugs, and one simply cannot abolish those economies by diktat of the CIA. One must face up to the fact also that, even if the will is there, the law enforcement agencies do not have the techniques to get rid of the product of the coca plant. We saw a body which was trying to train the Colombians and the Peruvians in a criminal justice system. One section of the course was entitled "Creating alternatives to confession". There is no tradition of collecting evidence to bring people to trial.

In the United States a huge amount of the steam has gone out of supply-side solutions. The Americans, especially the police forces, are saying that the answer is not to have more police, but must be in demand reduction. They know that they are losing the battle. No matter what they do, the potential is there for the people controlling drugs to ensure that as much of a drug gets into the country as is demanded. We are deluding ourselves if we think that the situation is any different in this country. If the decision is made by those controlling the drugs that this country will receive drugs, this country will receive them. That can be stopped only if our people are educated enough and sensible enough in the widest sense not to create a demand and a price for the drugs.

The extent of the horror of the situation in the United States has been referred to by other hon. Members. The statistic that most appalled me was the fact that in the United States last year 375,000 babies were born addicted to drugs. It was difficult to get people to be specific about what that meant, but it basically meant that 375,000 children that year were born with long-term physical and mental defects. The cost of that to the state, apart from the humanitarian issues, is colossal.

**Mr. Baldry:** One can go to children's wards in hospitals in the United States, as the Select Committee did, and can find a whole ward that is full of children who have been born to drug-addicted parents and who have serious drug problems from birth.

**Mr. Worthington:** Absolutely, because the horrifying significance of crack is the extent to which a small majority of the users are women. While they are addicted to crack, as they will probably continue to be, there is no way in which they can look after their babies. So there is the phenomenon of what they call boarder babies—those who will have to be maintained by the state or private agencies for the foreseeable future.

There are changing attitudes in the United States about how to deal with that enormous problem. One of the major changes is that they used to be much softer on the user as against the pusher of drugs. The emphasis is now changing, because they are saying that the user is the motor of the system; the user is the one who creates the demand. Also, the ludicrous idea that drug-taking is a victimless crime has been abandoned. What one did with one's own body was a matter of civil liberties and one should not, for the sake of civil liberties, intervene in that. It is certainly not a victimless crime, and I shall return to that subject later.

All over the United States we were warned that a second front was to be opened up in Europe, because of the soft entry points into Europe, such as through Spain, Italy and Holland. The sums of money that can be used to promote the market are astronomical. United States customs officers talked in terms of literally hundreds of millions of dollars being moved around in Britain. We must defend our physical borders as well as possible, however many drugs the traffickers want—not just crack, but other drugs.

A striking menu of drugs is now available. One should not forget that other events are occurring. The conflicting events of peace in Afghanistan and war in Burma have increased the amount of opium being produced in the world. We should not, therefore, get obsessed with crack.

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): It is a long haul from the coca-producing valleys in the central American republics to the Clyde. Is it not the case that, while all forms of drug abuse are serious, crack is not a serious problem in our constituencies and that a much more serious problem is that of alcohol abuse?

**Mr. Worthington:** I am sure that my hon. Friend will make that point at greater length later. I am not denying that an infinitely greater problem than crack in the areas that we both represent is alcohol abuse. One reason for my concern is that we are coping so appallingly at present with our current addictions that the last thing that we want is another major addiction in this country. We are rightly being warned to bear in mind that the capacity for crack to get into the country is almost limitless. We will not be able to stop it if there is a demand for it.

Of course, the problem is that drugs, such as alcohol, tobacco and especially cannabis, are gateway drugs. When people use mood-altering drugs of any kind, their receptiveness to other drugs is much greater. It is relatively rare for drug takers to be non-smokers or non-drinkers. There are boundaries there that have been broken down in terms of mood alteration, of which we should be aware.

I should mention our response to those people who become addicted. Here I would want to break the cross-party friendliness, which has so far characterised the debate, because I believe that the Government are in danger of going down the wrong road in terms of their emphasis on punishment within the community. Reference has been made to the sheer difficulty of dealing with people who are addicted, whether it be to crack, to cocaine, or to alcohol. However, it is absolutely certain that the answer is not punishment. All research has shown that punishment for users is counter-productive. It intensifies their lack of self-esteem and even their self-woe.

One of the few encouraging signs in Washington was the second Genesis project, which has survived now for 20 years. We saw there some element of success in its work, which was essentially on the basis of trying to help people to realise that they were not victims of the world—they were not people who simply had things happen to them —and to help them to become favourable change agents. It helps them to realise that their lives and their actions can be worthwhile. We are not even at first base in the provision of such facilities. If the emphasis in our criminal justice system is simply on punishment, we are deluding ourselves if we think that that will deal with the victims of drugs.

Because of the failure of the supply-side mechanisms, we need to put the emphasis on education in the widest sense. It is not good enough for the Government to lock

*[Mr. Worthington]*

themselves into bureaucratic departmental categories when they say that they are doing something in the schools. Many of our schools, particularly large secondary schools, are not part of communities. The catchment areas for such schools are large and students go home to a completely different area. We must ensure that our education work continues in those areas rather than just in the schools.

As other hon. Members have said, education must not only be directed at particular drugs in our society, but must recognise that our society is drug-ridden. Many people are dependent upon sleeping pills, amphetamines and other means to obtain the illusion of contented life. Those drugs, as well as the more dramatic drugs, are part of the same phenomenon.

We must face up to the illusion that drug-taking is a victimless crime. The user, or abuser, through his demand for the drug, is the motor and the cause of a drug trafficking system. The demand for drugs acts as a stimulant for organised crime on a scale that we simply cannot comprehend. The Select Committee on Home Affairs is extremely worried about the extent to which drug money has got into the orthodox banking system and has not been stopped.

The cost of enforcing the drug laws is considerable. The link between drugs and AIDS is becoming ever more clear. We have already heard about the cost of the health care of children born addicted to drugs. There is evidence to suggest that when drugs get into a community child abuse escalates. We must appreciate the scale of the problem, and we must appreciate that the attitude of the user is the cause of that problem. If people are taking drugs, we must avoid simple punitive measures, and we must encourage methods by which they can recover.

Much more emphasis must be put on long-term, community development work. I have no doubt that the areas in which drugs become entrenched are those where the people feel rootless and do not feel accountable for each other's actions. My hon Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding) has already referred to ineffective youth work. She spoke of the basic demand to provide simple accommodation where young people could rest and meet rather than being treated as nuisances and asked to move on. In recent years there has been far too little emphasis on the need for good community development and good youth work. In Strathclyde areas have managed to pull themselves up by their boot straps because of such community work. The work was not described as "anti-drug"; to highlight the issue in such a way is often counter-productive. A byproduct of stimulating the tenants' organisations, good youth work and ensuring that support is given to single parents is that the people in those areas feel valued and involved rather than distanced from mainstream life. Those areas, therefore, have been able to defend themselves against the incursion of drugs.

I accept that the work done in schools is valued and valuable, but I appeal to the Minister to stress the importance of long-term, intensive community development work in his dealings with the interdepartmental unit on drugs, chaired, I believe, by the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department. Such work should not be headlined as "anti-drug". It should be about accepting that many of our communities and their people have become rootless. In such areas people feel that they do not have a contribution to make.

In Washington one appreciated that for many of the young blacks the choice was between working for $3 an hour as a burger boy or becoming a small-scale pusher. The material rewards of such work dwarf what is available in the orthodox system. In too many areas of Britain it is difficult to convince young people that there is an orthodox, legal, licit way to obtain satisfaction from life. They do not believe that because of their poor living conditions and lack of job opportunities. We must, therefore, put the emphasis not just on school-based work, but on community-based work. I hope that the Minister will take that on board.

12.26 pm

**Mr. John Bowis** (Battersea): I listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington), but I will not follow him in his study of the American scene.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett), who opened for the Opposition, spoke about tobacco—the one area of drugs that has been missed out of this debate and the one on which I wish to dwell. I agree with the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie that that drug abuse should not result in punishment. Often tobacco is not spoken of as a drug and all too often health education separates drugs and alcohol from smoking. Smoking should be considered part of the mainstream of drugs, because only then shall we take the problem seriously.

In some ways, the English language does not help. A discussion of drugs may be promising as some drug prescriptions can do one good. The drugs that we are talking about in this debate—and certainly tobacco—are not prescriptions to do anyone any good. Perhaps we need some new form of English to cover tobacco and such drugs.

Reference has been made to young people who get into trouble. We often refer to young offenders in terms of drink-related and drug-related offences. When talking to and meeting young offenders I have found it interesting to discover how many of them also smoke. I wonder whether there is a connection that we have not yet identified. perhaps a symptom of their cries for assistance is their becoming dependent on the tobacco drug. Perhaps if we notice that connection earlier, we may be able to help them to overcome their problems and thus avoid a life of crime. I do not know the statistics on that—perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister does—but from my observations at least, I believe that there is a connection.

I must confess that I am a reformed smoker. My hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) confessed to having given up smoking, but to be eating more as an alternative. I have to confess, as many of my family and former colleagues will bear witness to, that I went through a much more painful process—to their discomfort as well as to my own. I went on a diet at the same time as giving up smoking, on the theory that the pain of one took away the pain of the other. The smoking bit worked because I have not taken up smoking again, but I cannot say that the three stones that I dropped have stayed off. However, that is perhaps a matter for another day.

My children played a part in my giving up smoking. They put pressure on me because they did not like it. Perhaps their involvement in the process of giving up was beneficial to them in some way because none of them has shown any sign of taking up smoking.

I do not raise this issue to gain any plaudits for having given up; I raise it because I want to look back to see why I took it up in the first place. One looks first to one's family and then to one's peers at school, and so on. One of my early family memories is of presenting my grandfather with some spills for his pipe. I can also remember watching my father smoking his pipe and seeing strings of tobacco leaves drying in the garage. My mother also smoked, although she, too, gave up. One took up smoking at school because other people did so. It seemed an adult thing to do. It was an emulation of what seemed smart, chic and stylish. So often, that is why people start to smoke.

We must begin by looking at the toddler, who picks up a packet of cigarettes. When the toddler gets a little older and progresses from playing with the packet, he or she will often take the cigarettes out of the packet and crush a fistful. A little bit older still, and the young infant might put one in his mouth because he has seen adults do it. I am concerned about role models, hence my intervention earlier. Role models are important in children's lives and we must ask parents and teachers to set an example.

My hon. Friends will be pleased to know that I am not seeking to pillory adult smokers. They have free choice and smoking is their decision, provided that they are genuinely adult smokers. Perhaps we could persuade them to stop their habit through tax and other means. However, I am not concerned about that today. I am concerned about young people, young minds and young habit formers, for whom we in this House have a responsibility. We are in loco parentis in terms of education and in helping young people to avoid taking up wrong habits.

We have heard many statistics and I shall provide one or two more. Half the adults who smoke started before the age of 16; only 10 per cent. started after the age of 21. I very much welcome the Minister's statement about what he is doing about drugs. I welcome what the Government are doing to discourage smoking. I also welcome the law that, in theory at least, forbids the sale of tobacco products to those under 16. I hope that the House will forgive me if the only figures from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys that I have are for 1986. I do not know whether we have any later figures, but we should. Those figures show some encouragement in the numbers of young people smoking. Up to 1986, there was clearly a marked fall in the number of boys smoking cigarettes, decreasing from 13 per cent. in England and Wales, to 7 per cent. However among girls the figure was not anything like as good, decreasing only from 13 per cent. to 12 per cent. Nevertheless, those figures are encouraging and there is an encouraging rise in the proportion of pupils in all the countries of the United Kingdom who have never smoked at all. That is good news. Many of those who smoke once never do so again because they feel ill the first time. Being made ill is also a factor in stopping young people from smoking.

Statistics show that where while only 82 per cent. of girls in their first year at secondary school have never smoked, that figure has fallen to only 29 per cent. by the time they leave. Although that is an improvement on the past, there is still a steady decline in the health of our schoolchildren and an increase in the number who are taking up smoking. The worst news is that 23 per cent. of schoolchildren aged under 16 smoke 10 cigarettes a day. That means that 880 million cigarettes a day are being smoked by children aged 11 to 15, at a cost of £66 million, which those children somehow find to pay for their habit. As those aged below 16 cannot legally purchase tobacco, it is incredible that 89 per cent. of young smokers obtain their cigarettes from shops, and 19 per cent. obtain cigarettes from vending machines outside shops.

We need to remind ourselves of the reasons for interfering in people's freedom of choice from an early age. We do so for the sake of our children's futures and their health. We want children leaving school to look forward to a healthy, enjoyable and active life, and not to one of ill health. That is what we shall condemn them to if we do not get it right when they are still at school. We want to encourage children to leave school without the burden of the cost to themselves and to their families of being hooked on tobacco, particularly as many of them can ill afford the luxury of smoking.

We must consider also the cost to the economy of working days lost as a result of smoking-related diseases, which is a burden on smokers and non-smokers alike. There is also the cost to those of us who must pay it, of £500 million per year required for health-related care, part of which must be borne in future by young people when they leave school and start contributing to the cost of the Health Service. We must be aware also of the cost to our environment and of the importance of ensuring the cleanliness of the air that our children breathe in school and everywhere else. Our children should learn not only the old adage, "Your freedom ends where my nose begins", but, "Your exhalation of secondhand smoke ends when my nostrils start to twitch."

I do not know the latest statistics for deaths from drugs, but those for deaths from smoke-related diseases show that 35,000 people per year die from lung cancer and that 11,000 of them are aged below 65. It is known also that 100,000 people die per year from smoking-related diseases. That is equal to 300 people dying every day—the equivalent of half the membership of the House. That is the size of the problem.

We must encourage the good health message, as we do in respect of drink driving. The good news is that young people are better than their adult relatives at not drinking and driving, which has come about from young people's fear of driving with alcohol in their blood. We must emphasise that fear and deter children from smoking, as well as educating them about it.

My hon. Friend the Minister referred to the national curriculum, which will play a major part in health education. Many teachers would like to set an example, but they, too, need help to kick the habit. Not only are the teaching and non-teaching professions setting the wrong example to young minds, but they are polluting the air that young children breathe, causing all the problems associated with passive smoking. Teacher unions, teacher trainers and schools education services must be brought in to tackle the problem.

I know that my hon. Friend the Minister is interested in youth affairs. In addition to schools, youth services outside schools must be involved. As a president of the British Youth Council, I believe that the youth movement and youth organisations must also play a part in backing my hon. Friend the Minister in his campaign for a healthier society.

*[Mr. John Bowis]*

Education can go so far, but my hon. Friend must seek the support of his right hon. and hon. Friends on tobacco advertising. My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) intervened in the comments of the hon. Member for Leeds, Central on advertising. My hon. Friend said that most advertising aimed to make people switch brands. That may be true for adult smokers but it is not true for non-smokers who are often young people. They are not brand switchers, but they can be influenced to take up smoking by advertising.

We must consider carefully where we permit tobacco to be advertised. It should not be permitted in areas frequented by young people, such as sports and arts venues, on public transport, in newspapers or on shop fronts. We must also be careful about allowing tobacco companies to sponsor sports events and other activities.

My hon. Friend the Minister should talk to his right hon. and hon. Friends about the price of tobacco. We should take tobacco out of the retail prices index so that keeping down the price of tobacco is not part of the Government's counter-inflation policies. I believe that that would be acceptable to hon. Members on both sides of the House.

There is evidence to suggest that a 1 per cent. increase in the price of tobacco leads to a reduction of about 1 per cent. in consumption. That may not last, but if it is a national impact, the impact on the young person's purse or wallet will be much greater. If my hon. Friend wants to help young people not to take up smoking he should price tobacco out of their range. He will then be supporting the Government's education policy in schools and in the youth world, which I support. My message to him is to keep at it and to keep on at the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

12.43 pm

**Mr. Harry Greenway** (Ealing, North): My hon. Friend the Minister made a valuable point when he said that schools had a leading, perhaps a central, part to play in educating future adults against drug taking, smoking and alcohol abuse. I have 23 years' experience of schools, including 12 as deputy headmaster of a boys' comprehensive at King's Cross and seven at a mixed school of 2,200 on the Bellingham estate in south-east London, and I know that it is amazingly difficult to do what hon. Members have suggested today. Everyone says that such matters as road safety and the dangers of drugs should be taught in schools, but many problems are involved.

Any school that does its job knows that every lesson is, in a sense, a lesson in English, as so much depends on the way in which the teacher presents the information and on the pupils' ability to respond. In another sense, every lesson could be regarded as a lesson in health education, in that everything that a teacher says or does can imply an awareness of the problem of drugs, particularly crack. When the teacher sees an opportunity to put across such information, it should be possible. I think that, in the long term, that will be more effective than what could be seen as a rather heavy health education programme.

Fundamental to all education, and particularly to the future of society and that of any individual within it, must be the ability to exercise self-control. Present and future self-discipline will provide the best possible protection against serious excesses of the kind that we have been discussing. How can schools achieve that for children? Teachers can influence children through good, sound personal relationships, and also through good counselling; they should be able to pick up any difficulties relating to drugs or anything else which children may be experiencing, and do something about them at an early stage.

Basic to human nature is the fact that—as Shakespeare pointed out—forbidden fruit tastes the sweetest. As my hon. Friend the Minister pointed out, to tell children that something is to be shunned is to inspire a great interest. That approach must therefore be relaxed, but it must be done subtly.

Nothing is achieved without money, and part of the problem is the amount that schoolchildren have at present. According to a YMCA survey of 400 London children —quite an efficient survey, covering four or five typical schools—teenage boys have more money to spend than girls, but girls go to the pub much more often. Teenage boys receive an average of £10·25 a week in pocket money, while girls receive an average of £8·61. That is quite a lot of money; many pensioners cannot regard such sums as pocket money to be spent on extras and luxuries. For children of 17 or 18, the average sum is £16·66—and clearly they will start looking for ways of spending such an amount.

The same survey showed that, by the age of 15, more than half the 400 pupils had been to a pub, but girls are more regular pub drinkers. Three quarters of sixth-form girls go to a pub once a week, usually with an older male, and 54 per cent. of the sixth-form boys go to a pub at least once a week.

The survey shows that children start drinking early. It is the main way that many of them spend their money. They like going to the pub. They feel adult. They see other people drink and they want to join in. Gradually, some move on to heavier drinking, with serious results, and some become hard drinkers at an early age.

I shall mention some other facts discovered by the survey, as they are central to our debate. Girls, who tended not to be interested in pool or snooker, suddenly listed it as one of their main hobbies after the age of 15. However, I do not think that pool and snooker are always their central interests. Often, strong drink is available in pool and snooker clubs, and that may be what draws some girls into them. On the other hand, many girls go there quite innocently to look for a partner, and that is reasonable and normal.

The survey also found that 60 per cent. of young people go out on Friday night, compared with 82 per cent. on Saturday night. Boys listed sports as their favourite activity but girls listed dance classes as tops. Girls preferred to go to discos once a month, rather than once a week. Young people said they were more likely to go to mum than dad with a problem, but that they would turn to their father if they had trouble with money.

I spoke of the need to improve counselling in schools, but we tend to forget the central role of parents, particularly of mothers, in counselling children. Children go to their mums when they are in difficulty. That underlines the importance of backing up parents in their difficult task of bringing up children.

**Dr. Godman:** I thank the hon. Member for recounting to us the findings of this very interesting survey. Were the respondents asked whether they preferred to visit cafes rather than pubs? In the west of Scotland there has recently been a proliferation in the number of cafes and many young people prefer to visit them instead of our rather grim pubs.

**Mr. Greenway:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that informative point. There are not many cafes of the kind he describes in London, and those that exist are not as much fun or as comfortable. They do not have the same atmosphere as pubs. I understand why this survey applies mainly to pubs because that is where children most like to go.

When children go to their dads for cash, fathers have a responsibility to talk over with them what they will spend it on. They have to do that without being too heavy or they will lose their influence. A reasonable and proper control over children's pocket money must have a tremendous effect on how they spend it. When young children get into drugs such as crack a lot of money is involved. Therefore, it behoves parents in particular to keep a close eye on how much money school children are spending, and where it is going, but they need to be as subtle as they can.

The survey showed that 30 per cent. of youngsters under 14 attended places of worship. That figure dropped to only 10 per cent. after the age of 14. That underlines the failure of Churches—I am not castigating them, as they have a difficult task—to hold and secure a Christian, moral or religious education among young people.

I mentioned the need for young people to be taught self-discipline. That can be done by teachers and parents, and above all religious and moral education can play an important part. It is imperative that, as a nation, we do something about religious education in Britain. Six years ago, the Religious Education Council revealed that in 66 per cent. of all primary schools religious education is confused and teachers do not know what they are seeking to teach. The same report pointed out that there is no religious or moral education whatever for three quarters of our children after the age of 14. We are throwing children into a dangerous vacuum with all the drugs and drink about. It is an extremely serious problem and we would do everyone a favour if we tackled the basic way in which children and adults think about their lives and what they seek to do in living them.

Youth clubs are not generally attractive to the young. They are simply not interested in playing ping-pong in a hall. Youth clubs have never had less influence. The survey discovered that 88 per cent. of sixth-form girls are likely to confide in a friend outside school or a youth club, or perhaps in their mum or dad. However, only 32 per cent. of boys are likely to do so. It is much more difficult to secure the deep confidence of boys than girls.

The effect of alcohol in schools can be extremely serious. I have seen girls at the age of 13 or 14 going off to pubs and coming back to schools. The effect of heavy drinking, much more on girls than on boys, has been to get them fighting viciously between themselves. I have seen nasty, horrid fisticuffs and scratching—really beastly behaviour. If the House has any doubt about the effects of alcohol on young people—we know that it affects many people, but we are discussing young people—it is clear in Iceland where there is a serious alcohol problem among eight, nine, 10 and 11-year olds who are often rolling round the streets drunk or fighting as early as 8 or 9 o'clock at night. That country has been worried about it for some time.

How should we influence pupils? We should do so through personal relationships between parents and children, teachers and children and others interested in them. Sport is a particular way in which to influence children. Teachers working and training school teams have an unparalleled opportunity to get to know children. Tragically, teachers' strikes over recent years have meant that fewer teachers take teams out for matches. That valuable influence has been lost, and has led to pupils being less fit. Any doctor knows that the child who starts to look for drugs is not the healthy, fit child but the unfit and seedy child, who does not experience the physical and mental restlessness of physical fitness.

If physical education is not taught in schools, children become less competitive. We are all competitive, particularly as children. If children do not have healthy bodies, they do not have healthy minds.

If I may make a political point, the Bristol headmistress who banned the egg-and-spoon race two or three years ago to please her Socialist masters because it induced undue competitiveness in children did those children a grave disservice. That stupidity has been repeated throughout the country. Competitive team games have been eliminated in many schools run by Labour-controlled authorities. Cricket is thought to be too middle class and competitive and has been eliminated in many schools. In some places, only one in eight primary schools teach cricket to boys, and sometimes to girls. That is one reason why, in future, we shall not win Test matches. We are losing what cricket and other team games bring to children's development of self-control and working in a controlled but competitive environment, which is fundamental to their saying no to drugs and alcohol.

**Dr. Godman:** The hon. Gentleman is speaking of the discouragement of sporting activities. Will he state plainly whether he means schools in London or England, because his remarks bear no resemblance to what happens in Scottish schools?

**Mr. Greenway:** I do not speak for Scotland. I can only speak from my experience of teaching in London for 23 years, but my remarks are true in other parts of the country.

If we do not do something to restore physical education and the teaching of games in schools, teachers will lose an opportunity to influence pupils for the good. Teachers should be paid extra for taking teams out on a Saturday morning. If they give up their time on a Saturday, it is only right that they should be paid for doing so. When I was a professional, I took children out every Saturday morning, but I was never paid for it. I was delighted to do so because I received such feedback from the pupils.

Health education in schools is in a mess. Too often, in the sixth form it is a subject alternative to an A-level. In the sixth form, health education covers everything from contraception to healthy child rearing. Like English language or English literature, health education should be part of the curriculum.

I support what the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding) said in her admirable speech. Glue sniffing is a very serious problem and we must not ignore it when we consider the whole issue of drug abuse. In some schools 20 per cent. of children sniff glue, with children as young as five involved. I met a 19-year-old young man in prison the other day. His mind has been completely blown

*[Mr. Greenway]*

as a result of sniffing glue. One person every day dies as a result of sniffing glue. Sometimes people take their own lives, but often they die unintentionally from the effects of glue sniffing. We must be aware of the size of the problem and we must do more than we have been doing so far.

1.5 pm

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I listened very carefully to the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway). He referred to sporting problems, but we have different problems with sporting activities in Scotland as was witnessed plainly in the reactions to the transfer recently of Mo Johnston to Glasgow Rangers instead of to Glasgow Celtic.

The hon. Member for Ealing, North also referred to the Churches. I am not sure that his comments would hold up in relation to Scotland. In my constituency, the Catholic Church, The Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church still have large attendances at their masses and services. Their youth clubs are also well attended.

However, I agree with the hon. Member for Ealing, North that there is an urgent need for teachers and others concerned with education to be aware of the serious problems associated with drug and alcohol misuse and abuse. I was interested in what the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) said about that most pernicious form of drug taking—cigarette smoking.

In my constituency we have problems of drug and alcohol abuse, but the latter is by far the more serious. In Greenock we have a drug line funded by the urban aid programme. In addition to her other duties, Annette Webb, the drug line worker, works closely with teachers in local schools. Part of her work is to educate children about drug and alcohol abuse, but she is also involved in training teachers. I listened very closely to the hon. Member for Ealing, North because I know that he has vast experience in that regard. Just as with problems of child abuse, teachers are in the front line and it is essential that they are briefed and educated in the need to detect signs of drug and alcohol misuse. Similarly, they need to be aware of some of the signs of child abuse and other forms of abuse.

Youngsters must receive guidance and encouragement and I would include necessary guidance about the dangers of cigarette smoking in addition to other forms of drug misuse. I am relieved to be able to say that crack is not a very serious problem in the west of Scotland at the moment. Many youngsters in some of the more impoverished districts of Glasgow are addicted to or misusing opiates rather than crack or heroin.

Alcohol abuse is a very serious problem in Inverclyde. We have a much higher incidence of alcohol-related crime there than in any other comparable area in Strathclyde. I know that this is a matter of considerable concern to Sheriff Sir Stephen Young and Sheriff Irvine Smith and to Chief Superintendent George Douglas, divisional commander of X division of the Strathclyde police and his officers and all those who are worried about alcohol abuse and its relationship to crime. A particularly worrying form of this crime is that which involves domestic violence and robbery with violence. In terms of alcohol-related criminal acts, a local legal dignitary recently said:

"Glasgow is a paradise compared with Inverclyde".

I suspect that he was indulging in a touch of hyperbole, but his comment signifies the worries created by drug abuse.

The Inverclyde council on alcoholism plays an important educational and training role, in addition to the admirable work performed elewhere by its director and members. Much of that work takes place in local schools and colleges. We need a designated place in Inverclyde to assist not only youngsters but all those who suffer from alcohol abuse and misuse. I sincerely hope that the Scottish Office will respond sensibly and favourably to the application for financial support to set up such a designated place. It is desperately needed.

Similarly, the Scottish Office must give all the support possible to the expansion of the drug line service and the work of the Inverclyde council of alcoholism, especially in relation to its work in colleges and schools. I have argued before in the House that alcohol abuse in the west of Scotland and, I suspect, elsewhere in the United Kingdom is a much greater problem than drug abuse and misuse. It is essential that the Government, especially the Scottish Office, show much closer regard for the need to tackle the problems attendant upon alcohol abuse and misuse in addition to drug abuse and misuse.

1.12 pm

**Mr. Roger Gale** (Thanet, north): We are discussing the future of our children, which means that we are discussing the future of our nation, and we are discussing matters of life and death—three dreadful clichés in a row, and all of them true. Most of us are parents and, in that context, are also members of the public. I hope that I speak for every Back Bencher when I say how grateful I am as a parent for the attitude taken by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State and the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett), for the level of agreement that has been reached and for the tremendous non-partisan approach that they have taken to a subject which matters a great deal to all of us.

The Home Affairs Select Committee, to which the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) referred and of which he is a member, as I am, is working on a report on drug trafficking and related serious crime. On Thursday next week, we shall publish an interim report on the crack menace that faces the United States and Europe. My hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler), the Committee's Chairman, will at that time make a series of what I hope will be found to be extremely helpful recommendations. I do not propose to pre-empt those, so I will not refer to them.

The ministerial steering group, chaired by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Home Department and of which my hon. Friend the Minister here today is a member, will be meeting on Wednesday. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North will allow me therefore, to draw on some of the experiences that I, in common with others on the Select Committee on Home Affairs, had when we were conducting part of our drug inquiry in America.

That means, inevitably, that I will refer to the crack menace, as others have done today. We went first to Washington DC and we were well briefed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Agency. As part of our inquiry, we were invited to take part in a drugs bust. We went out with the Drug Enforcement Agency into an area where drug sellers were known to be operating and we watched three arrests take place. We rode in the police cars and we saw armed policemen and women leap from the cars and arrest some fairly socially inadequate people at the bottom of the pile.

The youngest of them, thrown into the back of the police car with his hands handcuffed behind his back, was 12 years old. He already had two adults working for him. He was one of those who now give the drug away free in schools in the certain knowledge that after one, two or definitely three smokes, they will have yet another customer. While this young man was selling his wares on the streets of an uptown ghetto, two miles away in a hospital, a 14-year-old girl was giving birth to her first child. That child was addicted to cocaine at birth and was one of the 375,000 such babies born in America last year. Not only was that child an addict at birth, like the other 375,000; he was also brain damaged. The effect of drug taking generally, and cocaine and crack in particular, on a pregnant woman is to cause contractions which strangle the foetus in the womb and choke the air supply to the unborn child. That is one illustration of the scale of the problem we face.

Crack is so dangerous because it is effective instantly. It takes roughly 10 seconds for the effects of the drug to travel from the mouth to the brain. The effects are often instantly irreversible. Unlike other drugs, crack dries out the brain cells that produce certain essential substances for the body. Once destroyed, those cells cannot be replaced and the person is semi-dependent on some form of additional stimulus for as long as he may be able to carry on living. The drug is incredibly cheap; in America it sells at about $5 a shot.

The hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding) referred to a child's curiosity and sense of adventure. I know that she was not promoting that sense of adventure in this context and I would not wish to suggest that she was. However, anyone who believes that it is possible to have a sense of adventure or curiosity about crack is living in a dangerous world. However great one's sense of adventure and curiosity, one does not try crack once because once is once too often. The Americans are now having to mount a dramatic campaign on television because the drug has travelled from the ghettos into white, middle-class America. Suddenly, it is no longer a problem that "won't happen here"; it is a problem that the Americans have to live with day by day.

From Washington, the members of the Select Committee travelled to El Paso, on the border between Mexico and Texas. As the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie said, we watched the illegal immigrants walking across the Rio Grande. Not only that, we stopped our police car, got out, spoke to them and photographed them. They froze—like ostriches with their heads in the sand—and waited until the police car had driven away before carrying on their journey across the border taking with them whatever drugs they had. They literally sprinted to work in the United States, and they commute in that fashion daily.

The amount of drugs that the illegal immigrants carry is tiny compared with the quantities coming in by the container-load across the border, by light aircraft across the border from Mexico and in small craft from the West Indies.

For the most part, the drugs are grown in the Andes, the mountains of Peru and Bolivia. The valleys in which they are grown are out of Government control and the prospect of reducing the size of the crops is virtually nil. The drugs travel to Colombia where the coca plant is purified into pure cocaine, which is then smuggled into north America. We were told somewhat cynically by a member of the United States Drug Enforcement Agency that the crop is part of the economy of Peru and Bolivia and that the Colombians

"have the best police force that money can buy."

The United States market for the drug appears to be virtually saturated and the Colombian drug dealers are therefore turning their attention seriously towards Europe. They are looking for routes, via the West Indies, into Spain and Italy, and inevitably, therefore, into the United Kingdom. We are told that they are ruthless and determined and that they

"make the Mafia look like choirboys."

A favourite technique for dealing with traitors is to murder their wife or child first as a warning to others before finally murdering them.

The belief has been expressed that it could not happen here. My hon. Friend the Minister told us earlier of marijuana on offer to schoolchildren. I have personal experience of children in my constituency leaving school during the lunch hour and travelling to a known drug pedlar's house to buy their daily drugs.

In Kent, we face the problems that any frontier county faces. We have a number of ports and we know that drugs come through them fairly regularly. In recent months, we have also discovered a number of amphetamine factories. It would be wrong to believe that the only threat comes from imported drugs. From the drug addict's point of view, we make some perfectly acceptable substances at home. The Kent police have done a tremendous job in recent months—and I pay tribute to them—in finding and busting amphetamine factories, but they believe, and I believe, that it is still only the tip of the iceberg. Add to that the other problems about which we have heard—solvent abuse, the abuse of adhesives and so on—and one realises that school children are under real threat.

My hon. Friends the Members for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) and for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) referred to the increasing threat that is posed by cigarette smoking. It is through cigarettes that both marijuana and crack are consumed. Again, we were told in America that the reason for the startling growth in female addiction is because, in the past, young ladies in particular, found it unacceptable to inject heroin. Because they already smoke, they find it easy to smoke substances other than tobacco.

I have a known and declared interest in a brewing company. I make that absolutely clear as a preface to what I am about to say about alcohol abuse. I am also a trained counsellor. I trained with ACCEPT in dealing with alcohol-related problems. In what time I have at home, I deal on a day-by-day basis with some of the problems that affect alcoholics. I have had personal experience of having to search hedgerows, lavatory cisterns and the stuffing of chairs to find concealed alcohol. I am aware of the problems that have been referred to, and I would not wish to make light of them.

The House should pay tribute to the responsible attitude that is being taken by major brewing companies and to the contribution that is being made by the Brewers Society to the provision of education packs and advertising to try to ensure that people, particularly young people, use and do not abuse alcohol. There is no mileage and no brownie points for brewers, landlords or tenants in

*[Mr. Roger Gale]*

creating social problems. They continue to invest heavily in seeking to ensure that public houses are more sociable and more family-orientated places and that a good supply of non-alcoholic beers and wines are available. It is not a matter for my hon. Friend the Minister today—he might like to take it to his meeting on Wednesday—but landlords could help to control under-age drinking, especially by schoolchildren, if, at least on a voluntary basis, we introduced a national identity card. Such a card would be of more national value—I include north of the border of course—than a football identity card.

I shall add one solution to the problems that we have been discussing. I hope that you will not rule me out of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for mentioning quasi-religious cults. They, too, have a pervasive influence in and through schools, and some of them are drug-regulated. My noble Friend Lord Rodney, the chairman of the all-party group on cults, has a file of misery that has been caused by, and because of, young people becoming involved in organisations and matters that they do not understand until it is too late. There is an overall solution to those problems.

I was particularly pleased to hear my hon. Friend the Minister announce the increased funding that he intends to make available. I hope that my county of Kent will take advantage of that funding and note the lessons that we have learnt from my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes, as it appears that Sussex has taken a lead in the matter. The solution cannot be an over-dramatic, knee-jerk, television campaign reaction.

Every hon. Member who has spoken appears to agree that a shock-horror campaign would be much more likely to stimulate demand than to begin to solve the problem. The solution must be through a sustained long-term campaign of education through schools, youth clubs and every other available organisation. I ask my hon. Friend to pay attention to the work that is now being done by the Schools Outreach organisation in some schools and also by ACET, the AIDS care education and training organisation. I am not suggesting that either of those bodies is necessarily a suitable avenue for the funding that has been made available, but I believe that it is essential that we provide ourselves not only with a network of drug or health education co-ordinators, but with a network of trained counsellors serving literally every secondary school and, through them, every primary school in the country. That will cost money, and it will cost more money.

It was explained to us in America that, if the epidemic that it faces were to take hold here, so much of the money that is currently being spent on the National Health Service would have to be diverted into the treatment of drug-related illnesses that arguments about the future of the Health Service would become academic.

I welcome the Minister's programme and the funding that he has won for what I hope and believe will only be the start of a sustained programme. In an ideal world, much of the work and education about which we have been talking would be carried out by parents and by families. However, we do not live in an ideal world. We in the House must deal with the real world, which knows that far too many children have parents and families who do not provide the support that they need and, therefore, the only support will be through the institutions that they attend, and, for most, those institutions will be their schools.

I hope that we will be able to deliver a threefold message to young people—first, every action has a reaction and a consequence; secondly, to take any drug once is once too many; and, thirdly—I believe that this is the message that will most appeal to the young—the moment one becomes involved in drug taking, one is allowing someone else to tell one what to do. Young people do not like to be told what to do, so the message must be, "You decide what you are going to do; you stay in control."

1.32 pm

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): Like others, I welcome the debate. Some clear messages are being repeated by hon. Members on both sides of the House, which will allow the debate to fulfil two of the three functions that the Minister made plain are the functions of the Government and of hon. Members when we address such issues. The Minister made clear that our three functions are as legislators, opinion formers and policy makers. On this occasion we are not legislating, but we are seeking to develop policy and to form opinion. The debate is welcome because it helps to set those two objectives. It may be that legislation will follow later, but it does not appear at present that specific pieces of legislation are planned or necessarily contemplated.

I am happy to say that I believe that the implication of the key message, which the Minister, on advice, announced in the debate in May of "stay healthy, stay in control", is the right one. I want to divide what I say into a recapitulation of how urgent it is for us to address the subject, the justification for the approach that we have adopted and to ask a few questions about the Minister's responsibilities and the way in which education will address the specific agenda about how to deal with alcohol and drug abuse.

The statistics—we can all quote many—are frightening for two reasons and the personal experience of hon. Members justifies the concern. The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) said that educating people about alcohol, and in particular about drugs starts with advertising. I intervened to make a similar point. Evidence shows that, at the age of six, two out of five children can identify at least one alcoholic drink. By the age of 10, they are familiar with the names of many alcoholic drinks. It is after that age that they begin to drink. Between the ages of 10 and 14, only 2 per cent. of children have not tasted alcohol. By that age the vast majority of boys and girls will have begun to drink, often regularly. According to the Strathclyde university survey, the majority of boys and nearly the majority of girls will have had illegal drinks in pubs by the age of 14. By the age of 15 twice as many boys as girls will have begun to drink. It is generally accepted that girls are more addicted to tobacco than boys and that boys are more addicted to alcohol. By that age, drunkenness is also experienced by many children, normally outside the home. By the age of 16 only 12 per cent. of young people will not have tasted alcohol.

The important thing to recognise in the statistics is the underlying trend, which shows that the age at which people begin to smoke and to drink is becoming younger.

Although alcoholic consumption is at its heaviest in mid-teenage boys, the amount drunk by younger boys on a regular basis is increasing.

The latest figures from the official survey on young drinkers' trends shows that 37·5 per cent. of 11 and 12-year-old boys have some alcohol on one day of the week. The percentage rises as the boys get nearer the age of 16.

In April this year, at the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association conference in Torquay, there was a debate on young drinking. Many experts gave evidence to show the horrendous consequences in the school room of such drinking. A teacher from Borehamwood said that there was plenty of evidence to show that teenagers were now drinking alcohol to the detriment of their health, and he asked:

> "How do you cope with 11-year-olds who have experimented with alcohol at home over lunch?"

Another teacher said that children were often absent or, if they were present, they were befuddled by drink.

There is an inter-relationship between drink, drugs and worse. Young people who later become involved in drug abuse have often earlier drunk alcohol. Often early drinking of alcohol increases early sexual activity and early sexual activity means casual sex, unwanted pregnancies and sometimes AIDS. Alcohol can lead to the severe harm of children.

In some cases the problem is horrendous. I was a youth worker before I came to this House. In our youth club in south London there were 14 and 15-year-old boys who would drink 15 pints a night regularly. At the end of such drinking they would not even be on the floor. One cannot drink 15 pints a night unless one has had a drinking habit for a considerable time. When that becomes acceptable behaviour for 15-year-olds, something is clearly wrong.

I agree with many hon. Members that education, especially of schoolchildren, is the single most important thing that we need to do to reduce drug abuse. Education gives young people and children the wherewithal to make their own decisions about drugs instead of simply following the strictures of others. We all know that the strictures of others appear as irrational to young children. If one says to a youngster,"Just say no to drugs", the obvious question will be, "Why?" Once a naturally inquisitive child asks why, that child will want to explore for himself why he has been told that he cannot do this or that. As my other hon. Members have said, being told not to do something is often the best excuse for trying it out at the first available opportunity. I guess that many of us did exactly that in our own youth. Therefore, one simply cannot say things like that.

Later, and separately, in the education process, one can indeed say no, but at the beginning one must do something else. One has to persuade children that they should not abuse drugs. I agree with the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) that one does so by showing young people as clearly, factually, and accurately as possible the physiological, physical and mental effects of drugs on people—or possibly all three.

If, from the beginning at their time at school, children are taught that they are unique and special and that the health of their minds and bodies is essential to ensure that anything and everything that they do in their lives will happen as it should and that their bodies will be affected by taking in any drug, they will begin to understand the effect of the substances that become abused. They can then begin to understand visually, not only what not to do to their bodies, but what they should do. Education about the foods that they should or should not eat and about the things that they should or should not drink is part and parcel of the same teaching which explains how fat leads to heart disease, how alcohol affects the bloodstream and brain, and the meaning of advertising agents' slogans such as, "Heroin screws you up".

I endorse entirely the comment of the hon. Member for Lewes that one of the most effective methods of doing that is the one pioneered in Australia by Rev. Ted Noffs, and which is now well-recognised in this country and is receiving funding. We know that the Prince of Wales has given his support to it and that certain parts of the country have endorsed it. The Life Education Programme is clearly effective in communicating those simple messages. The human body is presented visually to young people. Responses to certain addictions and intakes are described and the young people are allowed to see for themselves the effects of drug or alcohol abuse. In Australia the project has been successful with the most lost and hopeless of cases. Indeed, it started in Sydney and in other areas where the problem was at its worst.

I hope that such projects can be supported and endorsed here. The Minister was satisfied that it had been extremely helpful in formulating Government policy and that it had received their support. However, that type of project needs to be continually upheld as the way in which one should educate from an early age. Children should be allowed to know the reasons for their choice. We should underscore their ability to make such choices against the pressures of their peer group and of their friends, or sometimes of those who are not their friends, but who are seeking to make money out of the deal.

One of the political arguments revolves around whether such topics should be the subject of compulsory education and how they should pass into the national curriculum. The general argument is that personal, social and health education is being considered by the inter-curricula working group, on whose timetable I trust the Minister will comment briefly when he winds up, which will recommend how such education can be embodied in a cross-core of foundation subjects, particularly science.

There is considerable discontent and uncertainty about whether the division of such teaching among several subjects is a responsible approach. We know of the existence of the drug education co-ordinators, who will be funded until next year, but there are doubts as to whether the provision for the teaching of separate subjects is the right way forward. Is the Minister and his advisers in a position to allow their working party, and the Department to allow itself, to consider whether there may be grounds for co-ordinated teaching rather than separating it under different departmental heads? There are strong arguments for putting such education together and for ensuring that every school provides it.

The Minister announced his Department's 10-point plan and the money available on 10 May—not today, as some of his hon. Friends seem to think. Concern has been expressed as to the extent to which private sector organisations with an interest in certain topics should become involved in schools promotions. Point five of the plan concerns the greater involvement of the private sector in the sponsorship of drugs and alcohol abuse programmes. It is right to ask whether the Scotch Whisky Association is being totally selfless when it seeks to become

*[Mr. Simon Hughes]*

involved in the education of young people and to support the drug and alcohol abuse programme when the association's ultimate key objective, not surprisingly, is to promote whisky sales in this country and abroad. I choose that association as but one example.

A matter of common concern not covered by the 10-point plan but which has been mentioned in the debate is solvent abuse. I am aware that Ministers both in the Department of Health and in the Department of Education and Science share that concern and are responding to it. I am not critical of them, but I hope that they will continue to flag up that many youngsters abuse solvents. It is more difficult to control sales outlets of solvents than it is to control those who are selling alcohol or prescribed drugs, because solvents are generally available without restriction in many ordinary shops.

The former Under-Secretary of State for Health, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie), brought to that Department a high profile on health provision. I have no idea of her likely fate in the coming days, but I am concerned that whoever is in post at the Department of Health and at the Department of Education and Science should develop policy together, as they have done in the past, and give an extremely high profile to the argument that health promotion and education is the way to counter drug and alcohol abuse —best starting with the young.

The postscript is this. Health and Education Ministers and their officials must persuade their colleagues in other Departments to play the same game. As long as massive amounts of money are spent on tobacco and alcohol advertising—and there are no Government warnings required for the latter, although there are for the former —and as long as there is no general ban on such advertising, the Government's health education programme will compete with market pressures that make it difficult for any health campaigns to succeed. The Treasury must be persuaded that bad things should be taxed more than they have been. The Department of Trade and Industry and the Home Office, for example, which deal with broadcasting, the media, and the private corporate sector, must be taken on board. It is not sufficient for the Department of Health and the DES to argue for health promotion if other Departments do not assist them.

I welcome what the Minister has said and the action that he has taken. I am pleased that the Government have given us the opportunity to have this debate. We are all agreed that we must promote good health and encourage young people, as the Minister put it, to "Stay healthy, stay in control." I hope that that message will be twice as loud in the year ahead.

1.50 pm

**Mr. Butcher:** I am grateful to have the leave of the House to respond to the many powerful points made during the debate. It is almost customary for Ministers to begin their reply with the words "We have had an interesting and informative debate." Those words would not properly describe this debate because—I choose my words advisedly—it has been remarkable and possibly historic.

We began by agreeing on our objectives. I listened carefully to every contribution. I set out in the hope that there would be broad agreement about our tactical position and I believe that we have agreed on the tactics to fulfil our objectives. The House has endorsed the framework of the 10-point plan. There is all-party agreement that the plan is the correct way to bring about a reduction in demand and to take forward the education programmes in our schools, youth services and community services.

I speak about consensus carefully because some hon. Members raised their fears about alcohol companies being involved in marketing campaigns against abuse, and I shall take that into consideration. Some hon. Members rightly emphasised the problems of alcohol and of smoking. Few of the matters that they raised could not be accommodated in the framework of the 10-point plan.

I warmly thank the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) for his comments. Incidentally, I, too, was involved in the "Rhythm and Booze" campaign. My experience was slightly different from his. I found it a powerful combination of broadcasting and "narrowcasting". The responses to the broadcasts were dealt with on a one-to-one basis, using workshops and phone-ins where individual inquiries could be dealt with. I commend that effective methodology which has also been used in other programmes.

Some hon. Members raised the question of money. The £7 million now available is, to use a jargon of the City, highly leveraged. It can buy the awareness of hundreds of thousands of people, if it is used correctly. We shall be training the trainers, they will be training more trainers and trained people will be going into the classrooms. Already some 100,000 are aware of part, if not all, of the story. We have more than 400,000 teachers and tens of thousands of youth workers. I believe that we can get the message to nearly everyone if we spend the money appropriately, and bring in the organisations—some of them voluntary—that have been mentioned today.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central rightly said that we should distinguish between campaigning with a capital C—which can occasionally be counter-productive—and delivering the message in a localised, personalised, specific, sophisticated and subtle way. The necessary judgments and assessments must be made by the workers in the community: if we laid down what they should be saying and in what circumstances, it could not work.

I am delighted that the House has endorsed the umbrella message—many others underlie it—which can be expressed as, "Stay healthy, stay in control." Having analysed all the comments made to me over the past few months, I squeezed the message into as few words as possible.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central hoped that personal and social education, and health education generally, would not be squeezed out of the curriculum by the coming reforms, and others have expressed the same hope. The hon. Gentleman will know that the science curriculum already contains health messages: we accept the idea of cross-curricular messages.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) made some telling points about the hidden curriculum. A certain ethos will emerge from any lesson: that hidden curriculum is part of teachers' daily professional lives. We need not tell teachers that they should be serious about health education; all that they need are the necessary skills and materials. Many are already delivering the necessary messages in different ways, and my hon. Friend is right to commend their professionalism in that regard.

Let me reassure the hon. Member for Leeds, West and my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) that nicotine and tobacco are very much part of the work of the drug education co-ordinators. In the not-too-distant future, they are to become known as health education co-ordinators. About three months ago I broadened their remit to include AIDS, alcohol, tobacco and solvent abuse. After all, a chain of activities can start with an experiment with soft drugs at a party and then—in a small proportion of cases—proceed to hard drugs and intravenous injection, and thence to AIDS. I wanted to reflect the interrelationship of a variety of health and substance abuse problems.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** The change of title will be helpful. Will the Minister tell us two things? For how long is that funding guaranteed? Originally, it was until 1990. Will it be secured beyond that? Secondly, is thought being given to the fact that, as prevention of drug and alcohol abuse is not a part of the national curriculum, its importance may be reduced in the eyes of pupils? We may need to put it back into the curriculum to give it that importance.

**Mr. Butcher:** There is no danger of the importance of this message not being put across in schools, and that is what matters. How formally we include it in the curriculum is less important than commitment to it, and we are close to getting an agreement that the message must be got through. It can be got across within existing subjects, such as science, that are formally written into the curriculum. There could be separate lessons, but I am not entirely sure that that is the best way, although that already happens in personal and social education. There is room outside the core curriculum if schools want to use that time, but I think that this combination of options will give the teaching profession the flexibility it requires and, more important, the tools to get the message across. I have here on the Table a box of information on drug abuse such as is available to teachers.

This is not a crash programme, but a long, drawn-out operation. It is almost an underground, continuous guerrilla war as opposed to a frontal war. For that reason, I have secured funding for three years, starting in 1990. That is my signal to the co-ordinators that they are in a long-term effort. I hope that that has encouraged them to think that there is no danger of their contracts being terminated by local education authorities after one year. I am now telling local education authorities that we are giving support for three years. Funding will obviously be reviewed on a rolling basis, but our signal to the world at large is, "This is not a short-term campaign"—it is much more than that.

**Mr. Fatchett:** I go along with the notion that ths issue should be discussed on a cross-curricula basis. that is the most positive and effective way in which to deal with it. If the issues are taken separately, there is a danger of glamorising them and of the message not getting across.

I was not objecting to the cross-curricula approach. I wanted to make sure that it was embedded in the development of the national curriculum. That is important and is the most effective way of dealing with the problems.

**Mr. Butcher:** There is no difference between us on that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) was not able to stay for the winding-up speech for reasons I entirely understand, so I record my intention to write to him about the confiscation of drug barons' money. I am sure that my colleagues at the Home Office will be advised of his comments. Drug pushers and drug barons are vermin, in the strict meaning of the word. They are the lowest of the low. I do not think that anyone in the country would stand in the way of a Government who came down heavily on those people and used the panoply of measures available to the state and to this Chamber to deal with them. Certainly no teacher would disagree with that statement.

The hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding) is absolutely right that alcohol is a greater danger as a substance of abuse, by a factor of 10 to 1. During the past few years, we have all looked at the problem of what was dubbed the lager lout and the yob mentality. I agree with the hon. Lady—I, too, am worried about the way in which excessive drinking seems to exacerbate the yob mentality. The statistics on convictions for drunkenness are frightening. In 1987, more than 35,000 people were convicted of aggravated drunkenness, which essentially means being drunk and disorderly, and 6,500 were convicted of drunkenness. In addition some 40,000 people were much the worse for drink and received cautions. That comes to over 80,000 cases of public intoxication. What sort of example does that set our young people? Schools try, through personal and social education to inculcate into young people important values about respect for others and responsibility for one's own actions. They are not helped by that sort of behaviour from so-called adults or media coverage of such behaviour. Schools cannot do it all. I agree with the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme that we need localised campaigns and a personal approach with experts on the spot. They should be given the freedom to pursue the problems with the appropriate backing from the Government.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) made a broad variety of perceptive points. As he is the chairman of the all-party group, we would expect no less from him. He has helped many of us by bringing forward ideas for the future.

Now that we have had this debate and have agreed on our objectives and the tactics to be used, we are legitimately entitled to take the initiative in Europe. My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes mentioned various European bodies with which we can deal. In terms of demand reduction we have a number of ideas that we could fruitfully share with our European colleagues through the European Commission and the Council of Ministers. I am happy to initiate that process by making our paperwork available to the European network and inviting fellow Ministers within the European Community who are dealing with similar programmes to send their policy documents back to me. My hon. Friend has hit on an important point. If he is looking for a powerful response to what he said, I can tell him that I will take that initiative. Let us hope that it bears fruit.

I pay tribute yet again to the drug education co-ordinators who are soon to be known as health education co-ordinators. I should also like to pay tribute to the Life education centres. They have impressed many hon. Members and I welcomed the words of my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes about the work of those

*[Mr. Butcher]*

centres. I met representatives from the organisation recently and I am sure that they have an important part to play in promoting healthy attitudes among young people. I know that they work closely with schools and the drug education co-ordinators. They have been successful in persuading the private sector to devote resources to their work. Local education authorities will, if they choose, be able to spend part of the £7 million that they will be receiving next year to make use of the centres in their schools.

I shall look carefully at the comments made by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) about Schools Outreach and ACET. His account of his experiences in the United States was fascinating and terrifying. We should be constructively terrified—if that is the correct use of the term—about what could happen under worse circumstances if we do nothing. We should use that constructive tension in the House and in Whitehall to positive good effect. I detect the correct atmosphere in which to release that tension in positive, helpful and perceptive policies.

The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) also endorsed the Life education centres. I hope that I have satisfied him on the question of the curriculum. I shall write to him about the timetable. He kept asking me about that and all I can say is that it will be dealt with as soon as possible.

I thank all hon. Members for their observations. The use of the word "historic" may in this case not be an exaggeration.

**Mr. Tom Sackville** (Bolton, West): I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

*Motion, by leave, withdrawn.*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

*Ordered,*

That, at the sitting on Monday 24th July, the Motion in the name of the Prime Minister for the Adjournment of the House may be proceeded with, though opposed, after the expiration of the time for opposed business; and shall lapse three hours after it has been made, if not previously disposed of.

That, at the sitting on Wednesday 26th July, notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (1)(b) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business), Mr. Speaker shall put any Questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on any Motions relating to Social Security not more than three hours after the first such Motion has been entered upon.

That, in respect of the Extradition Bill [*Lords*] and the Continental Shelf Bill [*Lords*], notices of amendments, new Clauses and new Schedules to be moved in Committee may be accepted by the Clerks at the Table before the Bill has been read a Second time.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

## Nature Conservation and Wildlife

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

2.9 pm

**Mr. Ron Davies** (Caerphilly): I listened with interest to the previous debate, and I am grateful to the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment who has arrived hot-foot from her Department. There is no greater contrast between the issues in the previous debate, which dealt with the agonies caused to humankind, and the subject we are about to debate—wildlife and nature conservation in Great Britain. It is the first time that the hon. Lady has had the opportunity to debate the matter in the House and to put forward the Government's view, so I am grateful for the opportunity of the debate, albeit it late on a Friday afternoon.

It offers us the chance to take stock of wildlife conservation in Britain and to examine the impact of a sustained period of Conservative government on Britain's record. It is a matter of great public issue, and the huge membership of organisations such as the National Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds shows the extent to which people's interest is easily translated into positive commitment.

As someone with a lifelong interest in the natural world and the natural history of these islands, I had become used to the bipartisan approach which characterised British policy on wildlife conservation in the pre-Thatcher era. While personally I would always put more emphasis on wildlife conservation, that would not have signified a political difference between our respective parties.

I regret that the battle to protect the fraction of remaining wildlife habitat is a cause for political differences between the Government and the Opposition. The Government have signalled their departure from the historical bipartisanship, and in administering their new treatment the patient will also be the victim. The economic dogma that has been forced on so many other parts of British life is now threatening even what remains of our indigenous wildlife. Natural history is a particularly sensitive guinea pig, for damage inflicted on ecosystems often can never be rectified.

I shall say a few words about why the issue is important. We could legitimately talk about the right of species other than homo sapiens to continued existence on this planet, and I am sure that the Minister would have a valid contribution to that debate. However, a more accessible case for nature conservation involves the benefit that homo sapiens can derive from nature. I am delighted that my own Member of Parliament, the hon. Member for Battersea, (Mr. Bowis), is here, listening intently, but in case I sound like a Thatcherite I should make it clear that I mean the benefit derived from observation rather than exploitation of the natural world.

The value of a varied and rich natural environment is impossible to quantify, but anyone who has walked the moors above Llanbrynmair, watched bearded reedlings on the Norfolk Broads or seen a peregrine stoop on to its prey will have experienced the value and delight of the natural world. It enriches and humbles those who observe it, and, as with any asset, its value increases with scarcity. We have reached a point where the remaining natural habitat in most of Britain is, by virtue of that scarcity, worthy of protection in all but the most exceptional cases.

I shall not feel able to explain the actions of my generation to those yet to come if we do not cease the onslaught we have unleashed on most species and habitats in this country. The importance of the study of nature rests not only with its inherent interest but with the effect that an understanding of nature can have on the tolerance and maturity of young people. That study requires the raw material to be widely available.

I should like to put on record particular victims of that onslaught that have been denied protection by the Government. This will necessarily be highly selective because the litany of important sites and habitats that have been destroyed with the connivance, or at least through the inaction, of the Government would more than fill the time available in this debate.

An obvious place to start is the Flow country of Caithness and Sutherland. No one with an interest in conservation in Britain can be unfamiliar with the battles between conservationists and accountants over this area. On what side have the Government come down in that test case? A recent report by the Highland regional council on the potential for further afforestation of the Flow country reached conclusions entirely at odds with the Government's specialist advisory agency, the Nature Conservancy Council. The Secretary of State for Scotland acknowledged that divergence of view when responding to the Highland regional council's report by saying,

> "It is proper to record that the proposed strategy does not totally remove the potential for conflict between conservation and forestry."

That was the understatement of the year. The report of the Highland regional council recommends further planting of 40,000 hectares, much of which is on land of incomparable value for landscape and wildlife purposes. The Nature Conservancy Council wants no further planting. In this thorny dispute, the Government acted by accepting the Highland regional council's recommendation that

> "consultation with the NCC should in future take place only where tree planting is proposed on existing or potential SSSIs."

In other words, landscape of the value of Caithness and Sutherland, with its aesthetic beauty and value as a wildlife habitat, is to be denied any protection unless it has been categorised as a site of special scientific interest.

The Government reacted to that potential for conflict, which they recognised, by capitulating to the commercial forestry interests and overruling the concerns of their conservation advisers. The result will be afforestation approval such as that announced on 19 January, under which a further 1,400 acres will be planted, and the most recent announcement on 12 July that another 800 acres will be destroyed for ever.

Another highly sensitive area is what little remains of Dorset heathland, which is home to the marsh gentian, smooth snake, sand lizard, hobby and Dartford warbler. A little over 20 years ago, 100,000 acres of that wildlife-rich habitat remained. Today, 14,000 acres of scattered fragments remain. That total will be further reduced by the Department of the Environment's recent decision on the crucial planning decision at Canford heath. The inadequate measures under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 mean that what is left, even after the Secretary of State's depradations, is being devalued by deliberate mismanagement.

A further site of major importance is the lowland raised peat bog on the Shropshire-Clwyd border. The majority of that area is under threat from peat extraction. Fens, whixall and bettesfield mosses support the large heath butterfly, raft spider and bog bush cricket. But because of planning consent for exploitation of the vital feature of this area, it may not support those or any other important species for very long.

In my native Wales, the Cardiff bay barrage threatens the vital feeding grounds of thousands of wading birds, in a site of special scientific interest unique for its accessibility for the general public—all because developers desire a view over water, however polluted, rather than the rich estuarine mud that is so valuable to wildlife.

Other important sites threatened by the inadequate protection offered by the Government are Oxleas wood in Greenwich, the Cambrian mountains, mid-Kent's area of outstanding natural beauty and West Mersea meadow in Essex. Species as well as sites are under pressure. In the Somerset levels, snipe populations have declined by 68 per cent. over the past 10 years. Nationally, hen harriers are down to 450 breeding pairs; the corncrake population has declined to 750 calling birds; stone curlews have declined from 1,000 pairs in the 1930s to 160 pairs today. In respect of all those species, Britain has national and international responsibilities.

It is against this background that we must view the direction in which the Government have signalled they intend to go. That is not a background of maintaining the status quo or even of a gradual decline. It involves a wholesale onslaught unleashed at a time when there is less than ever to protect.

It is most unfortunate that I am obliged to refer to the record of the present Secretary of State for the Environment. The right hon. Gentleman has recently been referred to by distinguished observers as "an ecological hooligan" whose record is "nothing short of a disaster". Those references are unnecessarily restrained. The appointment of this environmental Genghis Khan to oversee the management of our remaining natural assets was a kick in the teeth to all who care about the environment and those with an interest in the countryside and wildlife in particular.

The natural world can breath a sigh of relief that the staggering double standards of the originator of the NIMBY syndrome are to be directed elsewhere in the very near future. However, we will still have the legacy of his period in office to contend with. I fear that we must consider the steps that the Government have taken to combat the threats that I outlined earlier.

As well as directly damaging the environment, the Government have a long record of opposing initiatives that would protect it. The most obvious cases are their opposition to the flora, fauna and habitats directive and their minimalist interpretation of the environmental impact assessment directive. The Government have altered the planning regulations and they scuppered the Hedgerows Bill which was introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy).

In a recent parliamentary answer, the Minister said that the draft directive on flora, fauna and habitat was unacceptable to all EC member states. However, she did not say that Britain was uniquely hostile to that conservation measure at all the meetings in which it was discussed. To hide behind the minor reservations of others is deliberately misleading. Why does not the Minister have the courage to say that she ordered Britain's total opposition, and explain why? Why did Britain scupper that directive?

*[Mr. Ron Davies]*

The environmental impact assessment directive is a similar case. Britain was not successful in denying all member states European action to safeguard the environment in relation to that directive. However, the interpretation of the directive at home has been as mean-spirited as it is legally possible for it to be.

Inaction has also spelt doom for thousands of miles of British hedgerows. The Government estimate that 500 miles of hedgerows are lost per year. Authoritative independent estimates put the loss at 4,000 miles per annum—an increase from a loss of 2,900 miles a few years ago. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature, planning decisions

> "have all too often given procedence to the developers' interests over environmental considerations even when sites of national or international importance are involved."

Perhaps it is appropriate that I should conclude my remarks by referring to the Nature Conservancy Council, the fragmentation of which is the Secretary of State's valedictory two-fingered gesture to the conservation movement in Britain. A word that is frequently used when discussing that piece of vandalism is "capitulation". It refers to the well-known hostility of vested and landed interests and of certain individuals and organisations representing them to the Nature Conservancy Council. They disliked the council because it prevented them from doing what they wanted to do—to damage the environment. Those voices were particularly heard in Scotland, and the Secretary of State has capitulated to them, making the NCC a victim of its own success, as one of its senior employees put it yesterday.

By breaking up the one body which could take the national overview of particular conservation issues, the Government are damaging the cause of conservation in two main ways. It is well known that in certain environmental battles local interests have frequently been in the anti-conservationist corner. In holding the ring, the NCC, as a national body, was able to assess the significance of the environmental sacrifices from a national or international perspective. For instance, a particular wildlife habitat may be very little valued by those who live nearby, but be of enormous national significance and attract naturalists from far afield because of its importance as a reserve for an internationally threatened rare species. In such cases, a national organisation can weigh the local and national interest. A regional structure cannot do that. That is why the NCC is being fragmented.

A regional organisation is also unable to speak for the whole country, both in the kind of international forums and conventions which are increasingly important in wildlife conservation, and to the Government at home. Clearly, the Government do not want to hear what the Nature Conservancy Council has to say. Their ears have been closed for the past few years, but just because they are determined not to listen does not mean that there are not others who are glad of Britain's voice in international gatherings. That will now be extinguished.

According to its chairman, who was not consulted on its dismemberment, the Nature Conservancy Council decision makes little sense in respect of wildlife—presumably, one of the NCC's main concerns—in national, international or economic terms. He has pointed out:

> "wildlife issues are no respecter of geographical or political boundaries and I am greatly concerned that complete separation will undermine the scientific capability of the NCC and prevent effective policy advice being provided to the Government."

The Government do not care. The director general of the Nature Conservancy Council has complained:

> "This reorganisation throws the baby out with the bathwater".

I can only echo the words of both men.

I hope that the proposal to privatise national nature reserves will be dropped at the same time as the madman who conceived it. A more naked piece of partisan dogma is hard to imagine. On top of a 5 per cent. cut in the NCC's budget this year, which has prevented it from buying several reserves of outstanding value, it has been ordered to prepare for sale 62 of the jewels in this country's wildlife crown, four of them imminently. Can the Minister give a commitment that this madcap idea will be ditched, or is it the intention to starve the NCC of funds, dismember it and force it to sell its priceless reserves, in line with the Government's doctrinaire approach to so many valuable public assets?

This is an opportunity for the Minister to tell the House and the country what the Government intend. I hope that she will take it in answering these questions frankly, honestly and fully and that she will give us more warning as a country than she and the Secretary of State for the Environment gave the chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council of his organisation's fate. I am afraid that I can only suspect the worst. I have become used to that in observing the Government's record on conservation, wildlife and the natural world.

2.26 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Virginia Bottomley):** I welcome the opportunity to respond to the debate initiated by the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies). As he said modestly in his opening remarks, he has had a long-standing interest in our country's natural habitat. We are privileged to live in a country with such splendid flora and fauna. I endorse his remarks about the importance of that natural heritage to our young people. Many people do excellent work in opening the eyes of youngsters and in explaining and demonstrating all that is around us in the natural environment. We live in a country in which about 30 per cent. of our countryside is designated in one way or another—as an area of outstanding natural beauty, as a site of special scientific interest, as part of one of our splendid 10 national parks or as part of the green belt, which has doubled since the Conservative party came to power.

Before talking more generally about some of the issues raised by the hon. Gentleman, I should like to respond to his point about the Nature Conservancy Council. This is an opportune moment to explain some of the thinking on this matter and perhaps to reassure the hon. Gentleman and others who may have misunderstood the purpose behind the proposals.

Many of the hon. Gentleman's points reflect the remarkable increase in public interest and involvement in environmental issues. This is illustrated by the growth in the membership of voluntary bodies right across the spectrum, from Greenpeace to the National Trust. The Government welcome these developments, which are channelling so much energy into improving the environment. They are increasingly being complemented by the greening of our major industries, and the new emphasis on conservation in agriculture.

The Government are also intervening firmly and decisively on the side of conservation—contrary to the hon. Gentleman's remarks. It is worth recalling briefly how radically the legislative framework, and the role of bodies like the Nature Conservancy Council, have changed over the past two decades. The watershed was the Wildlife and Countryside Act passed in 1981. The Act created a protected network of habitats—sites of special scientific interest—designated by the NCC which now cover 7 per cent. of the land surface of Great Britain. It protects most species of wild birds, and over 200 other animals and plants, again with the active involvement and expertise of the NCC. It introduced marine nature reserves, widened the definition of national nature reserves and accelerated the trend towards management agreements with farmers and landowners to protect many of our key sites. The Countryside Commission for England and Wales, too, was given important new responsibilities by the Act, as well as a separate status as a grant-in-aid body.

The Government have enabled——

*It being half-past Two o'clock, the Motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.*

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

**Mrs. Bottomley:** The Government have enabled both the NCC and the Countryside Commission to implement the provisions by substantially increasing their resources. Taken together, the grants for the two organisations now total £62·28 million, compared with £13·4 million in 1979-80, a rise in real terms of 134 per cent. That shows clearly the Government's commitment to our natural habitat.

The NCC, in particular, has been transformed by its expanded duties and resources. When the council was established in 1949 covering the whole of Great Britain, it was designed to be a small body, compared primarily with research. It had relatively few staff or executive responsibilities. In 1960, it had only about 200 staff spread across the whole of Great Britain. It would not have made sense then to establish separate bodies, or even under the Nature Conservancy Act 1973 which divided the NCC from the Natural Environment Research Council.

Today, the NCC has grown more than fivefold, and has more than 1,100 staff. More important still, many of those staff have to carry out their duties—designating and monitoring SSSIs, negotiating management agreements and co-operating with other bodies, both statutory and voluntary—in areas of the country that have very different circumstances and needs. These are not simply academic or scientific tasks. SSSIs for example, can affect the livelihood both of individual owners and of the community of which they are part. Great sensitivity is required in applying such designations in a way that will obtain grassroots support, whether from farmers, foresters or conservationists. The Government firmly believe that it is only through the voluntary support of the whole community that successful conservation can be achieved. The right way to proceed is to work with the grain of those who live and work in the countryside and not to try to antagonise or alienate them unduly.

The NCC has grappled with the problems brought by its expanded role and it has many achievements to its name, not least the establishment of the current SSSI network. I have visited the NCC in Peterborough and I have been most impressed with much of the excellent and high quality work it is undertaking. However, its three-tier structure is inevitably over-centralised and remote from those areas where the nature conservation effort takes place on the ground. Our proposals to create separate agencies in England, Scotland and Wales will remove one of the tiers and establish much clearer lines of accountability and responsibility. This in turn should improve the efficiency and sensitivity with which conservation functions are carried out and provide better opportunities to carry forward the cause of conservation in ways that command the support of the whole community.

I feel sure that the House will also agree that it is an anachronism for the Department of the Environment to be responsible for the appointment and funding of the NCC in Scotland and Wales. The Secretaries of State for those countries already exercise many responsibilities for conservation, including several new ones, such as the declaration of marine nature reserves and the making of nature conservation orders, bestowed on them by the 1981 Act.

It is only logical that they should be able to exercise those powers in partnership with agencies specifically attuned to the needs of Scotland and Wales. After all, that is how we organise other aspects of Government work involving the delegation of executive responsibilities to separate statutory bodies, such as the conservation of the built heritage. English Heritage does its job extremely effectively in England and separate, equally competent professional bodies offer similar advice and undertake a similar task in Wales and Scotland. I do not think that the hon. Member for Caerphilly or anyone else should regard the new arrangements for nature conservancy with suspicion or mistrust.

As my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales have already made plain, they look forward to the opportunity to take a clearer responsibility for the conservation of those countries' precious and unique natural heritage. And it is not just the Secretaries of State. I note that the *Western Mail* carried a leader responding to the announcement that the Government proposed to merge the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission in Wales, and welcoming the fact that the decisions would not be placed fairly and squarely with the Secretary of State for Wales, to be made on the basis of advice given to him.

I should emphasise that the new bodies will have a similar constitution to those of the existing NCC and the Countryside Commission—that is to say, they will be separate grant-in-aid bodies with specific statutory functions. They will not, of course, be voluntary bodies like the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds or Friends of the Earth. But they will not be Government Departments either, and they will be expected to carry out their work under the supervision of their own chairmen and boards.

In Scotland and Wales, our proposals are also designed to secure integrated agencies, covering both wildlife and landscape conservation as well as informal recreation and access to the countryside. In adopting this approach in Scotland and Wales but not in England, we have taken account of several factors. First, there is a much higher density of population in England, and consequently even

*[Mrs. Bottomley]*

greater pressure on land from many legitimate but often conflicting interests. The hon. Gentleman referred to some. It therefore makes sense to retain separate bodies —one to protect wildlife for its own sake, and the other to cover landscape, recreation and access issues.

Secondly, a much higher proportion of the land area of both Scotland and Wales is composed of natural, or semi-natural habitat, much of it already covered by formal designations and more appropriate to a strategic approach embracing all relevant interests. As the consultation document published by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland points out, there is a complex interaction between flora, fauna, scenery and human activity. In both Scotland and Wales this can best be covered by single agencies providing a one-door service to Government, farmers, conservationists and the wider public.

Mention has been made in respect of the Nature Conservancy Council and others of the need to preserve the scientific base of the NCC. Only yesterday I met representatives of Wildlife Link, an association of well-regarded organisations of high standard operating in the field, and one of their main concerns was the maintenance of the scientific base of the NCC.

The Government fully accept that the work of the three successor bodies must be underpinned by rigorous science, using the data and expertise that the council has built up over the past 40 years. We shall, therefore, ensure that provision is made for the Government to maintain a Great Britain overview an that each body has access to adequate scientific advice on a Great Britain basis where this is desirable.

We are ready to discuss how best this might be done. Options include in-house provisions or actions by outside bodies such as universities and research councils, arrangements for the pooling of data and expertise among the agencies and the use of common protocols and data protection techniques. It is important to recognise however that the science base is only one aspect of the NCC's activities and now takes proportionately less of its resources following the increase in the council's executive responsibilities, especially those for SSSIs. The NEC is not a research council and already commissions the majority of its original scientific work from other bodies such as the Natural Environment Research Council and universities.

It is perfectly proper for the Government to take account of matters other than the interests of the science directorate of the NCC in deciding the appropriate organisational model for the functions of nature conservation in this country. We are confident that the concerns expressed by the chairman of the NCC, to whom I pay tribute for his distinguished contribution over the years, and others can be readily accommodated within the organisational arrangements that we intend to make. We believe that, when stripped of emotion and political hyperbole, these concerns boil down to a fairly narrow compass which, although important in themselves, do not undermine the Government's case for the reorganisation of these bodies.

It is certainly not a concern about costs and the formulation of policy at national and international level. On costs, the Government would wholly reject any suggestion that the real motive of the proposals is somehow to cut spending on conservation. Our aim is to improve the delivery of conservation services in all three countries, while maintaining the scientific integrity that underpins many of the NCC's activities. We will also take account of short-term costs, such as those incurred by staff relocation, in deciding what level of resources to recommend to the House in the next public expenditure White Paper.

On national and international policy, there seems to be a widespread but mistaken belief that, because wildlife crosses political boundaries, the machinery of Government must do likewise. It is of greater importance to ensure that the agencies are effectively protecting wildlife at grassroots level in local communities and in co-operation with voluntary bodies such as the country trusts. When advice is needed at the national and international level, we shall make arrangements to ensure that the new agencies are able to provide it, and that the Government are able to act on it, whether in Brussels or in the various international wildlife conventions to which the United Kingdom is party, whether the Ramsar or Berne conventions. It is important to remember that the Government, not individual Departments, decide whether to ratify international conventions and agreements on behalf of the entire United Kingdom. Consistency will also be maintained between the criteria used for designating sites of national or international importance in each of the three countries.

It is understandable that the Great Britain headquarters of the NCC finds it difficult at the moment to accept that there is a better way to organise the council's work. However, there is clearly a strong current of favourable opinion in Scotland and Wales. In Scotland, it was noticeable that the chairman of the Scottish Wildlife Trust Ltd. and the convener of the Scottish Landowners Federation wrote in considered and positive terms to *The Scotsman* last week. The chairman of the trust believes that the measures

> "could turn out to be the most effective and imaginative in our generation".

The Government intend to prove him right.

The hon. Gentleman referred also to concern about habitat damage and other issues.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** An Adjournment debate is an opportunity to pursue a matter, but I will be brief. Does the Minister understand that the Government's direct refusal to consult with the bodies that are involved—the Nature Conservancy Council, the Countryside Commission, regional interests, or Wildlife Link and the constituent parts of that body—was bound to cause a great deal of anger and suspicion? There is precious little use in her complimenting individuals when she withheld from the opportunity for prior consultation. If she values them, why on earth did she not consult them before she took the decision?

I recognise that there is some merit in merging the NCC and the Countryside Commission in Scotland and Wales, but there are two major concerns. The Minister has not spelt out how she intends to ensure that national and international value is given to parochial arguments. For example, in the case of SSSIs in Cardiff bay, how can we ensure that the international perspective is maintained? Will she please make it clear that, when Britain speaks in international forums, there will be a unified voice and that we will not have a fragmented approach to matters of international importance?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** I am pleased to respond to the hon. Gentleman's remarks. For some time, there have been discussions with the NCC about the right way of proceeding and the appropriate form that its structure should take. It is also the case that my noble Friend the Minister for Housing, Environment and Countryside, has written to Wildlife Link in response to correspondence, making it clear that concerns and views about the way to proceed would be welcomed.

The decision has been taken about the structure. Many of the hon. Gentleman's points are concerned with the manner in which the work will be undertaken and the importance of conserving an ability to speak on behalf of the United Kingdom as a whole. It is clear that on many occasions, when the United Kingdom Government must take a view, they are working with a co-ordinated view between Departments. We do not anticipate that that will cause difficulties, but I will ensure that the hon. Gentleman's concerns are properly taken into account when we finalise the arrangements. Discussions are going on with those who work at the NCC and elsewhere about the most appropriate way to respond.

The hon. Gentleman referred to habitat damage. It is important that our system of SSSIs, which is now approaching 5,500, and the other designations in the countryside, are given value. I would like to do justice in longer detail to many of the cases to which the hon. Gentleman referred, but I am not sure that that would be welcome now. I shall write to him about them in more detail, as I will on birds and the situation in Scotland.

The hon. Gentleman has misunderstood the Government's position on the habitat directive. Everything that I have said today makes it abundantly clear that we take great pride in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. We believe that we have introduced a model for the preservation of wildlife and species of natural habitats. It is an example that many others could well follow. He will appreciate that we are not convinced that the mechanisms being promoted by the Commission were the most appropriate way of ensuring that our excellent record in this country would be matched by others. We are hopeful that progress will be made and we have made it clear that we welcome discussions on the subject.

I hope that I can reassure the hon. Gentleman that we have every confidence that the Nature Conservancy Council will continue, albeit in its new form, to give its high-standing and reputable advice to the Government. We are strongly committed to preserving, protecting and enhancing our natural heritage. I welcome the opportunity offered by the hon. Gentleman to put that absolutely clearly.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at thirteen minutes to Three o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Monday 24 July 1989*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

HYTHE MARINA VILLAGE (SOUTHAMPTON) WAVESCREEN BILL

NEW SOUTHGATE CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM LIMITED BILL

*Orders read for consideration of Lords amendments.*
*To be considered on Thursday 27 July.*

HAYLE HARBOUR BILL *[Lords]*

QUEEN MARY AND WESTFIELD COLLEGE BILL *[Lords]*

*Orders for consideration read.*
*To be considered tomorrow.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## ENERGY

### British Coal

1. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the date upon which British Coal will break even.

**The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Cecil Parkinson):** I will be reviewing British Coal's financial prospects with the corporation once its current negotiations with the generating companies are concluded. I cannot anticipate the outcome.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Does my right hon. Friend accept that the contracts will be inextricably linked to British Coal's ability to break even? Does he agree that it is important to apply both the carrot and the stick to an industry whose productivity has risen by nearly 50 per cent. during the past three years? Did he notice the enthusiasm and dedication of the Nottinghamshire mineworkers when he visited the county last week, and is he aware of the considerable approval of and gratitude for his visit that is felt among mineworkers generally and by the miners of Thoresby?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I thank my hon. Friend for his kind remarks. I enjoyed my visit to Thoresby. I was impressed with the enthusiasm with which the men there are using the new equipment and the big investment that has been made. They are doing the very thing that is guaranteed to safeguard a good future for them. They are an outstanding example of how the industry can secure its future.

**Mr. Allen McKay:** When does the Secretary of State expect to write off the interest charges—before or after privatisation?

**Mr. Parkinson:** Of course, one cannot anticipate the Queen's Speech, but I expect proposals to come forward in the very near future—certainly later this year—for the restructuring of British Coal's finances.

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** May I re-emphasise to my right hon. Friend the need to have a capital restructuring, which is absolutely vital for the industry? Is my right hon. Friend aware that we have been talking about breaking even for the past 20 years, but that we have never been able to achieve it?

**Mr. Parkinson:** One reason for that is the high interest charges borne by the industry. It has received nearly £10 billion in deficit grant and subsidy in recent years. However, its capital structure is not satisfactory. It has no reserves. Every time a pit closes, the cost is added to the negative reserve. The answer is restructuring and, as I have already said, I expect the Government to come forward with proposals.

**Mr. Barron:** When the industry is restructured, will the Secretary of State make sure that comparisons of the costs of British coal are not made against the marginal cost of coal on the international markets, in view of the answer that he gave me in 1987—that if the international markets were to supply the Central Electricity Generating Board, it would substantially increase the cost? Will he assure the House that the actual costs of production will not be compared with the marginal costs of international coal?

**Mr. Parkinson:** The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. It is a mistake to take the lowest price at which one can buy coal on the spot market and say that that is the world price. As he knows, if the CEGB were to go into the market for 80 million tonnes, it would shift the world price considerably. I am glad that on this occasion he and I can agree.

### Renewable Energy

2. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his latest estimate of the potential for electricity generation from renewable sources in the north-west of England.

10. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what further studies he expects to authorise on renewable electrical energy potential in the north-west of England or other regions.

20. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement concerning renewable energy sources for electricity generation in the north-west of England.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Michael Spicer):** The recent report of the North-Western electricity board and the energy technology support unit estimates the potential for electricity generation from renewable energy sources in the NORWEB area to be equivalent to 400 MW of conventional base load plant at costs up to 3p per kWh, excluding connection costs. The board is currently considering the next steps.

**Mr. McCartney:** I welcome the NORWEB initiative and report. Is it not astonishing that after privatisation, by the year 2000, only 1 per cent. of capacity will come from renewables, yet the report shows that 10 to 12 per cent. of NORWEB's capacity could come from renewables? As methane gas has one of the worst effects on the greenhouse problem, should not the Department of Energy be promoting a nationwide programme for using rubbish tips and harnessing methane gas as an alternative to the nuclear industry, which is expected to produce 15 to 20 per cent. of electricity. We could then ensure that methane gas was used by NORWEB and other companies so as not to destroy the atmosphere.

**Mr. Spicer:** I do not know where the hon. Gentleman gets his figure of 1 per cent., but I can tell him that no Government have done as much as this one for renewable energy, not only in sponsoring research, but in providing for the non-fossil fuel obligation, which will give a special chance for renewable energy. Renewable energy has never been so protected as it will be in the future. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will welcome that.

## Energy Saving

3. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what private sector initiatives there are in the field of energy saving.

**The Minister of State, Department of Energy (Mr. Peter Morrison):** There is now a well-established energy efficiency industry operating and taking initiatives in the private sector.

**Mr. Jack:** Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating a company in my constituency, Inenco, which for the past 21 years has been investing in energy management, to the extent of £2·3 million in saving systems, which in turn have saved £1 million worth of energy? Does he agree that that excellent example of a private sector initiative shows what can be done in energy savings?

**Mr. Morrison:** I agree with my hon. Friend that Inenco deserves a very good 21st birthday present. I am glad to say that where that company has gone, so have many others.

**Mrs. Roe:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that horticulturists are among the most efficient users of energy, yet their operations are threatened by the large increase in gas prices?

**Mr. Morrison:** I am aware of that, not least because my hon. Friend, with another of my hon. Friends, discussed with me the position of the glasshouse industry. She knows that Ofgas is in discussion with British Gas at present about the predicament that she mentioned.

## Insulation

4. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had on the desirability of setting a minimum target for the number of low-income households to be insulated in the current year and next year.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The number of low-income households insulated is largely determined by the availability locally of unemployed people requiring training in those occupational or skill areas which the projects can provide. Against that background, it would not be appropriate to set a minimum target.

**Ms. Quin:** Will the Minister confirm that there has been a 50 per cent. reduction in the number of low-income households that have been insulated during the past year since the introduction of employment training? Will he urgently consider ways of expanding such schemes and urge his colleagues to increase the funding to local authorities, so that they can increase the number of schemes that they operate?

**Mr. Morrison:** I confirm that there was a reduction during the transition from the community programme to employment training. However, the hon. Lady will be aware that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment considered this matter carefully and increased the grant by £40. Since that time it appears that the take-up of the scheme under employment training has been good, and I know that my right hon. Friend is looking carefully at continuing that grant.

**Mr. Morgan:** May I re-emphasise to the Minister how important it is to insulate low-income households because of the likelihood that, during the period before privatisation and afterwards, their electricity bills will increase by about 50 per cent. or more? I draw to the Minister's attention the case of my constituent, Mr. John O'Connor of Ashcroft crescent, Fairwater, Cardiff, which was brought to my attention on Saturday. He was told in his most recent electricity bill that his monthly payment on or after 25 September will be £27·50. That is a 55 per cent. increase on Mr. O'Connor's previous quarterly bill and on the average of the four previous quarterly bills that he has received.

When I received my quarterly bill at the same time I was told that if I changed to a monthly budget account my bill "would be" £91·50 per month. That is a larger increase than that faced by Mr. O'Connor, but at least I was given the option by being told what my bill "would be" if I switched to a monthly budget account, whereas pensioner households on council estates are being told, "Your bill will be going up by 55 per cent. from September". Does the Minister agree that it is absolutely urgent that low-income households are fully insulated and that the practices of the South Wales electricity board are reviewed?

**Mr. Morrison:** First, I am glad that the hon. Gentleman agrees with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment on his insulation initiative.

The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that this is the first time that he has mentioned the case of his constituent, Mr. O'Connor, but I shall be perfectly happy to look into the matter. Perhaps he would like to write to me or come to see me about it. He will appreciate, however, that electricity bills have not increased by anything like 50 per cent.

## Fossil Fuels (Pollution)

5. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had regarding means to offset the cost of air pollution from the burning of fossil fuel.

**Mr. Parkinson:** I regularly receive representations on environmental questions and discuss them with a wide range of interests.

The Government are committed to reducing acid emissions from the burning of fossil fuel and, for example, a £2 billion investment programme is planned by the electricity supply industry to meet new standards agreed with the European Community.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** Does the Secretary of State agree with the recent report of the Select Committee on Energy on the greenhouse effect which concluded that the nuclear industry would not have the advantage in reducing the greenhouse effect and that the Government should not overstate the nuclear argument? Does he agree that the best way forward is to find the most efficient method of burning fossil fuel? Methods are being investigated, but because of the underfunding of plants such as Grimethorpe, that investigation is unable to progress. On Thursday, the Under-Secretary of State refused to give a definite assurance that that plant would be financed. Will the Secretary of State assure the House that Grimethorpe will continue to be funded by Government money?

**Mr. Parkinson:** As the hon. Gentleman knows, we are trying to put together a package—I am extremely optimistic that we will succeed—of finance to keep the project active and to bring it to a successful conclusion. I cannot anticipate the outcome of my arguments and discussions with the Treasury, but I am optimistic.

We will, of course, reply to the Select Committee report, but we do not take the view that there is one answer to the greenhouse effect. We believe that the answer will be found in a variety of ways through cleaner coal burn, nuclear power and the extension of renewables—the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) mentioned the burning of waste gas. We have 45 projects on the stocks and we should be producing nearly 50 MW of electricity from waste gas next year. In a variety of ways, therefore, we shall tackle the problem of the greenhouse effect. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that one such solution is cleaner coal burn.

**Mr. Hannam:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that one of the important future methods of reducing pollution from coal burn will be gasification? How is gasification developing and how near are we to its use?

**Mr. Parkinson:** We are backing research into this matter because my Department takes the view—I have said this many times—that coal is one of our most important indigenous resources. We must find cleaner ways in which to use it, and gasification is one of them.

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** Does the Secretary of State accept that when more stringent sulphur controls are imposed on nuclear power stations—the sooner it happens the better—that will encourage the burning of low sulphur coal? In those circumstances, and given the pressure on British Coal as the Minister pushes it towards privatisation, does he agree that the forced closure of many coalfields in Scotland that produced low sulphur coal has been a mistake? Will he respond, even now, to my suggestion that he should review the likely premium for low sulphur coal when full restrictions are in force? That review might, at least, salvage some of the Scottish coalfields.

**Mr. Parkinson:** As the hon. Gentleman knows, closures are a matter for British Coal, which examines each case in detail before arriving at its decision whether to close. I agree that low sulphur coal has a role to play, but since the vast majority of our reserves are high sulphur coal we see the flue gas desulphurisation equipment as a way of guaranteeing a continuing market for the main body of British coal.

**Mr. Redmond:** The Secretary of State mentioned the financial package for Grimethorpe. If that package fails, will he stand guarantor so that, irrespective of whether the package is put together, the Government will continue to ensure adequate finance?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I do not personally have the means to stand guarantor, but I am extremely optimistic: I find that the Treasury is inclined to listen if one has a good case and puts it sensibly. I am extremely optimistic that we shall be successful in our negotiations.

**Mr. Dickens:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the power of the wind is perhaps that most ozone-friendly of all means of creating power? Although wind farms and large offshore windmills may seem commercially very unattractive at the moment, in years to come when the coal has run out, and gas oil wells have dried up, windmills may prove one of the big sources for the future.

**Mr. Parkinson:** My hon. Friend makes an important point. The problem with windmills is that people who are enthusiastic about the prospects of producing electricity from them hate having them anywhere near their homes. One reason why we are sponsoring three projects with the CEGB is to find out whether the public will accept large wind farms, because they are undoubtedly environmentally intrusive, even though the electricity that they produce is welcome.

**Mr. Blair:** Will the Secretary of State comment on the reported collapse of the Leicester combined heat and power scheme because, as the chairman of the consortium said, there would be no effective competition in electricity generation after privatisation? If that is right, is it not a fairly damning indictment not merely of the Government's environmental policy but of their privatisation proposals.?

**Mr. Parkinson:** It looks as though the Leicester project is not going to happen, simply because of the economics. The plain fact is that it cannot produce a project that will provide electricity at any sort of economic price. But there are many other projects with good economic prospects. I am sorry to disappoint the hon. Gentleman: there will be substantial independent generation in the future.

### Energy Efficiency

7. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list those forms of additional assistance with energy efficiency work made available since 1 July 1988, listing those which have been discontinued since that date.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 7 March a new best practice programme which aims to spread and advance best practice in energy efficiency. This programme began on 1 April and replaced the energy efficiency demonstration and research and development schemes.

**Mr. Speller:** My right hon. Friend has not precisely answered the question, which was whether he would list forms of additional assistance. I am well aware of the packages. Does he accept that there are two predominant forms of energy efficiency which we should seek to encourage: first, energy audit in the home and the workplace, to save some fuel; and, secondly, energy labelling on all machinery and appliances, to save energy and costs and, in the long term, to reduce the need for new generation?

**Mr. Morrison:** I agree with my hon. Friend in this respect: it is up to the individual, company or commercial organisation to see to their own energy efficiency, and that is where our programmes are directed. However, I would not go the whole way with my hon. Friend's suggestion. It would entail unnecessary bureaucracy which could prove tedious and turn people against energy efficiency.

**Mr. Gow:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the public sector is setting the most appalling example of the economic use of energy? If he will look above him, he will see 150 powerful lights burning to keep this Chamber illuminated to a degree which is quite unnecessary. If my right hon. Friend goes round Government Departments in London and outside it, he will find, on the brightest day of the year at 12 noon, lights on in almost every building. Will he do something serious about this appalling waste?

**Mr. Morrison:** I always try to follow my hon. Friend's example. I know that when he was a Minister he assiduously used to go round his Department turning out unnecessary lights. We should all follow that example. I hope that he was pleased with the announcement on 20 July by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy. In answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam), who asked whether he would make a statement on the campaign to promote energy efficiency in the public sector, my right hon. Friend gave a long answer which promoted precisely what he, I and my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) would want.

### Toilets (Pits)

11. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the total increase in underground toilet facilities in British Coal pits in the last year.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** This is a matter for British Coal, which has between two and six lavatories in each of its collieries.

**Mr. Barnes:** The Minister will be aware that the Employment Act 1989 means that many women may be obliged to work down the pit or lose benefit. In that event, should there not be adequate toilet facilities in the pits? It is clear from the Minister's answer that such facilities are often primitive, inadequate or some considerable distance from the work face.

**Mr. Spicer:** I am aware of the hon. Gentleman's interest in this matter because of his membership of the Standing Committee that discussed the Employment Bill. I have read the Committee's reports. I assure him that the two to six lavatories per pit could easily be converted for use by women. As to why existing ones are not used, I invite the hon. Gentleman to accompany me on my next visit to the pits and we can endeavour to find out why more miners do not use the lavatories that are provided for them.

### Electricity Privatisation (Advisers)

12. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will accept the recommendation of the Energy Select Committee that the terms of remuneration of each adviser he has employed on electricity privatisation should be provided to the Select Committee.

15. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will publish a statement on the responsibilities, selection, basis of remuneration and method of contract appraisal of the advisers he is currently employing on work related to the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

**Mr. Parkinson:** As the hon. Member knows, we give careful consideration to all recommendations made by the Select Committee on Energy. The Government will give their considered response in due course.

**Mr. Sedgemore:** Bearing in mind the fact that last year the Government spent £6 million on advisers' fees—the equivalent of employing 220 people—and that this year they intend to spend the equivalent of employing 870 advisers, it is not scandalous that Parliament is not given the information that it needs to decide whether it is getting value for money? Vast sums are being paid to Kleinwort Benson and Slaughter and May for doing God knows what and for God knows how much.

**Mr. Parkinson:** We are embarking on the huge enterprise of privatising and restructuring this massive industry. Although that information is not made available in detail to the Select Committee on Energy, it is of course available in total to the National Audit Office, which has the right and the duty to examine every item of public expenditure and say whether the Government are getting good value for money. Parliament is being accounted to, in the way that it requests, through the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee.

### Carbon Fuels (Tax)

13. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has received any recent representations about a tax on carbon fuels.

**Mr. Parkinson:** I have received several letters from hon. Members, on behalf of their constituents, on this matter. In my replies, I have assured them that the Government have no plans for such a tax.

**Mr. Thurnham:** Has my right hon. Friend had any discussions with other countries? Clearly it would be uncompetitive for our energy-using industries to pay a tax on carbon fuels if industries in competitor countries did not do the same.

**Mr. Parkinson:** We are active members of the intergovernmental panel on climate change which is due to report on these matters by the middle of next year and will be taking a view about whether international initiatives can be taken. My hon. Friend is right; for us to put ourselves at a disadvantage by making a totally individual gesture would be pointless. We are active supporters of the IPCC and will work hard to make sure that it comes up with some worthwhile schemes.

**Mr. Ashby:** There is a local tax in the form of a tonnage extraction rate. Will my right hon. Friend undertake to publish, for each coalfield and each opencast mining operation, the amount of tonnage rate that is paid?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I shall write to my hon. Friend about that matter.

## Carbon Dioxide Emissions

14. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish the most up-to-date figures available from the United States Department of Energy Oak Ridge laboratories on carbon dioxide emission levels in the United Kingdom, France and West Germany for the two most recent years available.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** According to the Oak Ridge laboratory report the United Kingdom, West Germany and France are responsible for about 2·8 per cent., 3·3 per cent. and 1·7 per cent. respectively of the world's non-biogenic emissions of $CO_2$. I will circulate a fuller answer, including a table of figures, in the *Official Report*.

**Ms. Mowlam:** That selective use of the figures does not give us a true picture of the comparative level of carbon dioxide emissions by Britain, France and West Germany. Will the Minister tell us clearly whether Britain's emissions of carbon dioxide are higher than those of West Germany or France? A straight yes or no answer will be sufficient.

**Mr. Spicer:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** Does my hon. Friend believe that his Department has responsibility for collaborating with other Departments to plant more trees, which alone can take in carbon dioxide and breath out oxygen, and so overcome the problem that we all fear so much?

**Mr. Spicer:** As my hon. Friend has implied, my Department is not responsible for planting trees, but various aspects of our policies are aimed at reducing the increase in $CO_2$ emissions, in particular our policy on the nuclear power industry. Some arguments suggest that the nuclear industry produces some $CO_2$, but even the Friends of the Earth cannot present figures that show that it produces more than 4 per cent., far less than that produced by the coal industry.

*The following is the information:* The Oak Ridge national laboratory maintains a computer database of global $CO_2$ emissions, including estimates for individual countries, covering the period from 1950 onward. A report on this database was published earlier this year and I will arrange for a copy to be deposited in the Library of the House. Since publication of the report, however, the database has been updated to include 1987 data and revisions to earlier data.

The latest estimates of carbon dioxide emissions in France (including Monaco), West Germany, the United Kingdom and the world as a whole, produced by Oak Ridge national laboratory, are given in the table for the two most recent years available. These emissions relate only to the combustion of fossil fuels and to emissions from cement manufacture and are expressed in million tonnes of carbon. The individual country estimates also exclude some emission sources such as bunker fuels.

All such estimates are of course subject to some uncertainty and Oak Ridge has estimated that even the global annual totals are subject to an uncertainty of 6 to 10 per cent. Figures for individual countries will be subject to even greater uncertainty because, for example, the estimates are based on global average carbon emission factors.

I have therefore provided a table giving the latest official estimates of United Kingdom emissions which are compiled by Warren Spring laboratory. These are compiled using a more detailed methodology and should therefore provide a truer picture of the United Kingdom situation. They also include emissions due to gas flaring at oilfields and other sources such as bunker fuels and incineration, which are not included in the Oak Ridge data.

*$CO_2$ Emission estimates compiled by Oak Ridge laboratory*

| | *1986* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|
| West Germany | 184·9 | 181·5 |
| France | 98·2 | 94·7 |
| United Kingdom | 152·5 | 156·1 |
| Global Total | 5512 | 5599 |

*United Kingdom $CO_2$ Emission estimates compiled by Warren Spring laboratory*

| | *1986* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|
| Total United Kingdom | 165·5 | 166·3 |

*Notes:*

1. All figures expressed as million tonnes of carbon.
2. All figures for individual countries rounded to one decimal place and the global total rounded to the nearest million tonnes but this does not necessarily reflect the precision of the data.
3. Oak Ridge figures include emissions from fossil fuels and cement manufacture only and individual country estimates exclude bunker fuels. Warren Spring figures include emissions from additional sources such as gas flaring at oil fields, incineration and bunker fuels.
4. Figures for France include Monaco.

## Regional Electricity Boards

18. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what matters he proposes to discuss with the chairs of the regional electricty boards when he next meets them.

**Mr. Parkinson:** I regularly meet the area board chairmen to discuss various matters of mutual interest.

**Mr. Pike:** When the Secretary of State next meets the chairmen of regional boards, will he discuss why boards such as NORWEB have reduced the number of inspectors that they employ and, for example, no longer inspect empty properties before they are reconnected to the electricity supply? Is that not an example of how, as the industry moves towards privatisation, profit becomes more important than safety?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I do not accept that. I have visited NORWEB on a number of occasions and I think that the improvement in its standards of service to its customers is remarkable. For instance, it has improved the level of disconnections, and that is again remarkable. It is preparing itself to give better service and is not doing so by taking any risks with safety.

**Mr. Favell:** When my right hon. Friend next meets the chairman of NORWEB, will he discuss the proposal to phase out Europa house in Stockport, where 600 or 700 people are employed? Does this new proposal arise out of privatisation? Are the rumours true that jobs are to be moved from Stockport, where unemployment is relatively high, to Swindon, where there is virtually none?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I cannot give my hon. Friend an answer to that. It has not been raised with me before and as he knows, I am not responsible for the day-to-day running of area boards. That is why there are boards of directors. However, I shall find out the answer and write to my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Hardy:** Will the Secretary of State discuss with the chairman of regional boards who is to pay for the scandalous waste that is about to be experienced, as all Wellington boots, donkey jackets, overalls, crockery, crested paper and so on bearing the emblem of the CEGB are replaced by goods bearing the logo of the new companies? Does the Secretary of State expect the customer to pay for that in advance of privatisation?

**Mr. Parkinson:** It has always been the practice in the electricity industry to promote the corporate identity of the industry. The idea that something new is being done is wrong. As a small example, in the last year of Labour Government, the equivalent of £57 million was spent on advertising, the object of which was to steal business from another national industry, the gas industry.

**Mr. Douglas:** Does the Secretary of State concede that when he can meet the chairmen of the electricity boards of England and Wales, he can discuss problems of mutual interest between them and British Coal? That, however, does not apply to Scotland. Nonetheless, there is a matter of considerable interest involving the South of Scotland electricity board and British Coal. When will the Secretary of State be able to resolve the important coal contract between that board and British Coal?

**Mr. Parkinson:** As the hon. Gentleman knows, that is very much a matter for the two parties. The Government have used their good offices to some effect—I think that the hon. Gentleman will agree with that—to maintain coal production in Scotland. We hope to see an agreement between the two parties in the near future.

### United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

21. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what scope he envisages for the diversification of the business of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The Atomic Energy Authority has decided to restructure its activities into a series of distinct businesses under the new corporate identity of AEA Technology. The businesses will be focused on the areas of work with the best commercial prospects. I welcome these developments.

**Mr. Butler:** Will my hon. Friend confirm that with the downgrading of the fast breeder reactor programme all is not doom and gloom with the AEA, and that its prospects could be extremely positive in the near future?

**Mr. Spicer:** I can confirm, as I said in my main answr, that there are prospects that the AEA is exploring assiduously which would restructure its business to make it extremely commercial.

**Mr. Allan W. Williams:** We know how desperate the AEA is to try to diversify its business and to try to improve its public image, but will the Minister dissuade it from entering the business of food irradiation? I understand that the Government are thinking of lifting the ban on food irradiation although there is serious public concern about the safety of irradiated food products. The British Medical Association opposes the irradiation of food.

**Mr. Spicer:** I cannot at this moment give any commitments to that effect to the hon. Gentleman, but I have listened to what he has said.

### Nuclear Power Stations (Valuation)

22. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most up-to-date valuation of the nuclear power stations of England and Wales.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The market value of the electricity supply industry will depend on a number of factors such as market conditions at the time of the sale, the profitability of the companies and their prospects. It is premature to speculate on the likely level of proceeds.

**Mr. Smith:** Will the Minister kindly explain to my constituents who work at the coal-fired power station at Aberthaw how they can be expected to compete equally and fairly with nuclear power stations when so much has to be written off from the value of power stations when they are transferred and sold off to the private sector? Surely my constituents at Aberthaw will be competing with one hand tied behind their backs?

**Mr. Spicer:** The hon. Gentleman prejudges how the balance sheet will be structured for the privatised companies. We have not said how we shall restructure them. We do not know yet what the state of the market will be when we come to privatise the companies. I can tell the hon. Gentleman in direct answer to his supplementary question, which related to the protection of the coal industry as against the nuclear industry, that we spend £2 million every working day on investment—a large chunk of that is from the public sector in the form of taxpayers' money—on the coal industry. If that is not a protected industry, I do not know what is. We are getting slowly to a position where it will be able to stand on its own feet.

### Greenhouse Effect

23. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps he is taking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the generation of electricity.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Current policies and initiatives are intended to limit the emission of greenhouse gases. The encouragement of cost-effective energy efficiency measures, the development of renewable energy resources, our support for nuclear power, and the diversified and efficient supply options in the Electricity Bill are a firm basis for any future action.

**Mr. Barron:** Without repeating what has been said already, is not the hon. Gentleman's answer unconvincing when we recall that on Thursday the Government removed from the Electricity Bill the only real teeth in that measure for ensuring that there is energy efficiency and conservation?

**Mr. Spicer:** The hon. Gentleman knows that the Electricity Bill, which we shall be debating further later this afternoon, has two major features connected with energy efficiency. The first feature is that the entire industry is to be restructured to bring forward the most efficient forms of energy production. Secondly, for the first time in the United Kingdom's history, we shall have built into legislation requirements on the regulator to promote the interests of energy efficiency. That is a major step forward. It is extraordinary that the Opposition still fail to understand that important point.

25. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what research has been conducted into British public attitudes towards the role of nuclear power in tackling the greenhouse effect; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** No such research has been carried out on behalf of my Department.

**Mr. Williams:** Does the Minister recognise that no matter how often he, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Environment—or perhaps the ex-Secretary of State—repeat the nonsense that nuclear power is the solution to the greenhouse effect, the general public have rumbled them and believe that spending money on energy conservation rather than nuclear power makes much better economic sense and plays a much greater part in tackling the greenhouse effect?

**Mr. Spicer:** The Government agree that energy efficiency has its part to play, which is precisely why I gave the answer that I did to the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron). The hon. Gentleman, for various reasons, may not like the nuclear industry, but I am surprised that he is not prepared to accept the facts. Electricity produced through the nuclear industry accounts for only 4 per cent. of $CO_2$ emissions even taking into account the Friends of the Earth figures. That is far less than the level produced by the coal industry. If the hon. Gentleman cannot understand that fact, I cannot understand how he can raise such a question.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Mr. Colin Wallace

56. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Attorney-General, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Brent, East of 29 June, *Official Report*, column *507*, if he will make a statement on the contents of the letter to the Director of Public Prosecutions dated 7 March from the chief constable of the Sussex police concerning the circumstances surrounding Mr. Colin Wallace's conviction for manslaughter.

**The Attorney-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew):** No, Sir.

**Mr. Livingstone:** Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman's refusal to make a statement mean that he is satisfied with the 10 questions that I put to the chief constable of Sussex about collusion to create identical police statements, police interference during the trial and police withholding of evidence? Is he personally satisfied that all those fears are groundless and unfounded? Will he give the House that assurance?

**The Attorney-General:** All such questions are not for me but for my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

### Director of Public Prosecutions

57. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Attorney-General when he next expects to meet the Director of Public Prosecutions about fraud; and if he will make a statement.

**The Attorney-General:** Tomorrow. No.

**Mr. Skinner:** When the right hon. and learned Gentleman finally meets the Director of Public Prosecutions—[HON. MEMBERS: "Tomorrow."]—yes, tomorrow, does he expect to discuss the scandal at NatWest, County NatWest, Phillips and Drew and the way in which the crooks in Tory-dominated firms are getting away with blue murder? Will he tell the DPP that it is no excuse for business men, often earning more than £100,000 a year, to say, "We do not understand the niceties of the law"? Will he also tell the DPP that he should act extremely quickly because those well-paid men may follow the example of Cameron-Webb and Dixon of the PCW syndicate, fly the coop and end up in America? Under this Tory Government is there not one law for the directors who support the Tory party and another for the old lady who has a tin of pilchards out of Marks and Spencer?

**The Attorney-General:** The County NatWest papers have been referred not to the DPP but to the director of the serious fraud office because he is the appropriate official to consider them. That is all that it is proper for me to say at this stage, other than to suggest that it does not assist the course of justice to shout, or even to say quietly, the sort of remarks that the hon. Gentleman made. Such matters must be dealt with in a sensible, ordered and balanced way, because that is the way that justice is done in this country.

**Sir John Stokes:** Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that most right and hon. Members appreciate his comments? However, ordinary people look to him and others to ensure that where fraud is found in an organisation, those at the top do not escape the penalty.

**The Attorney-General:** Fraud is an extremely serious criminal offence, wherever it is found. That is why a great deal of trouble is taken to investigate proper allegations, to establish whether criminal proceedings are justified, and to ensure that prosecutions are properly prepared before they begin. I agree very much with my hon. Friend's comments, and I am grateful to him for them.

**Mr. Fraser:** Despite the Attorney-General's dismissal of the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), is not the right hon. and learned Gentleman concerned that the Tory enterprise culture seems to have spawned a few mulit-million pound viruses in the City? The real problem is that such incidents are not occurring at the fringes of the City but at its very centre. Will the Attorney-General confirm that decisions about investigations and prosecutions are consistent and made without partiality or prejudice as to the rank, title, seniority or antecedents of the individuals concerned?

**The Attorney-General:** Certainly they will be. Whether it is congenial to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) that such decisions will be taken without concern to rank, title, status or anything else, I rather doubt. Of course it is right that all prosecution decisions are taken by reference to the Attorney-General's guidelines, laid down by my predecessor and now incorporated in the code for Crown prosecutors, a copy of which is in the Library, under the statutory authority of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. It is extremely important that such matters are examined absolutely impartially and fairly, and without regard to extraneous considerations.

**Mr. Dykes:** I appreciate that my right hon. and learned Friend cannot say much about County NatWest because a report has gone to the serious fraud office. While dissociating myself from the hysterical remarks of the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), further to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Sir J. Stokes), does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that there is widespread consternation about the report's suggestions and allegations of bad handling and of dishonest behaviour in the City? There may be suggestions that that behaviour is tantamount to fraud or is fraud, and does my right hon. and learned Friend appreciate that it would not be enough for the House, and that it would be outraged, if just a small number of lower level executives were to be the scapegoats for what happened and there were no resignations at the higher level?

**The Attorney-General:** I repeat, misconduct of any kind connected with a breach of trust, and particularly in respect of the affairs of the City of London, is very serious. Whether or not it amounts to fraud is a matter for the director of the serious fraud office to consider in due course. However, no one who has paid attention to the comments of my noble Friend Lord Young of Graffham when he was Secretary of State for Trade and Industry can be under the slightest illusion as to the high degree of gravity that he and the Government he represented attach to such misconduct. The matter was referred by the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to two inspectors, and a very thorough report was prepared and published, which has been sent to the director of the serious fraud office. The gravity that right hon. and hon. Members in all parts of the House attach to the matter is entirely understandable, but the proper authorities must be allowed to do their job.

### Advice to Ministers

58. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Attorney-General what steps he takes to ensure the secure storage of documents relating to his legal advice to Ministers.

**The Attorney-General:** My Department follows established procedures.

**Mr. Dalyell:** On the subject of misconduct, may I ask, in a quiet and sensible way, whether Mr. Ingham did not get hold of legal advice and approve its quite improper disclosure in relation to the Solicitor-General's own letter on Westlands? Also on the question of misconduct, was not Sir Michael Havers so angry when he returned from his sick bed that he threatened to have Scotland Yard at the door of No. 10 Downing street if an inquiry was not set up? Equally, on the question of misconduct—gross misconduct—did not the Prime Minister, when cornered and in difficulty—she is now forming another Cabinet—resort, at column 657 of the *Official Report* for 27 January 1986, to telling Parliament, in order to get out of her difficulty, a self-preserving and self-seeking lie?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman knows far better than that. Will he please withdraw that last comment?

**Mr. Dalyell:** You see, Mr. Speaker——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Will the hon. Gentleman please withdraw that comment?

**Mr. Dalyell:** No——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would be deeply reluctant to have to take action on this. Will the hon. Gentleman withdraw that final remark?

**Mr. Skinner:** He said it last week and nobody pulled him up.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am dealing with this. Will the hon. Gentleman withdraw that comment?

**Mr. Dalyell:** Who does a greater injury to Parliament, a Prime Minister who lies——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am not concerned with that matter. The hon. Gentleman must now obey my request or take the consequences.

**Mr. Dalyell:** We have to be quite clear——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman is putting in jeopardy the questions of other Members of Parliament. I will give him one more chance. Will he withdraw that comment, please?

**Mr. Dalyell:** This is too serious a matter. It is dragging on and on. As you know, Mr. Speaker I have been to see you about this issue. It is a serious matter. Our questions have been pushed aside. Question after question has not been answered. What does the House expect——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I have already said this and I am deeply reluctant to say it again. Is the hon. Gentleman refusing to withdraw that word?

**Mr. Dalyell:** If I had wanted to withdraw it I would not have said it. It is the truth.

**Mr. Speaker:** I name Mr. Tam Dalyell.

**The Attorney-General:** To my great personal regret, it falls to me to move,

That Mr. Tam Dalyell be suspended from the service of the House.

*Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 43 (Order in debate):—*

*The House proceeded to a division—*

**Mr. Ian Taylor** (Esher) *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it in order that we are about to lose Overseas Development questions, particularly those on Brazilian rain forests which were tabled by several Conservative Members, because of the disgraceful behaviour of Labour Members?

**Mr. Speaker:** It is not a question of order; it is a question of fact.

*The House having divided:* Ayes 188, Noes 28.

**Division No. 315]** **[3.21 pm**

## AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Adley, Robert
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Anderson, Donald
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Haselhurst, Alan
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Ingram, Adam
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclean, David
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Mudd, David
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Tom
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Ward, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle and
Mr. John M. Taylor.

## NOES

Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Callaghan, Jim
Canavan, Dennis
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cox, Tom
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Eadie, Alexander
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Flannery, Martin
Galloway, George
Hardy, Peter
Heffer, Eric S.
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
McAllion, John
McCartney, Ian
McKelvey, William
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Patchett, Terry
Redmond, Martin
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Vaz, Keith
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Dennis Skinner and
Mr. Harry Barnes.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Ordered,*

That Mr. Tam Dalyell be suspended from the service of the House.

**Mr. Heffer:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. After the statement.

# War Crimes

3.32 pm

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the report of the war crimes inquiry.

I set up the inquiry in February 1988 to consider allegations that persons who are now British citizens or resident in the United Kingdom committed war crimes during the second world war and to advise whether the law of the United Kingdom should be amended to enable prosecutions for war crimes to take place in this country.

The report as submitted to me was in two parts. The main report contains the inquiry team's analysis and conclusions. The second part contains detailed material on individual cases. The inquiry team intended that the main report should be published. I am today publishing it in full and without amendment. I also accept the expert view of the inquiry team that publishing the material in the second part about individual cases would risk prejudicing any proceedings which might be instituted. I am sure that the House will see the wisdom of that distinction and understand why I cannot comment on individual cases.

I believe that the House will find the main report a full and impressive document. It takes a broad view of the historical context affecting the territories and peoples of eastern Europe, of the conduct of successive British Governments during and after the last war and of the legal and other issues. The team visited the Soviet Union and interviewed a large number of possible witnesses. I am most grateful to Sir Thomas Hetherington, formerly Director of Public Prosecutions, and Mr. William Chalmers, formerly Crown Agent for Scotland, for their authoritative analysis.

The inquiry deals with allegations of horrific killings on a large scale—crimes which would constitute violations of the internationally agreed laws and customs of war. The allegations are not about actions committed in the heat of war. They concern individuals allegedly holding quite senior positions in paramilitary units operating in territories occupied by the German forces, whose task was the systematic murder of civilians.

The inquiry examined in detail seven cases. It concluded in respect of four that there was sufficient evidence to mount a criminal prosecution. One of the individuals concerned has since died. The inquiry went on to recommend that further investigations should take place in respect of the other three cases. In addition, of the nearly 300 further cases drawn to the attention of the inquiry, it recommends further investigation of 75 and that attempts should be made to trace a further 46.

The inquiry recommends that there should be a change in the law to permit the prosecution in this country of acts of murder and manslaughter committed as war crimes in Germany or German-occupied territory during the period of the second world war, by persons who are now British citizens or who are resident in the United Kingdom. Certain procedural changes, including the taking of evidence by live television link from persons outside the United Kingdom, are proposed to facilitate the trial of such cases.

The members of the inquiry were aware of the danger of creating retrospective legislation and have tried to meet that objection. They are addressing actions which they are satisfied constituted at the time clear breaches of international law, and which would constitute offences triable in British courts now, had the persons concerned been British citizens at that stage.

The inquiry reached its recommendation on legislation and prosecution in this country after examining and rejecting other courses of action. In particular, it discussed but did not recommend extradition of the individuals concerned to stand trial in the Soviet Union. It set out in the report the arguments for and against extradition. The Government find the arguments against extradition to the Soviet Union convincing.

The inquiry's recommendations raise important issues of principle and practicality. It can be argued that it is no service to the memory of the victims of these crimes to resurrect, after so many years, the horror of what they endured. One can question what will be achieved by prosecuting old men so long after the events. The practical difficulties of conducting trials include the age and frailty of witnesses, the problems of assembling the evidence, which is available in the Soviet Union, if at all, in a form in which it can be convincingly presented to a jury in Britain, and the problem of establishing identity and other key elements beyond reasonable doubt when witnesses' memories are more than 40 years old. The report deals with all those matters.

On the other hand it will be argued that, in the words of the report:

> "The crimes committed are so monstrous that they cannot be condoned . . . To take no action would taint the United Kingdom with the slur of being a haven for war criminals."

Other countries that have uncovered similar evidence have acted to enable the alleged offenders to be brought to trial, sometimes making broader changes in the law than recommended in this report. Despite the practical problems of conducting a trial, the experienced inquiry team consisting of a former Director of Public Prosecutions and a former Crown Agent, reached the view that there would be sufficient evidence in three cases to mount a prosecution if there were jurisdiction. If and when the time comes for assessing the evidence, the prosecuting authorities of the day will need to make their own assessment of particular cases.

We are impressed by the force of argument that led the inquiry to its clear conclusion that legislation was required, but we want to hear the views of Parliament before taking a final view on the principle of legislation. This is a matter, after all, on which the views of Parliament will be decisive. The Government will provide an opportunity for each House to debate the implications of the report and the action that should be taken in response to it. The debates will take place in the autumn once there has been a proper opportunity to study the report and reflect upon it. In the light of the views expressed in those debates, the Government will take a final decision on whether to bring forward a Bill on the lines proposed by the inquiry.

**Mr. Roy Hattersley** (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I offer the Home Secretary support for the general position that he has adopted following the inquiry into war crimes. Few will doubt that the crimes considered in the report are too appalling to be passed over, even after half a century has elapsed. The inquiry was right, however, to identify some formidable problems of principle and practice that would be involved in prosecutions. We therefore welcome the Government's decision to arrange a debate in the House before reaching any definite conclusion on how to proceed.

If there are war criminals in Britain, and if they are brought to trial, it is essential that action against them should be taken by acceptable legal means. I therefore welcome the Government's decision that, if there are to be prosecutions, those prosecutions must take place in Britain. It would be quite wrong to deport, or allow the deportation of, suspected persons to countries where, as the report put it:

> "The system of justice is not comparable to that in this country".

The decision to try such people here would require substantial changes in British law. I hope that the Home Secretary will confirm, in terms, that it would require restrospective extension of jurisdiction to persons who are not at present liable to charge or trial.

With that in mind, let me ask the Home Secretary three specific questions. First, if changes in the law were necessary—for example, the introduction of video recordings as evidence in Scotland—would the Government consider changing the law in general and applying the changes to all criminal proceedings, or would they consider simply changing the rules of evidence as they apply to war crimes? There is clearly a great danger in having one rule of evidence for one crime and different rules of evidence for all others.

Secondly, has the Home Secretary considered the full implications of relying on evidence in statements by individuals who are now dead? Few people would be happy were that practice to be extended to legal proceedings in general and, again, there is great danger in applying the principle to one category of charges and trials but not to others.

Thirdly, the Home Secretary will know that some of the individuals who may be prosecuted under the legislation that he is considering have already been named in newspapers. As they are not covered by the sub judice rule, does the Home Secretary propose to take steps to protect them from more prejudicial publicity?

Finally, let me ask the Home Secretary to consider one issue of principle—even before the House debates the subject. Does he agree that there are great problems of principle and practice in introducing legislation to facilitate the prosecution of a very limited number of individuals, who are probably identifiable?

Would it not be better to introduce general legislation —perhaps in terms of the Geneva convention of 1949—to make possible the prosecution of criminals from any war who have taken refuge in Great Britain or acquired British nationality? I understand that that is the approach which has been favoured by other countries that have faced the same problem. To many of us, that seems right—to avoid making retrospective changes in the law to deal with known individuals and to ensure that Britain does not harbour criminals from any war taking place at any time in any part of the world.

**Mr. Hurd:** I am grateful to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) for his general approach. This is a matter on which there will be strong differences of view that will certainly cut across party lines and on which Parliament as a whole will have to take a view.

I confirm the right hon. Gentleman's understanding that the proposal in the inquiry report would not make anything criminal which is not now criminal. Instead, it would bring within the jurisdiction of our courts certain allegations of crimes which are not at the moment within their jurisdiction because those concerned did not live here at the time of the crime although they now live here and in some cases are British citizens. That is the scope of the change.

I accept the general principle that the right hon. Member suggested about not providing special procedures for the particular crimes described in the report. He will know that under section 32 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 we provided for evidence to be taken by video links in England and Wales. It does not apply in Scotland, which is why the report suggests that it will have to be dealt with. It has not yet been implemented in England and Wales, and we shall have to discuss its implications more thoroughly. The principle is provided in the law for England and Wales.

The right hon. Member rightly said that there has been comment on individual cases in the past. Neither I nor anyone else can prevent such comment in the future. It is worth saying that, even if Parliament decides to amend the law, as the inquiry suggested, three consequent stages will bear on a fair trial. First, the prosecuting authorities will have to decide, by their usual criteria, whether there is scope for a successful prosecution, Secondly, the judge will have to decide the conduct of the trial to ensure that it is fair—the Criminal Justice Act is clear about that. Thirdly, the jury will have to decide whether the trial has been fair.

The right hon. Member mentioned the scope for wider legislation. Other countries have gone wider, but to go wider than the Hetherington inquiry would land us in a range of further problems. I shall study what the right hon. Gentleman said.

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the recommendations of this distinguished inquiry will meet wide support throughout the country, because they will mean that Britain will no longer be a safe haven for the monsters who committed the worst atrocities? Although any decision to legislate will undoubtely be strengthened by an opportunity for quiet consideration of this emotive subject, one of the recommendations of the inquiry is that legislation should be introduced as quickly as possible, bearing in mind the ages of suspects and witnesses. Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that although the inquiry was limited to consideration of the second world war, it will be necessary to have such legislation in place to deal with atrocities committed in wars since the second world war?

**Mr. Hurd:** On the second point, the scope of the recommendations is more limited. If we legislate, that is exactly the sort of point that the House will want to consider.

I note what my hon. and learned Friend says about speed, but I find this such a difficult subject, and all those who have thought about it will share my views. The arguments of principle and practice pile up on either side, and it is not easy to reach a conclusion. I am sure that it is right that we should all consider the report carefully, pause and listen to views, which the Government certainly intend to do before bringing proposals before the House.

**Mr. Robert Maclennan** (Caithness and Sutherland): Will the Home Secretary accept that Social and Liberal Democratic party Members welcome the measured depth of the analysis of these two distinguished gentlemen? The Home Secretary has taken appropriate action in allowing Parliament to voice its view before he takes a final decision, although perhaps it is fair to say that his statement leans towards accepting the recommendations.

Does he accept that the important finding of the report is that the crimes concerned were not only monstrous but were against international law at the time that they were committed? The limitation of the recommendation to extend the jurisdiction of our courts to deal with these matters is important because it enables us in Britain to give greater effect to the rules of international law for the purposes for which the Nuremberg trials were set up.

Finally, may I add my support to the submission made by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) that in considering legislation it would be appropriate to contemplate wider legislation to seek to bring within the scope of our jurisdiction war criminals who have committed crimes in other situations and at other times, perhaps those covered, as the right hon. Gentleman suggested, by the Geneva convention?

**Mr. Hurd:** When the hon. Gentleman studies the report, he will see why the inquiry came down in favour of a narrow extension of the law. It was anxious to avoid the accusation of retrospection and, therefore, to confine the scope of any change in the law to allegations of crimes which clearly and beyond any doubt were crimes and were criminal at the time they were committed, and not as a result of any international instruments that may have been entered into since 1945. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his general response.

**Mr. Ivor Stanbrook** (Orpington): Is my right hon. Friend aware that it would be a tragic mistake now to institute war crimes trials in this country and to stir up the emotions of hatred and revenge which would be evoked by the stories of these wartime atrocities? How would it be possible for those few men to get a fair trial when a law would be passed specially to frame them, when the evidence would be almost 50 years old and when it would be impossible for them to go to the Soviet Union to find witnesses and evidence that might clear them?

**Mr. Hurd:** My hon. Friend puts a point of view which will certainly be widely shared. However, the emotions that he has talked about are, of course, stirred up by the allegations and would certainly not be put to sleep by an announcement that the Government were going to do nothing. That would not necessarily have the effect that my hon. Friend mentioned. We in this country do not have a statute of limitations. Other countries, such as Sweden and Belgium, do, and it affects their handling of these matters. However, like Australia, Canada and the United States, we do not have statutes of limitations and, therefore, although there is force in my hon. Friend's practical point, it is not a point of principle for our law.

**Mr. Merlyn Rees** (Morley and Leeds, South): Is the Home Secretary aware that, as chairman of the all-party group on war crimes, I agree with his description of the report as impressive? It contains within its covers a statement about the international law and about what has happened in other countries. Indeed, the impressive nature of the report is what one would have expected from Sir Tom Hetherington and Mr. Chalmers. In the writings that preceded the report, far too many people have ignored one fact, which is brought out in paragraph 9.50, which states:

> "The cases we have investigated disclose horrific instances of mass-murders".

I emphasise that the Hetherington report has been investigating mass murders, not any of the other horrible things that happen in wars on either side. I should like to make it clear to those from the Ukraine, from Latvia and from middle Europe that most of those people who have come into this country have become first-rate citizens, and many of us know them, especially in the cities of the north. The people that we are concerned about are those who have been involved in horrific instances of mass murders, and those who choose to forget that will be asking for equally horrific things to happen in the future.

Will the Home Secretary confirm that the recommended change in the law is approximately this: that if I, as a British citizen, had committed these crimes in any part of the world, I could be brought to trial; so those who acquire British citizenship subsequently are not being treated in any other way than in the way in which British citizens by birth are being treated, and that is the way that it should be?

**Mr Hurd:** The right hon. Gentleman's first and last points are correct. The report brings out clearly the turmoil in central and eastern Europe immediately after the war and the way in which people came here for all kinds of reasons and through all kinds of procedures. There was confusion and a lack of clear thinking and administration. As a result of that, many thousands of people of east European origin have been living here for a long time as admirable and loyal citizens. The right hon. Gentleman was right in pointing out that we have all come to know and respect their communities. As the right hon. Gentleman said, and as I tried to say in my statement, we are not talking about actions committed by soldiers in the heat of battle. That is a different proposition. We are talking about allegations—they are only allegations—that crimes of mass slaughter were presided over and participated in by a number of people now living in this country.

**Mr. John Gorst** (Hendon, North): Does my right hon. Friend agree that to deter such crimes in the future, it is first necessary to ensure that those who commit those evil deeds will be certain that they will have to face justice and that, therefore, there is a gap in our existing law? May I ask my right hon. Friend one detailed question? If Parliament affirms what my right hon. Friend will be putting to it in the autumn, will it be necessary for the British police to carry out investigations, which they cannot at the moment carry out or believe that it will be necessary to carry out in future?

**Mr. Hurd:** Yes, Sir, certainly, and the report makes that clear. It recommends a series of investigations, but I am not prepared to authorise further work on them until it is clear in what way Parliament will wish to proceed.

**Mr. James Molyneaux** (Lagan Valley): The Home Secretary used the phrases "within the United Kingdom" and "a Bill". If the Government decide, with Parliament's approval, to introduce legislation, will they seek to proceed by way of a single Bill applying simultaneously to all parts of the United Kingdom?

**Mr. Hurd:** Yes, Sir, I believe that that would be the right way to proceed if—it is an "if"—it were decided to seek legislation.

**Mr. John Wheeler** (Westminster, North): Does my right hon. Friend agree that there will be widespread admiration for the thoroughness of the excellent report, which requires careful consideration? Does he also agree that the horrific nature of the allegations contained in the report make it not a matter for just British Jewry alone, but that the wider issues of justice and principle must also apply?

**Mr. Hurd:** I very much echo the hope that hon. Members and, indeed, the public will read the report. I know people who have approached the subject with one attitude but who, having read the report, have come to a different one. My hon. Friend is right to make his distinction. It would not be for the House or for Parliament to decide whether individuals were guilty or even whether they should be prosecuted. Now that the report is before us, Parliament is involved with a question of principle—whether there should be legislation to bring such allegations within our jurisdiction. If Parliament so decided, it would be for the prosecuting authorities in different parts of the United Kingdom, under their existing criteria, to decide whether prosecutions should be mounted. If they were mounted, it would be for the judge in each case to decide whether the trial was best conducted under this or that procedure authorised by Parliament, and at the end of the day it would be for the jury.

**Mr. Peter Archer** (Warley, West): While in no way dissenting from the right hon. Gentleman's proposal for a debate, has it occurred to him that those who hear nemesis approaching may decide to disappear for a second time? If there is a delay in legislating, the Odessa file may be out again. Has he any proposals for dealing with that and, if not, is time not of the essence?

**Mr. Hurd:** I have no proposals for dealing with that. It would be unacceptable to take powers to constrain the movements or actions of people who are involved in the situation that we are now discussing. I cannot see any basis on which one could do that. The right hon. and learned Gentleman's point is an argument about time, but I do not believe that he would press us to rush into legislation in the fag end or the spillover of this Session. That would not be a sensible way in which to approach such a matter.

**Mr. Robert Boscawen** (Somerton and Frome): I think that many people will be grateful that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has agreed that Parliament should make the decision on whether legislation should go ahead. My right hon. Friend has already answered my question when he said that Parliament would have no further say on whether there would be prosecutions following that legislation and that, naturally, that would be within the hands of the prosecuting authorities. The decision to go ahead with legislation could mean that such war crime trials could take place. After 45 years we in this country should not feel that it is necessary to prove that we are not a safe haven for war criminals. We never have been and we do not need crimes tried after 45 years to prove that.

**Mr. Hurd:** I understand my hon. Friend's point of view. I hope that he will read what is said in the report about the people, the crimes and the documents and statements that have been produced as part of the investigation by Sir Thomas Hetherington and Mr. Chalmers.

**Mr. Jeff Rooker** (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Does the Home Secretary accept that war crimes are not committed by the losing side only, but that the specific and horrific nature of the crimes in this case—no one denies that those crimes were committed—is what makes them different from all other war crimes? Therefore, I do not believe that we should feel apologetic at all in seeking to consider bringing forward legislation. It behoves the combative powers of the second world war, 45 years after its end, to make a common decision and to say, "We will proceed no further at any time with any allegations regarding war crimes" or, "Collectively, we shall amend and adjust our legislation to pursue until the end of time those who have committed those atrocious crimes." I subscribe to the latter view, but one way or the other, a decision of principle should be made.

**Mr. Hurd:** The report gives a fascinating account of the efforts to reach precisely that decision of principle immediately after the war and how those efforts foundered. Different countries have gone different ways. The United States, for example, deports and extradites —it has extradited to the Soviet Union and I believe that the person extradited was executed. In our terms I do not believe that that is a satisfactory way in which to proceed. Other countries have statutes of limitations and other countries have held trials. Canada and Australia, which faced a very similar situation to ourselves, have passed legislation that goes rather wider than that proposed in the inquiry. Although I see the advantage in what the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) has suggested, I am afraid that it is past praying for. We shall not get a co-ordinated and harmonious approach to this matter. We must deal with it as the report deals with it, within the law and within the practice of each country.

**Mr. Ian Gow** (Eastbourne): Despite the horrific nature and the horrific scale of the allegations will my right hon. Friend remember Churchill's precept: there is no greater danger than retributive persecution, and a policy of retribution is a policy which is pernicious?

**Mr. Hurd:** It was actually Sir Winston Churchill who, during the war, set in hand the principle that there should be retribution. The report clearly shows how that statement by the Prime Minister set the tone for a great deal that followed. The fact that someone like Sir Winston Churchill had great difficulty, as time passed, in deciding within himself what the right approach should be, illustrates something that anybody thinking about this comes to appreciate—that it is extraordinarily difficult and that the passage of time obviously makes it more difficult in terms of principle, but particularly in terms of practice. I believe that the only recipe—I will not give this advice again—is for right hon. and hon. Members to digest the report and to come back in the autumn and form views upon it.

**Mr. Greville Janner** (Leicester, West): Will the right hon. Gentleman convey to the distinguished and learned commissioners the appreciation of the House of the way in which they carried out their difficult task? Will he especially convey the appreciation of those of every nationality, race and religion who suffered and whose

*[Mr. Greville Janner]*

families suffered as a result of the mass murders and barbaric Nazi outrages to which this report refers? Will he also have regard to the final paragraph of the report—that

> "Given the ages of the suspects and witnesses"

the commissioners considered

> "that any proposed legislation should be introduced and brought into force as quickly as possible"?

May we hope that the debate on this matter will be at the end of this Session, although, of course, legislation could be introduced only at the beginning of the next?

**Mr. Hurd:** I note what the hon. and learned Gentleman says. I think that I covered most of his points in my earlier replies. I would certainly hope that the debates will not be long delayed; I mentioned the autumn, which gives the business managers a certain flexibility.

**Mr. Rupert Allason** (Torbay): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the report highlights an anomaly in the law—that under present legislation this country does, indeed, provide a safe haven for war criminals, an unpleasant fact which is true of only one other country, Syria? Once legislation is contemplated by the House, will my right hon. Friend seriously consider setting up a specialist police unit to investigate the allegations made not only against the 75 people who have been identified but against the 46 who have yet to be traced?

**Mr. Hurd:** Certainly, if the House decided to proceed down this path there would need to be further investigations. The matter could not be left on the basis of the cases that the inquiry had the time and resources to explore. That would be far too haphazard. If Parliament took a decision in principle there would be further investigations as a consequence and they would have to take place in the usual way. As I have said, I am not prepared to authorise such further investigations at the moment.

**Mr. Harry Ewing** (Falkirk, East): Am I right in assuming that the Government have still not made up their mind about the possibility of bringing forward legislation? Is the Home Secretary aware that this is a highly emotive issue which pulls people in all directions? For some time at the beginning of the statement I thought that I might be in a minority of one—until I heard some Conservative Members speak. I have just as much sympathy and feeling for the victims of these atrocious crimes, but, on the principle involved, what is to be achieved by putting on trial people of 80 years of age or more and, assuming that they are found guilty, sending them to prison for the rest of their natural lives? What on earth can be achieved by that sort of approach? Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that the world, north and south, east and west, is at the beginning of a healing process? If we open up all these old sores, how will we ever continue that process?

**Mr. Hurd:** The hon. Member puts it well; he will certainly not be alone. It would not be this House which put very old men on trial. The decision before the House is a different one, about whether, as a matter of principle, we should follow the example of Australia, Canada and the United States, which were faced with the understanding that there were people within their borders who might have committed these crimes, and which changed their laws to bring those crimes within their jurisdiction; or whether, again as a matter of principle, we should take the line that although we have no statute of limitations, the matter is too difficult and too long ago, and however horrific the crimes, we intend to forget them.

I hope that the hon. Gentleman will read the report in full. He will find his views recorded there and he will discover what the report has to say about them.

**Sir John Stokes** (Halesowen and Stourbridge): Is my right hon. Friend aware that I remember only too well the war crimes trials held immediately after the last war, and that some, even then, had doubts about the procedure, although I agreed with it? Are we now to resume war crime trials of these few old men 40 years later? How can we ever obtain proof? Will not the trials be in danger of being show trials? Above all, do the people of England want this? We are not a vengeful nation and I have not heard any demand for it apart from the demand by this small and highly articulate lobby.

**Mr. Hurd:** My hon. Friend puts a view in which, as I have said, he will not be alone. He will read the report as others will, and he will see how it caters for the objections that he puts forward about the fairness of trials. Of course, the House will be concerned not with individual cases or trials but with the principle of the matter. It will be concerned with the quotation, which I have now found, from a speech by Mr. Churchill to which I referred in answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow). Mr. Churchill, the Prime Minister, said:

> "Retribution for these crimes will henceforward take its place among the major purposes of this war."

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): There are valid arguments on both sides about whether prosecutions should occur and many reasons have been voiced by hon. Members. Is it not more a question of justice and certainly not revenge? Will not many people ask how it was possible for people who have been held responsible for monstrous crimes against humanity to enter the country in the first place? Is it not correct to say that if it had been the determination of the allies to carry out in practice what Sir Winston Churchill, together with other wartime leaders, promised to do from 1941 onwards, and if Nazi war crimes had been properly investigated after the war and certainly after Nuremberg, but before the cold war started, it is likely that some of the difficulties and agonising problems that we are discussing about whether such people should be brought to justice would never have arisen in the first place?

**Mr. Hurd:** The hon. Gentleman can hark back like that if he wishes, but I am not sure that it is profitable. The first chapters of the report deal with the history in some detail. Great numbers of people came here in the turmoil that followed the war. Some of them were deliberately recruited by the Government for particular jobs, some were here as prisoners of war and, for example, many Poles came because of their connections with the Polish armed forces. The matter has a long and tangled history. There was a good deal of screening. No one could argue that it was particularly clear minded or administratively thorough and no one with a sense of history would expect that it could be. I do not think that the hon. Gentleman would do anyone a great deal of good by spending too much time on history.

**Mr. David Sumberg** (Bury, South): Will my right hon. Friend accept my congratulations on a sensitive statement on matters which show crimes beyond parallel in the long catalogue of human misery? Will he underline that, as the law stands, it would be possible to prosecute a natural-born British citizen over such matters and that what he now proposes is to put those who acquired British citizenship after birth in the same position as those who acquired it on birth? I accept that there is a need for the House to debate the matter widely and thoroughly. Does he accept that there is a need to get on with it?

**Mr. Hurd:** My hon. Friend accurately describes a proposal which is not mine but that of the inquiry. The Government make no proposal today. We are impressed by the force of the arguments and the background set out by the inquiry, but propose to pause and listen in the way that I have described.

**Mr. Paul Flynn** (Newport, West): Does the Home Secretary appreciate that although a Bill may deal only with war crimes, Nazi crimes started many years before the commencement of the war? Does he also appreciate that since the war unfortunately, many other acts of mass murder have been committed in both the East and the West? Would not the Bill be a marvellous opportunity for this country to reassert its leadership of the world on humanitarian issues? We can do that if we sent out a clear signal to all those whose business is mass murder and torture, whether in the distant past, the recent past or now, that never again will they find safe refuge in our country.

**Mr. Hurd:** That goes very much wider and I think that on examination the hon. Gentleman will find that there might be quite serious problems in terms of retrospection if we went back that far and covered the kind of pre-war offences that he talked about. I hope that he will look at the report. He is obviously in sympathy with its general conclusion and would like it to do more. The report spends a certain amount of time discussing why it thinks that its limited recommendation is right.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The House knows that there is to be a debate on this matter later, but, as hon. Members have been rising, I will call them. However, we must move on at 20 past four because we have another statement.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): Will my right hon. Friend agree with Milton Shulman, who says in today's *Evening Standard* that no emotion

> "soils the human spirit more than vengeance"?

Is it not possible, despite what my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) said, that the motivation behind this campaign has nothing to do with justice and everything to to with smothering the world with a form of moral blackmail as a means of covering the present behaviour of the state of Israel? The House has got the impression that my right hon. Friend is not happy with this measure, and has not found a respectable way of not bringing it forward.

**Mr. Hurd:** I honestly think that my hon. Friend's description is grotesquely astray in its attempt to describe Sir Thomas Hetherington and Mr. Chalmers, who have taken a great deal of trouble to take the allegations that have been made—for whatever reason—to analyse them and to look behind them into the facts of these crimes. It was because the Government wanted to get away from the kind of atmosphere that my hon. Friend attempts to describe—in which all kinds of allegations were being tossed to and fro, and nobody knew the motives or what substance there was behind the allegations—that we had this inquiry. I hope that my hon. Friend will read the results of it.

**Mr. Spencer Batiste** (Elmet): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the important message that should come from the House is not one of revenge or of opening up old wounds, but the simple fact that those who have been guilty of horrendous crimes against humanity must never be able to feel that they are capable of achieving a safe haven in a civilised world? Would not that be the best message of hope that we could give to their potential victims?

**Mr. Hurd:** I am sure that my hon. Friend is right in that no serious person can be interested in revenge as the basis for justice. Nor could any serious person ignore the difficulties of proceeding as the inquiry suggests after this length of time. Those difficulties are real, and that is what makes the subject so daunting. Nevertheless, the analysis is a clear and strong one.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett** (Pembroke): I share the considerable unease that has been expressed by some of my hon. Friends about whether, 45 years after the events, there can be a fair trial and fair rules of evidence, especially when we have to introduce retrospective legislation. Therefore, I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement that Parliament will make a judgment on this.

I have a more specific question concerning the documentary evidence. My right hon. Friend will be aware that most crimes took place in what is now either the Soviet Union or another eastern bloc country. Historians have recently expressed concern that many documents have been forged. Can we be assured that any documents that might be used for trials will be the originals and not photocopies?

**Mr. Hurd:** That was one of the points in which some of us were particularly interested before the inquiry was set up, and it was something on which the inquiry spent a good deal of time. It reached the conclusion set out in part 1, which is that there was a strong case for believing that the documents concerned were authentic and the witnesses credible.

**Mr Toby Jessel** (Twickenham): Is not the real point the sheer number of murders? We are not talking of one murder, nor six, nor 60, nor 600, nor 6,000, nor 60,000, nor 600,000 but 6 million murders, including the murder of about 1 million children. What is wrong with the idea of a little bit of justice for that?

**Mr. Hurd:** In essence, what we are talking about in this inquiry is the slaughter, after the fighting was over, of very large numbers of Jews, simply as a matter of policy. The policy was one of slaughter, and a large number of people participated in that.

**Mr. John Marshall** (Hendon, South): Should not the fact that the evidence is regarded as sufficient to warrant a prosecution by Sir Thomas Hetherington silence the doubts of those who cast doubts on the quality of the evidence?

**Mr. Hurd:** I do not expect a report, however expert, to silence doubts on a matter such as this. I should be surprised, and in a way dismayed, if that were to happen. That is not the way that we run our affairs. There is bound to be controversy, and it is bound to cross the ordinary boundaries of party, as we have seen in these exchanges. It is a clear and forceful report, by people whose experience, coolness and caution in such matters it would be hard to rival.

**Mr. Hattersley:** I have no wish to take serious issue with the Home Secretary this afternoon. I think that we have more in common over this issue than over many, united by our mutual doubts. However, I ask him whether he will consider one answer which he gave, and consider the possibility that it was wrong in fact. He said that were we to proceed on the lines that are now possible we would not be proceeding against individuals. That would certainly be the case were we to amend the law in general as the Geneva convention of 1949 suggested, but were we to proceed as the report suggests, it would be specifically directed towards individuals. If the Home Secretary reads paragraphs 8. 24 onwards of the report under the heading "Tracing suspects", he will see that the report does everything but name the individuals against whom the action is proposed. It is that which concerns some of us. Therefore, will he think again about the more general provision which I have urged upon him?

**Mr. Hurd:** I have promised to think about the more general provision, but I would not agree with the right hon. Gentleman. Parliament would be asked to extend our jurisdiction over a series of offences—not specified and not specific as to individuals—committed outside the United Kingdom during the war, in Germany or German-occupied territories, by people who were not then British citizens but now are or who live here. That would be compatible with individual decisions by the prosecuting authorities to proceed or not to proceed in particular cases. That is what I mean by saying that Parliament would be involved in deciding the principle. It would then be for the prosecuting authorities, the judge and finally the jury, if there were a prosecution and a trial, to decide in particular cases. That is an important point.

# Electricity Privatisation (Nuclear Power)

4.21 pm

**The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Cecil Parkinson):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about electricity privatisation and nuclear power.

As a result of our preparations for privatisation, it has recently become clear that the cost of reprocessing and waste treatment of spent Magnox nuclear fuel will be a great deal higher than has been charged in electricity prices and provided for in the accounts of the Central Electricity Generating Board and the South of Scotland electricity board. The Magnox stations are drawing to the end of their lives. One is already closed, and most of the others are due to close within the next few years. Most of these costs therefore relate to the past, to electricity already generated and paid for. Future customers will be bearing the full cost of the electricity they consume. It would not be right to burden them also with costs arising from the past.

It is important that the energies of the companies should be directed towards ensuring that their existing stations are run efficiently and at lowest cost. National Power will, subject to planning and other consents, also be building new pressurised water reactors. In order to enable the nuclear generating companies to focus their attention on the future, the Government have decided that it would be appropriate to relieve the new companies of dealing with these substantial problems of the past.

The Government have considered carefully how best to implement this decision. It has been decided that both the assets and liabilities relating to the Magnox stations belonging to the CEGB and the SSEB should remain under Government control.

The advanced gas-cooled reactor stations will be assigned to National Power and the Scottish Nuclear Company, and will be privatised. These stations have many years of operation ahead. The operating performance of these stations has shown marked improvement, and this can be expected to continue in the future. Therefore, we have good reason to believe that the AGRs will have a long and successful future in the private sector. National Power will continue to construct Sizewell B and, subject to obtaining the necessary planning approvals and satisfactory contractual arrangements, intends to construct and operate three more PWRs.

No changes to the Electricity Bill are needed to bring the Government's decisions into effect. The Government shall be laying a draft order before Parliament during the autumn to increase the limit on the amounts payable under schedule 12 from the interim level of £1,000 million to £2,500 million.

This order will be subject to affirmative resolution and will give the House a full opportunity to debate our detailed proposals. The order will enable grants to be paid to National Power and to the Scottish Nuclear Company for unforeseen costs, as previously explained to the House. These powers will also be used to ensure that the Magnox stations can continue to be operated and their liabilities to be met.

I am most concerned to ensure that nothing is done to jeopardise the future of the employees concerned. Their pension rights, their ability to benefit from the flotations, and their career prospects will be protected. To this end I shall discuss the implementation of the proposal with all the parties concerned, including the trade unions.

We shall ensure that the necessary resources are available to maintain the present high standards of safety and environmental protection. We shall not take any steps that are not approved by the nuclear installations inspectorate.

Preparation for privatisation has brought new information to light. The costs for the Magnox stations, which have now become clearer, would present major financial problems for the two nuclear companies. They can be paid for only by the customer or the taxpayer. The Government do not believe that this legacy of the past should be borne by customers in the future. The Government have therefore moved rapidly to deal with the issue.

It is right to separate the problems of the past from the prospects for the future. The nuclear generators will be able to concentrate their efforts on building a new generation of PWR stations and further improving the performance of the AGRs. On the basis of the presently planned life, the last Magnox station will have closed by the year 2002. Thereafter, commercial nuclear power generation will be wholly in the private sector. That is where it should be, and where it will flourish.

**Mr. Tony Blair** (Sedgefield): Well, Mr. Speaker—here we have it. After months in Committee, three days on Report, weeks in the other place and the Prime Minister's statement on 5 July, all the time told that the nuclear stations would all be sold, we are now informed, on the last day of the last stage of the last group of final amendments to the Bill, that the sale of the Magnox stations is to be ignominiously pulled—renationalised before they are even privatised. Are not the right hon. Gentleman's proposals for privatisation now a humiliating farce? If the lunchtime reports are correct and the right hon. Gentleman is departing to other pastures, this must be the most expensive exercise in political history of clearing one's desk.

Am I right in following through what this means—the Magnox stations will remain in public ownership so that the full costs of decommissioning, disposing and reprocessing of waste will fall on the taxpayer? Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that the latest estimates show that those costs may be £500 million a station—a total of £4·5 billion or perhaps even more?

Is not the question, what has the taxpayer got in return for that deal? Am I not right in saying that, not only will the nuclear tax still remain to pay for the new stations, costing consumers billions of pounds, but the nuclear quota will remain, distorting the market and squeezing out competition? Worse, does not what has been announced today mean that the public sector liability for decommissioning those stations transferred to the private sector will not just remain in full, but will be increased two and a half times? Has there ever been a more disastrous deal for the British taxpayer?

The only explanation we are given is that the public have used the stations and thus should pay for them. If that was the criterion, what of the new stations and those with many years of life left in them in which the public have heavily invested and of which they are now to be deprived? If the Secretary of State says that the public sector must pay for the stations it has used, why should it not also use those for which it has paid? Is not the true motivation for this quite transparent—that the right hon. Gentleman will sacrifice anything, including normal commercial prudence, the interests of the taxpayer and the consumer and the future energy needs of this country, provided that, above all else, he can sell his privatisation to the City?

Does not one large obstacle remain, however? Has not the right hon. Gentleman always made it clear, most especially last March in front of the Select Committee on Energy, that the critical element in the entire structure of the privatisation, with its monopoly area boards, monopoly grid and duopoly of generators, was dictated by the worry about what he called the marketability of nuclear power in the Magnox stations? Has not the right hon. Gentleman now removed not merely a substantial part of the electricity industry's assets from the privatisation, but the entire justification for the form that the privatisation has taken? Would not the right course now be not to try shoring up that crumbling monument to incompetence, but to abandon it here, now and for good?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on a fine display of rhetoric, but I wish to point out one or two matters. He made it sound as though this were the first time that any Government had proposed that public money be written off. I remind him that £20 billion of taxpayers' money has been written off since the nationalisation of the coal industry, and that only earlier this afternoon his hon. Friends were urging me to write off billions more. Let there be no more of this nonsense about it being the first time that any Government have come forward with restructuring proposals.

I wish to make one point quite clear. The Magnoxes, virtually to a station, were commissioned and built during the lifetimes of Labour Governments. Far from causing the problem, privatisation has, for the first time, brought the costs into the open. We are making arrangements to deal with the problem, not creating the problem.

I confirm that the AGR and PWR stations, which will be transferred, will bear their own costs, will provide for their own decommissioning and will provide for their own waste management. The difference is that, in most cases, those stations have decades of life ahead of them, while the Magnoxes are all coming to the end of their useful lives.

As we explained in Committee, under schedule 12 to the Electricity Bill, the only money that will be paid to the privatised nuclear stations will be for unforeseeable costs arising from changes in Government policy. Other costs will have to be met by the customer, collected through prices and provided over the lifetime of the stations.

The Magnox stations were never the vital part of our privatisation plans; they are the past. We did not devise a structure around a set of power stations of which most will be closed by 1995 and only one, Wylfa, will be operational in the next century to the year 2002. Those stations were not a major part of our proposals and not part of the future. Today we are clearing up costs incurred in the past.

**Mr. David Howell** (Guildford): Despite the fulminations of the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair), who clearly would like to keep everything under strict bureaucratic control, are not my right hon. Friend's proposals a sensible and realistic way of dealing with a legacy of the past, and in line with what some of us wanted from the outset? Does my right hon. Friend agree that, far

*[Mr. David Howell]*

from damaging the future of either the nuclear or the privatised industry, they clear the way for much better prospects for competitive nuclear power? Will he confirm that the fact that not only National Power but PowerGen may consider building a dedicated PWR nuclear power station is evidence that it is an increasingly competitive and promising area?

**Mr. Parkinson:** My right hon. Friend is right. We are talking about clearing up the costs of technology that was initially developed at the behest of Labour and Conservative Governments more than 30 years ago, which is a very expensive exercise. The future of the nuclear industry is in the hands of the PWRs, which operate successfully worldwide. There are very successful private sector operators of PWRs in France and Germany, and there is Duke Power of the United States of America. PWRs are a proven technology capable of producing electricity economically. My right hon. Friend is right to say that we are clearing up the past and opening the way to the future.

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce** (Gordon): Will the Secretary of State admit that the reason why he came to the House with his statement is that his friends in the City told him that he cannot sell the Magnox sector? If omitting it from privatisation is such a good idea, why did he not incorporate it in the Electricity Bill, as others suggested at the outset?

The Secretary of State attempted to turn the attack from the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair), but does he not admit that the scale of the write-off of taxpayers' money associated with the flotation of the electricity industry exceeds the worst excesses of Socialism that the right hon. Gentleman is so keen to fulminate against? The sum is £8 billion to date, and there is an open blank cheque from the consumer for the decommissioning of Magnox power stations.

Will the Secretary of State admit that his statement vindicates those right hon. and hon. Members who condemn the expansion of nuclear power and opposed Sellafield and THORP reprocessing facilities in particular —alas supported now by both the Labour and the Conservative parties—and accept that the privatisation is wholly flawed? Should not the right hon. Gentleman abandon it, and acknowledge that his announcement today is an indication that he has no interest in the environment but is interested only in maximising the industry's share price? The only thing that is green about Conservative Members is the colour of their wellies.

**Mr. Parkinson:** The hon. Gentleman's last remark and the reaction of the House to it summed up the level of his contribution. Privatisation is exposing the industry's existing costs, it is not the cause of them, and we are making arrangements to deal with them. The country has taken electricity from the stations concerned for more than 30 years, and they have an average of six years of life left. We are making arrangements to clear up the past and to open up a secure future for the industry.

**Sir Ian Lloyd** (Havant): First, I may express my hope that if the news we are likely to hear today is true, this is the last occasion on which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will have to rest on the energy bed of Procrustes.

My right hon. Friend's statement is as welcome as it was inevitable. I wish to put to my right hon. Friend four related questions. [HON. MEMBERS: "Four?"] Yes. First, my right hon. Friend said that the electricity from the Magnox stations has been generated and paid for. The fact is that the electricity has been generated but not paid for. Therefore, as my right hon. Friend said, the choice is between the taxpayer and the consumer, and he has chosen the latter.

Secondly, how will the Government ensure that there will be fair competition between the electricity that will be produced in the Magnox sector for at least a further six years and that of the rest of the private sector, including the other nuclear stations? Thirdly, how will the very large sum—it remains a matter of dispute as to whether it is the £4·4 billion suggested by British Nuclear Fuels plc or some lesser or larger sum—be distributed between Magnox, PWRs and AGRs and, broadly speaking, the reprocessing sector?

Finally, my right hon. Friend expressed confidence that after 2002 all nuclear power will be in the private sector, "where it will flourish." I share his hope but not his expectation. Does his expectation imply that, in his judgment, by 2002 the full environmental costs of fossil fuel power generation are likely to tip the balance in favour of nuclear power?

**Mr. Parkinson:** In the past, customers paid what was regarded at the time as a fair price for electricity, but it is clear that they underpaid. We had to decide whether in future customers should pay a fair price for nuclear electricity and, at the same time, pay the price for previous under-charging. We came to the conclusion that that would not be reasonable.

Electricity produced by Magnox stations will be paid for through the fossil fuel levy. The arrangements for that are set out in the Bill. In future, the area boards will sign up for nuclear electricity from Magnox stations, which will still be in the public sector as long as they continue to produce electricity.

AGRs have enough life ahead of them for proper provision to be made now in the price that they charge, through the fossil fuel levy, for their future decommissioning and reprocessing costs. That will be built into the price that they charge. They have enough life left for them to recover the full costs.

As I said in reply to a previous question, in other countries, PWRs are operated by private sector companies. They are privately financed, and successfully produce competitively priced electricity.

I found it interesting at Question Time that some hon. Members asked why Britain produces more carbon dioxide than France. The French produce 70 per cent. of their electricity from nuclear stations: that is why France contributes less carbon dioxide and less to the greenhouse effect. Hon. Members who argued against nuclear power were at the same time pointing to the French performance, which is based on nuclear power.

**Mr. Tony Benn** (Chesterfield): Is the Secretary of State aware that what he has done today is to confirm what many people have long suspected—that nuclear power in Britain is not, and never has been, economic in any sense of the term? The Government have closed many pits, however, and have thrown many miners out of work on the ground that the pits were uneconomic.

Is he also aware that, in the United States, where pressurised water reactors are in private hands, not one has been ordered for 10 years? There is no reason to believe that they will be any different in their economic operations from the Magnox and AGR stations. Is the Secretary of State also aware that, by retaining the costs of Magnox stations in the public sector, he is deliberately giving an enormous subsidy to shareholders who intend to buy parts of the electricity industry? Finally, how could he say that he had no idea of the cost of nuclear power until he tried to sell it off? I think it is virtually a resignation speech when a Minister says that he did not know what he was doing until he tried to sell off an industry and the figures came to light.

**Mr. Parkinson:** I am an admirer of some aspects of the right hon. Gentleman, but for sheer, brass-necked effrontery, that intervention takes some beating. If I closed every pit remaining in Britain, I could not match the right hon. Gentleman's record as a closer of pits, because he closed more than any previous Secretary of State. He was also an enthusiastic supporter of nuclear stations while he held the job that I now hold. I think that I am right in saying that he ordered AGRs and approved of that technology. Therefore, having been a party to creating the problem that I am now dealing with, for him to come over at his sanctimonious worst is almost beneath contempt.

**Mr. Chris Butler** (Warrington, South): What will be the effect on the price of electricity of this announcement about Magnox stations? Will it be higher or lower as a result? Will there be doubt about the decommissioning costs of other reactors as a result of the exposure of privatisation?

**Mr. Parkinson:** The price of electricity will not be affected by today's announcement; it will be affected by the proper charging of costs in the future. We have made, and will make, arrangements to charge properly for the cost of electricity produced by nuclear power stations. I have said over and over again in Committee that we are creating a totally transparent system. The days of pushing it under the carpet, which was the hallmark of the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), have gone. The cost of nuclear electricity will be revealed, known and declared and it will have to be defended, and I am quite happy to do that.

As I have already said, almost all the present generation of stations have a long life ahead of them. During that life, knowing what is now known, we can make provision to meet the costs of decommissioning and waste management.

**Mr. James Molyneaux** (Lagan Valley): In his statement, the Secretary of State said:

> "This order . . . will give the House a full opportunity to debate our . . . proposals."

Will the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues on the Front Bench ensure that that full opportunity is somewhat greater than the 90 minutes accorded to Northern Ireland business, even though it is primary legislation?

**Mr. Parkinson:** That is obviously a matter for the business managers. The right hon. Gentleman makes a serious point. The Government will be only to happy to have a full debate on this subject.

**Sir Trevor Skeet** (Bedfordshire, North): Since I moved in Committee, and on Report, amendments to do exactly this, may I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on having moved along these lines? Does he realise that it is likely to be a loss-making enterprise, unless he is prepared to add to it a mix of profitable assets, which should include the AGRs and PWRs that are being built?

If it has a mix of assets, the enterprise will be able to compete with National Power and PowerGen in the future. Will he still have time to consider that possibility?

**An Hon. Member:** He should live so long.

**Mr. Parkinson:** I think I am going to live longer than that. My hon. Friend has consistently argued this case, and I recognise that. We believe that it is necessary to clear up the past nuclear power stations. If they had a longer life ahead of them, we could make arrangements to recoup those costs, but, as I have explained, it would not be reasonable to impose on today's customers the underpricing that went on for a long time. We believe that the nuclear past should stay where it is and that the nuclear future should move into the private sector.

**Mr. Alexander Eadie** (Midlothian): May I press the right hon. Gentleman, with reference to the question about how long we will have to debate this issue, to tell us whether he is speaking on behalf of the Government when he says that there will be a full day's debate on this proposition? I am sure that he will know that Sir Winston Churchill said, 80 or 90 years ago, that the Tory party was the party of big business and vested interests. Does not the announcement that he has made today show that he has capitulated to the City, and that it is the taxpayer who will have to pay the bill?

**Mr. Parkinson:** The question about a full day's debate is a matter for the business managers, but there is a strong case for it, and I hope that there will be no attempt to restrict debate to an hour and a half. I will press that point on the business managers.

We are not selling out to big business. We recognise that there has been serious under-provision, during the past 30 years, for costs that will be incurred in the future. I do not see how our action will benefit the City, or how it could be fair to impose on an industry costs for stations that will virtually not be operating under the control of the businesses involved. The stations are coming to the end of their useful lives. They were commissioned in the public sector, and they will end their days there.

**Mr. Peter Rost** (Erewash): What is my right hon. Friend's best estimate of the cost of nuclear electricity in pence per kilowatt hour? When does he expect an announcement to be made about the ring-fenced price?

**Mr. Parkinson:** The negotiations between BNFL and the generators about future prices are still in progress. The information will be available when we return after the summer recess and present full and detailed proposals.

**Mr. Peter Hardy** (Wentworth): The Secretary of State suggested that, when the generating industry was originally structured, it was necessary to provide National

*[Mr. Peter Hardy]*

Power with 70 per cent. and PowerGen with 30 per cent., so that National Power could accommodate all the existing nuclear undertakings. Does this substantial change mean that the right hon. Gentleman will be revising the very structure of the generating industry?

Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that great pleasure will be felt by investors in the privatised industry, not least the substantial proportion living abroad? The foreigners will share the loot, but the burdens and liabilities will be borne exclusively in Britain.

**Mr. Parkinson:** As I told the House, we are creating an electricity industry which we hope will continue well into the next century. We are building a structure that will have a very long life. We are talking about clearing up the costs of stations, most of which will be closed by the middle of the next decade, and only two of which will be operational after 1995. It is quite wrong to say that the whole structure of the industry was developed to accommodate them. We are discussing how to clear up the past and liberate the industry so that it can develop nuclear power in the future.

**Mr. Michael Stern** (Bristol, North-West): I thank my right hon. Friend for the fact that, despite this afternoon's announcement, my constituents who work at Oldbury and Berkeley will be entitled to share in the benefits of privatisation. Does he not agree that it is a bit rich for the Opposition to criticise him this afternoon for leaving the costs of decommissioning with the public sector when that has been their policy throughout?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I made it clear in my statement that we would take part in active discussions with the trade unions and management to ensure that career prospects, pensions and the opportunity of a stake in the privatised industry would be available to those who work in the Magnox sector. My hon. Friend is absolutely right: we are making arrangements to deal with existing costs. We are not inventing costs, or creating them; we are arranging to clear up the costs of a group of power stations most of whose useful lives are well behind them.

**Mr. Jack Thompson** (Wansbeck): I am sure that the Secretary of State has felt no pleasure in making this statement to the House. This information should have been given to him many months ago, before the Bill came to the House, by the CEGB or his own Department. Is there not a case for heads to roll? Does he accept that if the information had been available some months ago, the tenor of our debate on the Bill would have been different?

**Mr. Parkinson:** The fact of the matter is that only when we set about the process of privatisation were those facts forced out. They have become available in detail literally only in the last few weeks, and we have been working to produce the information and make it available. I could not have come to the House any earlier than I have.

As I pointed out in my opening remarks, everything that we are proposing is possible under the Bill: we do not need to change it. I felt, however, that the House should have specific information as soon as I was in a position to give it, and that is why I am here.

**Mr. David Tredinnick** (Bosworth): Is it not a fact that, but for the privatisation process, the real costs of decommissioning Magnox would not have come to light? Is that not another illustration of the benefits of privatisation?

**Mr. Parkinson:** It is absoutely true that, if we had not decided to privatise the industry, ways would have been found of losing the costs through the bulk supply tariff, and they would never have been revealed to the public. The privatisation process has exposed the costs, and will force the industry to make better arrangements in the future.

**Mr. Alex Salmond** (Banff and Buchan): Is there any limit to the amount that the Government are prepared to spend to keep the nuclear show on the road? Can the Secretary of State estimate to, say, the nearest billion pounds the likely final expenditure on the nuclear slush fund of schedule 12?

As the right hon. Gentleman knows, the electricity companies are coping with the rapidly escalating costs of non-Magnox decommissioning by discounting expenditures far into the future. If one of those private companies were to go out of business before the expenditures became due, who would pick up the tab?

**Mr. Parkinson:** The hon. Gentleman asked about the size of what he calls the slush fund. May I point out that, at worst, it would be just over a third of the amount that we have written off in coal since it was nationalised? Considerable sums have been written off, and—as I told the hon. Gentleman earlier this afternoon—I am being pressed by Members with mining interests to write off billions this year. The idea that there is something novel about Governments' discovering under-provisions and making arrangements to deal with them is entirely wrong.

**Mr. Ian Bruce** (Dorset, South): Does my right hon. Friend agree that Gridco is currently having some difficulties in organising how electricity will be priced? Can he tell us a little more about how electricity that is effectively produced from Government assets will be fed into the free market?

Having removed the difficulty of Magnox, do we really require the non-fossil fuel levy to exist for the other stations that will be run by National Power? Will my right hon. Friend also tell us how the stations owned by the Atomic Energy Authority—in particular, my own station at Winfrith—will figure in the new organisation?

**Mr. Parkinson:** What I said in my statement was that the future costs of nuclear electricity would be clearly shown, and would be collected from all users of the system through the fossil fuel levy. That is what it is there for —to ensure that the cost of nuclear is borne by all the industry's customers, and not just by the domestic sector, as has been in danger of happening in the past. The costs of future, properly priced nuclear electricity will be collected through the fossil fuel levy and spread among all the customers of the industry.

**Mr. Giles Radice** (Durham, North): Does the Secretary of State accept that withdrawing such a large part of the nuclear industry from the Bill at this late stage not only represents a stunning personal reverse for him but undermines what little public confidence remains in his electricity privatisation scheme?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I do not think that that is the case at all. I think that the fact that the Government have recognised the problem, revealed it and explained how they will deal with it will do nothing to destroy the credibility of the industry.

**Mr. Tim Smith** (Beconsfield): Is not the statement a serious indictment of the way in which the electricity supply industry has been managed by successive Governments in the past? Is it not now clear that the Central Electricity Generating Board has completely failed to provide adequately for the costs of decommissioning, that as a result its accounts in successive years must have been seriously misleading, and that consequently electricity consumers have paid too little for their electricity? Do not all those factors underline the inadequacy of nationalisation?

**Mr. Parkinson:** My hon. Friend is right. One would never guess from listening to the Opposition that they were defending the system that created the problem which we are tackling.

**Mr. Frank Cook** (Stockton, North): I thank the Secretary of State for confirming everything that I have ever said about his grasp of his subject. He seeks to justify the withdrawal of the Magnox stations from his window display by citing the length of time left in their working life, saying that it is not fair to hand them over. Will the same criteria be applied to fossil-fuel-burning stations that have a limited remaining life? Is it not the case that, when the right hon. Gentleman claimed a number of times at the Dispatch Box that nuclear-generated electricity was the cheapest available electricity, he had been misled, and therefore had misled the House? The right hon. Gentleman has already admitted that he does not yet have the AGR and PWR costings. If we could not believe him when he was wrong before, how does he expect the House to believe him now?

**Mr. Parkinson:** To the best of my recollection, I have never heard the hon. Gentleman open his mouth in an energy debate in which I have taken part. I invite him to go through *Hansard* and find in any debate in which I have taken part any claim by me that nuclear electricity was the cheapest. I have always defended nuclear electricity on the ground of diversity of supply being the basis of security. I have never claimed that it was the cheapest. I have made it clear that I wanted to expose—and under our system we would—the true cost of nuclear electricity.

The hon. Gentleman has asked me about the costs of fossil-fuel electricity. We have written off or made deficit grants of about £1 billion to the coal industry in each of the past 10 years. The CEGB reckons that it has been paying between £500 million and £1 billion over the odds for the coal that it has been burning. We have effectively had a coal tax of between £1·5 billion and £2 billion a year every year for the past 10 years.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): If large potential liabilities attach to Magnox reactors, and if the taxpayer is going to pick up the tab, will not the taxpayer get an equal or equivalent amount of additional money at the time of privatisation? Although the subject of accountancy might be a little difficult for the Opposition to understand, I wonder whether my right hon. Friend could arrange for courses in arithmetic so that at least they could work out that taking one from one leaves no difference?

**Mr. Parkinson:** From our first debate on this subject, the Opposition have failed to recognise that it is the City, the shareholders, who pay and the Government, the taxpayers, who receive. As a result of not loading the industry, the taxpayer will receive a better price, so the taxpayer will benefit from the realism that we are introducing into this discussion.

**Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse** (Pontefract and Castleford): Is the Secretary of State aware that, although he may tell the House that he was not aware of the costs of nuclear electricity until his statement, he was questioned on that fact 18 months ago by the Energy Select Committee? In paragraphs 147 and 148 of its report, the Select Committee said:

> "First, we are worried about the costs of nuclear power . . . Secondly, if there are to be additional costs from nuclear power, we are concerned about where they will fall."

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, as recently as last week, the chairman of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority told the Select Committee that it was not possible to estimate the true costs of decommissioning the power stations? Where will the tab for decommissioning fall? Is it not simply political dogma for the Government to insist on 20 per cent. nuclear power, whatever the cost, so as to enable them to run down the coal industry?

**Mr. Parkinson:** We are not making arrangements to run down the coal industry. For about the past 15 years, 20 per cent. of our electricity has come from nuclear power. The other 80 per cent. has been available to the coal industry, which has supplied a great deal of it. When we have privatised the industry, 80 per cent. of the market will not be supplied by nuclear. I hope that a great deal of it will be supplied by British Coal.

**Mr. Michael Jack** (Fylde): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the nation has a particular debt to pay to the nuclear industry, for it was nuclear electricity that kept the power flowing during the last miners' strike? Will he confirm also that the public will be reassured by his announcement that these early decommissionings of Magnox stations will be properly financed and supervised?

**Mr. Parkinson:** My hon. Friend is right. We are openly acknowledging costs that have been incurred over the past 30 years and have been under-provided for. Those costs are now being revealed, and we are making arrangements to meet them. That is the sum total of the effect of my announcement.

**Mr. Bruce Grocott** (The Wrekin): Is the Secretary of State aware that, probably unwittingly, he has performed a service to the House, in that he has spelt out with a clarity that is unmatched by any of his right hon. Friends the complete absence of principle behind the Government's privatisation policy? It is based upon the political expediency of rewarding his friends in the City and of providing that the tab for anything that is unprofitable is picked up by the taxpayer. If there is any other basis for the distinction that the right hon. Gentleman has enunciated today, will he please do the House the service of spelling it out?

**Mr. Parkison:** I have already answered that question. At the moment, all the assets and all the liabilities are in the public sector. If we maintain some of the liabilities in

*[Mr. Parkison]*

the public sector, we will get a better price for the taxpayer for what we sell. Therefore, the taxpayer both receives the benefit of the sale and bears some of the liabilities.

**Mr. William O'Brien** (Normanton): The right hon. Gentleman has revealed how misguided he is about the privatisation of electricity. Is he aware that, for years, the decommissioning of these old power stations has been debated by the Energy Select Committee and the House? To tell the House that he has just realised the problems is totally misleading and unfair to the House. Do we take it that this afternoon the Secretary of State has revealed a forerunner to what we will have with water privatisation —the antiquated sewage works and the old reservoirs will be taken out of the sale? Is that the way that the Government are going on privatisation?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I have already answered that question at least five times, but because the hon. Gentleman insists, I am happy to make the point again. The Government, on behalf of the taxpayer, are selling and will receive the proceeds of the sale. The Government will also retain some of the liabilities. One must be set against the other. I believe that we have put the position clearly in front of the House. I have always argued the case for nuclear on the ground of diversity leading to security, never on the basis of price.

**Mr. Ian McCartney** (Makerfield): What we are seeing is Meltdown Man—the first nuclear meltdown in Britain. The Secretary of State has come to the House to admit that, unless he gets this proposition through, the City will not purchase the privatisation shares. What he has not said is that he is creating a third generating company. We require information about who will be responsible for the generating company and who is negotiating about the six years of average production. I assume that the right hon. Gentleman will not close all the Magnox stations on vesting day, so someone will purchase their capacity from the company. Who will be responsible for that? Who will be the chairperson who will carry out the negotiations, or is that another fix that was not sorted out before the right hon. Gentleman came to the House with his astonishing statement?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I made it clear in my statement that we shall come to the House with detailed proposals. We shall have discussions with trade unions and management, as I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would expect us to have. I have already committed the Government to making sure that the career prospects, pensions and security of those who work in Magnoxes will be maintained. We shall come to the House with detailed proposals on that and we shall attach them to the debate in the autumn.

**Mr. Alan W. Williams** (Carmarthen): Is not this statement humiliating for the Government, particularly for the Secretary of State on the last day of his job? He is ending with a miserable climb-down. Is it not the case that the City of London has looked long and hard at nuclear power and seen an uneconomic industry which has always been uneconomic and has problems with waste and decommissioning? Is not the truth that it is just as unhappy about AGRs and PWRs as it is about Magnoxes? Is it not the case that we should not privatise nuclear power or the electricity industry?

**Mr. Parkinson:** I do not understand the thought processes that conclude that what I have announced today is some sort of advertisement for nationalisation, under which these problems developed. It is privatisation that is making this Government the first Government to face up to the real costs and to make arrangements to meet them. It is nationalisation that enabled these stations to be developed and operated as they are. I cannot see anything in what the hon. Gentleman says that is an advertisement for nationalisation.

**Mr. Paul Flynn** (Newport, West): In his panic statement, the Secretary of State said that Magnoxes would be part of our past. Does he agree that they will be very much present in our future? There are six Magnox stations within a 25-mile radius of my constituency, the two at Berkeley are being stripped down now, but it will take 12 years to remove the fiercely radioactive material, and the rest will stand there for at least a century. Does the Secretary of State agree that the cost and anxiety of nuclear power will be with us for many years and will be a burden on our grandchildren's grandchildren? Will he tell us today what that cost will be? In effect, the Secretary of State is making a gift to those who will buy the shares in the new industry but placing a burden on taxpayers that will be centuries long.

**Mr. Parkinson:** There is no source of energy that does not involve long-term clear-up costs. Is the hon. Gentleman prepared to estimate the cost of the damage to the climate, the contribution to the greenhouse effect, subsidence, lives lost and slag heaps that come from burning coal? Is he prepared to work out how many generations will pay those costs? Does he recognise that the cost of removing platforms from the North sea will be at least £10 billion and that that, too, will have to be paid for? To pretend that coal does not involve clear-up costs is to mislead oneself.

**Mr. Donald Dewar** (Glasgow, Garscadden): Will the Secretary of State accept that today's announcement will be seen in Scotland as an astonishing story of confusion and muddle? Is it not now clear that the chairman of the South of Scotland electricity board was right to claim at Torness in December 1988 that his board, when privatised under the Government's plans, would be wholly unsellable? Both the Minister of State and the Secretary of State denied that, but we now know that the taxpayer will simply be asked to take over the costs of decommissioning Hunterston A, which may amount to £500 million, in order to float the privatisation programme, which would otherwise sink without trace.

I accept that the Secretary of State may not be able to give details of his scheme for the Magnox stations, but surely he could give us an outline of it. Will there be a separate state-owned generating company to see them through the remainder of their life? Will there be a separate company to decommission Hunterston A, or will it be handed over to a privatised generating company in England or to the successor board in Scotland?

Is not the clear implication of what the right hon. Gentleman is saying that the boards have failed until now to face up to the realities of BNFL reprocessing and decommissioning costs? If in future the privatised companies face up to the "real costs", the implication is that there will be a specific fund for that purpose financed by the consumer to meet those costs. Will that not mean significantly higher electricity costs? That is the inescapable conclusion of the Secretary of State's arguments.

Finally, does the right hon. Gentleman accept that he has admitted failure and, worse still, shown a wrong-headed determination to proceed with a discredited and unwarranted privatisation exercise, irrespective of the cost?

**Mr. Parkinson:** The hon. Gentleman's argument is not supported by his example of Hunterston A, which will never produce a single unit of electricity for a privatised company. It will be closed at least a year before the company is floated. He is saying that we should load a new company with costs from power stations that have never contributed a single unit of electricity to it. I hope that he is beginning to realise the scale of the problems with which we are dealing.

The hon. Gentleman asked about the successor vehicle for holding the Magnoxes. We are having discussions with the nuclear installations inspectorate because it is important that the inspectorate is prepared to license that vehicle. We shall come to the House with full details of our proposals, and we shall be happy to debate them then.

Our proposals are forcing costs out—[HON. MEMBERS: "Up."] No. They are forcing costs out. They will force people to recognise what the prices are and to realise that the costs can no longer be lost in the bulk supply tariff. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome that transparency. The result of privatisation is that prices will be what they will be. *[Laughter.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Parkinson:** Privatisation does not create the costs; it simply reveals them. To claim that, because we now know the costs, they have been caused by the action that makes us aware of them is extraordinary logic.

**Mr. Speaker:** Application under Standing Order No. 20.—Mr. Benn.

**Mr. Harry Ewing** (Falkirk, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall take it later.

**Mr. Ewing** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** No. The hon. Member knows that I will take it later.

**Mr. Ewing:** You would be better to take it now, Mr. Speaker.

# Industrial Situation

5.17 pm

**Mr. Tony Benn** (Chesterfield): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely

"the serious industrial situation directly created by Government policy, which has compelled large numbers of workers to withdraw their labour in order to maintain their living standards in the face of rising prices and higher mortgage interest charges; and to protect essential services, public safety and civil liberties, which are threatened by other Government policies."

Hon. Members who support those who are now on strike have been unable to put their case before the House and the public, and Ministers have been protected from having to justify their actions, which have precipitated the problems now being experienced by the public.

The dockers have been denied the protection of their jobs, and their employers have been dismissing those who are taking action in order to intimidate the men to return to work on the old and brutal casual basis.

Town hall staffs are the direct victims of a persistent assault upon local services, which are understaffed and underfunded, at the expense of the communities that depend on them. All this is happening at a time when the Chancellor has announced a huge budget surplus.

The basic rate for a railman is £103·60 a week, and average earnings last year were £196·80, based on overtime of 13 hours and an average [illegible]hour week. Contrast that with the astronomical salaries of chairmen of major companies, such as Lord King of British Airways, who has received an increase of 115 per cent. bringing his earnings to £7,423 per week. Sir Peter Walters of BP receives £9,000 a week, Mr. Rowland £19,000 a week and Lord Hanson £23,000 a week.

During the winter of 1978-79, 48 applications were made for emergency debates on the industrial situation, and some of them were allowed by the then Speaker. I urgently request you, Mr. Speaker, to allow this application before the House rises, if only on the ground that the reputation of Parliament will be damaged if those who elected us to this place to protect their interests and concerns find that we in Parliament have no time to consider their demands for justice and fair play.

**Mr. Speaker:** The right hon. Gentleman seeks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the serious industrial situation directly created by the Government's policy".

I have listened with care to what the right hon. Gentleman has said. As he knows, my sole duty in considering an application under Standing Order No. 20 is to decide whether it should be given priority over the business already set down for this evening or tomorrow. I regret that the matter which he has raised does not meet the requirements of the order and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

## Electricity Bill (Consideration)

5.22 pm

**Mr. Tony Blair** (Sedgefield): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In the statement that we have just heard, the Secretary of State for Energy said, perhaps rightly, that no amendment to the Electricity Bill would be required to facilitate the process that he has described. But surely the proposals have very great consequences that would go to the heart of the privatisation provisions. There would be consequences concerning the structure of whatever company would hold the Magnox stations, for accounting procedures and for personnel and pensions matters. The curious thing about the statement is that the proposal will mean that whole chunks of our debates in Committee and on Report will be rendered otiose or will have taken place on a completely false basis.

May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of urgency, to see whether, in accordance with the rules of the House, we can at least postpone consideration of the Bill until such time as arrangements can be made for a full and proper debate on the effects of the statement on the Electricity Bill?

**Mr. Harry Ewing** (Falkirk, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It may help the hon. Gentleman if I say that the only thing that he can do, from the procedural point of view, is to move a motion, which I should be prepared to put to the House.

**Mr. Ewing:** Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I apologise to you; we have got on fine during this Session and the last thing that I would want to do would be to upset you at this late stage. Nevertheless, I have a very important point of order. It concerns the effect of the statement by the Secretary of State, not on the Electricity Bill itself, although my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) made an important point, but on the money resolution. The House has already passed a money resolution to the Bill. Whatever the cost of the proposal announced by the Secretary of State—we have had some to-ing and fro-ing across the House with figures of between £4·5 billion and £8 billion—that cost is clearly outside the terms of the money resolution.

Rather than allowing the House to get into difficulty by debating proposals that fall outside the terms of the money resolution, would it not be better to take the Electricity Bill off the list of business for today? I know that you do not have the power to do that—or perhaps you have. It is clear, however, that the proposals must contravene the money resolution and I ask you to look into this matter carefully before we start to debate the Bill.

**Mr. Alan Williams** (Swansea, West): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful to you for the guidance that you have given my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair). Last week, you wisely intervened and agreed to the adjournment of questions on a statement to allow proper information to be made available, and I gather that your are willing to consider the possibility of adjourning the proceedings on the Electricity Bill. We seek your guidance, Mr. Speaker, because you will understand that, as the Secretary of State has said, there need be no further legislation. That means that this is the very last opportunity that we shall have for a debate.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield said, our debates over the past few months would undoubtedly have taken a very different form had the information that has been made available today been available before, not just to this House but to the other place, which will now have absolutely no opportunity to absorb the proposals. We would therefore wish to take advantage of the procedural opportunity that you have suggested. Will you please tell us when is precisely the right time to move that we suspend or adjourn further proceedings on the Lords amendments? We shall then do just that.

**Mr. Speaker:** The right time to move such a motion would be once the Orders of the Day have been read, and I would put the Question upon it forthwith.

**Mr. Ian McCartney** (Makerfield): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Secretary of State said that there would be no requirement to amend the Bill. He used as his excuse the provisions of paragraph (4) of schedule 12, which refers to his powers to specify by order that the sum may exceed £1,000 million. My hon. Friends and I then asked the Secretary of State specific questions about the setting up of a company, and he admitted that he was setting up a generating company.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. None of this is a matter for me. The hon. Gentleman persists in referring to what the Minister said, and I am not responsible for that.

**Mr. McCartney:** I understand that, but I am trying to make a point of order regarding the business before us. In bringing this business before the House, the Secretary of State has told you, Mr. Speaker, that amendments to the Bill will not be required. Yet in his statement he said that he would be setting up a generating company to deal with Magnox——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. No, the hon. Gentleman must pursue this matter under business relating to statutory instruments. It is not a matter for me.

**Mr. McCartney:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It is not a matter for me.

**Mr. Tony Benn** (Chesterfield): But has the Minister made a statement converting the Bill into a hybrid Bill, Mr. Speaker, in which case it is a matter for you? That is the point. The Minister has dropped the Bill today—*[Interruption.]* Well, he has dropped the main provisions of the Bill. He has said that he proposes to introduce a new Bill involving a public and a private generating provision, as my hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) has said, and the electricity will therefore come from a hybrid system.

With respect, Mr. Speaker, you will recall the arguments over the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act in 1975, when hybridity became a very important question. I am asking you, Mr. Speaker, to consider whether it is in order for you to allow a Bill to proceed when a statement has been made that contains a clear indication that hybridity has been introduced and when we are considering the Lords amendments.

**Mr. Speaker:** At the moment, we are supposed to be discussing Lords amendments. No amendment is to be brought forward by the Minister today.

**Mr. Michael Foot** (Blaenau Gwent): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. A few minutes ago, in your guidance to the House, you said that the matter would be put to the House and that you would be prepared to consider a motion proposing the adjournment of the debate, and—if I may say so respectfully—that is the very best advice that could be given to the House. I am sure that my hon. Friends on the Front Bench will take up that suggestion and move the adjournment, in which case it will be a debatable motion, will it not?

**Mr. Speaker:** We have had nearly an hour on this matter, and I would certainly be prepared——

**Mr. McCartney:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** No.

**Mr. McCartney:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** No!

**Mr. McCartney:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. I am on my feet, and the hon. Gentleman has been here long enough to know that he must not interrupt the occupant of the Chair.

Following what the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) said, I shall put the dilatory motion to the House, if it is moved, for the reasons that we have heard over the past hour. The hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) must not persist in raising points of order with me that are not my responsibility.

**Mr. Foot:** May I confirm that the dilatory motion is debatable? I am sure that the House will understand that.

**Mr. Speaker:** I intend to put the motion forthwith, on the ground that we have had an hour of questions to the Minister.

**Mr. McCartney:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Clause 63(1)(a) says that two companies

"shall be designated as generating companies".

Those words appear on the face of the Bill. The Secretary of State said today that there would be a third generating company, but there are no legislative powers in the Bill for that. That is the point that we have been trying to make. Schedule 12 provides the Secretary of State with the ability to make an order for costs. The Secretary of State does not have the power to amend the Bill today to set up a third generating company, which is precisely what he said in his statement. Clause 63 does not allow him to do that without amendment.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is as may be, but the Secretary of State has not brought forward an amendment.

## NHS (Wales)

5.31 pm

**Mr. Barry Jones** (Alyn and Deeside) : On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you, Mr. Speaker, assist in obtaining from the Secretary of State for Wales a statement to the House on the National Health Service in Wales? We understand that a statement will be made, but outside the House. We have received no papers on the Health Service, but they were promised on 1 March. We have had no debate on the White Paper, but we were promised one on 1 March. Labour Members believe that the Secretary of State should make a statement before the House rises. We ask for your assistance as it appears to us that the Secretary of State for Wales is running away.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have no knowledge of such a statement being made outside the House, but I am sure that the hon. Gentleman's comments will have been heard by Ministers.

# Orders of the Day

## Electricity Bill

*Lords amendments further considered.*

5.32 pm

**Mr. Alan Williams** (Swansea, West): For the reasons put forward by my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) and me already, I beg to move,

That further consideration of the Lords amendments be now adjourned.

*Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 34 (Dilatory motion in abuse of rules of the House):—*

*The House divided:* Ayes 186, Noes 293.

**Division No. 316]** **[5.31 pm**

### AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Canavan, Dennis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Ray Powell.

### NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony

Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*

Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael

Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard

Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Sir Dennis
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory
and Mr. David Maclean.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

**Mr. Tony Benn** (Chesterfield): May I go back to the point that I raised with you about hybridity, Mr. Speaker? I appreciate that what the Secretary of State said to the House—I do not know if he is still the Secretary of State —has no legislative authority and, having consulted the Table, I understand that only when the wording of the Bill was changed would the question of hybridity arise. I have had the opportunity of having a quick look at the Bill. I do not believe that you, Mr. Speaker, could possibly answer now the question that I am putting because there may be enough in what I am proposing to submit to persuade you that you should seek advice before you give a ruling against what I am saying.

5.45 pm

Clause 62 states:

> "all property, rights and liabilities to which each Area Board is entitled or subject immediately before that date shall become by virtue of this subsection property, rights and liabilities of a company which, in relation to that Board, is nominated for the purposes of this subsection by the Secretary of State."

However, the Secretary of State has said that that will not be the case any more. In effect, he has said that certain financial liabilities in respect of the Magnox stations will remain in the public domain.

Clearly, those are only words from a Secretary of State and have no legislative authority. However, had they been part of the long title of the Bill—the right hon. Gentleman has told us that the Bill will be interpreted in that way —you, Mr. Speaker, would have been bound to consider whether we were getting a mixed arrrangement for the supply of electricity which would affect private and public companies and consumers separately.

In view of the sensitivity of matters relating to hybridity, which affect the House and the protection of private rights and so on, I believe that you should not reject my submission out of hand until you have had the opportunity of considering it. Therefore, I submit that

*[Mr. Tony Benn]*

you, Mr. Speaker, in your judgment, should not allow the Lords amendments to be proceeded with until you have had the chance of taking that advice.

**Mr. Speaker:** I will certainly consider carefully what the right hon. Gentleman has said, for, as he correctly stated, no legislative change is made to the Bill as a result of what the Secretary of State has said. I suggest that the right hon. Gentleman submits his reasons for what he has just said to me in writing so that I may consider them carefully.

Now we move on to Lords amendment No. 158 with which——

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South) *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I do not think that I can say any more, and I am not prepared to rule on hybridity in the middle of Lords amendments.

**Mr. Cryer:** I simply want to ask you, Mr. Speaker, at what stage does the House have the opportunity to refer such a Bill, if it is indeed hybrid, to the Examiners of the Bill, who, as you know, consist of officials from both Houses, to check on the question of hybridity? Is it following a statement by yourself when you make a decision, Mr. Speaker, that a formal motion is moved, and is that motion subject to a vote like the vote that we have just had, in which the Government can use their vast majority to tear the procedures of this place apart and thus remove the rights which protect ordinary citizens, as they have just done?

**Mr. Speaker:** That matter is hypothetical until I have seen the submission to be made to me on this matter.

**Mr. Bruce Grocott** (The Wrekin) *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I repeat I cannot rule on hybridity in the middle of Lords amendments.

**Mr. Grocott:** I am sure that you will recall, Mr. Speaker, as we all do, the tremendous seriousness that was attached to the issue of hybridity during the 1970s on crucial matters of legislation which, as far as I can recall, included a whole day's debate on whether a piece of legislation was a hybrid measure. We are all dealing with information that has come to light only recently and the information that I have received seems of similar import to the discussions that took place in the 1970s. Therefore, can we have your assurance that, when the ruling is made, the opportunity will arise, so far as it is in your power, Mr. Speaker, to determine it, for us to discuss it in the same way and with the same seriousness with which it was discussed in the 1970s?

**Mr. Speaker:** I must first consider the submission that is put to me. Of course I do not control the timing of debates in the House, but I shall certainly bear in mind very strongly what the hon. Member has said.

**Mr. Benn:** The point is that the passage of the Lords amendments today could lead to an attempt to get Royal Assent for the Bill immediately. Clearly, when the House has dealt with the Lords amendments, the Bill will have completed its passage through both Houses. *[Interruption.]* I do not know whether it depends on how the House rules on the matter. However, the point is that the matter of hybridity would have to be settled before the Bill was cleared for Royal Assent. Once the Bill has gone for Royal Assent, it becomes an Act of Parliament. There is, therefore, an urgency about the matter. When you come to it, Mr. Speaker, you would have to interpose your judgment between the final stages in either House and the Royal Assent. You have given me an opportunity to put in such evidence as I can, which will concern clauses 62 and 63 on the generating board.

**Mr. Speaker:** The right hon. Gentleman should get in that submission as quickly as he possibly can.

**Mr. Tony Blair** (Sedgefield): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you confirm that it will be necessary to have a ruling on the question of hybridity before the Lords amendments are passed, since otherwise the opportunity is lost? The matter is therefore urgent.

**Mr. Speaker:** I understand that.

### Schedule 12

NUCLEAR LIABILITIES: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

*Lords amendment:* No. 158, in page 117, line 21, after "incurred" insert "or to be incurred".

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Michael Spicer):** I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Mr. Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendment No. 159, in page 117, line 26, at end insert—

"(1A) Subject to paragraph 4 below, the Secretary of State may, with the approval of the Treasury, enter into an agreement with any person under which the Secretary of State undertakes that, if such conditions as may be specified in the agreement are satisfied, he will exercise the power conferred by this paragraph in such manner and to such extent as may be specified in the agreement."

Amendment (a), after first 'agreement,' insert

'to be no longer than 5 years in duration.'

Lords amendments Nos. 160 to 162.

**Mr. Spicer:** The amendments will fulfil the commitment given by my noble Friend in another place to put the provisions of schedule 12 on a firmer footing. It is important that the nuclear generators should have the certainty of knowing that the Government will stand by their assurances to provide funds, and the amendment simply provides for the Secretary of State to enter into contracts to meet those obligations.

The Opposition amendment (a) to Lords amendment No. 159 seeks to restrict the length of the contract to five years. That would make the policy unworkable. The contracts need to last long enough for the Government to make the payments when they fall due. The stage 3 decommissioning of power stations may not take place for 100 years after the station has closed, and vitrified high-level waste will not be finally disposed of until at least 50 years after vitrification. It is essential, therefore, for the contracts to be capable of lasting for a long time. While accepting the Lords amendments, I would ask the House to reject the Opposition amendment.

**Mr. Blair:** The Lords amendment alters substantially the position as it was in the Committee and Report stages of the Bill here. The Secretary of State said in his statement today that if there had been any benefit of privatisation, it was to have exposed the economics of nuclear power. It is worth pointing out that it was only two and a half years ago that Mr. Hadley, the secretary of the Central Electricity Generating Board, appeared before the Sizewell inquiry and proclaimed that the Magnox reactors, about which we have heard a lot this afternoon, were saving the consumer some £250 million a year. Throughout the history of nuclear power until privatisation, we were told consistently that it would be cheap. Indeed, that was the primary case submitted by the CEGB in support of Sizewell. What has happened since then is not that by some magical process of privatisation or a great evolution of market power it has become clear that nuclear power has become more expensive, but, in crude terms, that, where it used to be in the interests of the electricity board to tell us that nuclear power was cheap, it is now, short-term at least, in its interests to tell us that it is expensive so that it can get more guarantees and more subsidies from the Government.

When we debate the schedule and the Government amendment, we should remember that we are not merely debating those nuclear liabilities, but we are debating them against the background of the nuclear tax to pay for the new PWR stations that will be costing the consumer about £20 or £50 a year. The nuclear quota will remain in being and will ring-fence the nuclear industry in that special way, but the cost of decommissioning, which will form part of the nuclear liabilities cost, will arise not merely in respect of the Magnox stations that have been shuffled back into the public sector today, but in respect of the PWR stations that are about to be decommissioned in the United States. The estimates of cost for commissioning the advanced gas reactor stations are again escalating at a fairly rapid rate.

During our deliberations we heard much from the Secretary of State about how he wants to rid us of the iniquities of the cost-plus system, but under privatisation, and under the provisions relating to nuclear liabilities, we will have cost plus and then the profit on top of that necessary for the private sector to take a dividend for its shareholders.

The amendments have a peculiar and coloured history. My hon. Friends will remember that in Committee those nuclear liabilities for the end-of-cycle costs of decommissioning, reprocessing and disposing of nuclear waste started off as simply those costs that were entirely unforeseeable. The only example that we received during the entire Committee stage was that a future Government might bring forward stage 3 of the decommissioning process and that would add to the cost. That would indeed add to the cost. Indeed, recent estimates show that it would add about £200 million to the cost of decommissioning the power stations. I add, too, that it appears that the fact that a future Government may change our procedures to bring them into line more with those procedures operating as best practice abroad is entirely foreseeable. Why we should guarantee and insure a private sector company against that risk, I do not know. That is the only example that the Minister gave us during Committee of where the schedule would be activated.

We were then told in the other place, when the matter was debated, that that was to be extended not merely to items that were unforeseeable, but to what were called, in the words of Baroness Hooper, factors "outside the industry's control". That is an utterly vague statement on which we should have clarification today. What has happened, too, between our debate in Committee and the Bill's returning to the Floor of the House for Lords amendments is that the discretion of a Secretary of State to exercise power and to give nuclear liabilities the underwriting in the way I have described has gone and has been replaced by these words in the amendment:

> "the Secretary of State may, with the approval of the Treasury, enter into an agreement with any person under which the Secretary of State undertakes that, if such conditions as may be specified in the agreement are satisfied, he will exercise the power conferred by this paragraph in such manner and to such extent as may be specified in the agreement."

In other words, a discretion has been replaced by a binding agreement into which the Government now want to enter to shore up the nuclear side of the privatisation.

The importance of that is that the discretion would be exercisable at the time when the contingencies against which it is guarding arise. Therefore, the discretion might be exercised when a future Government change the decommissioning plan or when the factors "outside the industry's control" materialise. I hope that the Minister will deal with that point.

Presumably the arrangement in the Lords amendment now contemplated by the Minister will be agreed to before privatisation. The purpose of the amendment, therefore, is to give binding rather than discretionary guarantees to the industry before privatisation. Surely it becomes all the more important that we should assess the contingencies that may give rise to that binding agreement and what its terms would be.

6 pm

A binding agreement will be entered into as a result of the amendment and Parliament will give the power to make that agreement. The extraordinary thing is that we do not know the terms of the agreement, its duration, the contingencies against which it may arise or the consequences of the agreement for public sector funding. Nothing is known about this open-ended agreement to subsidise a private sector company from public funds. It is therefore outrageous for the Government to enter into such an agreement on our behalf in order to shore up a privatisation which, as we heard earlier today, is failing so badly.

Why have the Government not taken all the nuclear power stations rather than just the Magnox power stations out of the privatisation? The explanation is perfectly simple and it is an important one to remember when considering the amendment. The Government have not taken the Magnox stations out because they have a greater appreciation of the future success of the other stations compared with those Magnox stations—some might argue that the advanced gas-cooled reactor stations are in a worse shape than the Magnox stations. The Government have withdrawn the Magnox stations because they know that if they took all nuclear power out of the privatisation, as we urged them to do, they would have to withdraw the Bill.

In Committee and throughout the passage of the Bill we were told that the 70:30 per cent. split between National Power and PowerGen was necessary to ensure the marketability of the nuclear sector within the industry's structure. If the Government withdrew nuclear power from that structure, they would then have to withdraw all the structure.

It is important to remember that, under the agreement, the price that we shall pay has been upped from £1 billion to £2·5 billion. That is the sum for which we, as taxpayers,

*[Mr. Blair]*

will be liable. The price that we pay as taxpayers and consumers is, no more and no less, the price of saving the Government's face.

I must make it clear that we wholly repudiate the notion that the Government should be allowed to enter into an open-ended agreement for the public subsidy of a private sector company. We do not regard the introduction of the amendment as a proper exercise of ministerial discretion.

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce** (Gordon): Today's statement has sharpened the purpose of the amendment and for many outside it will be put into sharp focus the commercial and safety risks associated with nuclear power. During the past 15 years the Government have had an incredible record of misinforming the public about the case for nuclear power. It is therefore difficult to see how any innocent speculators can be reassured by the Government's admission that the Magnox stations are too big a risk to be privatised, but that they should not worry as the Government will underwrite the risks of the other nuclear power stations. People are supposed to be reassured that those stations do not suffer the same problems of uncontrolled costs and environmental complexities as the Magnox stations. We have heard it all before and no one should take the Government's word about nuclear power.

Over the years the views of many of us have been vindicated. Throughout the passage of the Bill we have given the Government the benefit of our advice, but they have refused to take it even though, at the last gasp, we have been proved right and they have been proved utterly wrong.

The amendment is an open cheque as it is an attempt to get the House to accept that the private sector, which will run the nuclear power stations, should have unlimited access to taxpayers' money to cover the cost of its commercial mistakes, engineering failures, the difficulties associated with reprocessing, however unpredictable, or any other environmental consequences of the industry's activities. I hope that the Minister can tell us what other part of the private sector of the economy has such cast-iron, gilt-edged and open-ended guarantees. If such an amendment had been tabled by an Opposition party to cover any other industry it would have been ridiculed and condemned by the Government. Here they are, however, asking the House to accept a Lords amendment that will provide such guarantees.

The Secretary of State told us that he has only just discovered that nuclear power is more expensive than people thought. Many of us could have told him that a long time ago if he had been prepared to listen.

**Mr. Rhodri Morgan** (Cardiff, West): The right hon. Gentleman has moved rapidly.

**Mr. Bruce:** That is true. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that it has just become apparent that the cost of reprocessing is escalating at an unprecedented rate. Those of us who study the industry could see that coming and, in the circumstances, the escalation in costs is not entirely surprising.

It is not just a matter of problems associated with reprocessing as other changes are taking place. The hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) mentioned Baroness Hooper. She said that risk was being shared in such a way

"in areas which are not subject to the control of the nuclear operators"

That underlines my point about the amendment being an open cheque. She also said:

> "We must look very carefully at this area to see whether we can give greater certainty to the investor and the public that the Government will meet their side of the deal. Therefore, at Report stage we intend to table an amendment to Schedule 12 to enable the Secretary of State to enter into binding commitments in this respect."—[*Official Report, House of Lords,* 19 June 1989; Vol. 509, c. 20.]

That quote sums up the Government's attitude. They are much more concerned about the potential investor than they are about the best strategic way in which to run the industry or about meeting the public's concern about nuclear power.

The cost of reprocessing has escalated and is continuing to escalate dramatically. What happens if the cost of reprocessing makes nuclear power stations unviable? Today's statement does not make any difference. The entire cost of the lost capacity would fall on the taxpayer; there would be no risk to the shareholder. What would happen if Sellafield or THORP—the thermal oxide reprocessing plant—were closed on safety grounds? As a consequence the Magnox power stations would have to cease to produce. Who would bear the cost of that? Who would find the replacement capacity? The answer is that the taxpayer would bear the cost. To pretend that normal risk analysis or risk management would operate is an extraordinary distortion.

There is evidence to suggest that my theory is not just a fanciful concern. At the Hinkley inquiry the National Radiological Protection Board said that evidence of recent years suggested that the acceptable radiation dose had been set at too high a level. It suggested that the level should be reduced to a fraction of the current level. If what the board is proposing were introduced, it would mean that about one third of the employees at Sellafield would be exposed to radiation levels above the safety level projected by the board. The Minister must acknowledge that, if that is so, it is difficult to see how Sellafield or THORP could continue to operate. Already they have been threatened with closure, and if that happens the consequences for the taxpayer will be phenomenal.

Earlier, the Secretary of State tried to impugn the Labour party's commitment to the coal industry, and what it has cost the taxpayer, and I suppose that the Opposition's commitment is fair game. But what the Government are proposing is potentially a far greater commitment than that to the coal industry. The Bill is already committed to costs of more than £7·5 billion, and they go up by about 20 per cent. every time it returns to the House. I imagine that there will be numerous orders in the coming years on occasions when the Government come back to the House to seek further consent to increase borrowing to cover the costs of decommissioning and rising reprocessing charges.

Until recently, not many people suggested that we would simply abandon a decommissioned nuclear power station in a concrete shell for 100 years. Interestingly, the industry has tried to make that sound like an acceptable proposition, but I do not think that it will prove acceptable to have a decaying nuclear power station—monitored though it may be—wrapped up in concrete as a monument looming over people's communities. People will want total decommissioning; they will want stations removed; they will want land to be freed from the blight put upon it——

**Mr. A. J. Beith** (Berwick-upon-Tweed): Will not that be especially true in cases in which the generating board has its eye on greenfield sites and beauty spots like Druridge bay in Northumberland, where there will be not only a building but a structure that will last for 100 years?

**Mr. Bruce:** My hon. Friend raises a pertinent point. This factor will be used by objectors in future planning inquiries into the implications of building nuclear power stations. No longer will the industry be able to say—however unacceptable even this might be—that it is a question of a 25 or 30-year cycle, and then the structure will be removed. People know that it is so difficult to succeed in planning applications that one fades away, then another comes along, followed by another. My hon. Friend's point was a fair one: many communities will find it wholly unacceptable that a piece of land is likely to be frozen and out of use for up to 200 years. At least with a conventional power station, they know that it can be removed and that the site can be levelled within a generation or a generation and a half.

All those factors will affect the cost and liability of the industry. They will make many people reluctant to invest in it. We are faced with this prospect because of the consistent resistance of the City and other quarters to the saleability of a private electricity company based on nuclear power, and on Magnox reactors in particular. A poll published recently showed that about 17 per cent. of the population said that they might be willing to buy shares in the privatised electricity industry, but on closer questioning, more than half of those said that they would not buy shares if they included a nuclear component.

The Secretary of State may have had the worst of both worlds. He has failed to remove nuclear power altogether from the privatisation, but he has removed enough of it to tell these people that their judgment about the nuclear power industry was right and that an investment that requires them to buy into it is likely to be difficult—except that the Minister will be able to wave this proposal in front of them and tell them that they will make a profit while the taxpayer bears all the risk. The Government have signed up a wonderful deal for the investors. That is dishonest and immoral and it represents a principle that the Conservative party would not defend in any other context. It is the worst sort of double standards and double dealing to be brought before the House on this matter.

6.15 pm

The public should share my view and, if they have any sense, stay clear of the industry, and not only because it is not necessarily a sound investment: it is a bad risk with which they should not wish to taint their hands.

The Government are asking for an open-ended commitment which will leave investors feeling uncomfortable, which will not satisfy public concern and which will underline the fact that nuclear power should have stayed in the public sector. Surprisingly, the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North (Sir. T. Skeet) is not in his place; I should have thought that he would be anxious to contribute. He said from the outset that nuclear power should be kept in the public sector, as did the CBI. Many of us who opposed the privatisation recognised that it would have been tidier without the nuclear industry. It is extraordinary that the Government have not even been prepared to accept good advice either from the Opposition or from their own Back Benchers. We believed that, although privatisation should not go ahead, without the nuclear industry the argument for it could stand on its merits.

The Government have conspicuously failed to realise that. Their proposal involves a blank cheque which will mean, over time, that the industry will cost this country, in subsidies from the taxpayer, more than the coal industry has done to date—and by a substantial margin. It will do so in circumstances that utterly destroy the rhetoric for privatisation. This is a dishonest piece of legislation, of which this amendment is the most dishonest part.

**Mr. Alan W. Williams** (Carmarthen): I find it strange that we are debating schedule 12, in view of the Government's statement this afternoon. As Magnox reactors have been removed from the intended sale, I should have thought that at least half the problem of decommissioning has been removed from the privatisation, and I would expect dramatic changes in schedule 12, the more so since Magnox reactors are near the end of their lives and will incur these costs first.

The same goes for all our discussions today. The changes implicit in the statement should be subjected to the sort of discussion that we had in Standing Committee, because many of the premises have been wholly changed.

There is a fundamental objection to schedule 12. Why should the public carry all the risk of the escalating costs of waste and decommissioning? The sums mentioned in this context—£1 billion or £2·5 billion—are small compared with what I suspect the true eventual figures will be.

We have no real idea of how we shall get rid of high-level nuclear wastes. Intermediate-level waste will be given a shallow burial, probably at Sellafield. That will be very expensive and I do not think that the public, even near Sellafield, will accept it. Ideas for high-level wastes are still at the design stage. No country has got rid of its high-level waste, and the costs will run on for up to 100 years. The wastes will stay radioactive for hundreds or thousands of years, so how can we estimate the costs? One billion pounds or £2·5 billion seem trivial amounts compared with the true costs. Estimating the cost of decommissioning is crystal ball gazing. We understand that for Berkeley the cost may be about £300 million. Stages 1 and 2, which involve taking out the waste and reprocessing, will certainly account for that. We have no idea of the cost in 100 years time of dismantling the power stations and £300 million sounds like a terrific underestimate. Experts in the industry think that the cost could be anything up to £2 billion per reactor. That figure is from the *Financial Times* newsletter article, "Power in Europe" which is edited by Mr. Andrew Holmes. Where will that money be found?

In Committee we tried to estimate the foreseen costs for waste and for decommissioning and arrived at figures of £10 billion, £12 billion or £16 billion. Those are the present guesstimates. Apart from the guesswork involved in arriving at such figures, the fundamental objection to schedule 12 is why should the public carry the risk, especially in view of today's statement that Magnox reactors will be left out of the privatisation. The new privatised National Power will have AGRs and PWRs which will run for 20, 30 or 40 years. Presumably they will be operated at a profit but, if not, there is the nuclear tax to fall back on. When it comes to waste and decommissioning, the buck will be passed back to the taxpayer. Schedule 12 is wrong in principle.

**Mr. Alex Salmond** (Banff and Buchan): I should like to put two questions to the Minister to see if we can clarify the economics of the nuclear industry in the Government's mind. I understand that the Government now accept that the nuclear industry is not fully economic. In a whole variety of ways and through some ingenious subsidies, ways are to be found to subsidise the industry or to give comfort to private investors thinking of investing in nuclear power stations.

Can the Minister of State, Scottish Office tell us whether that is still the Government's thinking in terms of the Scottish nuclear industry? In Committee, the Secretary of State for Scotland still maintained that the nuclear industry was fully economic, and the most cost-effective method of generation in Scotland. My first question to the Minister is whether the Government feel that nuclear generation is not economic in England but is economic in Scotland.

If it is fully economic in Scotland, how does that square with the evidence given last week to the Select Committee by the chairman of the Atomic Energy Authority? Under the most strenuous questioning by the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) the chairman of the authority accepted the argument that the final decommissioning costs of nuclear power stations were unquantifiable at this stage. If the chairman of the Atomic Energy Authority is correct about that, how on earth can the Secretary of State for Scotland maintain that in Scotland the economics of nuclear generation is comparable with other power sources?

Perhaps the Minister of State will make a careful note of my second point, so that, when the Secretary of State returns, he will be able to give an answer to a question on which I manifestly failed to extract an answer from him earlier today. Given that the electricity companies are discounting over a long time the possible costs of decommissioning nuclear power stations, what will happen if the private companies go out of business before the costs fall due? Who will pick up the tab if the private companies which are to be given that responsibility are no longer around to meet the costs?

**Mr. Ian Bruce** (Dorset, South): I should like to comment briefly upon the way in which the Government have decided to unscramble the electricity industry in a very much different way from that which was originally proposed. Many of us understand the problems that any Government would face in trying to privatise a complex industry such as electricity generation and separate the different companies and the way in which they will operate.

The Government were correct to decide that there should be competition. I have always felt that perhaps the nuclear element of the industry should consist of one or more separate companies. The amendments are sensible, because the Government need to have powers to take account of contracts and other such matters. It is rather strange that the Opposition should try to defeat such contractual arrangements because, basically, the Government are seeking the ability to set out what is for sale and the agreements that are to be made in the industry. They seek to be able to say to potential investors that this is the way in which the Government will take out uncertainty about the reprocessing and decommissioning costs on the nuclear side of the industry. By doing that, the Government are not subsidising investors or giving them additional profit. By taking out that uncertainty, they are ensuring that the price paid for the other assets is much higher than it would be if such a doubt were allowed to influence the price. They are protecting the assets of the Government and the taxpayer by doing it in that way.

I stress to the Government that the uncertainty about the way that decommissioning and reprocessing will be dealt with is causing problems. Like any Back Bencher, I appreciate the Government's difficulty, because every time they make a decision about the way that we are to dispose of or reprocess waste, the NIMBY syndrome appears. That is designed to stop us taking decisions, and sometimes we have to go down what seems to be long and involved roads and try to put nuclear waste within a constituency that is already so heavily committed to the industry that it feels that it must provide a site for the spent fuel.

The Government's nuclear policy contains some imponderables. As we know, the City dislikes imponderables and will take the worst case and add 50 per cent. for good luck. Taking out the Magnox stations is a sensible idea. However, the Secretary of State for Energy has left within National Power a hostage to fortune, in that the management of that company could well use it as a milch cow by putting all the costs that it possibly can on the nuclear side, knowing that the rest of the industry will provide a subsidy.

The AGR stations and the future PWR stations should be shown to be economic. Given the additional costs of solving coal-fired problems of pollution and the cost of "greening" fossil fuel burning, we shall see the equation between nuclear generation and coal-fired generation turning around. It is necessary to have within the Bill powers to give nulcear power a subsidy, if it is needed. However, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will look carefully at ways to introduce a profitable nuclear industry and stretch it out.

The Atomic Energy Authority and British Nuclear Fuels plc are left in doubt as to what will happen to the nuclear stations that they are running. In my constituency, there is a steam generating heavy water reactor, which was designed many years ago as an experiment—the first-off of a type of reactor that was then cancelled by a previous Secretary of State for Energy, the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn). This station has a fairly limited life left, because its generators and other equipment will not last. We were assured that the station would be included in the non-fossil fuels requirement. Today's statement leaves us in some doubt about how this station will be dealt with.

The powers in the Bill are designed to help the Government to provide a sensible solution to the great difficulties of producing a privatised, denationalised electricity industry, and I commend them to the House.

6.30 pm

**Mr. Peter Hardy** (Wentworth): As I had to see a Minister about an urgent constituency matter, I missed part of the debate.

**Mr. Giles Radice** (Durham, North): Which one?

**Mr. Hardy:** They change so frequently that it is difficult to remember.

I shall not detain the House for long, but I have one or two important points to make. The other day, I took part in a "Worldnet" television programme, which lasted the best part of an hour, between Strasbourg and Washington. Taking part were an American senator in Strasbourg and other American politicians in Washington. It was interesting to hear them say that an expensive, large nuclear power station had been built close to Long Island, but although it was now just about complete, it would never function because they believe that it is neither acceptable nor economic.

The Secretary of State's statement about Magnox may have bought him some time, but whoever is Secretary of State for Energy after we come back from the recess will be appearing before the House to make yet another concession to try to make this privatisation work. Even with this concession, National Power will not be a successful flotation. The City may view PowerGen as dramatically more likely than National Power to succeed, because it has no nuclear encumbrance. However, if what I said both in Question Time and in the debate last Thursday is right, about the sheer fecklessness that we are about to experience as National Power approaches its launch in a few days' time, the City and many investors will be put off.

My last point echoes the point that I made when I asked a question of the Secretary of State after his statement. The prospect of electricity privatisation may be more attractive now in Tokyo, Frankfurt, New York and other such places than it is in London.

**Sir Trevor Skeet** (Bedfordshire, North) *indicated assent.*

**Mr. Hardy:** I am glad to have the endorsement, from a sedentary position, of the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North (Sir T. Skeet), who is the only Conservative Member to emerge with any credit from this sad and sorry tale. As he quite properly pointed out to the Secretary of State—false modesty has no place in matters as serious as this—he proposed in Committee the very step that the Secretary of State has taken today.

**Mr. Morgan:** Part of it.

**Mr. Hardy:** The hon. Gentleman suggested part of the step. One recognises virtue on a larger scale than it might deserve. However, the hon. Gentleman recommended a course of action that we supported in Committee but the Minister rejected. It would be interesting to ascertain how much the dilatory response of the Secretary of State to that proposition has cost us. The Secretary of State may feel that privatisation is more worth while, but the City of London, in assessing the economics of privatisation, may now recognise, despite all the cosmetic actions that have been taken, and all the to-ing and fro-ing to No. 10, the Government now look like a sick Government, or a partial Government. They look like a partisan Government, concerned only with the interests of those who will be seeking to make a little money out of privatisation. Today's action will not make privatisation successful, and it will assist neither the new electricity industry nor the cause of those who wish to see the business of this nation conducted competently.

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** I apologise to the House for not being here earlier, but I had to attend to one or two matters. I was here for the interesting statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy. I asked a question afterwards and suggested that my right hon. Friend could have gone a bit further. It is a wise man who recognises that, taking all the factors into account, a change is necessary. It shows the effectiveness of the Committee system when a Secretary of State listens to the arguments of Back Benchers, listens to the arguments put on Report, and eventually makes a modification. I find this one helpful. *[Interruption.]* I can remember when the Labour party introduced a groundnuts scheme, which cost us £36 million. An argument was put forward carefully in Committee and the Government are big enough, wise enough and awake enough to weigh up the arguments and bring out the desired modifications.

The crux of the Bill can be found in clauses 30, 32 and 93 and the schedule 12. We are dealing here with the schedule. When we deal with structures that will be closed down by the turn of the century, some revision must be made. Has it occurred to Labour Members that we are now building a third unit into the competitive exercise? We shall have not only National Power and PowerGen, but the British nuclear firm. In Committee, I made the modest suggestion that if we put some of the other nuclear assets into this body, it would be extremely competitive, and would be the third side of the competitive wedge. If we bring in the renewables, towards the end of the century, more competition will be introduced.

**Mr. Morgan:** The hon. Gentleman is rather jumping the gun. We were given no details to show that there will be a third company. If this were done by means of a sale-and-leaseback arrangement, that would not be the case. The Secretary of State gave no sign that a third company to supply nuclear electricity in England and Wales, with a bit of Scottish Magnox, would be set up.

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** It can be done in two ways. If the Magnox assets are retained by the state, those in Scotland and England will be either pooled into one company, or leased back to the enterprises. Final responsibility will rest with the state. That gives an additional guarantee to those concerned and to any disquieted members of the public that they can have full confidence in the privatisation that will ensue.

Further details will have to emerge. We shall have to ascertain precisely how these measures will be implemented. I have no doubt, however, that the right concession has been made at the right time and that it will lead to a successful flotation of the companies. The concession was made because the market required it—the market wanted the removal of uncertainty. It would not have been possible to continue with such a large measure of uncertainty.

Unfortunately, schedule 12 was not discussed at any great length in Committee. However, the Government were told that additional money would be required for the reprocessing of nuclear fuels, for their storage—much depends on where we put them—and for the disposal of nuclear waste. The Government were prepared to set aside as much as £2·5 billion, but the first tranche was to be a much smaller sum than that. If the Secretary of State wants to put more money up front, I can understand his reasons.

Let us try to understand what decommissioning is. For the first 50 years little will occur. That will be the cooling period. It will be a long time before the decommissioning can be amortised. We must understand that the Central Electricity Generating Board has been making provision for the eventual decommissioning of its stations. I do not

*[Sir Trevor Skeet]*

think for one moment that it has made satisfactory provision, but some provision has been made. I understand that it intends to make more and more provision as time passes. There is an advantageous position because the state enterprise in which the company is vested will remain with the Department of Energy, and the Department will be responsible for the reprocessing of the fuel elements. It will be responsible also for ensuring that any necessary repair work is carried out. It will be responsible for decommissioning.

**Mr. Salmond:** I am sure that the hon. Gentleman has read the Select Committee's report on the accounts of BNFL, which contains the following passage:

> "Using decommissioning to shift the burden of costs to future generations has little to commend it in economic or accounting theory or moral principle, particularly if the burden so shifted is a very substantial one."

Does the hon. Gentleman endorse that view?

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** We must remember that there are cycles of popularity. The nuclear industry was extremely popular a few years ago but popularity has now shifted to fossil fuels. I think that in the years ahead the nuclear industry will become more popular. Fossil fuels have the disadvantage of $CO_2$ sulphur dioxide, metals coming out of stacks and so forth. All these consequences have to be avoided and the shoe can move on to the other foot, as it were. Much depends on the amount of coal that comes on to the market, and it may be more restricted than we think. If that is so, the nuclear industry will gain in popularity. I should think that that would happen in about two or three years' time.

6.45 pm

Who would have thought that the price of uranium would have fallen from about $45 a pound to below $10? That fall in price has meant that it has become not especially profitable to operate all sites. With any commodity there will be periods of expansion and improvement followed by a period of deterioration. I have full confidence in the nuclear industry. It is wise to keep the nuclear industry going in the United Kingdom for the time when there will be improvements and expansion. Some countries have decided to let their nuclear industries go. If we followed that example, teams of experts would be disbanded. If £2·5 billion is made available for additional expenses and costs, the nuclear industry can be kept intact to a certain extent. That must be the desired consequence.

We have been told that no new nuclear power stations are being built in the United States. We must remember that the price of coal in the United States is very different from the price in the United Kingdom. The price here is relatively expensive, but in the United States the nuclear industry cannot compete with coal. I agree that the competitive element has gone in the United Kingdom that is on an 8 per cent. discount rate—but there are greater advantages here than there are in the United States.

**Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse** (Pontefract and Castleford): Does the hon. Gentleman think that he or anyone else can estimate the full cost of nuclear power, including decommissioning? It is all very well to talk about the next 50 years, but somebody will have to pay the full cost at the end of the day. It is likely that for two or three decades the private sector will make a profit from our nuclear industry. When the time comes to pay for decommissioning, the bill will probably be met by the public purse. Is that what the hon. Gentleman advocates?

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** If a plant is dismantled, it normally has to be dealt with there and then. When a nuclear plant is decommissioned, it has to be left to cool for a number of years. That applies especially to the reactor. The first phase may be 50 years. We then enter subsequent phases. Therefore, nuclear costs can be phased over a period. There is ample opportunity to do that. The purpose of the provisions that we are discussing is to meet the future possibility of vastly increased costs. When we dealt with this issue in Committee, I recommended that the Magnox assets were not very valuable and that they should be written down to some extent. It could be argued that some of the assets in the coal industry are similarly not of great value and that they should be written out of the accounts. I recommended today that the coal industry should be subject to a reconstruction. It may be that after 100 years have passed we shall have to examine certain aspects of the nuclear industry with a view to deciding what should happen next.

I think that the Government are moving in the right direction. They have taken up the Magnox stations and kept them within the state scheme. I agree that they could have gone a step further, but they have not done so. A partial contribution is an extremely valuable asset.

**Mr. Ian McCartney** (Makerfield): The Lords amendments stem from the directors of the National Westminster Bank. I have no doubt that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was to be seen scurrying to his inspectors to get them to examine the figures proposed by the Central Electricity Generating Board. We are talking not of a blank cheque but of the complete underwriting of a share issue because of the Government's fear that the City will not purchase at a sufficient level and that there will be a disaster on flotation.

These are not party political points being advanced by those who are opposed to the principle of privatisation. The issue arose in January in Committee when, fortuitously, the then chairman-designate of National Power sent a letter to my hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) in which he set out his concerns about the flotation of the company. He was anxious about its being saddled with the decommissioning costs of the nuclear industry. He argued against the underwriting by the company of the cost of fuel storage. He urged that the Government should construct a financial settlement that would protect BNFL, limit risks and enable it to be ripened, as it were, for future privatisation. The chairman-designate was opposed to the declared policy of the Department of the Environment that the polluter must pay. He said that, carried to its logical conclusion, such a commitment hung round the neck of the company would mean an unsuccessful flotation on the stock market. He said that he expected the Secretary of State for Energy to come up with proposals that would not only loosen the strings of that commitment, but would mean the Government picking up 100 per cent. of the continuing costs of nuclear decommissioning and the underwriting of fuel storage costs.

The Minister of State, Scottish Office is on the Bench and will respond to this debate. No doubt the Secretary of State and his Under-Secretary have been either successful or unsuccessful in the current operations at No. 10 Downing street. Perhaps we will be told later today what has happened. Will the Minister either confirm or deny that in January the Secretary of State received a letter from Mr. Baker making it clear that unless he introduced suitable amendments in another place it would be almost impossible to achieve a successful flotation of National Power? It is important that the public understand that the purpose of the amendments is not to provide some equalisation of market forces within the industry following privatisation; it is no more and no less than the use of taxpayers' resources to fund the flotation—a flotation which scares the Secretary of State stiff.

Mr. Baker's letter also made it clear that National Power was not prepared to agree to any commitment to phase 3 of decommissioning. He said:

> "There is no way that you can guarantee that National Power will not become insolvent over the next one hundred years. Any impediment on National Power is only likely to increase the chances that it will not survive."

He said that that would

> "significantly reduce its attractiveness to investors".

The amendments are designed purely to improve the attractiveness of the industry to potential investors, and the necessity to do that has obviously been quite clear since Mr. Baker's letter last January. My hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) was right to say that the beneficiaries of this policy will not be the taxpayers or the investors of the United Kingdom, but the foreign private capital investors who will buy the shares in the marketplace.

The Minister must clarify the statement made in another place about the Secretary of State giving up the power to decide on grants for unforeseeable costs. Indeed, under the amendments the Secretary of State relinquishes any power logically to decide on claims for the cost of decommissioning. By giving a blank cheque to the privatised companies he hopes to improve the chances of a successful flotation.

During the months since the Bill first entered its Committee stage, it has become increasingly clear that the public do not think that privatisation will benefit the nation. The Secretary of State has tried to push through this amendment while the manoeuvring at No. 10 is grabbing the headlines. He will not be successful——

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** The hon. Gentleman made a number of speeches in Committee. Does he accept that in most countries the private sector electricity industry is successful? That is partly because it involves an element of competition. Before the Government can privatise the industry, they must determine the value of its assets. Correct valuations must, for example, be made for all the reactors that will shut down by the end of the century. If a company is to be floated, it is important to decide whether its assets are worth nothing or a great deal. The Government have placed the private companies under an obligation to build four 1175 MW PWRs. That will be a heavy burden on the industry.

**Mr. McCartney:** The hon. Gentleman obviously did not listen to any of the arguments deployed by Labour Members in Committee, when we produced ample evidence of the problems. For example, New York state has had to step in to save a privatised company from bankruptcy. It sold and and then had to buy back the potential nuclear power generating capacity. The nuclear companies in France are on the verge of bankruptcy because of crippling costs and the French Government have had to intervene to prevent that. The hon. Gentleman knows that his argument does not hold up. That is why he, more than any Conservative Back Bencher who supports privatisation, has pressed the Government to underwrite the sale of the industry. Without a massive underwriting, not only will there be a shortfall on the expected proceeds from the sale, but in the long term the privatised company will be unable to cope with its social and environmental responsibilities as well as its prime objective of realising the profits that come from privatisation.

**Mr. Eric Illsley** (Barnsley, Central): I wish to make only a few brief comments, most of which will relate to the Secretary of State's statement this afternoon and the effect of schedule 12. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Magnox stations will now remain in public ownership, yet schedule 12 increases funding for unforeseeable costs from the interim level of £1 billion to £2·5 billion. That suggests that the funding is being increased for the benefit of fewer power stations. There will be a larger pie for fewer stations.

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** There were many fund-raising Bills for the coal industry under the National Coal Board in its time. Each time it exhausted the upper limit, it was extended through a new Bill. I am sure that no one would suggest that schedule 12 will last for ever. Perhaps another £500 million will be required and the Secretary of State will have to come back to the House with a new Bill. That is in line with coal industry legislation.

**Mr. Illsley:** The hon. Gentleman merely reinforces the point that we made in Committee, that decommissioning costs were unforeseeable and the Government would have to come to the House time and again to obtain more money for the nuclear industry. Cost comparisons including decommissioning all show that coal-fired stations are more economic than nuclear-powered stations. The Electricity Bill has not yet completed all its stages, yet already the Secretary of State intends to raise the funding for unforeseeable costs from £1 billion to £2·5 billion, even though the Magnox stations have been taken out of the equation. The decommissioning costs are increasing even before privatisation. The Select Committee report in April endorsed our views on BNFL, in which the hon. Gentleman has a particular interest. Its decommissioning costs have increased fivefold because of the change of policy to decommissioning to greenfield sites in three stages over 100 years.

We must wait until the Bill reaches the statute book in the autumn before the necessary order for further funding is brought before the House and we have an opportunity fully to debate the matter. BNFL's liability for decommissioning costs alone has increased five times over the estimated amount. That begs the question of whether the Government will need to return to Parliament for more money to pay for the decommissioning of the THORP plant, the costings for which already lag well behind the likely actual expense.

7 pm

**Mr. Donald Dewar** (Glasgow, Garscadden): I am obliged to the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North (Sir T. Skeet) for the thought that the measure that is the subject of this debate might be the equivalent of the groundnuts scheme for the Government. However, there is

*[Mr. Donald Dewar]*

a distinction to be drawn between the two, because I am sure that the hon. Gentleman accepts that the groundnuts scheme was based on idealism and good intentions, and no one can say that the same is true of electricity privatisation. Certainly it cannot be said of the muddle that we have witnessed today.

I am sorry that, although the Minister of State, Scottish Office, has been courteous enough to await the conclusion of this particular debate, he has chosen not to reply to it. I wanted to ask him one or two questions about the implications of schedule 12 for Scotland, and the Under-Secretary of State for Energy, who is beginning to look like a remarkably solid and permanent object on the shifting scene of the Department of Energy, may not be able to provide the detailed information I want.

As I flew to London this afternoon, it occurred to me that many important questions remained unanswered because of the total lack of information about nuclear capacity and nuclear costs. However, as a consequence of the past two or three hours, we have almost too much information—most of it confused and disjointed. Nevertheless, only the most churlish right hon. or hon. Member could retreat from remarking that there has been a most interesting series of happenings.

While I recognise that it is difficult to get the attention of any even junior Ministers on this day of all days, because there is some nervous tic on the Conservative Benches, I may tell the House that my interest in schedule 12 was triggered by a report last week in the *Glasgow Herald* that the South of Scotland electricity board's accounts will be delayed for up to six months. I was curious to know whether that was true and, if so, the reasons for the delay. Perhaps we can now guess at some of the reasons, but it will still be useful if the Minister can confirm that the SSEB's accounts have been delayed and that the explanation offered by those who monitor the industry is correct—that the arithmetic of nuclear power has gone so badly wrong for the SSEB that it has been compelled to delay publication of its accounts while it scratches its head about the way of presenting them in a more palatable form to those people who may be tempted to invest in the privatised company.

That is an extremely plausible scenario. As the Under-Secretary of State may recollect, last year the SSEB reported a £15 million operating profit, but it was suddenly translated into a £70 million loss because of the problems relating to the transfer of Chapelcross and of the sharp rise in BNFL's reprocessing costs. Those circumstances form part of the formidable evidence that the whole privatisation exercise is in appalling and fundamental trouble as a consequence of the escalating costs of Britain's nuclear capacity.

I confess that I am greatly irritated by the way that Ministers blandly deny even the existence of such troubles and there is hardly a ripple across their calm pond of ideology, when anybody who takes the slightest interest knows that there is a ferment of anxiety behind the scenes. It may even have reached the notice of the Energy Minister that in December 1988 the chairman of the South of Scotland electricity board, briefing the press at Torness, remarked that if the Government pursued their original plans, the privatised company would be unsellable. He asked for "absolute insurance" against the ever-escalating costs of reprocessing and the way in which he could apparently be held to ransom by BNFL and by the substantial costs of decommissioning, which are also constantly rising.

SSEB's chairman said at that briefing—I recall raising this point again and again with the Scottish Office—that the assurances

> "will have to be signed and sealed before one writes a prospectus—otherwise it will not be worth writing."

Clearly he felt very strongly about that matter. Subsequently, I and other right hon. and hon. Members pressed for details of the Government's intentions. There were tales in the press about secret deals and guarantees, but perish the thought, we were told it was a horrible idea that such things should be happening in smoke-filled rooms. In fact, I am sure that those rooms had very good air conditioning. We were told that nothing was happening, but now we know that a deal was hammered out, and that in essence it is an extremely bad deal for the taxpayer.

The Secretary of State for Energy—as he then was, and may still be—suggested that the Labour party was not in touch with reality and had failed to catch up with the developments with which he was dealing so bravely and effectively. However, when I raised various matters in December 1988, I received a reply from the Secretary of State for Scotland, who is ever-courteous in responding to queries, in which he wrote:

> "I fully recognise Mr. Miller's concerns, but I am confident that there will be a range of instruments to meet them in a manner which both meets legitimate investor concerns and safeguards the position of consumers. There are no grounds for suggesting that the successful privatisation of the industry will be jeopardised by risks associated with the nuclear operating costs."

A few months later, the Secretary of State for Energy stumbles to the Dispatch Box and concedes that there was every reason for concern, and that a major capitulation by the Government is required in respect of nuclear costs.

I still want the Under-Secretary of State for Energy to explain more about the Government's intentions. I realise that there will be detailed statements and a debate later, which I welcome. However, as the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North fairly pointed out, we are faced with a patchwork quilt of responsibilities, consisting not only of the English distribution companies but of two generating companies, one of which will have nuclear interests, and in Scotland a nuclear company wholly owned by the two successor companies to the present boards. There will be a Scottish Nuclear Company, and there is the possibility —I put it no higher—of some continuing state nuclear capacity, which will mesh into that network in a way that is, as yet, obscure.

I accept entirely that the details have yet to be worked out, because the Government have not worked out the details of any of their actions. They never seem to be worked out, and the Government consequently shift and change their position. The Minister must surely be able to give an overview of how the network will work and describe in the broadest terms what kind of holding company, public institution, quasi-quango, state board or corporation will be created to look after the residue of Britain's nuclear capacity that is the surviving Magnox stations—and state who in Scotland will spend the £400 million or £500 million that will, according to latest estimates, be required for decommissioning Hunterston.

I take the point made by the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond), quoting my hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse), that it is difficult to quantify decommissioning costs. My impression is that it is possible to make some estimate at a given point in time, but the trouble is that, over a long time, costs escalate in an alarming and extraordinary fashion.

I have an article from *Power in Europe*, a newsletter which carries some authority in the industry, showing the Central Electricity Generating Board's quantifications of decommissioning costs between 1986 and 1989 for a Magnox station. They vary from £211 million up to £641 million, depending on which of those years one picks, and the time scale between stages 2 and 3. This shows the variants and the unknown factors that we are being asked to face.

We want to know a great deal more about this, and about the circumstances in which money will be paid out under schedule 12. We now know that the upper limit of £2·5 billion is at stake. That is a substantial sum of money. It looks as though the taxpayer is being asked to take over the difficult fag end of the nuclear industry—the older Magnox stations—and pay the bills as a sacrifice to allow the new privatised industry to be launched with reasonable prospects.

It seems to me that there has been not just a touch of muddle, but a scandalous willingness to prop up a crumbling and tumbling scheme, almost irrespective of the cost.

**Sir Trevor Skeet** *rose*——

**Mr. Dewar:** I shall not give way. I am anxious to make a couple more points before I sit down.

My worry is not with the City, or the financiers—I have some respect for the people who might invest in this company—but with the people who will get forms through the door, because they are South of Scotland electricity board customers, telling them that they will have a wonderful discount if they buy SSEB shares. I think that that is worrying. I am sure it must worry the Under-Secretary as well, if his senior colleague is right, and the Government have had to ride to the rescue because the electricity industry has not faced up to the true costs of decommissioning and reprocessing over the years, but must do so in future. I understand from that that the Minister expects those costs to be met partly out of schedule 12 funds, but substantially out of some reserve, some unidentifiable fund, to be built up over the years. It will face the formidable costs of decommissioning and reprocessing the AGRs in Scotland, which is bound to occur one or two decades after privatisation. I hope that the Minister will comment on that.

If we are to face the so-called true costs in the future, it is clear that there will almost certainly be a substantial increase in the price of electricity to the consumer. That is an inescapable conclusion from the statement we have heard today, and from the muddle and confusion that has emerged.

An article in *The Daily Telegraph* on 21 July said that there might be a 15 to 20 per cent. rise in electricity costs as a result of privatisation. The logic of what has been unveiled today makes that a real problem. It will be a problem for small shareholders and for the consumer. I do not think that the Government are out of the wood yet.

If the Minister sells these shares on the basis of the prospectus to people who are unlikely to have independent financial advice—people who get offers through the door with discount forms, who see the gloss and the glitz of the television advertising every day in their front rooms—to judge from the arithmetic and prospects that emerge from today's confusion, that would be the height of social and, I suspect, fiscal irresponsibility. The one thing that emerges from all this, with great clarity, is that the old story that I have been given year in, year out by the industry—that the best commercial basis on which to produce electricity is nuclear—has been blown out of the water. The truth is now out.

7.15 pm

Paragraph 78 of the Energy Select Committee's sixth report, on the greenhouse effect, says:

> "Most strikingly, when questioned about the economics of nuclear power and the impending privatisation of the electricity supply industry in Great Britain, the Chairman of the UKAEA said that he did 'not believe that in the present situation or climate privatised electricity generating companies would invest in nuclear power, to be absolutely frank'."

That we have again had to bail out a privatisation with the cynical use of taxpayers' resources does not hide the fact that the problems of nuclear power will haunt many of the Scottish boards, or rather the combined generating and distributing companies. I suspect, as the years go by, that exactly the same problems that have haunted the SSEB over the past few years will haunt the new companies and their shareholders and, given the Government's approach, the people who will pay the price, formally and unfairly, will be the customers who buy the electricity.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I hope that the House will agree to the Lords amendments that we are discussing and oppose the Opposition motions because, as I said in my opening speech, I do not think that it is sensible to put a time limit on these agreements.

**Mr. Morgan:** The Government want a bottomless pit.

**Mr. Spicer:** The hon. Member says that we want a bottomless pit. That is precisely what is not implied in this group of amendments, in clause 93 and in schedule 12. A precise figure is attached to them, as he knows, because his knowledge of the subject is detailed. The figure is £2·5 billion. I remind the House that, for the figure to be raised from £1 billion to £2·5 billion, there will have to be an affirmative resolution. I want to underline what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said about that—the affirmative resolution will be debatable. Therefore, far from being open ended, as the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) said, it is the reverse. It is specific as to what sums of money are involved.

I assure the House that these amendments do not make any difference, in substance, to the purpose of clause 93 and to schedule 12. That is common ground in the House, I would have thought. It has been made clear to us when writing the prospectus for privatisation that the additional net, if it can be called that, should be introduced into the Bill so that there is no doubt about the Government's intention to apply the terms of clause 93 and schedule 12. It underscores and underlines the Bill as it stands.

I understand, after today's statement, that the Opposition want to peg further questions and debates. I do not quarrel with that, but this is purely a technical matter, underlining clause 93 and schedule 12.

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** Schedule 12 is there because certain costs cannot be evaluated because of the lengthy period over which they will mature. Decommissioning takes more than 100 years, so it is impossible to be precise, and, if one cannot be precise, one has to have this schedule to be able to deal with it. Is that not true?

**Mr. Spicer:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for making an important point which leads me to what I wanted to say in any case. The purpose of clause 93 remains exactly the same in relation to the new private companies. No doubt there will be unforeseen and indeed uncontrollable costs, but the powers under the clause will allow them to be met. The problem of the time scale would exist whether or not the industry was privatised, and regardless of today's statement; power stations of this kind have not been decommissioned before. The powers in the Bill clearly make sense, and the amendments simply underscore them.

The hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce), and a number of others, have thrown around the figure of £8 billion. I do not know where they got that figure; perhaps they will let us into the secret, and help us to make our dispositions even firmer. One of the reasons why we have no firm figure as yet was implied by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) when he asked me about the effect of Chapelcross on the profitability of the SSEB last year. Let me remind the hon. Gentleman that, contrary to the impression that he gave, Mr. Donald Miller has always been very enthusiastic about the sale —or so all his public statements have implied.

The hon. Gentleman's main question concerned the relationship between BNFL and the SSEB in the context of delayed accounts. I concede that negotiations between BNFL and the entire United Kingdom electricity industry on reprocessing are still in progress. Until the contracts are completed we cannot foresee the costs, as my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North (Sir T. Skeet) has pointed out.

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** I am not sure that the Opposition have worked this out properly. A different company from BNFL will probably be dealing with the Magnox reactors. I am assuming, on the basis of the schedule, that the additional costs of some of the reactors will come out of the £2·5 billion. If that can be clarified, we shall have made some progress.

**Mr. Spicer:** I was coming to that point. As I have said, the companies left in the private sector will be subject to the criterion that we have already laid down, and about which I was questioned by the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair). My hon. Friend was wise and percipient to ask about the Magnox reactors: the powers in clause 93 could be applied to Magnox costs, should cashflow problems require it. We are not sure whether that will happen, as they will be earning revenue in the public sector as well as creating costs. My hon. Friend has made an important contribution by enabling that to be put clearly on the record.

There is nothing untoward about the Lords amendments, and I hope that the Opposition will not press them to a vote. It would certainly be extraordinary of them to press their amendment to a vote. They may not like our general policy; they may be concerned about the statement; they may have all sorts of worries. The problems, however, are long-term problems and have not occurred before. Any policy involving "capping" or "time-limiting" the agreements would, I feel, be wrongheaded.

**Mr. Salmond:** I hope that the Minister was not intending to finish his speech without answering a question that I have already asked twice today. Given that decommissioning costs have been discounted over long periods, who will pick up the tab if a private company goes out of business before the costs need to be met?

**Mr. Spicer:** That is very unlikely, for a number of reasons. One of those reasons is that the regulator will be able to determine the prices that the industry will require to cover its costs. At the back of our minds has always been the need to make proper provision over a period of time, difficult though that is. That will incur costs, which the regulator will no doubt take into account when constructing his price formula. There will be no problem; that is the reason for the regulator's existence.

Given the regulation of the industry, the non-fossil fuel obligation and other protections for the industry which the Opposition have questioned, I do not feel that the hon. Gentleman's fears are well founded. I hope that the Opposition will feel able to withdraw their amendment and that the House will accept the Lords amendment.

*Question put,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 312, Noes 195.

**Division No. 317]** **[7.27 pm**

**AYES**

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel

Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Sir Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Maclean and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

## NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*

Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie and
Mr. Ray Powell.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 159 to 162 agreed to. [Special entry.]*

*Lords amendment:* No. 21, before clause 11, insert the following new clause—*Licence conditions for nuclear installations*—

> "Where a person authorised to generate electricity under section 6(1)(a) above proposes to do so by means of nuclear fission, it shall be a condition of the licence that the Secretary of State may at any time if he perceives that there is a matter affecting the safety of the public by order requisition and bring under his own control the relevant nuclear installations."

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I beg to move, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 81 to 89 and the Government motions to disagree with each.

**Mr. Spicer:** I understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, that it may be for the convenience of the House if we take with this group the following Lords amendments: No. 28, in clause 32, page 24, line 42, leave out from "with" to "and" in line 43 and insert

> "the suppliers concerned, by order require each public electricity supplier in England and Wales or each supplier in Scotland, before a day specified in the order, to make (in so far as he has not already done so)"

Amendment (a) to the Lords amendment, leave out 'each such supplier in Scotland'.

Nos. 29 to 35.

No. 36, in clause 33, page 26, line 21, after "above" insert

> "in relation to public electricity suppliers in England and Wales, or public electricity suppliers in Scotland"

Amendment (a) to the Lords amendment, leave out 'or public electricity supplier in Scotland'.

Amendments Nos. 37 to 50, 78 and 79.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is that the wish of the House? That being so, the Minister may proceed.

**Mr. Spicer:** Amendments Nos. 28 to 79, dealing with the non-fossil fuel obligation and associated levy, are technical amendments. If any hon. Member has questions, I shall be happy to answer them, but if not, I shall leave the amendments to one side.

The first group of amendments deals with safety and seeks to provide that when a nuclear power station is defined as unsafe, its ownership and control should fall back into the hands of the Secretary of State. The main reason why the Government disagree with that is simple. Under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965, the nuclear installations inspectorate has powers to shut down nuclear power stations or to modify their licences. Indeed, should there be any question of their being unsafe, it has virtually unlimited powers over power stations and their operators. The obligation for safety placed on the operators within the general restrictions and safety conditions laid down by the inspectorate has served the country well, so the amendment is not necessary.

I do not want to make a debating point, but the Opposition are trying to suggest that we should take safety for North sea oil operations out of the hands of the Secretary of State whereas the other place at least supports the view that safety at nuclear installations should be in the hands of the Secretary of State. It will be interesting to see whether the Opposition can solve that conundrum.

Both sides of the House agree that the present legislation is tight on safety. The Bill further strengthens the safety provisions relating to the regulator. We have had a debate on that subject and the Government have brought forward amendments to that effect. We agree about the paramountcy and importance of safety, but the Bill provides a regime to ensure that safety provisions will be complied with.

7.45 pm

**Mr. Morgan:** We are in something akin to uncharted waters this evening, in more ways than one. First, we seem to be operating in a Minister-free zone. I have some sympathy for the departing Secretary of State and his Under-Secretary of State, who were near to ascending their own parliamentary Everest. Just before they reached the summit, the Secretary of State, at least, seems to have slid back to South Col on his backside. Since then, he seems to have found a convenient bus operating from

South Col back to Katmandu. His future parliamentary survival may depend on him seeing what he can do to live down the consequences of his announcement earlier today that Magnox stations would be left out of the Bill at the last minute of its parliamentary consideration.

There is a further reason why we are in uncharted waters. The Secretary of State told the House at 4.30 pm that Magnox stations should be taken out of the privatisation process and brought back into the public sector, because that was the only way to protect potential investors. Now the Minister is telling the House, at 7.50 pm, that for reasons of public safety he is not willing to consider bringing nuclear power stations back into the public sector. He is willing to strengthen protection for private investors, but he wants to weaken protection for public safety. That is an extraordinary contradiction. It may even be the ultimate statement of what the Government are about. They do not care as much about public safety as they do about the safety of the privatisation process, and the advice that they receive from merchant banks on the electricity industry ranks higher than any other.

Lords amendment No. 21 makes it clear that, should there be any doubts about the public safety of nuclear power stations, the Secretary of State would have the right to draw them back into the public sector, if they had already been privatised. I assume that that is confined to AGRs and PWRs. Even after today's announcement, we have no details about that and there could still be an element of privatisation. For that reason, I shall speak as though Magnox stations could be privatised on a sale-and-leaseback procedure. That has by no means been excluded by the Secretary of State's extraordinarily vague announcement. That is another reason why we are in uncharted waters.

It is all very well for the Minister to tell the House, as he did two minutes ago, that we have well-established procedures for dealing with safety issues on the nuclear side of the electricity generating industry. No one has more regard for the inspectors and employees of the nuclear installations inspectorate than the Opposition Front Bench. We hold Eddie Ryder and his staff in the highest regard, but several relatively new factors tend to undermine one's confidence in the bland assurances given by the Under-Secretary of State a couple of moments ago.

We know from the nuclear installations inspectorate itself that it is seriously under-staffed. It would like a very much larger complement because it will have to deal with a much wider range of problems in future. It will be dealing with three separate nuclear installations technologies—Magnox, AGRs and, before long, PWRs—which it has never had to do before. It will also be dealing with a whole new ball game because of the number of stations being decommissioned. It looks as though the inspectorate may even have to deal with three separate companies, although that is not necessarily so. Clearly, it will have to deal with the nuclear divisions of National Power and the SSEB and it now seems possible that we shall have some sort of cross-border dog's dinner of a nuclear company to deal with Magnox in its declining years until Wylfa is decommissioned in 2001 or 2002, so the NII may be having to deal with three separate management teams.

The Minister argues that there is no need to worry because we have the NII, whose terms of reference are clear—that the NII licences the operators and the types and that that means that we in Britain have a much better system than other countries and that no problems can arise. As I said, no one could have more regard than the Opposition for the staff of the NII and their dedication to their duties, but the fact remains that they will be facing new problems.

Take the decommissioning of the Magnox stations. The staff of the NII take the view that with the present complement the inspectorate will have its hands full simply dealing with the annual reports for the Magnox stations. It will be almost a full-time job. In addition, the NII will have to consider for the first time the licensing of the operating side of PWRs when the construction phase of Sizewell B is eventually completed in about 1992. In the light of those new problems, the Minister's bland assurances are inadequate.

When the Magnox stations are running down, a whole new series of safety problems will arise. Let me give this idea to the Minister to chew over in case his mind is turning to other matters—such as whether he will be here tomorrow. As Magnox stations fall in temperature, they produce weapons-grade plutonium, rather than civil-grade plutonium. A whole new series of protective measures may be required to cover that accidental by-product of the running down of Magnox stations. The nuclear installations inspectorate and other international inspectorates may well take a great deal of interest in that unintended side effect.

In terms of public safety questions such as terrorist attack or theft of plutonium stocks, the decommissioning of Magnox will give rise to a whole new series of questions. We have never had to deal with such questions before because we have never decommissioned stations before, whereas now a whole series of Magnox stations are to go out of business over the next 13 years, until the Magnox problem is behind us.

For those reasons Opposition Members have a great deal of sympathy with the Lords amendments. The Government may say, "We have solved that problem ourselves by taking the Magnox stations out of the privatisation process and keeping them in the public sector. And if they are in the public sector already we do not need the power to take them out of the private sector." We need an assurance from the Minister that the Magnox stations will not enter the private sector by way of sale-and-leaseback arrangements because the Secretary of State was extremely vague on this issue in his statement earlier today. He gave us no idea what form the company would take—perhaps another Secretary of State will have to handle that particular hot potato—and until we know that, we must assume that there is a possibility that the privatised nuclear power industry will include at least the management of the Magnox stations. In that case the provisions of Lords amendment No. 21 would need to apply to Magnox stations as well as to AGRs and PWRs.

Even if we assume that the Magnox stations stay in the hands of a state nuclear corporation—being incorporated with BNFL, being placed in the hands of a separate Crown nuclear company or remaining in legislative limbo—we must still ask whether the state should have the right to reacquire ownership of AGRs if a public safety threat such as a military, terrorist or type-fault threat arose. Given all the criticisms that have been made about AGRs, that possibility cannot be excluded. Should the Government have an easy route to reacquire the stations on public

*[Mr. Morgan]*

safety grounds or should we have to go through the whole dreary process of introducing legislation to transfer the industry from private to public?

We have much sympathy with the Lords amendment because we believe that the Lords took a long-term view. The public have a great many doubts about how they will live with the nuclear industry. For example, we know that one could never build a nuclear power station on a green field site in this country following the public inquiry process. One can build new nuclear power stations where there are already nuclear power stations because there is a nuclear vested interest in those areas. But if the public had known in the late 1950s and early 1960s what they now know about nuclear power, the existing sites would never have been set up, and that vested interest would never have arisen.

The Lords have sought to reflect the fact that, given the choice, no one would allow a nuclear power station to be built in his area. The public do not want to live in close proximity to nuclear power stations. That is also true in other countries, the possible exception being France.

The public would undoubtedly be greatly reassured if the Government embraced the spirit of the Lords amendment and said, "We understand how you feel about nuclear power and how you were conned into accepting nuclear back in the late 1950s," acknowledging that nuclear power was our weapon to defend ourselves against being exploited by high oil prices and that to be able to construct nuclear power stations was the macho symbol of technologically advanced civilisations. All those assumptions proved hopelessly inaccurate, but they were sufficient to persuade the public to accept nuclear power stations.

The Government must think seriously about how to reassure the public that in a privatised electricity industry public safety will be given the highest priority. We know that once the industry is privatised we shall have a jungle out there. We know that the public believe that in the jungle of a privatised industry corners will be cut. The Minister asked earlier where the estimate of £8 billion for decommissioning Magnox stations came from. I recall that Phillips and Drew the stockbrokers, who are under something of a cloud at present in relation to an entirely different matter, suggested that the possible cost would be £12 billion. That firm was assisting the Government in preparing reasonable estimates of the real cost of nuclear power and said that the decommissioning of Magnox would cost £4 billion if it were done over a century but that that could rise to £12 billion if it were done at the most rapid practicable rate—the rate at which the Swedish Government have told their industry to decommission.

The British Government may wish to choose a similar regime. The public might want them to make that choice rather than having huge concrete domes all over the countryside. The public suspect that in a privatised nuclear industry management will say, "We cannot possibly afford that; we cannot do it; we shall go bust if you force us to do it." What is the answer to that?

The public are crying out for reassurance about the safety of living next door to sources of radiation while the interests of investors and shareholders are pulling the other way. We want to know which way the Government will go. The public would like to see the spirit of Lords amendment No. 2 incorporated in the Bill.

The prime purpose of the Bill must be to reassure the public. Whatever the ideologies of hon. Members, the operation of the industry must be safe and electricity supply must be secure. The Bill's prime purpose cannot be simply to give potential investors a risk-free ride when they have a punt on the pylons and power stations.

In that spirit of asking the Government to reassure the public about the safety of nuclear power stations, I ask them to think again and move to the spirit of Lords amendment No. 21.

8 pm

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** I support the general thrust of the comments of the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan). There are currently so many question marks over nuclear power that it should not move out of the public sector. It certainly should not move from the public sector when its monitoring, safety and emergency provisions have been exposed as underdeveloped. In Committee, we touched on such matters and gave examples to reinforce our argument.

The general attitude to the level of acceptability of radiation doses has changed dramatically over the years. We have moved from a feeling that any radiation was likely to be damaging, through a belief that quite high doses could be tolerated, to the current belief that we cannot accept the present dosages. The industry is about to be privatised when a public debate is going on about whether the acceptable levels of exposure to radiation are low enough.

In the 1950s, the dose limit for workers in the industry was set at 150 mSv, but it was reduced to 50 mSv in 1977, the last time that there was a specific change. The National Radiological Protection Board believes that much lower levels should operate, and has suggested 0·5 or 0·2 mSv. Seven per cent. of employees at Sellafield have received doses of almost 50 mSv. People involved in decommissioning and reprocessing are particularly vulnerable to high doses. If the processes of reprocessing or decommissioning make it impossible for humans to do them because safety levels have fallen below what is acceptable, what will that mean for reprocessing, decommissioning or the private sector nuclear industry? The amendment at least ensures that the Government have at their disposal, at any time, the right to intervene and to say, "We are not satisfied that sufficiently high standards are being applied, so we propose to take direct responsibility."

In Committee, I referred to emergency evacuation procedures for nuclear power stations. It is little short of a scandal that we still have no published, workable or known evacuation procedures for people within the vicinity of nuclear power stations, despite many requests for one by the Association of Planning Officers. Information is not available to local general practitioners about the effect of discharge of radiation on workers or people in the vicinity of a nuclear power station, although they have tried to secure such information several times.

The industry is being privatised, despite the fact that we know that major accidents can happen, and have happened. We have a moving position on safety and the possibility that, in an emergency, responsible local authorities and the public within the vicinity of a nuclear power station would not know what was expected of them. That example determines that the amendment is necessary to ensure that safety factors are taken into account.

The House should not allow the Government to be complacent about this industry, of all industries. It is a regrettable fact that the commercial climate created by the Government of the maximisation of profit and the allowance of commercial interests with the maximum deregulation has already led to major disasters in the private sector. I do not need to catalogue them, because we are all aware of them and because they have been referred to all too often in debates.

Do the Government want to put alongside Zeebrugge, Clapham or Lockerbie a Hinkley Point or a Dungeness B because they chose to privatise the industry with inadequate safeguards? I believe that that is what they are proposing. I believe that that is what their Lordships thought, and that is the reason for the amendment. It is regrettable that the Government do not appear to have learnt from the savage incidents that have occurred. The consequences for the nuclear power industry of the pursuit of profit and the compromise of safety standards that might occur as a result would be more far-reaching than the other disasters to which I have referred.

I should like to question the implications of the non-fossil fuel levy for Scotland, which is why I tabled two probing amendments. Scotland has substantial over-capacity in all electrical power generation, predominantly because of excessive investment in nuclear power stations. I suggested in Committee that, to reduce that over-capacity, the ownership of Torness should be transferred to National Power, thereby releasing some of the excess capacity in Scotland. That is not an ideal solution, because Torness should never have been built, but given that it exists and is operating, and given that under the Bill nuclear capacity is to be contracted to a percentage under the non-fossil fuel levy, it appears that it could make a contribution.

I ask the Minister to say whether the Government have any thoughts on when and if the non-fossil fuel levy will be applied to Scotland. It has been suggested that eventually it might, but will a different level apply? Perhaps more pertinent, it is important to impress on the Minister that the way in which nuclear power capacity is being forced on the industry is continuing to depress and prejudice the interests of alternative non-fossil fuel sources of electricity.

Will the Minister comment on reports that have appeared in the press over the past few days that the French believe they can meet the target that the Government have set of 600 MW of alternative non-fossil fuel sources from their hydro facilities? Understandably, the Government share my suspicions that that would be a way of offloading their extra nuclear capacity. When one switches on a light, it is difficult to know what system of generation has produced the power that results. This is an important issue and the Government could have set themselves a much higher standard than their 600 MW objective.

It remains a matter of concern to me—I repeat it only at its face value—that Scotland probably has the best potential of any part of the United Kingdom for developing substantial renewable energy. That is in no way to underplay what can be achieved in other parts of the United Kingdom, but, according to independent studies, our wind profile is better than that of Denmark and we therefore have the potential to secure a substantial amount of energy from wind power. The Norwegians are pressing ahead with wave power, and Scotland too has appropriate sites to develop that source of energy successfully. However, the chances of those alternative sources of energy being developed are much reduced by the fact that Scotland has massive extra capacity, most of it nuclear. That would seem to pre-empt significant amounts of investment in Scotland. I know that the Minister will say that certain things are happening—I am aware of them —but they are very small and I cannot see that significant commercial developments will result from them.

In any case, upgrading the interconnector is absolutely crucial if Scotland is to offload its capacity. That brings me to the crunch question for Scotland, to which I do not believe that the Government can give any answer. The method of calculating prices means that prices in Scotland will be based on the average rather than on Scotland's costs. The consequence of that will inevitably ensure that my constituents in the north of Scotland, who currently enjoy the lowest unit price of electricity in the country— and need to, given where they live—will find themselves rising rapidly up the scale of charges as a direct result of this privatisation.

On top of that, if the Scottish boards find difficulty contracting the sale of their nuclear-powered electricity, it seems that Scottish consumers, as well as Scottish shareholders, will be stuck with a capacity that they cannot sell and with a debt that they still have to service. The consequences could be disastrous for Scottish consumers. Whatever the perception of the Bill in England and Wales —and wherever one goes, the Bill is opposed by the majority of people—I have no doubt that the opposition to it in Scotland is more substantial, basically because in this legislation the Government are refusing to acknowledge the different structure, traditions and history of electricial generation in Scotland. The Government have lumped all the provisions into a global Bill with the consequence that Scottish interests—and the differences in the mix, the organisation and structure of the industry in Scotland— have not been taken into account.

That is why I have tabled amendments to take references to Scotland out of the provisions. I admit that they are probing amendments, but they are based on the premise that, as we reach the end of the Bill's passage through Parliament, it is apparent that it is bad news for the United Kingdom, but very bad news for Scotland. That probably means that it will be bad news for the Government in the polls in England, and very bad news for them in Scotland, but they have become used to that and perhaps after the next election there will be no Tory Members left in Scotland to bring back the reports of what happened.

However, that is as may be. My conclusions are simply that the non-fossil fuel levy and the safety issues are serious considerations, that the Lords amendments improve the Bill, and that it is regrettable that the Government are trying to reverse them.

**Mr. McCartney:** In our Committee discussions on nuclear safety, those of us who have been involved in local government and in the preparation of plans relating to the nuclear industry argued for a bipartisan policy on this matter. Irrespective of whether one is pro or anti-nuclear, or pro or anti-privatisation, one must agree that it is essential to the nation's security that we come up with an acceptable and workable set of proposals not only for on-site, but also for off-site emergency planning measures for nuclear installations.

*[Mr. McCartney]*

In Committee, in the Lords and again this evening, the tragedy has been the Government's unwillingness to accept a bipartisan approach to nuclear safety and to the development of off-site and on-site plans. In these privatisation proposals, the Government have missed a real opportunity to look at what has happened during the past decade between the nuclear industry and the emergency planning officers in local government, both at county level and at fire and civil authority level. All of us who have been involved in this issue over that period accept the need to resolve the inadequate relationship between planning officers and the nuclear industry as it currently stands.

8.15 pm

In Committee, the Minister went some way to accepting the need for a radical change in the current position in relation to on-site, but especially to off-site, emergency planning. He acknowledged that by saying that it was the Government's intention to bring forward proposals similar to those that are currently operating in industry for large-scale petrochemical plants and for other industrial processes that can cause difficulties and accidents. However, he did not go on to accept the current inadequacies of our off-site emergency planning procedures in terms of the ability of local authority emergency planning departments to sit down in consultation with the nuclear industry and with those in the community who live close to a nuclear plant and to come up with proposals to improve the existing position.

It is because of the inability and the lack of willingness on the part of the nuclear industry in the past decade to take local communities and emergency planning departments into its confidence that in the past few years local authorities and, through their professional bodies, the planning officers, have attempted to initiate new plans and proposals to upgrade and modernise off-site emergency planning activities. That has included a number of table top exercises, paid for by local authorities, which looked at the current position in the industry and the likely response from the local community in the event of varying scenarios of nuclear incidents.

Each time, the exercises showed the inadequacies of the development of off-site plans in all regions, whether in the north-west, the south-west, Scotland or anywhere else with a nuclear installation. All such table top exercises have shown up the glaring anomalies and the lack of accountability of the nuclear industry. They have also shown the lack of an adequate relationship between the industry and those responsible for the development of local off-site emergency plans.

Therefore, although the Minister will not accept any of the amendments that have been tabled and will attempt to eradicate those from another place, I hope that he will accept, irrespective of his personal views and his political animosity towards Opposition Members, that we should come to a bipartisan approach to off-site emergency planning.

In Committee, both I and my hon. Friend the Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams) spent a great deal of time over several days dealing with amendments and general discussions in clause stand part debates trying to set out a framework and structure for the type of amendments that would be required if there were to be any meaningful relationship and public accountability for off-site emergency planning or public involvement through emergency planning departments and officers.

Despite promptings from me and other hon. Members to come to see what was happening at local authority level, Ministers still insisted that the Government totally accepted the current position, and that there was no need for any major changes. However, that is flying against all international views on this and against the advice that is currently being given to the Government by the chief emergency planning officers and their professional bodies.

The Government are still refusing to amend their proposals on "reference accident"—although the International Atomic Energy Agency sees the reference accident scenario as inadequate under the current proposals. The reference accident is based on analyses of possible failures of components and systems, and fails to take into account that accidents that have happened overseas in the nuclear industry have not been because of a failure in the fail-safe component systems, but have been mainly through human error, especially those at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. The Government's proposals do not take account of on-site and emergency planning for such human errors and the accident that would flow from a major disaster involving the culpability of people working in installations.

Experience also shows that site operators fail to provide efficient on-site and off-site plans. It is therefore an absolute necessity that the Government proposals should bring about a system whereby the nuclear industry would sit down and work out in consultation with emergency planning departments a comprehensive plan for each nuclear installation, whether in the public or private sector. It is important, too, that we have a proper system of notification in the development of such plans to ensure the involvement of local communities and community organisations.

I shall quote from a recent report prepared by the chief emergency planning officers' professional body, which I believe the Minister has seen. Perhaps he will tell us tonight whether he is prepared to accept the report's recommendations. It states:

> "Nuclear installations should come under similar legislation to other industrial major hazard sites in that the operator should be required to engage County Authorities in producing the off-site plan for which the operator would pay. The operator would then have a duty to provide information to the public about the activities of the site and the appropriate counter measures to take in the event of an accident in response to an agreed warning system and the management of an off-site emergency plan would be in the hands of the Civil Authorities"

and not in the hands of a nuclear industry as it currently stands.

It is important, therefore, that the Minister does not simply reject the Lords amendment, or reject out of hand the Opposition's proposals, but that he comes up with a positive response to the genuine fears not just of politicians but of people in the community, community leaders and emergency planning officers, who have had experience of emergency procedures in, for example, the armed services, the Home Office and other Government Departments. None of them has been appointed because of a political allegiance to any particular party or policy on nuclear matters. They are appointed because of their experience and qualifications on emergency planning matters. When people with such experience and understanding of the situation tell the Government that the current position is inadequate, the Government should respond positively to their proposals.

In the recommendations for change, the Government should accept the abandonment of the reference accident as a basis for plans. They should accept an increase in the minimum emergency planning zone from 3 km to 10 km, two further planning zones of 25 km and 100 km, and an automated and extensive warning system should be established, coupled to a pre-arranged local radio station for the transmission of emergency information. There should be a legal requirement for county-level authorities to prepare and maintain composite off-site plans and for the site operator's role in the off-site emergency responses to be curtailed, and the responsibility for setting up the off-site operational support centres and implementing counter-measures should pass ultimately to the police.

We require the development of a mutual aid agreement between adjacent counties, because we have seen in Three Mile Island and in Chernobyl that accidents are not just contained within a region or a sub-region, but can cover the globe and create a European scenario or, in the United States, affect a whole state. It is important, therefore, that off-site emergency plans are not just developed for the immediate hinterland around an installation, but are co-ordinated regionally and ultimately at a national level. That must mean the creation of a national disaster unit, which would co-ordinate emergency responses at a national level. There would be an emergency planning inspectorate to evaluate all areas of emergency planning and to possess the power to withhold site licences for those operators whose off-site plans are not of the required standard.

Those are the minimum requirements and they are well within the grasp of the Government if they are prepared to take a non-party political view and to accept that the priority should not be to ensure that the industry is sweetened up for privatisation by downgrading and keeping to a minimum the basic measures needed for emergency planning. That is in the interests of no one, and especially is not in the interests of the industry.

One of the problems that has bedevilled the nuclear industry over the past decade, and still continues to do so, is people's unwillingness to accept the industry's assurances about its safety record. One thing that the industry could do to help itself, and that the Government could do to help the industry if they are interested in promoting nuclear power, is to give the public and the bodies that represent the public the opportunity to have a real say in the development of off-site emergency plans. Unless the Government give such a commitment and the resources to do it, there will still be public scepticism and fear about the nature of the emergency plans, their adequacy and who would control them if there was an accident.

I hope that the Minister will for once be positive in this matter and accept that the Opposition have some good ideas and some common-sense views about the development of such plans. Perhaps, if there was some co-operation between us, the fears that many people have about the nuclear industry and of a nuclear accident would, while not being completely ameliorated, be calmed, and for once, during the lifetime of the nuclear industry, the general public and local authorities would be involved in a real sense in the development of emergency plans, and their structure and criteria would be established in an effective and efficient manner.

**Mr. Alan W. Williams:** I address my comments to Lords amendment No. 21, which is a simple one. It gives the Secretary of State the power to take over a nuclear power station on grounds of safety whenever there might be a serious incident. In nuclear power, accidents do happen. There was a time when the nuclear industry used to claim that there were so many fail-safe systems that a serious accident could never happen—it was, for example, one every 1,000 million reactor years.

Then, in 1979, came the accident at Three Mile Island, when a pressurised water reactor came to within one hour of meltdown and, in 1986, there was Chernobyl, when a reactor went completely out of control. It burned furiously for two weeks or more and spilled out 5 per cent. of its radioactive content. That led to the evacuation of almost 100,000 people and the declaration of a zone 30 km around the reactor as uninhabitable. I read recently that more villages have just been evacuated in that area. The fallout went north of Chernobyl, and it is clear now that the soil and the food that is grown there are contaminated. They have therefore had to evacuate a further 25 villages.

Now, post-Chernobyl, they are finding deformities in animals, an increase in ill-health, thyroid problems among children and a doubling in the incidents of cancers to the lip and mouth. That shows that, when there is a major nuclear accident at a reactor, it can be disastrous. The cost of Chernobyl was conservatively estimated at £5 billion. The Government have argued that such accidents could not occur with our reactors, but that is transparent nonsense, as our reactors could fail just as disastrously.

I am pleased that, as a result of the statement, the Government have decided not to privatise the Magnox power stations, because those reactors are clapped out and, at any time, one of them could fail disastrously. I wish that the Government were not going to privatise the AGRs, PWRs or any other part of the electricity industry. At the Hinkley inquiry, the CEGB has now conceded that the newly designed PWRs could suffer a meltdown. It would be in such circumstances that we want the Secretary of State to have the power to take over a nuclear power station.

8.30 pm

I am aware that clause 92 gives the Secretary of State some power to give directions for the purpose of

"preserving the security of buildings".

That wording is extremely vague. The Minister spoke about the nuclear installations inspectorate and its powers. We are well aware of those powers, but the NII is incredibly under-staffed, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) has already drawn attention. It is a national scandal that the NII, in common with all anti-pollution inspectorates, is under-staffed. If a serious accident on the scale of Three Mile Island or Chernobyl were to occur, the NII would have insufficient powers to rescue us.

The public are genuinely worried about nuclear safety; perhaps that is the No. 1 reason why the public are so anti-nuclear. That concern is already felt about an industry that is in public control, but once that industry passes into private hands that concern will grow. There will be great

*[Mr. Alan W. Williams]*

concern about privatised PWRs that will be able to produce 1,000 MW or 1,200 MW, the largest capacity in the world.

The new clause proposed in Lords amendment No. 21 would give the Secretary of State a reserve power, which we hope that he would never have to exercise. If there were a major incident, the Secretary of State, as the public would want, could take over a nuclear installation. It is a long-stop amendment, as we hope that that power would never be needed.

If there was a major incident, chaos and confusion would reign. That is what happened at Chernobyl and that was our Government's reaction to that accident. The Lords amendment would give the Government the power to intervene and to tell the people that it was their responsibility to take over a particular installation rather than to act as passive bystanders.

The Government should accept the sensible amendment, as it would give the Secretary of State an absolute right to take over a nuclear installation in the interests of public safety.

**Mr. Kevin Barron** (Rother Valley): My hon. Friends the Members for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) and for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams) have made good contributions and, although their comments may have been somewhat wide of the amendment, the Government should take on board what they have said about emergency planning.

My hon. Friend the Member for Carmarthen was right to say that Lords amendment No. 21 is a long-stop amendment for the Secretary of State. We all hope that he would never have to use the power, but as the other place said, that power is a response to the fears that have been expressed by many of our constituents about nuclear power. More important, it reflects the fears held by many about the nuclear power industry being transferred to the private sector, especially as the private sector has not had a brilliant record in many sectors.

It may be argued that the Secretary of State has control over institutions such as the NII and that, therefore, there is no need for the Government to accept the amendment, despite its inoffensiveness. My hon. Friends have already demonstrated, however, that the NII is currently under-staffed. Until that is put right to the satisfaction of the inspectorate and everyone else, no one can be too happy.

The Minister said that amendment No. 28 and the other amendments in relation to the non-fossil-fuel levy were technical amendments. That is probably right as those amendments take up two and a half pages to amend two pages of the Bill covering clauses 32 and 33. Technical amendments of such length have been introduced on Report on all manner of Bills; they are symptomatic of this Bill and of the Government. Somewhere deep-seated in No. 10 we have a policy unit that devises schemes to move things out of the public sector into the private sector. The maxim is: public sector bad; private sector good.

Here we have two and a half pages of amendments to cover just three pages of the Bill that we discussed in December on Second Reading. Those two and a half pages relate to perhaps the most dogmatic part of the Bill, the Government's action to ring-fence the nuclear electricity industry as opposed to any other part of it. That action distorts the competition in the Bill, the very competition that we are told is the main reason for the Government to privatise the electricity supply industry.

Today, we have heard the bugles of retreat sound in relation to some of that ring-fencing as the Magnox stations will no longer be part of the private sector, because they are unsustainable. It appears that, although everyone else failed to convince the Government of that, the sounds from the City in the past few days did so.

It is ironic that the only good thing to come out of clause 32 and the ring-fencing is that the Government have given a slight commitment to sources of renewable energy, something that has been largely forgotten for the past 10 years. It now appears that sources of renewable energy may be given a lifeline because of the non-fossil-fuel obligation to which suppliers will be bound.

Hon. Members on both sides of the Chamber argued that combined heat and power should also be considered in relation to renewable sources of energy. That request was rejected in our earlier discussion of the Lords amendments. It was sad that, during the course of those very debates, the combined heat and power scheme put together by Leicester city council and a private consortium collapsed. It was intended that that scheme would lead the way in combined heat and power, but it collapsed because it was not allowed access to the grid. It believed that the East Midlands electricity board was operating its old cartel to keep out small and new producers.

Although we shall not divide the House on the non-fossil fuel levy, we should take this last chance to remind people who are reading our debates and who look with interest to the outcome of electricity privatisation how distorted the Bill is from beginning to end. The non-fossil fuel levy and the events of the past few hours in the Chamber have shown this legislation to be nothing more than an ideological attack on the public sector. It has been ill-thought out and in years to come we shall find that it will make electricity, which was once easy to come by, more difficult to get hold of and more expensive when it arrives.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** With the leave of the House, I wish to answer one or two of the questions that have been asked.

The hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) asked whether leaving Magnox stations in the public sector would affect the safety regime; the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams) asked the same question. The structure of the industry has no bearing on the safety regime, which will be controlled by legislation that is already on the statute book. The operator is responsible for safety, under the command and control structure of the nuclear installations inspectorate.

In this context, the hon. Member for Cardiff, West perfectly properly asked—as did the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron)—whether NII staffing would be adequate for the future of the industry. NII staff numbers have been significantly increased lately. We entirely agree that the inspectorate's staffing must be adequate, and I assure the House that it will be adequate to meet the NII's responsibilities.

There were 120 inspectors at 1 April 1988, and the inspectorate has the authority to increase their number by 33 per cent., to 160 inspectors, by 1 April 1990. We shall discuss all aspects of the new arrangements, including staffing requirements, with the NII to ensure that high standards are maintained in the industry. We agree with the Opposition about that and I hope that they are reassured by what I have said.

**Mr. Morgan:** Considering the new questions that now face the NII when determining, almost on a six-monthly basis, whether this or that Magnox station can safely continue operating, and, if so, what work must be done on it before it can be approved, is the increase of 40 in the approved establishment, for which the Government say they are willing to pay, what the NII has asked for to meet its responsibilities, which have been increased by the changed circumstances of the industry; or is that some lower figure?

**Mr. Spicer:** There is no change as regards safety. The Magnoxes are reaching the end of their working lives. Questions of safety relating to those stations arise under present structures, which have not changed. The resources will be provided so that the NII can carry out its statutory responsibilities.

There may be some qualification in this context: the NII cannot ask for excessive resources, but, like the Opposition, we want to ensure that the industry continues to be as safe in the future as it has been in the past. The NII is the instrument to achieve that, so it stands to reason that it must have adequate resources. We are at one with the Opposition on that.

The hon. Members for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) and for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) asked about emergency procedures which, as they acknowledged, we discussed at some length in Committee. Matters have moved on, to the extent that it was recently announced that new health and safety regulations are to be made under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The regulations will place a formal requirement on local authorities to prepare integrated off-site plans for nuclear installations similar to those in the control of industrial major accident hazard regulations—the CIMAH regulations—which now cover the chemical industry. That would put on a statutory footing arrangements for emergency procedures which already exist. I hope that that announcement answers the arguments advanced by the hon. Member for Makerfield and by other hon. Members.

The hon. Member for Gordon raised one or two points about Scotland—most pertinently, about the non-fossil fuel obligation. The reason why that obligation does not exist in Scotland is the high level of non-fossil fuel generating capacity there. That capacity makes the obligation unnecessary for the foreseeable future.

The hon. Member for Gordon went on to ask whether there would be some form of average pricing arrangements which would not put the same sort of commercial pressures—in the best sense of the word—on the industry in Scotland as are to be found elsewhere. The Nuclear Company in Scotland will be subject to regulation, and specifically subject to the need for transparent accounts and dealings. The regulator will be able to take a firm and direct view of whether the efficiency that he requires is present in the system.

The hon. Member for Gordon also asked about renewables and about the non-fossil fuel obligation applying to France. He was right to say that we have set a special tranche of 600 MW for renewables, although they can also compete within the general non-fossil fuel obligation. To some extent, that is a movable feast, capable of revision in the future. Should there be a massive under-provision for renewable capacity—in the context of the obligation for renewables—it would be open to the Government of the day to increase that tranche. That has been allowed for. So there is nothing final about this; the tranche, at 600 MW, looks about right in terms of a special arrangement within the overall NFFO for renewables.

In the light of those remarks, I hope that the House will feel able to agree with us and to move on to the next debate.

*Question put,* That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 291, Noes 190.

**Division 318]** **[8.48 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter

Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alan Howarth and
Mr. David Maclean.

## NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom

Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 81 to 89 disagreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 28 to 50, 78 and 79 agreed to.*

## Clause 1

### THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

*Lords amendment:* No. 1, in page 1, line 11, at end insert "in a manner that protects consumers of electricity without discrimination".

9 pm

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I beg to move, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendment No. 8, and Lords amendments Nos. 23 and 24, with the Government motions to disagree.

**Mr. Spicer:** Lords amendment No. 1 requires the director to protect consumers without discrimination. This would apply irrespective of who was actually supplying any particular consumer. If this amendment were agreed the director would have no option but to ensure that all licensed suppliers dealt with their customers on exactly the same basis in all respects.

In terms of prices, there could be no differentiation on the basis of the different and disparate requirements and characteristics of the customers and customer groups—industrial, commercial and domestic customers would have to be treated identically under the terms of the amendment. Nor could there be any scope for individual contracts since the terms of these could not be allowed to differ from what was offered to all other customers. The prices charged for electricity would have to be the same for a factory and a flat.

The requirement does not stop with prices. There could be no special protection for groups such as the elderly and the disabled. Nor could there be any aid for those who have difficulty in paying their bills. This would clearly be discriminatory against those who are not elderly or who had paid their bills on time.

In short, this is a wrecking amendment that attacks the central theme of the Bill by preventing the scope for competition in the supply of electricity and by doing so, rather than protecting the interests of consumers as it purports to do, it damages them by withholding the benefits of reduced costs and hence prices which would flow from competition.

It may be that the proponents of the amendment did not intend these effects but were concerned to ensure that there can be no unjustified discrimination between customers by suppliers. From this point of view, the amendment is unnecessary because, under clause 3, the director and the Secretary of State are already required to exercise their functions so as to protect the interests of all consumers of electricity in respect of prices. There are, in addition, provisions in clause 18 and in the public electricity supply licence preventing the public electricity suppliers from exercising undue preference or undue discrimination. These guarantee that the customer will always be able to get supplies at a fair price and will not be required to subsidise lower prices to others.

**Mr. James Wallace** (Orkney and Shetland): One of the concerns in remoter rural areas is the high cost of supplying electricity. Quotes of £60,000 have been mentioned. Clause 19 says that expenditure on supply will be recovered from

"the person requiring the supply . . . to such extent as is reasonable in all the circumstances."

Will the Minister explain or confirm that "all the circumstances" includes the means of the person who is seeking the supply of electricity?

**Mr. Spicer:** It certainly would not under the terms of the amendment. I have explained that no class of consumer could be the subject of discrimination—for or against. A fair, proper and reasonable price will be one that reflects directly the cost of providing a service. There are ways in which those who cannot pay are assisted, such as the the pre-payment system. There are other methods through social security legislation in which direct assistance is given.

Will a policy of non-discrimination in a new and competitive environment be in the interests of the rural customers whose interests the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) has at heart? I understand that he is making a case for his poor rural constituents. If there is competition and the area companies are not able properly to compete in areas where there is intense competition, with the result that they lose customers in those areas, as in many instances they will have the same overheads they may have to increase prices for their remaining rural customers. That is something which seems to have eluded some of those who are arguing against competitive prices within their areas.

In saying that there will be the ability to charge prices to meet competition, we are talking about a downward pressure on prices. If that ability is denied, everyone, including rural consumers, will be the losers in the end within area boards.

We aim to ensure by the provisions in the Bill—I think that we wish to achieve the same result as the hon. Gentleman—that costs are a consideration. There cannot be cross-subsidisation when cost structures are not reflected in prices. We are trying to ensure also that area boards have the ability to compete for customers. In the process of competition, prices will fall.

**Mr. Beith:** On the basis of the Minister's argument, is he saying that there will be no effective competition in the area of the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board? How else can he defend the fact that there will be a common tariff in that area and not in others?

**Mr. Spicer:** I am sure that the hon. Gentleman was present in Committee when we debated that. It has been thought that the structure of the industry and the dispersal of the population in the north of Scotland are such that special conditions apply that do not apply in the rest of the country. The hon. Gentleman is as aware of the argument as I am. He may or may not agree with it but it is there and it is the argument that has won the day for giving the north of Scotland special treatment.

The Government believe that Lords amendments Nos. 23 and 24 do not make sense. On the one hand, they would allow the supplier to show due preference in setting tariffs, but on the other they would prevent him from showing any discrimination. In particular, the supplier will not be allowed to show discrimination to rural customers. As no discrimination is to be shown to anyone, it is difficult to see what additional protection could be offered to any particular group. It is clear that any preference to any customer or group of customers must introduce a degree of discrimination. If there is no discrimination there can be no preference, due or undue.

Load management is a major part of any electricity supplier's planning to optimise operations and to reduce costs. If by offering particular terms a supplier can persuade customers to accept limitations on their supply, or to use power in such a way as to help improve load management, that will be of benefit to all customers. That applies equally to the domestic consumer using the economy 7 tariff as to an industrial customer who has agreed load shedding arrangements to have effect at short notice. The amendments would prevent that happening.

We understand that all the amendments are motivated by the objective and desire to ensure in future that due regard is paid to, and adequate protection provided for, rural customers. That is shown most clearly in amendment No. 8 to clause 3. We sympathise with that motivation. The clause already requires the director general and the Secretary of State to exercise their functions to protect the interests of all consumers in regard to prices. Nevertheless, we accept that the amendment will reinforce the requirement in respect of rural consumers. No doubt it would serve to draw to the attention of the Secretary of State and the director general the particular needs of rural consumers. In view of that, we invite the House to accept amendment No. 8.

**Mr. Alan Williams:** I wish to speak to Lords amendment No. 1 and the consequential amendments Nos. 23 and 24. As the Minister has pointed out, those amendments are about rural prices and the fears of constituents in rural areas that as a consequence of the Bill they may pay more for their electricity than urban consumers.

One can understand why the costs of distribution are greater in rural areas. Simply reading the meter is more expensive and the length of transmission lines means that the distribution costs are higher. If the privatised distribution companies started imposing economic costs on rural consumers, it could mean substantially increased charges. About 80 per cent. of the cost of electricity is for generation, and distribution accounts for only about 20 per cent. Nevertheless, if the price of electricity is about 6p per unit, in towns and big cities the cost including distribution may be only 5p. Therefore, those areas may be helped. In rural towns the cost of electricity would be 7p or 8p per unit and in rural villages it would be more like 10p. For individual farmsteads or remote cottages the cost may be 15p or 20p per unit. That sort of price structure could emerge if we applied rigorous economic costing. It would hit our rural areas and farmers badly. There are many poor people in rural areas and rural poverty is sometimes as extreme as inner city poverty.

In Committee the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) pointed out forcefully that people do not realise that this provision is in the Bill. If people in rural areas realised that that was the case there would be outrage. There would be no end of complaints from our constituents and the postbags of Members representing rural areas would be full. Conservative Members would perhaps suffer disproportionately.

In Committee the Government's reply to our argument was that the provision for differential pricing already exists and that our present electricity boards could, if they chose, charge rural consumers more than urban consumers. Under the present structure the industry is in the public sector so there is public accountability. Once it is privatised, the threat of differential pricing would be much greater.

One of the local authorities in my constituency, independently of my work on the Bill, realised that that could be a consequence of the Bill. Dynevor borough council wrote to the Department of Energy expressing its concern. The reply, dated 19 June, stated:

> "The Bill makes it clear that tariffs may relate to different areas."

It is obvious that differential pricing is possible. The letter also said that the area boards

> "have given an assurance that they expect to maintain common tariffs for domestic consumers for five years from privatisation."

That gives a period of grace of five years. The letter then offers the reassurance that, after that time, should the private companies

> "choose to introduce differential tariffs, the licence also requires that any difference in the price offered to different tariff consumers would only be permitted so far as it reasonably reflected differences in the costs associated with the supply."

I represent a constituency second only in size to Brecon and Radnor, and we fear that the remote areas will be adversely affected. Prices will be higher in rural villages in general and could even be doubled or trebled in remote areas.

9.15 pm

The principle of differential pricing is unjustifiable. I speak on behalf of the rural dwellers who already suffer from inadequate services, such as a lack of buses, and who have to face extra costs for rural transport. It is generally accepted that, for most services, urban areas should subsidise rural areas. For example, postal, telephone, gas and water services all operate under standard pricing. The Water Bill, which has paralleled the Electricity Bill, contains a clause that specifically rules out differential pricing.

I hope that the Government will accept the sensible Lords amendments, which would ensure that electricity pricing protects consumers without discrimination.

**Mr. Beith:** Despite the Government seeking refuge through technical objections to the wording of the amendments, their purpose is quite clear. They are about whether the new companies should be allowed to charge more to rural customers than to urban customers. The Minister failed to deal with that issue. The technical defects of the amendments are obvious, but the Government could have tabled amendments to put the objectives of the Lords amendments in the correct form, as they have with other amendments.

The Government have abandoned the case for those who live in the countryside. Should the private companies be allowed to charge their rural customers more than their town customers? The Government answer that crucial question with two voices. For the north of Scotland, the answer is "No"—by statute, there can be no discrimination between urban and rural customers in any part of the hydro board's area. However, in the south of Scotland, in the whole of England and in Wales, discrimination will be allowed between different parts of each area. There is no sense in adopting two such contradictory positions.

The Minister was in some difficulty when trying logically to respond to my intervention. He said that there were special circumstances and difficulties in different areas. Remoteness is remoteness, wherever it is. It is rather less remote on the outskirts of Inverness in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) than it is at the top of the Cheviots in my constituency, where the privatised company will be allowed to charge different tariffs.

My hon. Friend the Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace), who is present, put it to the Minister at an earlier stage that it would be perfectly practicable to extend the common tariff from the north of Scotland to all areas, thereby confirming the practice of the existing electricity boards. The Minister replied:

"I did not say that there was no way in which we could do it. I said that there is no way in which we would want to do it."—*[Official Report,* 6 April 1989; Vol. 150, c.400.]

Conservative Members must realise that the Government have no desire to protect rural consumers from tariffs that discriminate against them, which is a ludicrous position to adopt.

The Government's only other defence is that the chairmen designate of the electricity companies that do not yet exist have said that for five years they will maintain common tariffs. That statement is not enforceable in the courts and is without authority. It is, by their own definition, a transitional arrangement, at the end of which the companies may launch a programme of higher charges to rural consumers.

Any right hon. or hon. Member who doubts that possibility should consider the case of British Gas. Only two weeks ago, British Gas warned that it will introduce variable tariffs for domestic consumers in different regions if a price war develops with privatised electricity distribution companies. The new chairman of British Gas warned that he would have to meet the competition

"to hold the load",

which means that consumers in some areas might enjoy price reductions, but that there would be compensatory increases in others. That will happen also in the privatised electricity industry beyond the north of Scotland area, unless the Government accept the Lords amendment or make comparable provision. The Government expect it to be that way and even want it to be that way. I doubt whether many Conservative Members who normally sit on the Back Benches but who are not present tonight realise that they voted for such an arrangement.

The concept of higher charging will take one of two forms, or both. The electricity companies may pick out some of the smallest communities that are the most expensive to serve and penalise them, or they may operate adverse tariffs over a wider area, against larger sections of the rural community. I take the example of a small area, Holy Island, in my constituency. It is served by a special cable, and when the south of Scotland electricity company is established, it would be open to it to impose a higher tariff.

The same could apply to a comparable area, the Isles of Scilly, but for one factor—the Prime Minister's bête noire of Europe. The Isles of Scilly laid a new cable so that they could be served by mains electricity, which is cheaper than the high-cost, locally-generated electricity that they used before. However, the European regional development fund made it a condition of the grant that made that scheme possible that for the life of that cable—a period of 40 or 50 years—the Isles of Scilly would be charged only the same tariff as that imposed on the board's other areas.

The hon. Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris), who is also present, was involved in that process and will know of that decision. He must appreciate that only his constituents in the Isles of Scilly are protected, but others of his rural constituents could be charged higher tariffs. The company may say, "We shall have to look after the consumers on the Isles of Scilly because of the terms of the ERDF grant, but we can put up the prices in other parts of the St. Ives constituency as we can do, in Cornwall, Northumberland in mid-Wales."

The electricity companies' alternative approach could be to operate a higher price structure outside the major urban areas, where they would want to compete more aggressively. Higher tariffs would apply not just to one or two remote rural communities but across a broad band of rural areas outside the major conurbations. Either way, a penalty will be exacted from rural consumers who have no choice of other fuel and who are the victims of the monopolistic character of energy supply.

In most cases, rural customers will not have access to gas, which is why the electricity companies will be able to milk them for higher tariffs. The only alternatives for consumers are Calor gas and oil, and they will not have access to the major competitor to electicity—gas—that will be the cause of such price wars as arise in urban communities. Consumers who are unable to make the switch to another fuel, and to benefit from the competition between those other fuels and electricity, will be penalised.

Farming, the small business sector, tourism and all the other activities on which rural communities depend will face higher electricity charges. And the small industries which have been developed in rural areas and which are the cornerstone of any strategy for rural Britain will be among those most adversely affected by higher tariff differentials. That has been been recognised by the National Farmers Union, which has written to hon. Members protesting vehemently at the possibility of differential tariffs against rural areas. The electricity consultative council for the south of Scotland area has written in similar terms, saying:

"Our concern relates particularly to rural electricity consumers whether Domestic, Commercial or Industrial, in the South of Scotland who may be involved in higher

*[Mr. Beith]*

electricity charges resulting, for example, from additional expenditure on refurbishing transmission or distribution systems which are subject to more severe weather conditions than those in urban areas. It is the view of the Council that remote rural areas in the South of Scotland require no less protection than what is proposed for the North of Scotland area and there should be no possibility of discrimination between tariffs for the same class of consumer living in different areas of the South of Scotland."

Incidentally, the same applies to consumers of the South of Scotland board who live in my constituency in England, because they also will be served by the company that replaces it. The same will apply throughout England and Wales.

The other place did an excellent job when it defeated the Government on this part of the Bill. The Government, in their reference to and discussion of the amendments before us tonight, have simply taken refuge in technicalities and referred to the one amendment which would give the director general an obligation to take into account the needs of consumers in rural areas. That amendment alone would impose no obligation on the companies not to discriminate against rural areas. It is not sufficiently strong to protect the rural consumer from adverse tariffs which may already be planned for them by some of the people who will run those companies.

In the absence of anything better, I ask the House to stand by the judgment of the other place. There are a great many people in the other place who know a great deal more about the countryside than most members of the Government and most of the people who devised the Bill. The Government's defeat in the other place was the result of a recognition of rural problems, which is still not apparent in the actions of Ministers.

The Government still have time tonight to accept more of the Lords amendments and not seek to overturn them. I believe that the Government's attitude is a slap in the face for country dwellers throughout England, Wales and the south of Scotland. The House should not allow them to do it.

**Mr. Hardy:** I agree emphatically with the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), and I underline the powerful arguments advanced by my hon. Friend the Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams), who represents a large rural constituency.

The Minister should understand that some Labour Members represent county seats in England. My constituency is a county seat because I argued at the Boundary Commission hearing that it should be. Even in my constituency, which is in a metropolitan area, I have small settlements and cottages here and there, off the beaten track, and I am extremely worried about the people who live there. After the five-year transition period—the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed reminded the House that there is no guarantee that we will have to wait until the five years is over—there could be serious developments. When people want to make a profit out of the electricity supply industry, those who live some distance away from a conurbation will be at risk.

I am surprised that the Government have decided to treat the other place with contempt. As the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed said, the noble Lords who took part in that debate know what they are talking about. They understand the anxieties in rural and not-so-rural areas of Britain.

The Minister should have taken the time to watch television this weekend. They were burning an effigy of one of his right hon. Friends.

**Mr. James Hill** (Southampton, Test): Hear, hear.

**Mr. Hardy:** I felt sorry for the Minister concerned, whose effigy was burnt in one of Britain's most true-blue areas. The hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill) is not paying much attention, but it happened not far from his constituency. I had not expected to read that Conservative Ministers' effigies had been burnt in counties such as Hampshire, but it happened, and with good reason. The people responsible know that their areas are not being served well by an Administration who have hitherto pretended to care about rural Britain.

9.30 pm

Only a week or two ago, I took part in a debate in the House about a problem related to this—the housing problem. In huge parts of rural Britain, the cost of housing is now such that people who were born in a certain village, perhaps descended from generations of forebears who have lived there, can no longer afford to live there themselves. Now, even if they can afford the rent, they will not be able to afford the fuel. The Government are disregarding the yeomen to look after the yuppies, and the Bill is an example of their shifting priorities.

I am worried about people living in such places as Lea Brook and Street in the parish of Wentworth, from which my constituency takes its name. I am also worried about slightly larger communities such as Hooton Roberts, which has 80 or 90 electors. I am worried about communities a little larger than that as well. As the squeeze for profit develops in the electricity supply industry, the community at risk may become larger and larger. The industry will certainly be eager to supply London; I do not know whether it will be eager to supply Wentworth, and I certainly do not think that in five years' time the people of Wentworth—the village and perhaps the constituency—should feel entirely confident that they will pay no more than those living in Sheffield, Manchester, Birmingham or London.

If the Government begin to panic—there seems to be a good deal of panic in the air at present—to make sure that the people of Hampshire will not continue to burn effigies, they may decide to make electricity cheaper in the south than in the north. It is all very well for the hon. Member for Test to welcome such a prospect; I heard him shout, "Hear, hear," when I suggested that there was a serious risk. The fact remains that we have been subsidising the south of England for a long time in any case, because we have been bearing the cost of loss of transmission.

**Mr. Morgan:** Seven per cent.

**Mr. Hardy:** My hon. Friend is right.

Because it is a national service, we have been prepared to accept the burden, but now that we see the real risk —as a result of all the effigies being burnt all over the south of England—we are entitled to be a little worried, fearing that additional burdens may be imposed on us. I hope that the Minister will reassure us, first, that the boards will be told emphatically that the five-year transition period constitutes a pledge that will not be broken, and, secondly, that the electricity supply industry will be asked as a matter of urgency to ensure that that period is extended to at least 10 years—long enough, at any rate, to cover the political life of every Conservative Member.

Thirdly, we should like an assurance that the Government are beginning to understand that the rural areas already face serious problems—problems of access, cost, housing and transport. Some of the older inhabitants of such areas may rapidly develop an inclination to take up witchcraft; the Secretary of State may wish to ponder the fact that, before long, the broomstick may be the only viable form of transport in some parts of Britain hitherto regarded as salubrious.

I recognise that the Government face serious problems in relation to country dwellers. More farmers are going bankrupt in this year of grace, under this Administration, than ever before.

The Government must recognise that the priorities that the other place embraced a few weeks ago have more political wisdom than the criticism that the Minister offered on the amendments when he said that they were wrecking amendments. I wish they were. Above all, I should like the Government to recognise that they may be wrecking but they are wise, and it would be wise of the Government to accept them.

**Mr. Wallace:** I had not intended taking part in the debate, because my hon. Friend the Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) argued cogently and effectively the reasons why the House should agree with the amendment proposed by the other place to protect the interests of rural consumers. However, the Minister's response to my intervention was so unsatisfactory that it is necessary for me to put some points on the record and to seek a further response from him.

I welcome the fact that a special provision on common tariffs has been made for the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board area. This has been granted by the Government because they no longer see fit to include in the legislation a clause imposing a statutory duty on the company supplying electricity to the Highlands and Islands to take account of social and economic factors affecting that area. I accept that that makes this area different from others, but my hon. Friend the Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed and other hon. Members argued compellingly that rural consumers and those in other areas should be treated equally. I ask the Minister to consider their argument.

Even the special treatment given to the hydro board falls short because of the cost of connection for new consumers of that board. Lords amendment No. 8 provides some protection for consumers in my constituency and elsewhere who face high connection costs. In my intervention and on Report, I instanced the case of a constituent who had been faced with a bill of over £60,000 for connection. He lives in an area which, for historical and archaeological reasons, is designated a conservation area, so the wires and lines must be placed underground, adding to the cost. On Report, the hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) instanced other cases of consumers who were asked to pay £60,000. Since then, one of my constituents from the island of Stronsay has told me of a bill of more than £13,000. By no stretch of the imagination can people on modest incomes and pensioners readily find such amounts. In reply to my intervention, the Minister said that other means of help would be available. When pressed, he mumbled something about social security assistance. I do not think that he intended that to be a full answer.

I took up with the Minister of State, Scottish Office the case of my constituent with the £60,000 bill, and the hon. Gentleman took some time to reply. I do not complain about that, because the time was undoubtedly spent by him and his officials in trying to find what assistance might be available. The best that they could come up with was a £600 grant and £600 loan from the Crofters Commission. That is inadequate. It can be argued that this is an inadequacy of the present system, but there is nothing in the Bill to give consumers in the north of Scotland and elsewhere any confidence that under the new system connection charges will be reasonable and within the scope of most ordinary people.

I found one ray of hope, which I hope that the Minister will consider. Clause 19 (1) refers to the power to recover expenditure and states:

> "Where any electric line or electrical plant is provided by a public electricity supplier in pursuance of section 16(1) above, the supplier may require any expenses reasonably incurred in providing it to be defrayed by the person requiring the supply of electricity to such extent as is reasonable in all the circumstances."

The implication of "to such extent" is that the whole amount does not necessarily have to be recovered from the consumer. I should like to elicit from the Minister the circumstances in which he would consider it unreasonable for the cost to be defrayed by the consumer. Will the Minister consider that seriously? The present prices are prohibitive. Many people cannot afford to be connected to the mains electricity supply. They cannot benefit from facilities such as off-peak heating, and have to depend on generators, which can be unsatisfactory.

Undoubtedly, the Minister will ask the House to vote against Lords amendment No. 8, which would provide the only protection for rural consumers. In his reply, will he give some hope to those faced with substantial bills for connection charges?

**Mr. Morgan:** It falls to me to make the last contribution from the Opposition on this amendment. It is an old principle of Damon Runyon's New York that, "The opera ain't over until the fat lady sings." I say that without disrespect to the Prime Minister.

It is clear from the debate that the Government's treatment of shareholders and consumers is different. By rejecting Lords amendment No. 1, the Government are saying that they cannot discriminate in favour of any group of consumers, yet they made it clear earlier that they would do anything to discriminate in favour of shareholders. That is the problem and that is why the Bill will redound to the Government's disadvantage at the next general election.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The amendments highlight a difference between the philosophies of the Government and the Opposition parties. Either one agrees that competition will benefit the consumer and will put a downward pressure on prices or one does not.

**Mr. Beith:** What about the northern board?

**Mr. Spicer:** I have answered the hon. Gentleman about the northern board. It has been decided that it merits special treatment.

*[Mr. Spicer]*

If one accepts that competition between the area boards will bring benefits to consumers—who can contract elsewhere for their electricity—it stands to reason that they should be able to charge prices to combat the effect of that competition. So long as the prices bear a relationship to cost, that will have the effect of bringing prices down in urban areas. We have talked about deprivation in rural areas, and in other circumstances the Opposition would talk about deprivation in urban areas, too. There will be a general downward pressure.

I must answer the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) about the policy of common tariffs. I assure him that the period will be five years. Thereafter, the policy of allowing the area boards to charge prices which relate to costs and allow them to compete will apply. That will be to everyone's benefit, because prices will come down. *[Interruption.]* No. I gave the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) the answer, that the converse is possible. If we allow cherry-picking—where the best customer areas are taken away—the area boards will be left with rural customers and much the same overheads. The effect of that on rural customers would be increased prices. There would be a narrower customer base associated with much the same overheads. That would be bad for rural customers.

I accept that there is a philosophical difference. We believe that competition will be in the direct interest of consumers. It will place a downward pressure on prices which will be a good thing for rural, as well as for urban, customers.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) assumed that the Government would invite the House to reject Lords amendment No. 8. In fact, we suggest that the House should accept that amendment. That is an important concession to the hon. Gentleman's argument and to the argument made in another place. In direct answer to the proposition made in respect of the regulator, I remind the hon. Gentleman that that amendment will require the regulator in carrying out his duties to take into account the interests of rural customers. That enormous concession on the Government's part directly meets some of the anxieties that have recently been expressed.

I hope that hon. Members will think again on the basis of that major concession, although I agree that it does not completely meet the philosophical argument voiced by Opposition Members about competition, because the Government believe in competition, and competition runs right through the Bill.

I do not wish to be presumptuous, but this may be the last occasion on which I shall have the honour of addressing the House on this matter, and it gives me great pleasure to reiterate the importance of competition. The abolition of the common tariff assumption is fundamental to our restructuring of the industry. We believe that that is fundamentally good and in the interests of consumers.

I ask the House to reject the Lords amendments with the exception of Lords amendment No. 8.

*Question put,* That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 291, Noes 194.

**Division No. 319]** **[9.46 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David

Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas

Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle and
Mr. Tom Sackville.

### NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary

Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin

Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John

Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack

Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Allen McKay.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendment No. 8 agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 23 and 24 disagreed to.*

Committee appointed to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to their amendments Nos. 1, 21, 23, 24 and 81 to 89: Mr. Kevin Barron, Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory, Mr. Ian Lang, Mr. John Maxton and Mr. Michael Spicer. Three to be the quorum —*[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory.]*

*To withdraw immediately.*

*Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Lords amendments reported, and agreed to: to be communicated to the Lords.*

# PETITIONS

## East London Assessment Studies

10.2 pm

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): I wish to present a petition on behalf of my constituents and those of my hon. Friends the Members for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith), for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms. Abbott), and for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), and of those in neighbouring constituencies. I am constrained by the rules of the House in not being able to read out all 24 petitions. They relate to the east London assessment studies, which have among their proposals the driving of a major road through north and east London. There are also separate petitions protesting about the construction of an Archway motorway through the constituency of Hornsey and Wood Green and extending into my constitency of Islington, North.

I shall read one of the petitions as an example of local residents' concern about road building. It is one that I wholeheartedly endorse, as do my hon. Friends who are here this evening. It says:

> To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.
>
> The Humble Petition of residents of Corsica Street, Calabria Road, Liberia Road, Gallia Road, Fergus Road and Grosvenor Avenue in Islington, London N.5,
>
> Sheweth that there is an East London Assessment Study, commissioned by Her Majesty's Department of Transport, which proposes a number of solutions to the problems of transport in North and East London, among which is the building of new roads.
>
> Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House will urge the Secretary of State for Transport to take note that: We, the undersigned, are greatly concerned at the proposals of the East London Assessment Studies to build new roads in Islington. We feel that road building is not a permanent solution, is wasteful and damaging, destroying our communities and our environment. We would like to see greater emphasis on traffic management schemes, more expenditure on public transport and encouragement to use it, with the aim of reducing the amount of traffic on London's roads rather than increasing it. We demand a transport policy which safeguards the quality of our environment and gives weight to the needs of residents, pedestrians, cyclists rather than just the motorist.
>
> And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

That is supported by 23 other petitions, which contain similar demands, and are signed by more than 3,000 people. I wholeheartedly support them.

*To lie upon the Table.*

## Midwives (Leicester)

10.4 pm

**Mr. Keith Vaz** (Leicester, East): I wish to present a petition on behalf of sister Millington and staff nurse Baird of 14C, Hospital close, Leicester, staff midwife Katrina Barnett of 7B Hospital close, Leicester and 23 other midwives at Leicester general hospital in Evington who were outraged last week when Leicestershire health authority announced that midwives at the Leicester royal infirmary were to get incentive payments of £1,000 each.

The midwives at the general hospital were prepared to resign en masse. They believe that all midwives in Leicestershire should be treated equally and I understand that since the petition was raised the health authority has now agreed to extend the payments to the Leicester general hospital.

The midwives consider that the crisis of staff shortages, which at the general hospital means overtime payments for 480 hours a month, can be solved only by a proper salary regrading and not by the application of auction-like tactics to our Health Service.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House encourage the Secretary of State for Health to instruct the Leicestershire health authority to review the salary structure of midwives in the district.

*To lie upon the Table.*

## Channel Tunnel (Rail Link)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.]*

10.5 pm

**Mr. Bob Dunn** (Dartford): I am most appreciative of the opportunity to discuss the implications of the high-speed rail link for north-west Kent. I am most grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the time that he has spent previously and will spend tonight in debating this issue with me.

I am also grateful for the company of some of my right hon. and hon. Friends who represent the county of Kent —my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley), my hon. Friends the Members for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson), for Medway (Dame P. Fenner), for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) and for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold) and also for the company of my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), who takes a great interest in this matter.

It would be wrong for me to let the opportunity pass without placing on record the thanks of Members representing Kent to our right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) who today left office at the Department of Transport. He was at all times a most perfect gentleman and an extremely courteous Minister with whom to deal. I also welcome to that post my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) who, I dare say, will meet us soon to discuss the vexed problem that faces my constituents and those of other Members who represent Kent.

I also pay tribute to the many hundreds, if not thousands, of my constituents who have suffered for a year stress and anxiety, personally and collectively, caused by the wretched proposals that have been brought forward, I believe inadvisedly, by British Rail.

I speak for the constituency of Dartford and the five communities within it, South Darenth and Horton Kirby, Sutton at Hone, Longfield, New Barn and Southfleet, which are the most severely affected by the proposals to construct a high-speed rail link in and through Dartford.

Those communities are the most affected and yet, thus far, they appear to be receiving least help. Of all parts of the track, that part that I represent, the area roughly between the M25 and Istead Rise, is worse off today in terms of the impact, stress and damage of the proposals than even a month ago following the significant concessions made at the portals at Swanley and the lesser concession made to the portal placement at Istead Rise.

It is clear that the high-speed rail link has no benefits for the people of north-west Kent or the commuters of Dartford who face the most difficult and badly administered service within Network SouthEast, the Dartford line. It is indisputable that those of us in the House or those representing the county council, the borough and district councils, the parish councils or the various community-based action groups have found it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain the range of information from British Rail about the route and all its implications in order that we, the people of Kent, can properly evaluate the options available to us. These proposals will massively damage the people of Kent, socially, economically and environmentally, and British Rail has not responded as constructively as it might have to our request.

*[Mr. Bob Dunn]*

Tunnelling is clearly the main answer to our difficulty. British Rail has told us that the cost of tunnelling between Swanley—or the M25—and Istead Rise would be £410 million, as opposed to £289 million for constructing a surface line. So the difference between the two options means that, as at June 1989, tunnelling would cost £121 million more than a surface line.

British Rail has admitted of late that its opposition to tunnelling is based largely, if not solely, on the cost. In my view, direct tunnelling would save £20 million, thus reducing the gap to £100 million. Further, British Rail appears to have assumed London, not Kent, tunnelling costs for the mere five miles of tunnel between the M25 and Istead Rise, as the track goes through Dartford. This is important, because the substrata of London are a ragbag of ingredients—some sand, some clay and some other admixtures—whereas tunnelling through Dartford would go through good-quality chalk. Kent tunnelling costs are cheaper per mile than London costs. Taking that into account and bearing in mind that we have been given no idea of likely expenditure on environmental protection, the tunnelling option for Dartford becomes much more attractive and must be seriously taken into account by British Rail and by the House and the Department of Transport.

**Mr. Mark Wolfson** (Sevenoaks): I am sure that these suggestions do not come only from my hon. Friend's head: they will have been based on the views of consultants who are experts in their field.

**Mr. Dunn:** This point comes not only from me but from consultants, action groups and British Rail. It is an accurate point and it must be taken into account by British Rail.

My constituency faces further problems on the environmental front, caused by the potential placement of construction sites in Sutton at Hone and in other sites in and around New Barn. I refer to the movement of spoil. The A225 to Farningham, and perhaps into Dartford, will become a major route carrying a potential 2,000 vehicle movements a day, removing spoil from the construction site.

The same applies to the construction sites liable to be placed near the New Barn road between communities of Istead Rise and New Barn itself. We face the problems of the movement of spoil for at least six years after the passage of the legislation. Three million tonnes of the materials necessary for construction need to be moved to Kent, and about 15 million tonnes of spoil need to be moved out.

Our county faces a major problem of environmental survival. We would not be thanked by those who will come after us if we did not expect the House, the Government and the Department of Transport to recognise the anxieties that I have advanced and that my hon. Friends, if they catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, will also discuss.

There is a problem for the farmer and the business man and for elderly people living in private rented accommodation. All those aspects need to be covered and, yet a mere 15 weeks from the presentation of the Bill we are no wiser than we were last week or last month in terms of getting information from British Rail. The only option for north-west Kent is tunnelling.

**Dame Peggy Fenner** (Medway): British Rail is already tunnelling through the village of Halling in my constituency. It has to do that because the tunnel is under the north downs. British Rail is proposing a viaduct over the Medway. We already have five crossings of the Medway and another would create a visual impact that one should not expect. The Medway towns are among the most highly populated in the area and every scrap of the environment that is not urban environment is vital. In such parts of Kent, tunnelling is the answer. We need to consider the cost, but it should not be considered before the environment. I seek an assurance from my hon. Friend the Minister that the environment will come first. This link will be for always and the people of Kent should not be asked to shoulder the burden of a spoilt environment.

**Mr. Dunn:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for her contribution. She makes the point more effectively than I could have done.

We have not been well used by British Rail in this matter. We are anxious to ensure that the project is right, from its start on the Kent coast to its termination in the centre of London. I raise these matters because they must be dealt with now. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will not be able to say much now, but it would be wrong of me to allow the House to go into the summer recess without placing on record my concern about my constituents and the general concern that we all have for the future of the county of Kent.

10.17 pm

**Mr. Jacques Arnold** (Gravesham): I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn) for initiating this debate. He is a tireless champion on behalf of his constituents who are perhaps now the most seriously affected by the British Rail proposals. He and I share the representation of the village of New Barn which remains exposed to the line, albeit in deeper cutting. Bringing complete protection to that village could be achieved either by constructing the line via the progressive working of cut and cover or by extending the bore from Thirty-Acre Shaw to beyond the New Barn road. That would be a great improvement and would also benefit my constituents at Istead Rise.

Another advantage of carrying out construction in this manner would be that the necessary construction sites would be moved further westward saving both Istead Rise and Southfleet from such disturbance and from the removal of spoil which could be taken northwards on the disused railway line. Not least among that spoil would be high-quality chalk which could be taken to the Northfleet cement works. If implemented, the proposals would lead to a desecration of the beautiful Kentish countryside in north-west Kent, and lip service to the environment will not be enough.

10.19 pm

**Sir John Stanley** (Tonbridge and Malling): I thank my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn) for allowing me one minute of his precious time in this Adjournment debate. I have three points to put to my hon. Friend the Minister. First, will he continue to urge British Rail to listen to the people of north-west and mid-Kent, and will he in particular urge it to consider the real environmental concerns expressed by my hon. Friends the Members for Dartford and for Medway (Dame P. Fenner) and others? In particular, the section between the River Medway and the A229 road is still not acceptable environmentally and I hope that my hon. Friend will continue to register that with British Rail.

Secondly, will my hon. Friend the Minister resist any attempt by British Rail to get for itself deemed planning consent for the Mid-Kent Parkway station through the private Bill procedure. That development should be the subject of formal planning procedures and it would be an abuse to seek planning consent through the private Bill procedure.

Thirdly, will my hon. Friend urge British Rail to take more seriously the profound noise disturbance that is likely to be created on existing railways from transcontinental freight trains? British Rail can take steps with various acoustic baffling devices and so on to mitigate the noise disturbance on the designated freight routes and it should do so.

10.20 pm

**Mr. Andrew Rowe** (Mid-Kent): It would appear that the only way that I can get tunnelling in any part of my constituency is if there is a motorway service area, because it is more important to protect such areas than it is to protect real people. Kent is bruised by what I think are the dying throes of a dinosaur—the private Bill procedure which was invented to enable 19th century railway entrepreneurs to build a railway. It is a quite inappropriate procedure for building modern railways. Some 19,000 miles of railway are projected to be built within the European Community between now and the end of the century. It is a major part of the transport provision, and it is inappropriate for it to be excluded and treated wholly separately. I understand why the Government step back from this, but it cannot continue.

We need to look closely—not only for our county but for all the counties affected by future railway building—at compensation. It would be disgraceful if farms were to be expropriated at market value, and later British Rail was able to claim a major capital gain by selling the land back at an inflated price. I hope that my hon. Friend will take that point on board.

Secondly, it would be inappropriate for Kent county council to have to carry all the costs of access to the Mid-Kent Parkway station, which has been foisted on it in contravention of its county structure plan. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will agree that British Rail should contribute to the cost.

Thirdly, I echo what has been said by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley) about noise. The noise intensification of enormous freight trains running all through the night instead of occasional freight trains once or twice a night requires that compensation and protection should be available not only to the people of Kent, but, as this enormous explosion in freight being carried by rail spreads across the country, to the whole country. It is essential that my hon. Friend should give us some consolation on this matter.

10.23 pm

**The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Michael Portillo):** I do not remember an Adjournment debate in which six of my right hon. and hon. Friends have spoken and that is a testimony to the great importance of this subject in the county of Kent. I begin by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn) on having had the chance to initiate this Adjournment debate, and thank him for doing so. He has been assiduous in pursuing the interests of his constituents and I can fairly say that barely a day has gone past in recent months without my hon. Friend taking an opportunity to let me know his latest concerns and to press me further to see what I can do to soften the blow of this proposed project on his constituency.

My hon. Friend will not mind if I pay tribute to my other right hon. and hon. Friends who have spoken because they have also been most pressing on Ministers and British Rail in trying to achieve the best for their constituents. I thank my hon. Friend for his generous words about my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), who cares deeply about these matters. His mind was deeply engaged on how the project could best be carried forward with justice being done for all concerned. I know that my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson), the Secretary of State for Transport, will be only too keen that I should brief him as quickly as possible on the matters that have been discussed between my hon. Friend and I over recent months.

I wish my right hon. and hon. Friends to be aware of the tremendous influence that they have had already on the matters that we are discussing. I do not wish them at any time to downplay that. They are all aware that important changes have been made to the proposal. I understand that they wish the changes to go further, but the changes are important and many of them have been largely because of the pressure that my right hon. and hon. Friends have sustained over a long period. They all know that the cost of the project now, at £1·7 billion, includes a large sum —probably about £500 million—that has been provided entirely for environmental protection.

Even since the project was launched in March with the new proposals and the rather higher price tag, extra costs have been allowed to mount. It has been announced that the tunnelling will be somewhat longer than in the original March project. The extra tunnelling costs amount to £53 million, inclusive of property purchase and resale, to extend the London tunnel beyond the M25 and to move the portal of the north downs tunnel further west to the A227. These changes have arisen largely because of the pressure of my right hon. and hon. Friends.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dartford thinks that the least help has been given to his constituency. To some extent I would dispute that. He will know that there have been important changes in his constituency as well as in others. For example, the viaduct that was originally to have run to the north of the existing railway will now run through the south, so saving about 80 properties and removing the need to take part of the gardens of 70 properties. British Rail is still considering the height of the viaduct and what would be suitable there.

I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends—and I know that this is extremely difficult for them—to keep some sense of proportion in these matters. We are talking about a project that will result in trains running through Kent. They are not new monsters. Again, partly due to pressure by my right hon. and hon. Friends, the maximum speed of the trains will be about 140 mph or maybe 145 mph. It will not be the 186 mph that was proposed originally. The speed at which they will run will be fairly comparable to the speeds

*[Mr. Michael Portillo]*

of trains operating now, or that may operate shortly. With new technology, these trains may not be any noisier than present trains. Indeed, they may be a little quieter. In a number of instances we are talking about them passing close to villages which trains already pass. I do not want to play down the difficulties that are being experienced in the constituencies of my right hon. and hon. Friends. I merely ask them to maintain some sense of proportion, if they are able to do so.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dartford talked about lack of certainty at this stage. As I have said to him on a number of occasions, people in Kent want certainty so that they know whether they are affected by the scheme. On the other hand, they want genuine consultation. It is extremely difficult to have certainty and real consultation. I think that to some extent my right hon. and hon. Friends may have been surprised by the extent to which British Rail has been willing since the March date to consider different proposals, and I am sure that at least some of the changes have been welcomed.

There is obviously a dispute between my hon. Friend the Member for Dartford and British Rail about the cost of tunnelling and what would be the extra cost of putting the tunnel all the way through his constituency. The latest figure I have as British Rail's estimate of the cost of the longer tunnel compared with the preferred route is £122 million—which my hon. Friend disputes. I take the view that my hon. Friend's points should be exhaustively examined by British Rail and that he should be given satisfactory answers to them all.

**Mr. Dunn:** Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will allow me to correct him. The figure I used as being the difference in cost between tunnelling and laying a track on the surface was, to be pedantic, £121·6 million. I then knocked off from that figure other cost benefits that would accrue.

**Mr. Portillo:** Very well. I did not mean to misrepresent my hon. Friend in any way. In any event, he arrived at a different net figure, and his arguments should be exhaustively addressed. He will appreciate that if, after examination, the net cost of tunnelling is found to be very large, obviously British Rail will be reluctant to adopt his proposal. The project, at one point estimated to cost £7 billion, is less viable than when it was estimated to be considerably less. British Rail is concerned to complete the project, because it believes strongly in the provision of a new rail link across Kent and to London, to the benefit of the entire country, but it is concerned also to ensure that that project will be viable.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dartford is concerned also about the movement of spoil and about the construction site. Such matters are often discussed during the passage of a private Bill, and I hope that it will be possible to reach an accommodation either during the passage of the Bill or in discussions beforehand.

I noted carefully the short interventions of my hon. Friends the Members for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold) and for Medway (Dame P. Fenner), and my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley) raised a number of specific points. My right hon. Friend wants me to guarantee that British Rail will continue listening to the people of Kent. I hope that the tone of my remarks this evening leads him to believe that my view is that British Rail should do so, and there are a number of examples of British Rail's willingness to adapt its proposals to take account of the views expressed.

My right hon. Friend is concerned that the private Bill procedure should not be used as a means of obtaining planning permission in respect of issues far wider than simply the Mid-Kent Parkway station itself. I agree with him. It is implicit in British Rail's approach that it wants to discuss the wider planning implications of Mid-Kent Parkway station with Kent county council. While recognising that that will create difficulties in respect of the structure plan, Kent county council is at least content with that method of proceeding.

As to noise disturbance on existing routes, of course there is always the risk, if one lives near a railway or road, that more intensive use will be made of it as time passes. My right hon. Friend appreciates, I am sure, that it is difficult to compensate people for such changes. He asked me about specific physical measures, and I shall certainly raise that aspect with British Rail.

**Mr. Wolfson:** I appreciate the point made by my hon. Friend the Minister concerning increased rail activity over a period of time, but the difference in this case is that there will be a rapid marked increase in activity only two or three weeks after the tunnel is opened. The change will be dramatic.

**Mr. Portillo:** I am not so sure about that. I suppose that there will be a change when the tunnel is opened, but it might take some time for the freight to build up. In any case, I am not sure that there would not be analogies in other areas. Compensating people for changes in intensity of use is a difficult subject, but I note what my hon. Friend says.

My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) believes that the private Bill procedure is inappropriate. He will be aware that for the moment no other procedure is available for the building of a railway line. He raised what I hope he will forgive me for describing simply as a big subject—compensation. Not only my Department but the Department of the Environment will want to consider his remarks carefully. My hon. Friend also raised a point about the Mid-Kent Parkway station. That is a matter appropriate for discussion between Kent county council and British Rail, who are proceeding on that basis.

I thank my right hon. and hon. Friends for their great courtesy in raising these matters. I congratulate them on the meticulous way in which they have always represented the interests of their constituents.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty-six minutes to Eleven o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Tuesday 25 July 1989*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS (HULL) BILL
*Lords amendments agreed to.*

CITY OF LONDON (VARIOUS POWERS) BILL
*Order for consideration, as amended, read.*
*To be considered tomorrow.*

HAYLE HARBOUR BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

QUEEN MARY AND WESTFIELD COLLEGE BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
*Orders for consideration, as amended, read.*
*To be considered tomorrow.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## HEALTH

### Nurses (Grading)

1. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress of appeals by nurses with regard to regradings.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman):** The grading appeals are being dealt with under a longstanding agreement between the management and staff sides of the general Whitley council on procedures for settling differences over NHS employees' conditions of service.

Detailed arrangements for operating this agreement are for local decision.

**Mr. Ross:** The Under-Secretary will know that today a large delegation of Confederation of Health Service Employees nurses attended the Scottish Grand Committee, which was discussing health. Many of those nurses are still awaiting their gradings which were originally given on 31 October 1988. Can the Minister give the House a guarantee that those appeals will be heard by 31 October 1989?

**Mr. Freeman:** No, I cannot give that assurance. It is for local health authorities to hold those appeals as expeditiously as possible. I should point out to the hon. Gentleman that the unions, including COHSE, agreed the procedure for grading appeals. We are following that procedure, which involves three tiers, to the letter.

**Mr. Holt:** Will my hon. Friend take it from me that, whatever scheme is in operation, the midwives in south Teesside, who have been given one of the most magnificent hospitals in the country, are thoroughly fed up at having to wait for their claims to be heard? What will the Government do, apart from sitting back and saying that it is in someone else's hands?

**Mr. Freeman:** The local health authority will be pursuing those appeals as expeditiously as possible. Midwives have enjoyed an increase in salary over the past two years of 28 per cent. on average. The concern is not about pay, it is about other conditions of service. The midwives have had an excellent pay increase and appeals will be heard as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Fearn:** Is the Minister aware that at the midwives' conference that I attended last week, and which he could not attend the night before, but attended the following day, morale was very low? That was because the grading system still has not satisfied any group of midwives. Can the Minister tell the midwives that perhaps in the next six months they will have a satisfactory answer to the grading system?

**Mr. Freeman:** Ninety per cent. of all staff midwives are on grade E and higher. They have had a remarkably successful outcome from the regrading exercise and the pay increases.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** I appreciate that this was before the Minister's time at the Department of Health, but does he recall the Secretary of State lecturing nurses last summer that if they were dissatisfied with their grades they should appeal? As they encouraged nurses to appeal as the remedy, Ministers cannot now wash their hands of the shortcomings of the appeals system. Is he aware that tens of thousands of appeals at district level will not be heard until the end of next year and that 2,000 appeals at regional level will not be heard during this Parliament? What has happened to the Secretary of State's press statement on 5 December in which he promised that appeals would be heard by this spring? Will the Minister at least assure us that they will be heard by next spring?

**Mr. Freeman:** The smooth running of the appeals machinery to which the hon. Gentleman refers has been clogged up by the unhelpful and unco-operative attitude of COHSE and the National Union of Public Employees.

### Operations

2. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action is being taken by individual health authorities to increase the number of operations where their current performance rate falls substantially below the national average.

**The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. David Mellor):** We expect health authority managers, who now have available to them information on their performance relative to others, to use this to monitor their own performance and then to make any necessary improvements. We have a range of initiatives to help support and sustain such efforts.

**Mr. Gill:** Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that after the massive increase in spending during the past 10 years on additional staff, new hospitals, other new buildings and modern equipment, the British taxpayer is entitled to ask why we still have a waiting list? Is that not of itself sufficient justification for the Government's reforms of the National Health Service?

**Mr. Mellor:** Yes, particularly when some recent research showed that if every district health authority was capable of using its operating theatres as efficiently as the average—not even as the best—that would create enough vacant beds to allow everyone on the waiting list to be operated on immediately. That is the precise scope, and there are many other examples of what the added efficiency that we propose in the review will do for the National Health Service.

**Mr. Nellist:** What does the Minister say to a health authority such as Central Birmingham, which is responsible for the Birmingham children's hospital and which has limited the number of open-heart operations to 320, when the surgeons are capable of carrying out 380, and where the waiting list for children now stands at 140, when a year ago it stood at 110? That was at the time of the tragic deaths of David Barber and Matthew Collier, which my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes) has raised repeatedly in the Chamber. What does the Minister say to those area health authorities that are putting the lives of bairns at risk? When will they get enough money so that surgeons can carry out the operations?

**Mr. Mellor:** I have every sympathy with the parents of youngsters awaiting such operations. A great deal of attention has been given to improving the position at Birmingham children's hospital. I am advised that double the number of heart operations on youngsters will be carried out at that hospital this year compared with last year. That marks real progress and I hope that we shall be able to do even more in the months ahead.

**Mr. Burt:** Will my hon. and learned Friend congratulate my health authority, Bury, on the way in which it has dealt with the issue and is able to treat more patients by increasing the number of consultants by 35 per cent. over the past five years? Will he note that it has achieved that by saving on administration and by putting more services out to tender? Is not that the way that health authorities should go?

**Mr. Mellor:** What is encouraging is the range of initiatives taken by different health authorities. I applaud what Bury has done and, equally, I applaud other health authorities which, by having a higher proportion of operating cases treated as day cases, have managed to transform their waiting lists. The Coventry and Warwickshire hospital, which I visited last month, has transformed a waiting list of 1,400 to a list of 300 simply by increasing the proportion of day surgery cases from 7 per cent. of the total work load to 43 per cent. We look to such initiatives, and that is the scale of improvement that is possible when people use their ingenuity.

**Ms. Harman:** Is it not the case that to stay within inadequate budgets, hospital managers are telling doctors to do fewer operations, rather than more? How does the Minister's earlier answer square with a report in yesterday's *Daily Mirror* that two heart surgeons at Birmingham children's hospital were threatened with disciplinary action because they exceeded by one the ration of heart operations that they were allowed to carry out in May? Does that not show that the Government's real interest lies in saving money, not lives?

**Mr. Mellor:** This year, over 20 per cent. more in-patient cases will be dealt with in the National Health Service than were dealt with 10 years ago and there will be many more operations than there were last year. It is interesting that although the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) made his usual call about underfunding, that was specifically not endorsed at the meeting between regional health authority chairmen and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State last week. The problems of the National Health Service cannot be explained away by a shortage of resources, but have much to do with improved performance. It is about time that the Opposition played some part in making that clear.

## Bristol Channel (Pollution)

3. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received about sickness, including ear, nose, throat or body sores, in bathers, fisherman or other users of the Bristol channel attributable to the poor water quality and high sewage or industrial pollution of this marine cul de sac.

**Mr. Freeman:** None. My right hon. and learned Friend is aware of recent concern expressed by the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisation to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food about the possible health risks to fishermen from sewage disposal to sea. The public have also expressed concern to my Department and to the Department of the Environment about the state of our bathing waters.

**Mr. Speller:** I thank my hon. Friend for his clear awareness of some of the problems. Is he aware that not only fishing clubs but swimmers, school parties, parents and all who use the Bristol channel complain bitterly of sore throats, sore eyes, stomach upsets and other unpleasantness, all of which they attribute to polluted water? Is he further aware that the waters of the Bristol channel were last tested in 1987 and that the results of that survey have yet to be analysed or published? Will he request all medical authorities and GPs near the Bristol channel to give him information on the problem, which I suspect is small individually but major nationally?

**Mr. Freeman:** I give my hon. Friend that assurance. We appreciate and welcome comments from not only district health authorities but general practitioners on reports from their patients about any ill effects from sea bathing. A contract has been placed with the independent water research centre to carry out a study to assess the risk of contracting illness from sea bathing. That study commences this summer, and we shall place the results in the Library.

## General Practitioners (Contract)

4. **Sir Bernard Braine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the new general practitioners' contract will affect the chances of night visits being made by a patient's own doctor.

9. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the new general practitioners' contract will affect immunisation and screening policies.

10. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the new general practitioners' contract will affect the assessment of the development of young children.

**The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke):** The new contract will introduce a higher visit fee for those doctors who visit patients themselves, or who arrange night cover in small rotas of no more than 10 doctors. I believe that this will encourage general practitioners to carry out more home visits themselves or ensure that their patients see a doctor whom they know.

The new payments for the achievement of specified levels of childhood immunisation and cervical cytology will offer GPs a powerful incentive to raise protection against diseases for ther patients.

The new contract will introduce for the first time a fee for GPs who provide services to monitor the development and well-being of their child patients.

**Sir Bernard Braine:** Although a deputising service clearly has its uses, does it not make sense for general practitioners to have an incentive to visit their patients rather than to encourage the attendance of deputies, who may have had absolutely no contact with the patients, particularly elderly patients? If anyone had any doubts before, does this not clearly show that the function of the new contract is to improve the quality of service to the patient?

**Mr. Clarke:** I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. His point will be endorsed by his constituents who much prefer, wherever possible, a visit by a doctor from their own practice or one in close contact with it. I am glad to say that the majority of GPs do not use commercial deputising services. It is fair that they should be paid a higher reward for that. I regret to say that, at the moment, the general medical services committee is seeking to reopen discussions with me on the higher fee. I see no basis for that. We must remember the patients' interests and the public interest in settling the contract.

**Mr. Bellingham:** I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for that reply. Does he agree that good doctors have nothing to fear from the new contract? Will he confirm that, in future, in places such as west Norfolk, where there is a large retired population, people will get even better service from their GPs and will not mind them receiving extra rewards?

**Mr. Clarke:** We are very conscious of the increasing number of elderly patients and the increasing needs of elderly patients, particularly those beyond the age of 75. That is a growing feature of the population of Norfolk. Patients would welcome the introduction of a new higher fee for GPs in return for keeping at least in annual touch with all their patients over the age of 75.

**Mr. Nicholson:** My right hon. and learned Friend will be aware of my concern that the National Health Service should cope with the needs of patients of all ages, particularly young children. Does he agree that his earlier replies give the lie to claims that the new contract would work against patient care? What can he do to bring home to GPs the considerable benefits to patients from the new contract?

**Mr. Clarke:** I am glad to say that the new payment for child surveillance, which is monitoring the development and health of children under the age of five, was put into the contract at the request of the medical profession and the GMSC. It is one of many features of the contract that should encourage much better service to patients. Many GPs have still not altogether understood all the details of the contract on offer. They should realise that the resulting contract must be on a balance between the legitimate interests of the profession and the legitimate needs of patients to ensure that general practice maintains the highest international standards.

**Mr. Foot:** As the right hon. and learned Gentleman was originally appointed to his post because of his great powers of communication—we might call him the "Kenneth Baker of yesterday"—can he give the House an estimate of what would have been the response from doctors to the new contract without his great clarity and vision?

**Mr. Clarke:** I remain a colleague of Kenneth Baker today. I have certainly communicated with doctors. I and my negotiating team have had 19 meetings with the GMSC negotiators, spent 110 hours in negotiation and produced 38 papers as bases for discussion. We eventually reached an agreement that the GMSC recommended to the profession.

Obviously, I regret the fact that GPs have decided to reject the recommendations of their own negotiators, but at least it was not by the nine to one vote that greeted Aneurin Bevan when he tried to persuade the British Medical Association to accept his terms of service when the NHS was founded.

**Mr. Duffy:** The hon. Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) referred to the elderly. Is the Secretary of State aware that in Sheffield the most freely expressed fear about the new contract is that it will prejudice the dedication of services and resources to the elderly, especially in respect of night visits? Will he comment on the effect of the new contract on Sheffield's elderly population, especially as it is expected that the number of those over the age of 85 will increase by 82 per cent. during the next decade?

**Mr. Clarke:** I do not accept the interpretation that the hon. Gentleman claims has been put upon the contract by some doctors in Sheffield. As I have already said, we are introducing a new, higher payment in exchange for regular contact with patients over the age of 75. The new contract will benefit the elderly, who would much prefer that, whenever possible, night visits are made by someone from their own practice whom they are likely to know.

**Ms. Mowlam:** Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman make it clear that doctors will not be paid for immunisations and screenings if they do not achieve a minimum target of 70 per cent. of their patients? In an area such as Teesside, doctors, however hard they try, will have great difficulty in reaching that high target. It is a question not of good or bad doctors but of a target that is unattainable.

**Mr. Clarke:** Vaccination is part of the ordinary duties of every GP. I am sure that they all accept that they must strive to raise the level of immunisations. The 70 per cent. target is already being met by the majority of practices, certainly in England, and it can be achieved regardless of the social status of an area. It is important to try to secure a National Health Service that meets the highest international standards of patient care. The target that we have set is that recommended by the World Health Organisation, and none of us should recommend second-rate or lower standards for the NHS than those regarded as reasonably attainable in developed countries.

**Mr. Cormack:** Although it may be true that, as my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) said, the majority of doctors have nothing to fear from the new contract, does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that some excellent doctors are apprehensive? Despite his efforts through meetings, papers and discussions, does he agree that there is a need for a concerted effort during the next three months, when Parliament is not sitting, to talk to doctors throughout the country in as conciliatory and constructive a manner as possible, in the hope of persuading them that they have nothing to fear?

**Mr. Clarke:** My two ministerial colleagues and I hold meetings with hundreds of doctors each week, and they have been successful and productive. One of the main actions that we can take is to explain the impact of the contract to individual GPs, many of whom are labouring under unreasonable and unnecessary fears about a possible loss of income in their practices. In fact, the best doctors will gain under the proposals, but some will have to improve their performance. Many doctors are labouring under a misunderstanding because they have not absorbed the detail of the new contract. I shall take my hon. Friend's advice and I shall almost certainly communicate in writing with all GPs, setting out the terms on offer.

## Community Care

5. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a further statement on his plans for community care.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** As I said in my statement on 12 July, we will publish a White Paper on community care in the autumn.

**Mr. Hughes:** Will the Secretary of State elaborate on the arrangements for community care between now and 1991? He will be aware that many elderly and mentally ill people are already being discharged into the community, particularly in inner-city areas such as mine, and that facilities are already insufficient. Will he examine projects such as that proposed for St. Olave's hospital in my constituency where there is a danger that half the land will be sold for housing at market value rather than for the community care provision that would allow his plans to be implemented in the near future rather than having to wait until 1991 or thereafter?

**Mr. Clarke:** Our response to the Griffiths report aroused great enthusiasm among local authorities for the opportunity that it offers to improve the level of community care that we provide. I am sure that local authorities and health authorities are beginning to draw up their community care plans and to plan for new developments. Therefore, as a result of the announcement, increased priority will be given to community care immediately. I trust that that means a steady development before we reach 1991. I shall look at the constituency case to which the hon. Gentleman referred when he sends details to me and if there is ministerial responsibility, the Minister responsible will respond to him.

**Mr. Butler:** Do the community care proposals involve a review of attendance allowances with a view to making them more prompt, efficient, generous and sensitive?

**Mr. Clarke:** All of us become involved in appeals against refusal of attendance allowance, and I know how difficult many of those cases are. The Griffiths report did not specifically address the important matter of the benefits and financial assistance given to disabled people and those who care for them. I shall draw my hon. Friend's remarks to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security and I have no doubt that he will bear his point in mind.

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** Will the Secretary of State explain why, in his recent statement on community care, he made only a passing reference to Lady Wagner's report? Does he accept that, in view of the huge explosion in residential care, especially in the private sector, there is a need for minimum standards in the private and the public sectors and for proper inspections, too?

**Mr. Clarke:** Lady Wagner's report was excellent and the Government are grateful to her. Many of its recommendations have already been implemented. We endorsed it yet again in my statement, and we touched on her suggestions for the inspection of nursing and residential homes where we did not see any need for change in the statutory position at the moment. We introduced the legislation that brought in the system of supervising standards and we have made important recommendations which will help local authorities so to organise matters that the same attention is paid to the standard of care in public sector homes as should be paid in private sector homes.

## Limited List

6. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints he has received from patients and general practitioners in the last four years as a result of the introduction of the limited drugs list.

**Mr. Mellor:** Since the selected list scheme was introduced in April 1985 the Department has received some 6,000 letters about the scheme, but not many recently. Recent correspondence has tended to recognise that the selected list scheme has produced worthwhile financial savings while fully protecting the interests of patients. None of the dire predictions made at the time of the introduction of the scheme by the British Medical Association and others has proved to be true.

**Mrs. Hicks:** My hon. Friend will recall only too clearly that the outcry and fears expressed by general practitioners four years ago before the introduction of the selected list was not dissimilar to the present outcry from general practitioners about prescribing costs. For the sake of those vulnerable patients who are completely confused, will my hon. and learned Friend take the opportunity to bang on the head once and for all the untruth going about that any patient might be denied medicine? Will he reassure the elderly and those on long-term medication that they have nothing to fear under the Government?

**Mr. Mellor:** I am very happy to give my hon. Friend the reassurance that she seeks. Every patient will receive the medication that they require—that is a categorical promise. Despite the controversy over the limited list, it establishes that worthwhile savings of about £75 million per year can be made, which can be deployed elsewhere in the Health Service to the greater benefit of patients. The controversy shows also that, unfortunately, some groups within the Health Service are so resistant to changes that they will seek to blackguard them with the most wild charges—none of which, in respect either of the selected list or of other reforms, has proved to be true. The same will doubtless be true of the dire predictions made about the White Paper.

**Mr. Rooker:** One of the drugs that is the subject of most concern and, I suspect, of most representations, is Mucodyne—which was restored to the list, but only in the children's version. Many elderly people suffering from bronchial complaints, including a number of my constituents, have found no substitute for Mucodyne that meets their needs, and must fork out about £13 or £14 every time that they purchase a bottle. They have no choice because there is no proven, practical alternative. Mucodyne has also been the subject of many parliamentary questions, and I ask the Minister to bear my comments in mind if the list is ever reviewed.

**Mr. Mellor:** The hon. Gentleman knows that the drugs included on or omitted from the selected list were the subject of professional evaluation by an advisory committee, so those decisions were taken not by the Government but on specialist advice. The hon. Gentleman will know also that we offered the British Medical Association an appeal mechanism but it did not take us up on it. That would have been a way of dealing with any residual points.

**Dame Jill Knight:** Is not the simple truth that if my right hon. and learned Friend and his colleagues had listened to the BMA's campaign against the limited list, £75 million per year less would have been available to spend on patients?

**Mr. Mellor:** Yes, and that £75 million equals the cost of building a new Great Ormond street hospital every year for the past four years. That is what the debate is all about. Of the £2 billion currently spent in the NHS on prescribed drugs, tens of millions of pounds is misspent because of the refusal by some general practitioners to prescribe generic alternatives, slack repeat prescribing, and other reasons. Just as it is necessary for patients to have the drugs that they need, it is important that patients are not prescribed drugs that they do not need.

### Hospitals (Self-governing Status)

7. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has issued any guidance to health authorities on balloting National Health Service staff or members of the public on whether they agree with proposals to allow National Health Service hospitals to opt out.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** No National Health Service hospitals are going to opt out of the National Health Service.

**Mrs. Mahon:** Is the Secretary of State aware of the overwhelming wall of hostility against his proposals for futuristic private hospitals? If the right hon. and learned Gentleman believes that his proposals have the support of doctors, nurses, patients and the public, why does he not put them to the test by balloting Health Service workers and the public? He has spent enough taxpayers' money trying to sell that rotten idea.

**Mr. Clarke:** Recently, the hon. Lady, together with some of her colleagues, gatecrashed a meeting that I was holding with the staff of various hospitals in Leeds. The hon. Lady and her friends found themselves listening to a very serious discussion about the potential benefits of self-government for hospitals and units in the Leeds area, and found it so daunting that they left after a little while. If the hon. Lady and her friends had stayed, they would have understood my proposals more clearly. Clearly, the hon. Lady still does not understand them—and obviously she is not ready herself, let alone her constituents, to cast a vote on the matter. If we receive any applications for self-governing status from NHS hospitals, as I am sure that we shall in due course, we will consult most thoroughly—as we always do on any serious proposal.

**Mr. Hayes:** Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that balloting hospitals and the community would be as ludicrous as it would be unworkable? Does he agree that it would divide communities and hospitals, and divert valuable time and resources away from the Health Service?

**Mr. Clarke:** I am accused of challenging one or two of the Health Service's traditions, but I am not very much in favour of traditions that lead to inefficiency. However, I cannot recall a single occasion in the past 40 years when anyone has suggested that managerial changes should be the subject of a local ballot. At this stage, people should concentrate on seriously studying the Government's proposals, and wait to see what applications are made and what would be the benefits to the patients concerned.

**Mr. Galbraith:** I presume that when the Government presented their proposals they discussed the decision that the managers and consultants involved would determine whether hospitals should opt out of local health authorities, and that the local community would be considered. If the majority of consultants in a hospital were opposed to that hospital's opting out, would it still be able to do so?

**Mr. Clarke:** I have never used the phrase "opt out". It has not featured in any of my documents or speeches. The self-governing hospitals, like other hospitals, will look to the district health authorities for funds, as money comes with the patients referred by those authorities.

Let me suggest again that the description of the proposal that we have heard is based on misunderstanding, or is misleading. We shall consult in the ordinary way when applications are made, but I do not believe that such matters can be decided sensibly by means of a yes or no vote among any particular section of staff, or in any other part of the community. Those responsible will put forward considered applications that will be examined in the same way as any other important changes in the service.

### NHS Reform

8. **Mr. Norris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the allocation of the extra £40 million to help with the implementation of the White Paper "Working for Patients".

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I have undertaken to ensure that the costs of implementing the NHS review will be met by the taxpayer over and above the resources provided to maintain the growth of services to patients. The provision of the additional £40 million brings the total available this year for the implementation of the review to £82 million, of which £70 million is for the hospital and community health services, £5 million for the family practitioner services and the remainder to meet administrative costs in my Department.

**Mr. Norris:** Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that hard-pressed managers in the NHS deserve our full support, and that those additional resources are a welcome and constructive step towards implementation of the White Paper proposals? Does he agree that they are especially to be welcomed as new money that will leave untouched the existing record level of resources for patient care?

**Mr. Clarke:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend. As he knows, the great majority of managers in the service are very enthusiastic about the reforms proposed in the White Paper, and are working extremely hard to ensure their implementation. Some investment up front will, as I have said, be required, and we shall continue to provide it over and above the necessary increase in resources required to maintain the growth in patient care.

**Mrs. Dunwoody:** How much of that new money will be allocated to patient care, and how much to the provision of hardware, accountants and software to be employed in billing procedures? It is rather important for the patient to know what he is spending the money on.

**Mr. Clarke:** As the hon. Lady knows, in last year's public spending round we increased total spending on the National Health Service by £2 million. With additions during the year, we have brought the amount to be spent on the implementation of the review to £82 million. That covers a wide range of services, including grants for the training of more people with public health expertise who will be able to identify patient needs. Those needs will be resourced much better once the new system is in place.

**Mr. Favell:** Has my right hon. and learned Friend made any assessment of the savings that will be made by the streamlining of the decision-making process in self-governing hospitals? At present, as he well knows, major decisions must go first to the district health authority, then to the regional health authority, then to the Elephant and Castle and then all the way back down the line. Is it not true that savings will be made and that for all but the third rate, this will be a far better process?

**Mr. Clarke:** Over the years we have moved steadily towards replacing the second-guessing of decisions that has been traditional in the Health Service, when Ministers and their civil servants supervised the regions, which supervised the districts, which supervised hospital management. With self-governing hospitals, we shall put real responsibility into the hands of local people.

I agree with my hon. Friend that great improvements will be made in efficiency, and that at the same time the hospitals will be made even more responsive to local opinion, local patients' needs and perceived gaps in the present health care provision.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** Will the Secretary of State accept that we agree that this latest share-out shows the Government's priorities? Is he aware that three quarters of the new money has been spent on more finance staff and more computers for them, but only a couple of million pounds on the medical audit? Does it not speak volumes for the priorities of his White Paper that the accountants who treat no patients need 12 times the new resources that are given to doctors? Is not the truth that his priority is cost control, not patient care?

**Mr. Clarke:** The hon. Gentleman makes a specialty of picking out details of the White Paper that he blows up into misrepresentations. He knows perfectly well—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Clarke:** This will be planned and brought in by the profession. The additional £2 million is extremely welcome to the profession and shows our good will to that development. We accept that more money will be required to finance medical audit when the profession has in place the mechanisms required to carry it out. We are talking about £2 million being spent on pump priming for that purpose this year.

**Mr. Squire:** Will my right hon. and learned Friend take all possible steps to implement the White Paper at the earliest opportunity so that my constituents, who are suffering excessive waiting lists in Barking, Havering and Brentwood, have the advantage of one of the White Paper's many proposals—that money should follow patients rather than some abstruse formula?

**Mr. Clarke:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend, and I reassure him that progress on preparation to implement the review is going steadily and very well at present. We seem well on target to deliver not only the review but, most important, its benefits to patients such as his constituents, who will experience a big improvement in how the service is delivered once the changes are in place.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It is difficult to hear questions against a background of discussion.

### Artificial Limbs

11. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consultations he has recently undertaken regarding the supply, and fitting and repair of artificial limbs.

**Mr. Mellor:** These matters are dealt with in England by the Disablement Services Authority. We are regularly in touch with the authority's chairman.

**Mr. Morgan:** What on earth possessed the right hon. Gentleman's Department to bring wholly improper pressure on the Welsh health common services authority to award its three-year contract for the supply of artificial limbs in Wales to Intermed? Its artificial limbs may be straight, but its behaviour is so bent that two days after it was awarded the contract, which specified local manufacture at Rookwood hospital in my constituency, it said that it would move the manufacture and major repair of all artificial limbs for Wales to its central factory in Alton, Hampshire, contrary to the recommendations of the McColl committee on the supply of artificial limbs that manufacture and major repairs must always be done in the locality.

**Mr. Mellor:** Arrangements in Wales are a matter for the Welsh Office, not the Department of Health. Prior to our beginning this exercise, Intermed's share of the lower limb market was 75 per cent. in England, but it is now 16 per cent. I should have thought that that was a move in the direction that the hon. Gentleman wants.

## Miss Sharon Campbell

12. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Oxford East (Mr. Smith) of 6 June, *Official Report,* columns 97-99, what other action has been taken in response to the report of the committee of inquiry into the care and after-care of Miss Sharon Campbell, Cm 44; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** We continue to carry forward work which calls for Government action, particularly that concerned with the continuing care of patients discharged from mental illness hospitals. We will begin formal consultation on guidance on continuing care this Friday.

**Mr. Atkinson:** Will my hon. Friend confirm that his plans to improve health services for the mentally ill, which he announced in a detailed response to a question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) on 13 July, take account of the findings of the Sharon Campbell inquiry and go a long way to ensuring that such a tragedy never happens again?

**Mr. Freeman:** The statement of the Government policy on care of the mentally ill in the community made on 13 July was widely welcomed by hon. Members and the voluntary organisations involved. The announcement by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State of additional money in 1991-92 through the Health Service to help local authorities improve the quality of social care will go a long way to addressing some of the concerns that he and the Spokes report on the care and aftercare of Miss Sharon Campbell raised.

## General Practitioners (Contract)

13. **Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the effects of the new general practitioners' contract on health promotion clinics.

19. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the implications of the new general practitioners' contract for preventive health care.

**Mr. Mellor:** The new contract forms an important part of our policy of encouraging health promotion and the prevention of ill health. GPs' terms of service will make clear their role in these areas, and there will be new payments encouraging the provision of health promotion clinics, check-ups for newly registered patients and help to achieve high levels of coverage for cervical cancer screening and childhood immunisations.

**Mr. Baldry:** I thank my hon. and learned Friend for that reply. Does he agree that the provision for the first time of an incentive to general practitioners to run health promotion clinics will greatly improve the quality of patient care and provide GPs with the opportunity not just to react to problems as they come through their doors but to raise the quality of health of the patients on their lists?

**Mr. Mellor:** Yes, it is absolutely vital that the NHS becomes a service for health and not just a service for sickness. The way in which we have chosen to have a contract that is performance related will, for the first time, properly reward those who take the initiative in preventive medicine, rather than merely reward those who have been in practice for a long time, unrelated to performance.

**Mr. Greenway:** Can my hon. and learned Friend confirm that in terms of preventive medicine, the new contract for GPs will, for the first time, require them to visit elderly patients, that they will be paid to make those visits and that the visits will have to take place at least once a year? Will he confirm that they will be thorough visits and that the elderly people being visited will be properly looked after?

**Mr. Mellor:** For the first time, GPs will be paid more for having elderly patients on their lists. I find it astonishing, therefore, that the charge should be levelled at the contract that somehow it will make it more difficult for elderly patients to get treatment, when for the first time they are singled out as being patients whose care requires extra payment from the state.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 25 July.

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** This morning I had a number of meetings. I then received General Yazov, the Soviet Defence Minister, on his first visit to the United Kingdom. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today and will be attending a special garden party to celebrate 150 years of public education. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Is the right hon. Lady intending to reshuffle her as well? *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It is a good thing that I cannot hear many of the sedentary remarks that are made.

**Mr. Flannery:** Now that the Prime Minister has guillotined half the Cabinet and frightened the other half to death, can I assume that that is an admission that all the fundamental policies of the Conservatives have been wrong? [HON. MEMBERS: "Yes."] Is it not a fact that they have been wrong in, for instance, education, the economy, the poll tax, water and pollution? *[Interruption.]* It is clear that hon. Members in all parts of the House agree with me. Is the right hon. Lady now for turning, or will the developing chaos of wrong policies continue, to the detriment of the British people?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not think that the hon. Member can count. His side, the Labour Opposition, is constantly changing its policies, which is not surprising considering that they have had, and still have, such a rotten set. We sometimes change members of our Cabinet and Administration in order to pursue the same policies which have brought success to the British people for so long.

**Mr. Michael Morris:** While my right hon. Friend the new Foreign Secretary is getting his feet under the table, will my right hon. Friend contact the Indian Prime Minister and express to him the disquiet of many in the House about what is happening in India's relations with Nepal and Sri Lanka?

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has of course had his feet under the same table, as a very effective Chief Secretary, for a long time.

I saw the Prime Minister of India recently in Paris and had long talks with him. Obviously, he is taking an active part in the difficult questions that face Sri Lanka. I am sure that he will consider everything carefully in the interests of the people there, of the people of India and of his own army. I also know of the difficulty that is being encountered over Nepal and of the disquiet that it is causing in some parts of this House.

**Mr. Kinnock:** Will the Prime Minister be good enough to convey my congratulations to the former Foreign Secretary on his promotion? Can the Prime Minister tell us whether the appointment of the right hon. and learned Gentleman is intended to result in any changes in policy?

**The Prime Minister:** As usual, the right hon. Gentleman cannot have listened to previous answers before he came up with his prepared question. I made it quite clear in my previous reply that changes in the Cabinet will mean that the policies that have been so successful in Britain, and so successful in the House, will continue, because we have the right policies and they have transformed our country.

**Mr. Kinnock:** If the Prime Minister is saying that no changes are needed, is she disagreeing, at this early juncture, with her new deputy, who said this morning that he was needed

> "particularly when the Government as a whole are facing a new round of problems on the home front"?

**The Prime Minister:** We shall deal with those problems in this Cabinet as effectively as we dealt with previous problems. I quite understand that the right hon. Gentleman is once again going on about personalities because he is not capable of asking a question on policy.

**Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** Will my right hon. Friend join me in welcoming the Government's decision that Sikh workers on building sites no longer have to wear hard hats? Does she agree that this will be welcomed by many ordinary Sikh people, who will be able to go about their business and do their jobs, and that this demonstrates the Government's understanding attitude to towards ethnic minority British people?

**The Prime Minister:** I know that this decision will be welcome to the Sikh community. My hon. Friend will also be aware that employers will be relieved of any compensation that might come about because Sikhs are not wearing hats but, in general, I believe this will be welcome to the Sikh community.

**Dr. Owen:** While we welcome the new Foreign Secretary, may we have a pledge from the Prime Minister that she does not intend to interfere incessantly, and that, if he wishes to make a statement to the House on society, whether British or foreign, she will not cross it out?

**The Prime Minister:** I have great confidence in the present Foreign Secretary, as I had in the previous one. I notice that the present Foreign Secretary has taken over after quite a prolonged period of office in Cabinet, unlike the right hon. Gentleman before he was made Foreign Secretary.

**Mr. Cormack:** Will my right hon. Friend turn her attention later today to the problem of London's traffic? Does she agree that, whether there is a strike or not, London is grinding to a halt, and that we need to consider such solutions as banning deliveries during certain hours and banning cars that contain fewer than a certain number of passengers? Does she agree that unless drastic solutions are found London will grind to a halt?

**The Prime Minister:** I am aware that my hon. Friend is concerned, and that he will be more concerned at another totally unnecessary strike tomorrow because the National Union of Railwaymen did not accept the result of an independent arbitration. I know that increased prosperity, and the increased number of cars, brings increased traffic problems. This is a traffic problem and my right hon. Friend the new Transport Secretary will be looking at that, among other things.

Q2. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 25 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Wareing:** Having carried out a reshuffle of her Cabinet of doormats, is the Prime Minister aware that the British people do not appreciate the Right-wing extremism of the Government's policies, nor do they trust her to handle the National Health Service now that it has been revealed that so many local health authorities are having their budgets cut? Does the Prime Minister realise that the day that millions of people in this country yearn for is the day when they see the back of her?

**The Prime Minister:** No. As the hon. Gentleman knows, the policies followed by the Government have brought a higher standard of living to this country than has ever been known and a higher standard of social services than could ever have been provided by previous Governments. I do not think that the people wish to return to the awful standard of living, awful health services and the terrible domination by the trade unions that were the characteristics of previous Labour Governments. Cheer up—I notice that even the Labour party is trying to move Right because it thinks that those policies are more popular.

**Mr. Greg Knight:** Can my right hon. Friend confirm that the average law-abiding football fan has nothing to fear from the passage into law of the Government's Football Spectators Bill? Will not the only type of person placed in difficulty be the hooligan, the person who regularly exhibits bouts of threatening behaviour such as swearing in public, perhaps to a radio interviewer, or causing fights in the streets, say, outside an Indian restaurant?

**The Prime Minister:** I agree with my hon. Friend. The Football Spectators Bill will give us extra defences against hooligans and extra powers to get better grounds. I agree that the law-abiding spectator will welcome it. The legislation also gives us a basis on which to bring into law any proposals resulting from the Hillsborough report without having to wait a further year.

Q3. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 25 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** On Mr. Tiny Rowland's campaign in *The Observer* on Tornado, the House of Fraser and other matters, did the Prime Minister ever meet the Sultan of Brunei and discuss the takeover of the House of Fraser? Is it true that the report by the independent directors of *The Observer* into that newspaper was a whitewash in so far as it believed Mr. Rowland when he said that he did not have links with Dassault, while at the same time Lonrho employees were busily briefing Fleet street, especially Jon Craig of the *Sunday Times*, saying that there were commercial links between Lonrho and Dassault? Is it not about time that Mr. Rowland divested himself of control of *The Observer?*

**The Prime Minister:** I have no information on the hon. Gentleman's last point, but I am aware that the hon. Gentleman has tabled a number of early-day motions on this point. It would not be right for the Government to make any comment while the investigations concerning the House of Fraser continue. I meet the Sultan of Brunei from time to time to discuss matters of state. He is a very good friend of Britain.

**Mr. Bellingham:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that the majority of east coast ports are now working normally? Is she aware also that unemployment in King's Lynn has come down from a high of more than 15 per cent. to under 5 per cent. and that with a new, reinvigorated port unemployment should disappear altogether?

**The Prime Minister:** Dock workers are steadily returning to the ports. I think that they realise that there is no point in a strike. They are more keen to build a future for the ports in which they work and for the industries in the hinterland of those ports. The passing of the Dock Work Act was a good decision for the future prosperity of my hon. Friend's area and for all those in the hinterland of those ports.

Q4. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 25 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Skinner:** Does the Prime Minister agree that as she has not sacked or moved the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary or the Secretary of State for Wales, they must have been the most successful members of the Cabinet? Will she confirm that she has moved the Secretary of State for the Environment, who did not have the presentational skills to sell the poll tax? That being so, against the background of a massive trade deficit, how will he sell our goods abroad?

**The Prime Minister:** I think that the hon. Gentleman must be very satisfied with the overwhelming majority of policies that are being pursued by this Government and bringing such prosperity to this country. With regard to the community charge, I understand that many Opposition Members wish to have high expenditure but do not wish to contribute to it. That is totally and utterly wrong. As the hon. Gentleman knows, the community charge will contribute to only 25 per cent. of local authority expenditure in England, only 18 per cent. of local authority expenditure in Wales and only 14 per cent. of local authority expenditure in Scotland. It will be a much, much fairer charge than any previous charge, and I note that the Labour party has abandoned its latest policy because it is absolutely rotten.

## BILLS PRESENTED

### MOTOR VEHICLES (MILEAGE READINGS)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths, supported by Mr. Gareth Wardell, Mr. Tony Lloyd, Mr. Michael Latham, Sir Hal Miller, Mr. Tom Cox and Mr. Roy Hughes, presented a Bill to require the Department of Transport to establish a register of the mileage of each motor vehicle whenever ownership is recorded or transferred, and on every occasion that the vehicle is licensed; and to require the owner of the vehicle to supply this information: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 20 October and to be printed. [Bill 195.]

### MOTOR TRADE (CONSUMER PROTECTION)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths, supported by Mr. Roger King, Mr. Tom Cox, Mr. Gareth Wardell, Mr. Tony Lloyd and Mr. Roy Hughes, presented a Bill to seek to control the activities of motor dealers and in particular to ensure the protection of consumers in respect of roadworthiness and a description of motor vehicles: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 20 October and to be printed. [Bill 196.]

### PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS (RANDOM BREATH TESTING)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths, supported by Sir Philip Goodhart, Mrs. Rosie Barnes, Mr. John Home Robertson, Mr. Roland Boyes and Mr. Tony Lloyd, presented a Bill to make provision for police officers to conduct random breath tests on drivers to deter drinking and driving: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 20 October. [Bill 197.]

## Ban on Imports (Child Labour)

3.31 pm

**Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie** (Glasgow, Pollok): I beg to move,

> That leave be given to bring in a Bill to prohibit the sale of imported goods, the manufacture of which has involved child labour.

I place before the House a Bill that seeks to ban the import of goods that have been produced using child labour. I do so because to use children in this way is a crime. It denies their right to be treated as human beings while, at the same time, denying the right of adult workers to earn a wage worthy of their labour. As long as we buy the goods that child labour produces, we help to maintain a system that our own history has proved evil.

Today, I shall cite examples of child exploitation in India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, South America, Turkey and Portugal. This is only scratching the surface, because child labour is so commonly used that it is impossible to detail the full extent of its misery in 10 minutes.

Children today work in conditions every bit as wretched as those that prevailed in the darkest days of our own industrial revolution—when little mites were forced to toil from dawn till dusk in unhealthy, poorly lit, badly ventilated and highly dangerous conditions because the pittance doled out to them by the profit-hungry capitalists was needed to eke out the miserable wages that were grudgingly given to their parents.

Such vile conditions epitomise the very worst of those Victorian values that are so highly revered in certain quarters—values that set the human soul at naught in the all-pervading pursuit of profit.

My interest in the evils of child labour was aroused by various media reports, and, while I am pleased at the number of hon. Members who have signed the early-day motion that I tabled at Easter, I am sorry that the Government would not name the high street stores that currently sell goods that have been made using child labour, because, every day, all over the world, children are abused as they produce many of the goods we buy. Often they work in conditions of slavery—always in conditions of misery and injustice.

This is clearly seen in the now infamous story of India's carpet boys. In the state of Uttar-Pradesh 100,000 children work their weary little fingers to the bone as they knot carpets, 90 per cent. of which are exported. Children as young as five and six work up to 15 hours a day, seven days a week, and a boy of seven is described as a "skilled craftsman". They get just enough food to keep them working, are frequently beaten, and often have to sleep beside their looms because they do not have homes to go to as they have either been kidnapped or sold into debt bondage.

One of the biggest British Firms using looms here is E. M. Hill and Co., which pays its loom owners £105 for a carpet. The loom owner, in turn, may pay his four children £4 each—that is, if he pays them at all. What price the status symbol of those handwoven Indian carpets that sell in some London stores for from £1,200 to £5,000?

Next to that cruelty are the flames reminiscent of Dante's "Inferno", whose deafening noise drowns out the piteous cries of those who toil amidst blazing furnace temperatures, designed to rent asunder body and soul. Life's punishments are meted out by making the doomed slave in temperatures of 1,800 deg. as they are forced to stretch into the mouth of a furnace to draw out molten material. They then have to run, carrying it on a seven-foot ladle, trampling on broken glass on the way. In such a hell-hole, is it any wonder that tuberculosis is rife, and hideous accidents and burns commonplace?

Yet those are the conditions that little children of eight and nine have to work in as they toil in India's glass factories. Their labour is deemed to be so necessary that the owner of the C. A. glass works, where Nescafé jars are made, has been quoted as saying:

> "The glass industry cannot function without children. They can run much faster than adults and therefore production goes up."

Similar conditions apply in neighbouring Bangladesh. The *Daily Record* recently exposed the shame of the Scottish tea company, James Finlay, whose chairman, Sir Colin Moffat Campbell, was quoted as saying:

> "We are very proud of our achievements over there in Bangladesh."

Those achievements involve adults having to work for 60p a day and children having to work with them. Sir Colin's claim not to employ child labour is on a par with the description of his home at Kylbryde castle as "just a medium-sized house". Thank God I do not share his values.

In Thailand, poor people are often forced to sell their children into slavery and a quarter of the work force is aged between 10 and 14. As outlined recently in the magazine *Marie-Claire*, conditions in Thailand's sweatshops make those described by Charles Dickens read like life in a holiday camp. Examples have been given of children working in a soya sauce factory from 5 am one morning until 2 am the next. Others in an electric light factory have to cut through bare wires with their teeth. In a factory that makes plastic straws, kids work from 5 am until 11 pm, after which they are locked up to stop them running away.

In Malaysia, many children are forced to work as part of the family unit because their parents are too under-nourished to have the strength they need to meet their daily rubber quotas. The quotas are becoming more and more difficult to meet as the demand for latex products grows with the AIDS epidemic.

The BBC programme, "Child Slaves", also showed recently that children have to work as part of the family unit in Mexico where, at the age of 12 or 13, they have to tend the crops to make sure that the man from Del Monte says yes, that everything is ship-shape in Captain Bird's Eye's garden and that life stays jolly in the valley of the Green Giant. Life is anything but a barrel of laughs for the kids whose youth is eaten away by the greed of the multinationals. The "real thing" for kids in Brazil means that they have to toil in the sugar plantations to make sure that "things go better with Coca Cola" for the millions who drink it.

Nor can Europe be complacent. Children as young as 10 have been found working in the sweatshops of Turkey, sewing garments for customers who often ask that the products reach them without labels so that they can then sew in their own, unblemished by the sweaty calluses on the tiny palms that made them.

Everyone knows that Portugal's shoe trade has been allowed to flourish at the expense of British jobs. Its cheap shoes are in most high street stores. Even though Portugal has been a member of the EEC for three years, many of those shoes are still made using child labour. Firms such as Marks and Spencer say that they try to ensure that the shoes they sell have not been made by exploiting children, but why do they not guarantee it?

I fear that, all too often, reasonable prices hide the real cost of the products that we are asked to buy, in terms of the misery and suffering that have produced them. Opponents will argue that such is life, and that to ban the imports would make life even worse for the children. Balderdash! Two wrongs do not make a right in any language and so long as we stand back and do nothing, we condemn more children to endure hell in their short lives here on earth. The time for mere sympathy is over. We must act now to make sure that child exploitation is ended.

Britain can give a lead here, because we are one of the biggest importers of goods that have been produced by child labour. We must now become the voice of conscience, through which the silent pleas of the abused cry out for mercy.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie, Mr. Allen Adams, Mr. Jimmy Wray, Mr. Jimmy Hood, Mr. Alan Meale, Mr. John Hughes, Mr. Frank Cook, Mr. Don Dixon, Mr. George Galloway, Mr. Keith Vaz, Mr. Mike Watson and Mr. Frank Haynes.

### BAN ON IMPORTS (CHILD LABOUR)

Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie accordingly presented a Bill to prohibit the sale of imported goods, the manufacture of which has involved child labour: and the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 20 October, and to be printed. [Bill 198.]

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill) throughout the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Pollok (Mr. Dunnachie) was not just chunnering away, but was shouting out. He was making all sorts of remarks. I think that he said that it was a waste of the House's time. The hon. Gentleman should begin to learn some manners.

**Mr. Speaker:** I was listening carefully to what the hon. Member who moved the motion was saying. I did not hear anything else.

# Opposition Day

[18TH ALLOTTED DAY]

## Local Government Finance

**Mr. Speaker:** We now come to the first of the Opposition motions—that on the poll tax. I must announce to the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister.

3.42 pm

**Dr. John Cunningham** (Copeland): I beg to move—*[Interruption.]* That is all very well, but we would like to see that right hon. Gentleman replaced with a Socialist Secretary of State.

I beg to move,

That this House rejects the unfair, inefficient, intrusive and bureaucratic poll tax, the so-called community charge, because the tax will bear most harshly on the poorest and weakest in the community, will discriminate against carers at home, will undermine and distort local accountability by concentrating an unprecedented 75 per cent. of local authority expenditure under Ministerial control, and is capricious and unfair in its effect on areas of the country with low rateable values; furthermore regards the proposed rebate system as mean and inadequate; recognises that the national business tax will cause grave financial problems for thousands of small business people; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to abandon these proposals.

We already have evidence of those effects in Scotland.

Before I proceed, I want to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman the new Secretary of State on his major promotion. We know that he brings considerable intelligence and ability to a Department much in need of both. However, what has been lacking in the Department of the Environment are not just those things, but good judgment and coherent principles to safeguard the environment, the essential public services and local democratic government.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): Will my hon. Friend remind the House of how many Environment Secretaries he has seen off since he has been Shadow Environment Secretary? How long does he think the new incumbent will last in his office before we have a Socialist Environment Secretary?

**Dr. Cunningham:** As I said earlier, it is all very well seeing off Tory Secretaries of State, but I am getting a little fed up with them being replaced by other Tories. Next time we want to replace not only the right hon. Gentleman, but all Members of the Treasury Front Bench.

The new Secretary of State and his new Minister for Local Government, the hon. Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt), whom we also congratulate and welcome, must have at least some private misgivings, because they have inherited something of a shambles. The poll tax, water privatisation, the Government's failure adequately to safeguard the environment, both nationally and internationally, are, together with the threat to the National Health Service, the most deeply resented issues in British politics.

It is evident that no amount of repackaging or changes in personnel can possibly make the poll tax and water privatisations popular, or acceptable to the British people. Both are clearly seen as deeply unfair, inefficient and

*[Dr. Cunningham]*

damaging to families, to services such as education, and to the environment. Both are inconsistent with the widespread desire of the British people for a better quality of life.

Therefore, without fundamental changes in the policies themselves, the new Secretary of State faces just as rough a ride with his colleagues as his predecessor—indeed, an even tougher time, as the awful truth of the consequences of the poll tax and the national business tax on property dawn on the Tory party and the people.

**Mr. Robin Squire** (Hornchurch) *rose*——

**Dr. Cunningham:** No, I shall not give way.

We shall, of course, miss the special and idiosyncratic presentational skills of the previous Secretary of State, whom we also wish well. Opposition Members take considerable pleasure in the knowledge that he is still on the loose, still on the Government Benches and free to range the country in an attempt to recover support for the Tories, much of it lost by his own policies at this Department in the first place. British industry has been remarkably and uncharacteristically silent about its new Secretary of State. We share its obvious misgivings about the future well-being of industrial policy, jobs and the economy.

Like his hon. Friends, we shall listen to the Secretary of State's speech with particular interest. Indeed, the Labour party chose this debate because we wanted to give him the earliest opportunity to announce the changes in policy that he envisages. We promise him a warm welcome.

The Secretary of State will know about the uproar in the Chamber last week about the poll tax—or the "Tory tax" as the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) rightly calls it. That uproar was yet another sign of the fear that is spreading through the Tory party about the implications of the poll tax for them and their survival. Like us, I am sure that they too will be anxious, if not desperate, to hear about changes in policy, not just in personnel and presentation.

It was the predecessor of the Secretary of State who, with typical candour, blew the gaff on the Conservative Government's real intentions about the poll tax when he asked why a duke should pay more than a dustman. The implication is clear. The intention was to introduce a tax unrelated to income or to the ability to pay, and that is exactly what the Tory Government have done.

The people of Scotland have already been made to suffer, but they have reaped their revenge through the ballot box. The people of England and Wales will eventually do so too.

**Sir Nicholas Bonsor** (Upminster) *rose*——

**Dr. Cunningham:** No, I shall not give way at the moment.

We say that there are many reasons—equity, social justice and the principles of progressive taxation—why someone such as Lord King, the chairman of British Airways, with a reported salary of £386,000 per annum, should pay more than an engineering apprentice in his company with a take-home pay of between £65 and £85 per week. We know instinctively that it is grotesquely unfair to make them pay the same contribution in local taxation—*[Interruption.]*

Did I hear a Tory Member mutter something about rebates? Yesterday, I released up-to-date figures compiled by the statistical section of the Library, which showed the mean and inadequate rebates that would have been available if the poll tax had been in operation this year. Last week, the Department finally published its illustrative poll tax figures for 1989-90. Using the latest poll tax figures, I asked the statistical section of the Library to calculate for each local authority the maximum level of net weekly income at which poll tax rebate would be payable to single persons, married couples and pensioners.

The Government have always been afraid and unwilling to publish that information. The Social Security Act 1986 and the poll tax Act 1988 require everyone to pay at least 20 per cent. of the rates bill, regardless of their circumstances or ability to pay. That extremely unfair rule continues next year, when the poll tax comes into force on 1 April 1990 in England and Wales.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman** (Lancaster): Will the hon. Gentleman admit that, because the figures published in the document about the Labour party's proposed capital tax and local income tax showed how catastrophic they would be for the British public, the Labour party abandoned those policies?

**Dr. Cunningham:** No, I will not admit that, because it is not true. There has been no abandonment of policy. Nor did the previous Secretary of State for the Environment publish any realistic figures. The right hon. Gentleman told me in a note referred to in a parliamentary answer on 9 November 1987:

> "There is no comprehensive data available from which to assess the outcome of a capital revaluation of domestic rateable values, and it is not Government policy to undertake such a revaluation. Some insight into the possible effect of a revaluation on the basis of capital values can be obtained by considering the relationship between house prices and existing rateable values in England."

But the Department does not have the data. It was quite dishonest of the previous holder of that high office to fabricate the results.

**The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Chris Patten):** I notice that the Leader of the Opposition said last week that the Opposition's policy needed sophisticating. Will the hon. Gentleman say when it is likely that their policy will be sophisticated enough to share with the rest of us?

**Dr. Cunningham:** We are sophisticating all our policies all the time. That is why there is such a large and growing gap in British public opinion about the relative merits of party policy. When we have finished our considerations of these matters, the Secretary of State will not be the first to know, and that will come as no surprise to him. However, his right hon. and hon. Friends are waiting to hear from him not about Labour party policy, but how he proposes to dig them out of the appalling mess that present Government policy has got them into in their constituencies. Let me illustrate how big that mess is.

Figures show that a single pensioner in the Prime Minister's Finchley constituency, would face a poll tax bill of £290 per person per annum and would lose all entitlement to rebate if his or her net income exceeded £72·50 per week. In other words, a pensioner with a net income of £73 per week would be expected to find £5·57 per week to pay the poll tax. In Bath, the constituency of the Secretary of State, a single pensioner faced with a poll tax bill of £281 per year, according to the Government's figures, would lose all entitlement to rebate if his or her net income exceeded £71·60 per week.

A married couple with two children aged eight and 10 living in Finchley would lose all rebate if their net income exceeded £151 per week. In other words, they would have to find £11·15 per week just to pay their combined poll tax. A married couple with two children living in similar circumstances in the Secretary of State's constituency would lose all entitlement to rebate if their income exceeded £149·10 per week, and would have to find £10·81 per week to pay their combined poll tax bill.

**Mr. John Marshall** (Hendon, South) *rose*——

**Mr. Derek Conway** (Shrewsbury and Atcham) *rose*——

**Dr. Cunningham:** A single person under 25 living in Finchley would lose all entitlement to a rebate if his or her net income exceeded £58·80 per week, and nearly 10 per cent. would go towards the poll tax.

Those are the realistic implications of the impact of the poll tax on take-home pay, including the Government's current proposals for rebates. Those figures prove that all but the poorest face substantial additional tax burdens, with everyone required to pay the minimum 20 per cent. The tables show how little the rebates are related to the ability to pay or personal circumstances and are based on this Government tolerating scandalously low levels of pay and poverty.

The figures reinforce the conclusion of yesterday's Child Poverty Action Group report on poll tax benefits and the poor, which said:

> "The poll tax is intrinsically unfair—as a flat-rate tax, it falls equally on the shoulders of the rich and the poor. Even with the help of rebates it is poorly related to the ability to pay."

The inefficiencies of the poll tax are legion. Local government has already been faced with bills two to three times those for the collection of rates. At the annual conference of the Tory-dominated Association of District Councils, its leader, Tory councillor Roy Thomason, interrupted the then Secretary of State, the present Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, to say:

> "£200 million more, Secretary of State."

The then Secretary of State replied:

> "My advice to you is to find better ways of raising the community charge and try to make savings, rather than always complaining about not having enough money."

That answer was jeered to the rooftops by the Tory-dominated conference of the Association of District Councils.

Last week, there was a fiasco when the Government announced the so-called "safety nets". Howls of outrage from Tory Members rang round this Chamber, but in the main, they were only getting what they voted for in Division after Division, when, with a few honourable exceptions, they passed the legislation in the first place. The panic in the Tory party was astonishing.

**Mr. Squire:** As the hon. Gentleman and the House know, I come into the category he has just mentioned. If he is to beguile me to an alternative solution, he must—as I am sure he will—suggest one or more alternative ways in which we may proceed; otherwise, I may be convinced to follow my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

**Dr. Cunningham:** I recollect that the hon. Gentleman had his own alternative, which he tried to persuade his ministerial colleagues to accept, without success. In the main, Tory Members voted for what they are getting, and their panic is astonishing. It exposes the reality that many of them apparently did not know what they were voting for.

The safety net financial allocations are as capricious as every other aspect of the poll tax. Their application has nothing to do with efficiency or otherwise. Tories in the north, especially the north-west and Yorkshire, want more grant for their often Labour-controlled authorities because they fear a political backlash. Tories in the south complain that their constituents will subsidise their colleagues' areas. Let us consider the reality.

Wandsworth, for example, a Tory borough, gains £46·4 million from the safety net system. Is Wandsworth inefficient? Is that what Conservative Members are saying? Is it a poor council? Or is there a political reason for that allocation? Birmingham, a Labour city, contributes £50·2 million. Birmingham certainly qualifies under the Tory definition of efficiency, yet Birmingham has huge problems in housing, employment and inner-city difficulties. It has had to adjust to a cumulative loss of more than £500 million in rate support grant alone under this Government. Yet the people of Birmingham, under the safety nets, are asked to contribute an additional £50·2 million to subsidise the poll tax.

Let us consider Westminster. Is that a well-run Tory council? The safety net effect adds £33 per adult to the poll tax of £428 in Westminster. Lady Porter's policy of "building stable communities", which was described by Tory councillor Mrs. Patricia Kirwan as "gerrymandering the electoral processes", will cost each poll tax payer in Westminster an extra £60 a year. Is Westminster efficient? Are any Conservative voices raised about what is going on there?

Copeland borough council in my own constituency, which, under Labour control, had no rates increases for seven years, gains £5·2 million from safety netting—equivalent to £94 poll tax per adult—but the average two-adult household in my constituency will still be £40 a year worse off under the poll tax than under the rating system. So much for Tory claims that people are benefiting.

We know that poll tax registration involves massive new and regrettable intrusions into people's privacy and family lives. Many councils are asking people to respond to questions that the registration officer has no right to ask in the first place. Breaches of the Data Protection Act 1984 have occurred, and more than 300 councils are being required by the Data Protection Registrar to account for the questions on their forms. I seriously ask the Secretary of State to go away and look at that problem and do something about it. Will the Government stop unnecessary, and in some cases unlawful, activity by poll tax registration officers?

Those problems were highlighted during our debates, but they were dismissed by the then Ministers.

I should like to know whether the Secretary of State intends to make any changes. Responsibility for the final level of poll tax charged will overwhelmingly rest with Ministers and not with councils, whatever their political control. Ministers will decide and control 75 per cent. of council income, and they have already begun to consider how they can gerrymander the situation.

In the controversial propaganda leaflet that was sent to every household earlier this year, the Government said:

*[Dr. Cunningham]*

"Every council will decide the level of its community charge—just as it decides the rates now."

Of course, that statement is totally untrue. The leaflet goes on to mention the needs grant that each council will get. What the leaflet does not say is that the Secretary of State himself will decide how much each council needs to spend. His decisions could make hundreds of pounds of difference to the poll tax to be paid by almost every adult. That is what the system provides for.

The Opposition have a copy of the Government's working documents. For instance, one set of figures in front of the Secretary of State tells him that Birmingham needs to spend £627 million to provide a standard level of finance—to the Government's standards, that is. However, another figure tells the Secretary of State that Birmingham needs to spend £750 million to provide that same standard level. An analysis of the figures shows that the different formulae available for the Secretary of State to choose from could add over £3 a week to the poll tax for everyone in Birmingham. In almost every local authority, the situation and the effect are the same.

In Westminster, for example, the Secretary of State's choices could influence the poll tax by as much as £4·76 a week, in Kensington and Chelsea by £4·41 a week, in Wandsworth by about £3·70 a week, in Portsmouth by £2·20 a week, in Manchester by £3·40 a week, in Newcastle by £2·70 a week, and in Newham by as much as £5·40 a week. That is the Secretary of State's latitude, in addition to his 75 per cent. control, in determining exactly how much poll tax will be paid by people in towns and cities. It is nonsense to claim that that increases accountability and leaves more decision taking for local government. It does exactly the opposite.

The figures make a mockery of the Government's claims that high levels of poll tax are due to inefficiency or high spending. They demolish the argument that the poll tax will increase local accountability. Hundreds of pounds per person per year can be added to councils' bills by the Government and the figures that they decide to put into their computers.

From April 1990, Tory Ministers will control more than 75 per cent. of all local government income, an unprecedented state not only in Britain but in any western democracy. The Government's documents expose their determination to exercise even greater control over local government revenue raising. They show that the biggest influence on poll tax bills will be central Government policies and decisions, not local authority decisions taken in the communities.

For the increasingly large number of Tory Members who are now panicking, there is more bad news on the way. Last February, the Government announced their proposal for phasing in the combined effects of the nationalisation of business rate poundages and the first revaluation since 1973. Increases in business rate bills are planned to be restricted to 20 per cent. per annum plus inflation. Businesses gaining from the changes will have their benefits delayed. It all sounds remarkably like poll tax safety nets, and will have the same political effect when Tory Members and those business people active in local Conservative associations wake up to what is happening. An increase of 20 per cent. per annum plus inflation means rates bills going up by three times in five years.

Even five years of safety nets will not lead to the full introduction of the new business rate arrangement. Businesses in Tory areas in the south will find their poundages rising hugely. Government figures included with the poll tax calculations published on 19 July show that Kensington and Chelsea's business rate poundage will rise by 111·4 per cent., Wandsworth's by 60 per cent., Westminster's by 51 per cent., Redbridge's by 46 per cent., Bromley's by 43 per cent. and South Herefordshire's by 23 per cent. The revaluation will push up the figures even further. The combined effect of national business tax and revaluation in, for example, Kensington and Chelsea will have astronomical implications for the business rates that people will be expected to pay.

The Government are trying to cover up that unpalatable arithmetic. The new rateable values for every individual property must be deposited by the Inland Revenue with charging authorities by 31 December—yet the first that businesses will know about them, unless they or their advisers track them down in the town halls, will be when they receive the bills in March 1990. The Government hope that ratepayers will look only at the amount payable, restricted to an increase of 20 per cent. plus inflation, and not the eventual liability shown by the rateable value. Most business people will soon see through that. If Tory Members think that they are in trouble now because of the poll tax, let them wait until the facts of the new business tax come out.

A number of Conservative Members have asked about Labour party policy. For the expenditure of a modest 75p and a letter to Walworth road, they can have a copy of our document. We intend to introduce a modern property tax based on the capital value of a property, with up to 100 per cent. rebates for low-income families or those least able to pay; we will reduce the proportion of local taxes raised through property tax; we will dedicate an element of the income tax to local government; we will restore business rates as a local tax; we will return meaningful purpose to the statutory consultation between local authorities and local businesses; we will end the ever-changing and chaotic restrictions, penalties and cuts; and we will have annual elections for a part of every local authority.

That will provide for a local taxation system that is genuinely fair because it is directly related to the ability to pay. It will end the need for dramatic increases in local tax bills. It will restore the right of local people and their councillors to govern their communities and raise revenue free from central control. It will take account of the differences in resources of authorities in different parts of the country.

**Mr. John Heddle** (Mid-Staffordshire): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Dr. Cunningham:** No.

The Cirencester besom has been replaced by the modern Tory technological broom, from arid Silk Cut dry to Blue Chip glistening wet. The Secretary of State comes with a record of rebelling against cuts in employment and housing benefit, being in favour of aid to the poorest and of incomes policy, and is described as the heir to the tradition of Macmillan and Macleod.

**Mr. Heddle** *rose*——

**Dr. Cunningham:** The Secretary of State was co-author of the pamphlet by the Blue Chip Group, which argued that the Prime Minister's economic policies were socially divisive and politically unworkable. He was vice-president of the Tory Reform Group. He has now been promoted to patron of the Tory Reform Group, the body which published a paper on the poll tax which said:

> "The Government's case for the community charge rests, above all, on achieving proper accountability. Yet this is precisely where it fails."

It said that the poll tax

> "shows every sign of being an administrative nightmare"

and that the uniform business rate

> "will result in a massive increase in the centralisation of power."

Those are the views of the Tory Reform Group, of which we learn that the right hon. Gentleman is no longer a mere vice-president but a patron.

What has changed? Have his views changed, have the views of the Tory Reform Group changed, or have the Prime Minister's policies changed? If he was asked for his view yesterday, did he say with candour—candour which we know that he has in abundance—"Margaret, we have got it about as wrong as possible"? Or was it "as you were" with the policy?

The Secretary of State's problem is that the profoundly detested policies that he has inherited are the Prime Minister's own ideas. The policies have exceeded their shelf life. The ideas have passed their sell-by date and the British people will no longer buy them.

The flat-rate poll tax is a scandal which divides Britain from the rest of Europe and every other western democracy. The poll tax is unique to Britain; no other country in Europe has a tax that is so harsh, unfair and intrusive. The 24th amendment to the constitution of the United States of America rules out any connection between poll tax and citizenship. Churches, charities, voluntary organisations, businesses and many——

**Mr. Roger King** (Birmingham, Northfield): We do not live in America. We live here.

**Dr. Cunningham:** Unfortunately, the hon. Gentleman does live here.

—leading Tories have all condemned the poll tax proposals, and the Labour party's protest campaign has informed and focused the overwhelming opposition of the British people.

**Mr. Hill:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Dr. Cunningham:** No.

But whatever the Secretary of State's message today, our message is clear: the poll tax will go when the Prime Minister and her Government go. There can be no future for such an iniquitous, unfair, inefficient and capricious tax. A Labour Government will abolish it.

4.13 pm

**The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Chris Patten):** I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and add instead thereof:

> "supports the introduction of the community charge, the principles of which are manifestly fairer and simpler than those that now apply to domestic rates; welcomes the exemptions conferred on those who cannot be asked to pay and the generous discounts, rebates and increased income support available for those on low incomes; recognises that the unified business rating system introduces a valuable stability for non-domestic ratepayers; congratulates Her Majesty's Government on implementing proposals that will improve the accountability of local government by insisting that all who benefit from their services should have a say in their quality and cost; and notes that either a local income tax or a two-tax system based upon local income tax and capital value tax would be much more expensive to implement, much more unfair and make local government much less accountable."

I shall begin as I am sure the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) and I will go on. The hon. Gentleman paid me some very genial courtesies, and I return the compliment. As the House knows, the hon. Member for Copeland was a Labour moderate before it became compulsory. He was a moderate before anyone had heard the name of Peter Mandelson. As a result, he has always enjoyed the respect of the House. I realise that, for as long as the hon. Gentleman comes to the Opposition Dispatch Box, I shall always have my work cut out. Between the two of us—wild-eyed fanatics that we both are—I am sure that we shall keep our debates within the bounds of sobriety and public decorum.

A combination of typical ministerial humility and concern for all right hon. and hon. Members who wish to participate in the debate persuades me to be brief. *[Laughter.]* I knew that the hon. Member for Copeland would believe that. It is always tiresome when Front Bench speakers take up too much time in short debates.

The burden of the comments that I have heard from Labour spokesmen, such as those made on television last night by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and in the speech of the hon. Member for Copeland is—I shall try to be briefer than the hon. Gentleman managed to be—different man, same policy. Having listened to the comments of the hon. Member for Copeland, I have an overwhelming feeling that, had I been privileged to participate in earlier debates, I could say of him now—same man, same speech.

The House can be in little doubt that the hon. Member for Copeland does not care much for the Government's reform of local government finance, but he remains more than a trifle obscure on what he would do instead. There is an unfashionable degree of consensus on one particularly important point. On the Opposition, Conservative and Democrat Benches, there is agreement that the existing system of domestic rates must be replaced. The main reason why that must be done is that the domestic rating system is unfair. Whatever may have been the case in the 19th century, there is little relationship today between the rateable value of domestic property and the value of the services that individuals receive from their local authorities.

Still less is there much of a relationship in many cases between the value of a house or flat and the ability of its occupant to pay for local services. Moreover, the present system obscures the relationship between expenditure on services and payment for them. I shall deal with those points in more detail shortly.

I was not sure from the remarks of the hon. Member for Copeland, and from the Opposition's comments over the past few weeks, about their alternative. Sometimes they seem to have one, sometimes not. Today seemed to start as a have day, then it was a not day, and then a have day again. On have days—and perhaps this is one of them after all—it is suggested that about 80 per cent. of locally raised revenue should come from capital value rates. That would exacerbate the problems of the existing system. We all know well enough that an increase in the value of our house or flat does not mean that we can afford to pay more

*[Mr. Chris Patten]*

for local authority services or for anything else. If that is true for most people, what about the retired, the widowed, and all those people living on fixed incomes?

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): Is the Secretary of State aware that the Select Committee on the Environment of the 1979 Session, which had a Conservative majority, totally rejected the poll tax as an alternative to the rating system? The poll tax was rejected also by one of the right hon. Gentleman's predecessors as Secretary of State for the Environment, the right hon. Member of Henley (Mr. Heseltine). May we take it that the Secretary of State is enthusiastic about the poll tax as an alternative to the existing rating system?

**Mr. Patten:** My memory of past Environment Select Committee reports is clearly not as extensive as the hon. Gentleman's. What I do recall is that I, along with my right hon. and hon. Friends, have fought two elections arguing the case for a community charge, and that we won those elections with what can only be described as comfortable majorities.

**Mr. Brian Wilson** (Cunninghame, North): If the Secretary of State is going to cling to this policy, may I suggest that he learns his history a little better? Is he not aware that a White Paper in 1982 specifically rejected the idea of a poll tax, on the grounds that it was unworkable and unfair? Does he recollect that the Government went into the 1983 general election making no mention of a poll tax, and—again—specifically rejecting the possibility of one?

**Mr. Patten** *indicated dissent.*

**Mr. Wilson:** It is no use the Secretary of State shaking his head. The poll tax was invented in panic after revaluations in Scotland in 1984. Does the right hon. Gentleman not accept that it is both paradoxical and an insult to his own intelligence that he should start his speech by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on his moderation and then —apparently—give notice that he is going to accept uncritically the most extreme and offensive of the Government's policies?

**Mr. Patten:** That intervention suggests that we should not give way in debates such as this as often as we would like. Let me point out to the hon. Gentleman—I know perhaps even more than he does about these matters—that we began to advocate the abolition of domestic rates in 1974, and included that view in our election manifesto. *[Interruption.]*

**Dr. Cunningham:** I am grateful to the Secretary of State for giving way. I do not give way to hon. Members who sit and shout abuse during debates.

The Secretary of State does not seem to have a very clear grasp of the chronology of policy development in his own party. Is he not aware that his right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) has gone on record, as have his supporters, as making it clear that he worked with all his might and main to ensure that no mention was made of the poll tax in the Tory party's 1983 manifesto?

**Mr. Patten:** Whatever our disputes about the history of Conservative manifestos, I think that even the hon. Gentleman will concede that there was a clear mention of the community charge in our last manifesto. If it will suit him, I will settle for one example: the majority that we won in the last election, which we fought on the community charge.

I was pointing out that capital-value rates, as advocated by Opposition Members—coupled with a local income tax —would not be fair or administratively simple; nor would they overcome the lack of accountability to the electorate. That is one of the great drawbacks of the existing system. I know that the Opposition have criticised us for allegedly distorting their policy and its effects, but I am prepared to do a deal, and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will consider it fair. If the Opposition will tell us clearly exactly what their policy is, and the assumptions on which it is based, we shall be willing to work out with them a fair comparison of our proposals and theirs. I do not think that anything could be fairer than that.

**Dr. Cunningham:** The Secretary of State's predecessor made the same offer. The right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewksbury (Mr. Ridley), however, was not aware that I had already tabled a parliamentary question asking him to do just that. When we are ready, we will ask the Secretary of State to do it, but as he wants to avoid distorting the implications of our policy, why does he not consult the Institute for Fiscal Studies? *The Sunday Times*—not, incidentally, a known supporter of the Labour party—invited the institute to examine our proposals, and this is what it reported:

> "Smith found that Mr and Mrs Average, a couple with children, and an income of £13,000 a year, could expect to pay a total of £394 a year in poll tax, but only £363 under Labour's plan."

In other words, they would do better under Labour.

The Rating and Valuation Association has also carried out studies, which conclude that our proposals are not only fairer but more efficient than the poll tax. Why does the Secretary of State not read those?

**Mr. Patten:** The hon. Gentleman had better have a word with his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition, who only last week told the hon. Gentleman and others that their policy needed sophisticating, as it was not quite right. When the hon. Gentleman has finished his sophisticating, and has put his policy in place, we shall be happy to look at it. I hope that, when we do so, the hon. Gentleman and other Opposition Members will not complain as they did last week when we present the House with the consequences.

**Mr. Matthew Taylor** (Truro) *rose*——

**Mr. Patten:** I have already given way as many times as the hon. Member for Copeland, and I wish to get on.

There are three main attacks in the motion and the hon. Gentleman's speech. We are told that the new arrangements are unfair, undemocratic and unworkable. We all know that domestic rates are an unfair tax on property. They are paid for by only half the adult population. They take no account of the number of adults living in a house, and there is a poor fit between the rateable value of a property and the income of its occupants. Four out of 10 people in above-average rated properties have below-average incomes. By contrast, the community charge is fairer, simpler and more honest. It is based on people rather than property, and for the first time it will be paid by almost all adults. The charge will share the cost of paying for local council services more widely and fairly, but people will not all pay the same bill.

**Rev. Martin Smyth** (Belfast, South): I welcome the Secretary of State to his new position. He has served in Northern Ireland in the past. Can he enlighten us as to why the boon has not been extended to Northern Ireland? Is it because, in the past, we believed that those who paid rates had a responsibility to take part in local authorities?

**Mr. Patten:** I had some responsibility for local government in Northern Ireland a few years ago. As the hon. Gentleman will know, local government in Northern Ireland, for a variety of historical reasons with which the hon. Gentleman will disagree, has different functions and responsibilities from local government in this country. If the hon. Gentleman would like the community charge to be introduced in Northern Ireland, he will be able to pursue that in conversations with the responsible Minister in the Northern Ireland Office.

As I have said, people will not all pay the same bill. The rebate system that we are introducing offers help where it is most needed—among those with low incomes or no income at all. It is more generous than the present system of rate rebates. Taking the arrangements for the community charge and the rebate together, it is worth noting that one in four charge payers will receive a rebate. I am extremely concerned that those who need help should receive it. I am asking my officials, as a matter of urgency, to review the arrangements we are making to maximise the take-up of rebates.

For 5 million people, the continuation of the maximum rebate and the uprating of income support, which has already taken place, will mean that, unless they live under a very high-spending authority, they will not be paying anything extra in community charge. Indeed, they may well be a little in pocket.

**Mr. James Hill** (Southampton, Test): When my right hon. Friend is listening to the selective figures from the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) will he give the figures for Southampton, which are extremely favourable to a city of 250,000 people? At the same time, will he try to get out of the Opposition Front Bench spokesmen their policy to take over from the poll tax?

**Mr. Patten:** I am afraid that my knowledge of the position in Southampton is not as encyclopaedic as my hon. Friend's. I will encourage my hon. Friend who will reply to the debate to refer to those figures. Widows, single-parent families and others who are hard hit by rates in particular areas will be more fairly treated.

The next plank of the argument advanced by the hon. Member for Copeland is that there is something undemocratic about the new arrangements. There is certainly something deeply undemocratic about the present system. Only half the local electorate pay for the services enjoyed by us all.

**Mr. Allan Roberts** (Bootle): Why does the Secretary of State continue with the myth that, because there are only half as many rate bills as poll tax bills, only half as many people contribute? Do not all members of his household, like all other households, contribute to the rates bill? I assure the right hon. Gentleman that in my constituency, if a son is working, he contributes to the rates bill and if a wife has an income, she contributes to the bill—all the family pay the rate bill.

**Mr. Patten:** That is not the criticism that has been put and believed widely by those who have argued against the domestic rating system for many years—certainly at every election that I have ever fought.

We have seen the results of undemocratic weaknesses in many parts of local government, particularly in some inner-city areas governed by the extremist councillors that the Labour party tries to keep under wraps. We have seen sky-high rates for domestic ratepayers; businesses and jobs chased away from where they are needed as a result of rocketing business rates; and waste, inefficiency and extravagance in local authority budgets, contributing to an ever-increasing burden on the few who pay rates.

Under our system, there will be a simple link between the cost of services that an authority chooses to provide and the level of the community charge. People can decide what they think about the quality and cost of those services. The community charge bill will show this crucial relationship in the clearest possible way. Every pound per adult that an authority chooses to spend above the standard level of service will mean £1 extra on the community charge bill. Equally, every £1 per adult saved feeds through to £1 off the bill. That is a major improvement in local accountability and democracy. It gives a clear choice about the cost of local authority policies, which is precisely what the Labour party is so concerned about. The community charge puts the community in charge.

The other argument that we hear from the Opposition is that the new arrangements are complicated and unworkable. The hon. Member for Copeland referred to a scare story and to invasion of privacy. The legislation was drafted specifically to limit the amount of information for which registration officers can ask. We give specific advice, which we agreed with the local authority associations and the Data Protection Registrar, on the registration form. Some registration officers went beyond that and, quite properly, were pulled up short by the registrar. I hope that they will listen to our advice.

**Dr. Cunningham:** This is one of the few points of debate on which there is some agreement. That statement has been made previously by Ministers, but it seems to have gone unheeded. Why does not the Department take action by writing to community charge registration officers or issuing notes for guidance to stop this practice, which is an unnecessary invasion of people's privacy and, in some cases, is illegal? I assume that there is no party political dispute about that matter at least.

**Mr. Patten:** As the hon. Gentleman knows, we have issued guidance. I am certainly prepared to consider whether there is a case for further guidance, because I agree with the hon. Gentleman that in some cases registration officers have gone beyond what the law should have allowed.

It would be remarkable if a system that abolished rates and introduced a long overdue reform of local government finance could be achieved without some disadvantage to some people. Without undermining the principles on which this reform is based, we shall continue to do all we

*[Mr. Patten]*

can to smooth the transition. Much of the recent discussion about the new system has, understandably, concentrated on the safety net.

The changes that are coming next April are substantial. We are moving from a discredited system under which grant is distributed largely on the basis of rateable values to a fairer system. Inevitably, whenever there is change, some people benefit but others are worse off.

One of the main changes is the ending of resource equalisation. That has meant in practice that grant is taken from areas with high rateable values and directed towards areas with low rateable values. This might be a sensible basis for paying grant, but only if one accepts that rateable values are a fair basis for local taxation. As I have explained, that is not the case. With the move to the community charge, we are doing away with that cross-subsidy. It is a cross-subsidy of which few people are aware. It illustrates one of the problems of lack of accountability in the present system.

Councils providing the same level of service will in future be able to set the same community charge. If we had not introduced the new system, those authorities contributing to resource equalisation would have had to continue to pay that back-door cross-subsidy indefinitely. We shall do away with that unfairness.

The issue is how fast we can move to the new system. Some of my hon. Friends want us to move the whole way immediately. They represent those who have been paying the burden of resource equalisation in the past. They want to get rid of it now. I appreciate their concern, but it would not be easy to move to the new system overnight, and what my right hon. Friend proposed last week makes a big start towards phasing out a penalty and phasing in a gain.

Those areas which have traditionally benefited from resource equalisation need a period, however short, to adjust to the new circumstances. Other hon. Members representing those parts of the country have stressed that they need time for people to adjust to the withdrawal of the hidden subsidy. We have, first, made the system explicit. No longer will there be disguised cross-subsidy in the grant system. But we have proposed a temporary safety net which is separately identifiable and which makes clear what is happening.

Secondly, we have nearly halved the amount which contributors will have to pay to the safety net. Over 200 authorities will be better off as a result of the change. They will now pay 40 to 50 per cent. less in the first year than they would have paid under the old safety net proposal. That is significant progress.

I wish to make it absolutely plain that I shall look carefully at the points that were made when my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley) made his statement on local government finance last week. Naturally, some would like to go faster, with more of the gains coming through immediately. Others would wish to go more slowly, giving greater protection to the losers. I am not sure whether that circle can be squared, but I shall pay the closest attention to what is said in this debate and in future discussions.

I come to these issues relatively new. The hon. Member for Copeland made that point. I recognise that there will be many further exchanges across the Floor of the House before the charge is brought in next spring. I shall of course want to listen to any helpful suggestions on how we might make the transition as easy as possible. It would also be a welcome change to hear from Opposition Members —perhaps we have been making progress today; a bit here and a bit there—precisely what they would do, sophisticated or perhaps not so sophisticated.

For our part, we shall continue to press ahead with the introduction of this reform, whatever the kebabing tactics of the Opposition. We shall press ahead for the reasons set out in our amendment to the motion, and I urge the House, for the reasons there set out, to vote with us at the conclusion of the debate.

4.38 pm

**Mr. Dick Douglas** (Dunfermline, West): I listened to the maiden speech by the new Secretary of State for the Environment, the right hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Patten), with great interest. I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on his appointment. I have known him for some time in the House. I met him first as a colleague on the Select Committee on Defence, and I recognise his outstanding ability to grasp, and master, issues. I do not think that he needs to excuse himself if he finds this issue difficult to grasp.

I caution him that he does not need to look at the crystal ball—in Scotland we have the book. The poll tax books are coming through the door. Some of the three-monthly payments are due right now. Nice little letters come through the door to remind us that, if we do not pay for the three months, the whole year will become due.

I caution the Secretary of State because I think that he is a fair man. He comes from overseas development, where he considered the world situation. It was his responsibility to attempt to transfer resources from the richer nations to the poorer nations. An outstanding example of that was his experience in Nepal. We know that because the Select Committee on Defence went there and because of our exchanges with him.

I shall give a graphic illustration of the effect of the poll tax. An old man, aged 90, in my constituency told me that he and his wife, aged 88, have £6,000 in the bank. They pay two poll taxes. He asked, "Dick, my boy, does that mean that I will have to pay the same as the Earl of Elgin?" I told him, "Aye, that's the law." In God's name, is that fair? How can one say honestly that someone who has taken notice of the credos of the Tories, who has been careful and has built up a capital sum, should pay two poll taxes?

An old lady moved about 200 yards down the road to look after her mother, aged 90. The law says that she is now resident there and they will have to pay two poll taxes there and two poll taxes at the standard charge rate for the house that she has vacated. Instead of paying about £800 in rates, they are paying £1,200. How in God's name is that fair?

We have a tax on property. Does the Secretary of State not know that the standard charge is a tax on property? I part company with many of my hon. Friends on many issues, but I think that, in a system of taxation which is multi-based, there is no reason for excusing property. Everything else is taxed, so why in heaven's name is there a case for exempting property? That is what the Tories have tried to do, however, on the basis of accountability.

If one wants to evade accountability for looking after old people properly within the community, what does one do? Put them in a hospital, or a nursing home, where they do not pay any poll tax. Have them in the bosom of the family, however, and they will pay the tax. How in God's name can that be defended in a civilised society which prides itself on trying to look after elderly people?

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): In their constituency surgeries, Scottish Members have come across people who have been crippled by the poll tax. Does my hon. Friend agree that, yesterday, we saw a plain reaction to the Scottish poll tax in the resignation of the right hon. Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger)? Does he also agree that the right hon. Gentleman's resignation shows plainly that he and others in Ayr have given up hope of the Conservatives retaining that seat, because of this and other legislation?

**Mr. Douglas:** I will not digress too much.

The Secretary of State has had experience of Northern Ireland. There is no way the Government would try to introduce the poll tax in Northern Ireland without first putting it in their manifesto, but they did that in Scotland. They put it into practice without it being in the manifesto and the Scottish people have pronounced on it—we have voted on it.

I ask the Secretary of State to give me his attention and not to talk to the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key), who is trying to get his ear.

In Scotland, we pronounced on the poll tax. Accountability is the argument for the poll tax, but the only part of the United Kingdom that had the poll tax in 1987 was Scotland, and the Scottish people overwhelmingly rejected it.

The Secretary of State should not look at a crystal ball when he can read the book. He should consult his colleague, the Secretary of State for Scotland and, in a moment of reasonable quietude, perhaps achieve some understanding of what is happening there. Many people are paying poll tax, but many others, like me, are not. We will accept the odium.

I notice that people in certain parts of England have achieved a change of Secretary of State by burning an effigy of the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor. I wholly disapprove of that practice. I think that it is more illegal, and more of an incitement to bad behaviour, to burn an effigy of the right hon. Gentleman than to say there is a basic right in a civilised society to object, through civil disobedience, to the imposition of an unfair and unjust tax that has been rejected by our people in a democratic ballot. What can we do if they do not listen?

The Secretary of State's closing remarks showed, although it is early days, that he is looking at ways in which the safety net can be shaded. I think that a large proportion, if not all of the safety net, will be borne by the Exchequer.

We came first in Scotland and the Scottish people inherently and instinctively resent being made the guinea pig for legislation which cannot work in any part of the United Kingdom and is certainly not working in Scotland.

I do not know what the figure will be—whether we will have 500,000 non-payers by August—and I cannot predict it, but I predict that it will be substantial. That underlines the fact that payment has brought about an enormous amount of resentment, which has been added to by behaviour in this House last week such as when the right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson) who, although he is a supporter of the poll tax, said that he resented the way that the safety net has been arranged. Also, for the first time in the British media we have seen resentment at the poll tax.

Last year, I ran all the way from Edinburgh to London to protest against the poll tax. I shall continue to protest. This is a marathon race that has been taken up by Opposition Members. We do not intend to renege on that. We will go the distance until the poll tax legislation is removed from the statute book, because it is unfair and unjust, and does not do what the Government have suggested it does. It is unfavourable to the poorer sections of the population and to those sections of the population who ought to be cossetted—the sick and the mentally handicapped. Those people ought to be assisted.

I have sufficient faith in the right hon. Gentleman's background—I will not dwell on his religious upbringing —to believe that, when he examines the matter, there will be adjustments, but they should come in Scotland first. The ideal solution is to remove the legislation from the statute book.

4.48 pm

**Sir Rhodes Boyson** (Brent, North): I recognise the time constraints in this important debate, but I should like first to welcome my right hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Mr. Patten) to the Dispatch Box as Secretary of State for the Environment. We served together in the Northern Ireland Office, and I am sure that he will do an excellent job in charge of the Department of the Environment. It is an important portfolio. I welcome also my hon. Friend the Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt) to his new portfolio —because he will reply to the debate, I have tried to win his favour before deploying my arguments.

First, I believe in effective local government. I do not want power to be centralised, because liberty comes from a balance of power. I spent 10 years in local government and I do not want local government to be stripped of its powers. Over the past 20 years, local government has been threatened because often the majority party in local government differed from the party in government, so they do not have much time for each other. The danger is that the party in control may ride roughshod over the other party.

Secondly, I believe in the community charge. There is a straight difference of opinion between the two sides of the Chamber on this matter, but I believe that people should pay at least something towards what they vote for. That is what responsible government is about. We can argue about the amount that people should pay and about the amount of rebates.

It has been said that people pay as part of a family, but in some parts of the country only one in four of the people on the register pay rates, compared with one in three and one in two in other areas. That is wrong. There is an incentive to increase expenditure when some people can vote to spend other people's money. As a northern nonconformist, I believe that there is no political morality in that. I welcome the community charge as a means of bringing political responsibility into local government voting.

We have frequently heard about the peasants' revolt. Their revolt was basically against the oppressions of the feudal controls on the labour market. I would argue that that was a Thatcherite revolution. If I had met Wat Tyler

*[Sir Rhodes Boyson]*

on his way to London bridge, I think that I could have made him a member of the Brent, North Conservative association. His supporters wanted a free labour market. If they were marching on us today, I believe that there would be more of their supporters sitting on the Conservative Benches than on the Opposition Benches.

Thirdly, the present method of funding the safety net is immoral and is political suicide for the Conservative party. The idea of transferring money over four years from the heavy community charges levied on careful Conservative areas to spendthrift Labour authorities is unsaleable in Conservative areas. That will take place over a full four-year cycle of local government elections in England and Wales, over a general election and within one month of the next European election. All that time, electors in prudent areas will see that they are transferring through their community charge £25, £50 or £75 per person per year to areas that have more amenities because they have spent more money.

About a fortnight ago, a list that I compiled was printed in, I think, *The Times*. I referred to 25 Conservative seats in which all the constituents were to transfer considerable sums through the community charge over four years to largely Labour areas, yet the majority vote in favour of the main party was less than 5,500 in each constituency. This matter will be raised repeatedly in those constituencies.

**Dr. Godman:** Shame.

**Sir Rhodes Boyson:** There is no shame in it. Those authorities made a decision to be prudent—the shame lies with those who have wasted the money. The shame is that people in prudent areas have to pay for someone else's waste of money. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for allowing me to bring in a moral point. This is a dangerous and indefensible action.

Fourthly, I believe that a safety net so funded will break the morale of many good Conservative authorities. The hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) referred to Wandsworth. It was Thatcherite before Thatcherism, John the Baptist before anyone else came along. My hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope), who I believe is still in the Department of the Environment—it is difficult to keep up with everything that is happening—made his name in Wandsworth by being a Thatcherite and bringing down expenditure.

The average rates bill per household in Tower Hamlets is £500, compared with £360 in Wandsworth. Tower Hamlets is usually Labour-controlled but at present is under the control of the Liberals—most hon. Members on both sides of the house, except perhaps the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor), hope that that is only temporary. After the calculations on the community charge and safety net have been made and the money has been passed back and forth, an individual in Tower Hamlets will pay £153 and an individual in Wandsworth £148. That is the result after all the efforts over the past 15 years in Wandsworth to build up a Conservative careful authority, which documents such as "Good Council Guide: Wandsworth 1978-87" have made famous. It is a green-coloured document, which shows that the council was going green at that time and knew what would happen to the Department of the Environment.

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Sir Rhodes Boyson:** I shall give way when I have finished this point. We must go through paragraph by paragraph—it is much tighter and neater that way. It is like writing essays—we must do it properly.

After all that time, people in Wandsworth will be only £5 better off than people in Tower Hamlets. That is why I believe that this proposal will destroy the morale of many Conservative authorities.

I shall now give way to the hon. Member for Truro, as long as he makes just an intervention, not a speech.

**Mr. Taylor:** I hope that the right hon. Gentleman accepts that there are differences between Tower Hamlets and Wandsworth in terms of, for example, housing pressure. Tower Hamlets has large immigrant communities moving in, unlike Wandsworth. I think that all hon. Members accept that point. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman welcomes the fact that Tower Hamlets, under the Liberal Democrats, has cut rates.

**Sir Rhodes Boyson:** For the hon. Gentleman's benefit, I shall repeat my point. Wandsworth will compare the old rates and the new community charge and ask what it has done over those 15 years. I stand by what I say, whether or not the hon. Gentleman agrees with me.

Fifthly, the safety net is a strange formula. I spent nine months as Minister for Local Government. I always wondered where the calculations came from, where we changed them and what the computers did. Sometimes I felt that there were satanic demons, or gremlins, in the basement and, after we had all gone home, they moved the computers around. I believe that they have now moved up the stairs and are coming out.

I am sorry that the hon. Members for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) and for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) are not in the Chamber. Using the straightforward community charge, people in Brent will have to pay the second highest amount in the country—£561 per person, according to the projected figures. The safety net was supposed to give councils a chance to get it right, but Brent will have to transfer £36 per person per year to other overspending authorities. Anyone who can defend that should be a member of the Magic Circle and performing at the London Palladium.

**Mr. John Marshall:** Does my right hon. Friend accept that many people in the Department of the Environment and elsewhere believe that Brent Council, as presently constituted, is beyond redemption?

**Sir Rhodes Boyson:** I must not get into a religious argument with my hon. Friend, for whom I have great respect, but I believe in the saving of souls and the redemption of all men. It seems that I may have cross-party support on that.

My sixth point is that, if there is to be a safety net, the money must come from the Treasury. It must not come from the good authorities, because that makes a farce of the community charge and destroys the whole basis of the new arrangements. If my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wants to retain the safety net—and that is his right as Secretary of State—the Treasury must pay the lot. We do not want all kinds of formulas that we cannot understand; we have had too many of those from the Department of the Environment already.

We are told that £630 million will be needed next year to cover the safety net. If my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State comes back in October and says, "My right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North can sit at ease; he does not need to intervene because I have got hold of the £630 million," I shall decide that his is the best of the recent appointments. He will command my support on almost every other issue—that is a dangerous thing to say —for as long as he and I are still battling in the Chamber.

Consider what a headmaster would do. If 10 boys broke 10 windows in my school, I would charge the 10 boys, as would all old schoolmasters; even Scottish dominies would charge the boys, and it would be for the boys to decide how to raise the money. The last thing I would do would be to say to those 10 boys, "Go away. You have done nothing wrong," and then call the rest of the school together and say, "You are paying for the 10 windows." There would be a riot in the school, and there is no doubt in my mind that when Conservative voters find that they are paying for windows, as it were, that others have broken, there will be a riot in the constituencies.

I shall vote against the Opposition motion this evening, for the simple reason that there is a new Secretary of State in whom I have great faith. Earlier, we were talking in religious terms. I am not suggesting that my right hon. Friend should move mountains; I just want him to remove the safety net. That will do for me at the moment. My right hon. Friend can move mountaains later as part of the Department's activities on the green side, but on the local government side, all I want is for the safety net to be removed.

If, by the time we next debate the safety net in the House, it has not been announced that it will be financed from Treasury money, I shall certainly vote against it. I am not putting the Secretary of State on probation. I have total faith in him and I know that he will solve the problem —*[Interruption.]* I must not argue with the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas). I am sorry that no Treasury Minister is here to listen to what I, at least, believe to be words of wisdom. On the day when we discover that the safety net is to be funded by the Treasury, a cheer will go up throughout the country. I look forward to that day arriving before we reassemble after the recess.

5.2 pm

**Mr. Matthew Taylor** (Truro): I join in welcoming the Secretary of State to his new role. There has certainly been a change of image. The only thing that I would say to him —I am sure that others have given him this advice—is that the quality of the salesman will not make up for duff goods. The fact that we have already heard criticisms from Conservative Back-Bench Members, mollified only by his newness and not by his remarks, is a sign of the difficulties that he may experience in his new role. I wish him luck, however, and I hope that we see some changes in practice as well as in presentation.

The poll tax is the most unpopular measure to have come from this Government so far. I say "so far" because it has had to jostle for its place with other measures. Later this evening I shall refer in an Adjournment debate to the reform of the National Health Service, and I think that the Bill containing the proposals for that reform may topple the community charge as the most unpopular measure when it is introduced in the autumn.

I am afraid that we are past the point at which we can expect Ministers—under this Prime Minister at least—to say, "We got it wrong. We shall change the provisions fundamentally." Ministers have committed themselves to the proposal. I suspect that, when the Prime Minister interviewed replacements for the previous Secretary of State, she checked that they were not likely to rock the boat. I can imagine her asking the current Secretary of State some questions: "You are patron of this organisation the Tory Reform Group. You don't really mean it, do you? You are there as a figurehead, are you not? I am sure that you do not stand by what that body says and that you would not want to have to take responsibility for it. You would not agree with its members any longer, would you?" I can imagine the right hon. Gentleman thinking about it, but not very hard, and deciding that perhaps he could sell the required message. With a change of Prime Minister or a change of Government, perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will get the chance to do otherwise.

This debate allows us a moment of reflection, and it is to be hoped that it will allow the new Secretary of State to consider changes that he may be able to introduce even under a Prime Minister who has an iron will and dislikes deviation from the set course. I was pleased to hear at least one Conservative Member speak up from the Back Benches. I was particularly pleased that the right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson) pressed for change by calling for Treasury cash. The great error that the former Secretary of State made when he addressed the House last week was to try to reconcile the irreconcilable by telling those whom he had previously said needed help and support that they would get a little less, to help those whom he had said were getting more than they deserved. That was not an easy concept to sell, and he failed to sell it. If a safety net is needed, it should be funded by the Treasury, not by calling on other local authorities to step in merely to suit the Treasury's other financial aims.

The debate has been called so that we can consider the effects of the poll tax on ordinary people. One thing seems certain: As with so many measures that have been introduced under this Government, the effect of the poll tax will be to hit the poor and advantage the rich—in particular, to hit the old and the young——

**Mr. John Marshall:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Taylor:** I shall give way in a moment, when I have had the chance to develop my argument.

The community charge will affect most those just above the level at which one can claim supplementary benefit, who may have to pay the full poll tax. Equally, because the income support increase to help people pay the poll tax is based on the national average charge, people who live in areas of high poll tax—which tend to be the most deprived areas—will lose most. The living standards of those on low incomes will inevitably be adversely affected by the poll tax.

The analysis by the Child Poverty Action Group gives us evidence to support that. It considered the effect of the poll tax on the living standards of poor and middle-income families. I am sure that the new Secretary of State has recently been briefed on this. He will know that, overall, 63 per cent. of tax units will lose by the poll tax and 37 per cent. will gain.

**Mr. Dave Nellist** (Coventry, South-East): Tax units? Does the hon. Gentleman mean people?

**Mr. Taylor:** We are talking not about individuals but about families paying tax—or tax units—63 per cent. of which will lose and 37 per cent. of which will gain.

The key figure to which the Child Poverty Action Group draws attention is this. Of the bottom range of taxpayers, 83 per cent. will lose and only 16 per cent. will gain, and the average loss involved will be more than £1 a week. In contrast to that, of the top range taxpayers—the very rich—71 per cent. will gain and 29 per cent. will lose. That is an almost complete reversal of the figures for the population as a whole. That is why I say that the poor will incur the losses and the rich will gain the advantage.

**Mr. John Marshall:** The hon. Gentleman said that the old would suffer under the community charge. Does he agree that 90 per cent. of single pensioners will be better off under the community charge?

**Mr. Taylor:** I do not agree with that figure. Some single pensioners will gain, but not 90 per cent. of them. They might also gain under other systems. That is an argument against the rates, but not for the poll tax.

Combined with the changes in social security benefits, the poll tax will be a particularly bad deal for the worse-off in society. That is hardly a more equitable system than the rates. The two changes mean that families, with children who have a net income of less than £75 a week—which is a third of all families with children—will lose between £4·88 and £5·01 a week. I know that the Prime Minister does not believe in society, but I thought that she and her Ministers made a virtue of supporting family life. These changes will make life harder for families, and there is no justice in that.

This weekend I was approached by a pensioner in my constituency who lives in a residential care home and will be exempt from the poll tax. Did she congratulate the Government on exempting her? No. She said that she did not understand why those being cared for by their families at home should be penalised for the privilege, while she was exempt. She wondered whether the Government really intended to force people into residential care homes. She did not criticise the Government's treatment of her—she understood why people might wish to be cared for in residential homes—but she could not understand why the Government wanted to create a financial incentive to take people out of the family home and put them into care, no matter how good the care was.

The Secretary of State referred to the difficulties of taking up means-tested benefits and said that he would seek ways to alleviate them. I wonder whether much can be done within the present system of rebates. In Scotland, the take-up of rebates by people on low incomes is extremely low. In some areas, it is as low as 25 per cent. The Secretary of State was right to highlight the difficulties. I am not convinced that, under the poll tax and the cumbersome system of rebates and help that goes with it to make it workable, the Secretary of State will be able to achieve his objectives. It is good to hear a Government spokesman speak in favour of helping people to claim the money, but the Government do not have much chance of succeeding in that. Time will tell, but I believe that our fears will be proved correct.

The implications of the poll tax for civil liberties cause great anxiety. It brings with it wide and intrusive powers to establish and maintain the register and to enforce payment. Only today, I heard about an example in Rochdale which illustrates the problems of enforcing the poll tax. It is not an extreme example, but it illustrates the effect on people's daily lives, which is unnecessary and would not have arisen if the Government had not insisted on introducing the system.

Since last Friday, 33 canvassers have been calling at homes in Rochdale at 8.30 pm or at weekends to chase people about their poll tax registration. It is bad enough to approach people at a time of day when they cannot telephone anyone to advise them on their rights, but to call on the elderly and infirm at 8.30 pm is to frighten them. That is not simply because they are frightened of officials, but in some cases any unannounced caller at 8.30 pm causes fear and anxiety. Such calls would not be necessary but for the cumbersome nature of the system of taxation that the Government have chosen to introduce.

The effects of the uniform business rate are mentioned in the Labour party motion. Non-domestic rates currently raise more than domestic rates. The new rate will be set nationally, yet Ministers talk about the need for more local control and accountability and a greater link between people and their local authority and between businesses and their local authority. Ministers should be aware that the uniform business rate breaks the link. Deprived of locally raised non-domestic rate revenue, local authorities will depend on central Government for about 75 to 80 per cent. of their funding. So much for the supposed increased accountability of the poll tax.

The uniform business rate will penalise local businesses in areas where local authorities have done most to help them by keeping rates down and spending money sensibly. Businesses in my constituency are being asked to pay increases in their rates, in some cases massive increases, to fund local authorities elsewhere which in the past set high rates and provided more services. They are being asked to pay a considerable increase without seeing an improvement in local services in an area already acknowledged to be deprived and where incomes are almost 20 per cent. lower than the national average. We have more small local businesses than almost any other area. They thought that the Government were on the side of businesses, but they are penalising them.

As shop owners discover the effects on their business of this change, combined with the effects of revaluation and a wholly inadequate system of safety nets, they will go bust and change their vote. They will wish that they had not left it so late to change their allegiances.

In Truro, small shop owners paying rates of £767 will be shocked to see them rise to £1,750 over five years. That is an increase of 128 per cent., allowing for an inflation rate of 7 per cent. The bill of another retail outlet that we looked at would rise from £810 to £2,100. That is because the Government will not acknowledge their responsibility to support businesses. They are simply breaking local contracts.

The poll tax has been completely discredited. My party has never defended the rating system. For years, we have advocted a system of local income tax. Unlike the Labour party, we argued that case throughout the debates on the Local Government Finance Bill. We gave Ministers details of the alternative system that we would introduce. Ministers did not give figures on or make comparisons with our system, but snatched figures out of the air for their version of a local income tax system to mock it. They say that they are prepared to consider the Labour party's proposals and produce figures on them, but they dare not do so for a truly accountable and effective system of local income tax.

That is surprising, because every other European country has a system of local income tax, and it is used around the world. No other country uses the poll tax. Local income tax makes more sense. I do not know whether the Minister noticed that I was disturbed by what the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) said. It appears that the Labour party is moving away from any attempt to introduce in part a local income tax. The hon. Gentleman said that he sought to allocate a proportion of national income tax to local authorities, which is different. We have read in the newspapers that even the leadership of the Labour party believes that the system that it has come up with is too complicated.

**Mr. David Blunkett** (Sheffield, Brightside): I should hate another hare to start running, so I shall put the record straight. There has been no change this afternoon. We are in favour of a system based on the capital values of property, adjusted to take account of the income of those in the household.

**Mr. Taylor:** I may be wrong, but I think we are getting further developments as things go along. It is interesting to listen to what is happening. It would be easiest if the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) would accept the advice of those in his party who I know believe that a straightforward and simple system of local income tax would be the most workable alternative for the party to defend. I regret that the Labour party was unable to put forward any proposals during our debates on the Local Goverment and Finance Bill. It might have done more to put the Government on the spot at a time when we were all agreed that the existing rating system was an inadequate alternative to the poll tax.

In Cornwall, as in many other areas, domestic ratepayers and business men will be horrified to find that they are being asked to work under and pay for a system which means that the least efficient and the highest-spending authorities are subsidised by those which are most efficient and have the fewest local services. I do not believe that that will be any more popular in my local authorities than many Conservative Back-Bench Members believe that it will be in theirs.

Perhaps I should thank the Secretary of State's predecessor for handing me votes on a plate, but I honestly believe that the impact on those who will have to pay the poll tax—it will hit the poorest hardest—is insupportable. I regret the fact that those people will be penalised in that way. Although he was handed a job that he wanted to take and that will allow him to develop many of his ideas on the environment and other areas, which we look forward to hearing, I believe that the Secretary of State will regret the fact that he has to defend the indefensible and put forward a policy that hits those who are most defenceless.

5.22 pm

**Mr. John Heddle** (Mid-Staffordshire): I join other right hon. and hon. Members in sincerely congratulating my right hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Mr. Patten) on his appointment as Secretary of State, and my hon. Friend the Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt) on his appointment as Minister of State. I would like to place on record my personal gratitude to my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewksbury (Mr. Ridley) for the consistently courteous and thoughtful way in which he received many of us who are especially interested in matters affecting the Department of Environment and local government. His attitude and his approach to his parliamentary colleagues bore no relationship to the sort of comments that we have heard from Opposition Members and those that have appeared in some of the less informed sections of the media.

I join my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson) in wanting a closer, healthier link between central Government and local government, and between local government and the householder and the consumer of local government services. I ask my right hon. Friend, as a former Minister in the Department of Education and Science, when he further considers the matters generally, to give further thought to the possibility of the transfer of teachers' salaries to the centre, which would inevitably mean a lower community charge bill for all households.

The whole question of the reform of the domestic rating system has moved since 1974 further and further up the political agenda. All major and serious political parties at the last election committed themselves to a reform of the domestic rating system. However, the Conservative party was the only one to come forward with any credible alternative, having given serious and comprehensive thought to all other alternatives. It was for that reason that I supported, in principle, this legislation through all its stages.

However, the official Opposition simply said, "We will abolish the Rates Act and we will do away with the community charge in Scotland." There was no mention in their manifesto of any alternative, but now it has crept out bit by bit—the twin tax of capital valuation and local income tax. I was delighted to hear from the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) that the official Opposition are still committed to those two unfair strands of taxation. They are committed to them because they represent a wealth tax and have no relationship with the value of a person's property, whether they own it or not, or to the cost of the services provided.

I will give way to the hon. Member for Brightside if he can confirm to me and to all my Mid-Staffordshire constituents, who do not own their own homes, but who are tenants of local authorities, that what they would pay, if a Labour Government were subsequently returned, would be a capital tax based on the value of the property which they occupy, even though they do not own it. *[Interruption.]* I will willingly give way to the hon. Gentleman. I am grateful for the confirmation that 40 per cent. of local authority tenants in Lichfield and Cannock Chase district councils and Stafford borough council will pay a valuation tax based on the capital value of a property in which they have no personal direct stake.

**Mr. Blunkett:** In view of the way in which the hon. Gentleman is managing to create himself a scenario, which is completely out of tune with what we are suggesting, I shall put him straight. We are not suggesting that people will be in that position. I made it clear that our tax would be a fair tax and it would therefore take account of the ability to pay of those in the household. That is different

*[Mr. Blunkett]*

from what the hon. Gentleman has said. It would be over and above the question of rebates, as all progressive taxes should be.

**Mr. Heddle:** As the hon. Gentleman has responded to my invitation, I shall push him a little further. I ask him yet again to confirm that the capital taxation that his party proposes to introduce will be based on the value of a person's property, even though he does not own it. In other words, a council tenant occupying a property in Mid-Staffordshire, possibly worth £100,000, will pay tax to the local authority, especially if his income is in excess of the threshold which the hon. Gentleman implied would be introduced. Is that true or false?

**Mr. Blunkett:** The hon. Gentleman must make his own speech, and defend this iniquitous tax.

**Mr. Heddle:** I am just about to come to that. The hon. Gentleman has confirmed the worst fears of a significant proportion of the population who do not own their properties. We shall pursue that point relentlessly between now and 1992, until the truth is told.

**Mr. Dennis Turner** (Wolverhampton, South-East): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Heddle:** I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity to make his speech. I know that a number of Opposition Members wish to make their contributions. If the hon. Gentleman will allow me, I would like to pursue the policies of the Liberal party. At the last election, in its manifesto, the Liberal party, under the paragraph beginning

> "Local government needs a fair system of local finance which the rates no longer provide",

said:

> "We are committed to the planned introduction of a local income tax as the main source"—

not the only source—

> "of local government revenue in place of domestic rates. We believe that business rates should be related to ability to pay and we will consult with industry and commerce as to how this can be achieved."

The second part of that commitment means that the Liberal party does not have any policy at all on how non-domestic ratepayers should be treated.

**Mr. Turner:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Heddle:** No, but I shall willingly give way to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) if he will now tell the House and the nation how much he would put on the standard rate of income tax to take account of local income tax to fund the main contribution of local government expenditure, and then what other additional tax he would impose to take account of the balance.

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** The hon. Gentleman is more than welcome to have a copy of our pamphlet on this subject. If he drops me a note, I will send him a copy. The answer is that, as the tax will be set locally, it will, of course, vary, but it will vary between 5 and 8 per cent., roughly speaking.

**Mr. Heddle:** I am baffled by the hon. Gentleman's answer—between 5 and 8 per cent. of what? If it was between 5p and 8p in the pound on the standard rate of income tax, I would believe that the hon. Gentleman was somewhere near the truth because those were the figures produced by the Layfield committee when it reported in 1977.

That brings me back to the position today. Why was the Conservative party committed to reforming the rating system in the first place? The answer is not only because the domestic rating system is wholly out of date and wholly unfit for the second half of the 20th century and bears no relationship to the cost of the services provided, but because successive Governments—both the Conservative Government in the early 1970s and subsequently the Labour Government and then the Government under the control of the Liberal party in partnership with the Labour party—funked the issue of rating reform. It is because there is now no possibility of revaluing domestic property on any sensible scale that an alternative system had to be introduced.

**Mr. Turner:** On behalf of the people of Mid-Staffordshire, will the hon. Gentleman address the issue that we are debating—the here-and-now position of thousands and thousands of people in his constituency and in mine who will have to pay a heavy price for this change of policy? Will the hon. Gentleman tell the people of Mid-Staffordshire that they will pay precisely the amount that was quoted in the paper produced last week by his right hon. Friend the previous Secretary of State? Is that a correct figure? No, it is a false figure. Will he tell the people of Mid-Staffordshire that they will have to pay more than the Government are saying they will have to pay?

**Mr. Heddle:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for inviting me to conclude my remarks. We have established that the official policy of the Labour party is that a significant amount of the money that it would raise if it were in government would be found from the tenants of properties and would be based on a capital value in which they have no interest and over which they have no control. We have established that the Liberal party would increase the standard rate of income tax by between 5 and 8 per cent., or thereabouts. In the absence of any more comprehensive information, I believe that figure to be absolutely correct——

**Mr. Matthew Taylor** *rose*——

**Mr. Heddle:** No, I have given way once to the hon. Gentleman already.

I turn now to the safety net and to the position of my constituents in Mid-Staffordshire and to those of the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Nellist:** What have I done?

**Mr. Heddle:** I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. I meant the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-East (Mr. Turner).

**Mr. Nellist** *rose*——

**Mr. Heddle:** It is inevitable that in transferring from one——

**Mr. Nellist:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Heddle:** [illegible] is inevitable—[Hon. Members: "Give way."] It is inevitable that anomalies will arise when transferring from an unfair and outdated system. They have arisen in the non-domestic sector and that is why my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and

Tewksbury introduced transitional relief phased over a five-year period. I do not believe that period to be long enough, because it will coincide with the next revaluation in 1995 and, having regard to the fact that most commercial and industrial leases today have rent reviews every five or seven years, it will add to the temporary rates burden on the non-domestic sector. I should like to pursue that matter further with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in correspondence.

The transitional relief that my right hon. Friend's predecessor introduced for the non-domestic sector should form the basis for a transitional relief, by way of a safety net, in the domestic sector. I join my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North in wishing to see the safety net expanded and funded from central taxation, but targeted most specifically on those in particular need.

My constituents in Mid-Staffordshire are sick to death having to fund the expenditure of spendthrift and profligate local authorities, such as the adjoining local authority of the city of Stoke-on-Trent, when they themselves are well provided for by the prudent and Conservative-controlled Lichfield district council and Stafford borough council.

5.34 pm

**Mr. Dave Nellist** (Coventry, South-East): The bonhomie of Cabinet reshuffles tends to pass me by. I fail to see how a rubber stamp can be reshuffled. The only achievement of the new Secretary of State for the Environment in opening the debate was his acknowledgement that he has been handed a poisoned chalice—one that saw off his predecessor yesterday and one that I confidently predict will see off both him and the Prime Minister before the next general election.

Last week, we had a near-riot when Tory Members finally discovered what the poll tax is about in terms of the safety net. They were rewarded for their political cowardice in voting for it last summer when they suddenly realised that between 25 and 30 marginal Tory seats could be affected at the next general election. Again, I confidently predict that that number will be one third, if not less, of the number of seats that will be lost to the Tory party in Scotland, in England and in Wales by the full enactment of the poll tax legislation—if it goes ahead.

Just under two years ago, the Tory Reform Group described the poll tax as

"fair only in the sense that the Black Death was fair; it is indiscriminate, striking at young and old, rich and poor, employed and unemployed alike".

That description was wrong in one basic respect. At least the rich could catch the plague—the rich will not catch the poll tax. That is why, last summer, when an amendment to the legislation was being considered by the other place, 100 Lords were literally dug up to vote it down. Individuals such as Lord Vestey, the owner of Dewhurst butchers, currently pays £6,000 in rates on a country estate, but will pay only £200 in poll tax, while I and other hon. Members, especially Labour Members, have constituents on £50 or £60 per week who will have to spend between 10 and 15 per cent. of their income on the new poll tax.

The poll tax is a wealth transfusion from the poor to the rich. It was introduced in Scotland this April, and one year later—next April—we will get it in England and Wales. Why the difference? Perhaps there are still some military strategists in the higher echelons of the Tory party who remember the basic lesson of not taking on all one's enemies in one go. The Government decided to divide and rule and to have a testing ground to see how the poll tax goes, because that leaves the possibility of withdrawing it later, if necessary.

What happened in Scotland? On the introduction of the poll tax, *The Scotsman* described the chaos of the poll tax as like

"waking up to a nightmare."

Earlier this month, having contacted all the officials of the regional councils, the *Scotland on Sunday* newspaper estimated that the level of non-payment of the poll tax was 800,000 people out of the 3·9 million people on whom it is levied. However, I believe that that figure of 800,000 is on the low side, for two reasons. First, the numbers who have paid the poll tax have been artificially inflated by counting somebody who has paid the whole year's poll tax as 12 people. Secondly, the figure of 800,000 does not include those people who have paid the first instalment of the poll tax but have now decided not to make the second or subsequent payments. Those 800,000 people in Scotland have crossed the Rubicon; they have decided on the illegal non-payment of the poll tax.

If one transposes those figures to England and Wales, and assumes that the conditions here next April will be exactly the same, one must assume that more than 7 million people will be unable or unwilling to pay the poll tax. That is a staggering figure. At that level, the poll tax will be unworkable.

Why are so many people refusing to pay the poll tax? Bodies such as the Scottish Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Unions have played a major part in the campaign. There are now 550 anti poll tax unions in England, Scotland and Wales, most grouped into city or regional federations. I address two or three meetings every week about the poll tax, and the attendance is double the attendance I would expect at a meeting on any other subject.

**Mr. John Marshall:** Twice zero is zero.

**Mr. Nellist:** The hon. Gentleman makes cracks, but I can tell him that the meetings I address are usually attended by between 100 and 500 people.

The poll tax is one of the most serious attacks on the living standards of working-class people and the provision of jobs and services by local authorities in the 10 years under this Government. In the past four months alone, there have been three demonstrations, two in Glasgow and one in Edinburgh, attended by more than 20,000 people. Those in the Press Gallery should ask their editors why the London-based newspapers have never reported those demonstrations. I checked in the Library on the Monday following those demonstrations and there was not a single report. Are they afraid of contagion, of mass non-payment spreading south of the border? That is the only conclusion I can draw from that.

For 15 years, the Prime Minister has been making vague promises and pledges about the abolition of the rates under her Government. In 15 years in politics, most of the complaints I have received about the rates have been not about the method of collection but, in the past eight or nine years, about the amount people have had to pay. The main reason why rates have more than doubled in the past 10 years has been the £31,000 million in rate support grant withheld from local authorities because of cuts in Government funding.

If people are casting around for simple solutions to the opposition to the rebates, one solution could be to restore

*[Mr. Nellist]*

Government funding to 1979 levels. That would mean that Coventry would get back some if not all of the £110 million stolen from us in the past eight years. Domestic rates could be halved merely by restoring the level of Government funding to that pertaining at the beginning of the decade.

Another way in which domestic rates could be halved involves a precedent which the Government have developed and exposed most recently yesterday. According to the Secretary of State last week, if the poll tax were in operation this year, it would be £315 per head in Coventry—the highest figure in the west midlands. The lowest figure in the west midlands would be in Hereford, at £167.

Conservative Members such as the hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) would say that the council in Coventry is profligate or spendthrift, but let me tell him and others who believe such idiotic notions that Coventry has not had the money to build a single council house since 1981. It is closing down old people's homes and children's nurseries because of the cuts in Government funding. It is heading towards a crisis in education because of lack of school provision.

One of the reasons for charging £315 per head is that Coventry was bombed out during the second world war, with the destruction of virtually the entire city centre and much of the housing stock, so it has had to build a large number of council houses. Where do local authorities get such funds? They borrow from banks and finance houses. Over the past 40 years, Coventry's debt has risen to £300 million to build houses, schools, roads and community centres and the city council has to pay interest charges on that money. Every year, Coventry pays £30 million in debt service charges, not repayments. If Coventry were not paying that level of interest, it could halve domestic rates again.

However, is cancellation of debts impossible? Not for Rover, when £640 million-worth of debt was cancelled to give the company away to British Aerospace; or Rolls-Royce when £670 million was cancelled for privatisation; or the water authorities, when £5,000 million of debts have been cancelled. Yesterday, in the electricity privatisation statement, £4·4 billion of debt was effectively cancelled by the removal of the Magnox nuclear power stations from that privatisation. If financial restructuring can take place on that scale, I am sure that it will not be beyond a future Labour Administration to tackle the millstones around the necks of local authorities which have had to borrow money to build the infrastructure of cities. If we cancelled local authorities debt and restored the level of Government support, domestic rates would be one quarter what they are today and no one would object about the level of their rates.

The official Government figure for Coventry's poll tax is £315 per head. The city treasurer estimates that it will be £350, and it could be £60 higher, depending on Government grants to Coventry. Last week, we heard that total Government spending on local authorities would rise by about 3·8 per cent. over this year's spending, but inflation is 8·5 per cent. so there will be a 5 per cent. gap in total Government funding to local authorities. If the poll tax is up and running by next April, local authorities will control only one quarter of their spending and three quarters will be controlled by Whitehall setting the business rate and the level of Government grant.

How will Coventry bridge a 5 per cent. shortfall in Government funding? The only way is through a 20 to 25 per cent. increase in poll tax, which would increase it to £394. But even the £315 figure assumes that everyone will pay the poll tax. But if, as in Scotland, 20 per cent. are unable to pay, and as the poll tax has to raise the total sum for the council from the people who actually pay it, the tax will have to increase by 25 per cent. so that Coventry council can raise the money it needs.

The head of the local government division of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy, Rita Hale, wrote in a recent article:

> "building in 5 per cent. inflation and . . . unwinding safety nets, there were increases in local bills"—

that is the poll tax—

> "from one year to the next of 30-40 per cent. When you've got that happening by the mid-1990s, you start to question whether it can be sustained as a believable system."

With the reduction of the safety net, and current inflation, particularly if the Government do not match the needs of local authorities with decent grants, the level of poll tax will double or treble in the next four, five or six years.

I shall not speak for long, as some of my hon. Friends have waited several weeks to get into a debate on the poll tax, as I have. I shall briefly examine who will be worst hit by the poll tax. Eighty per cent. of the young people who are in work earn less than the Council of Europe decency threshold of £150 a week, but they will have to pay exactly the same poll tax as anyone earning more.

About 10 minutes ago, the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) mentioned rebates. Let us examine the rebates for young people. The official Government figure for Coventry's poll tax is £315. Any young person under 25—including any rights to Government funding through family credit or benefit—who takes home more than £61·35 a week will have to pay the full £30 to £40 a month in poll tax. In Birmingham, the estimated figure is £307. Single people under the age of 25 who take home more than £60·55 a week do not have a rebate.

The vast majority of young people escape unemployment by taking cheap labour jobs in hotels, cafes, bars, shops, restaurants, clothing establishments and other places and will lose the minimum protection of wages council rates if the next Employment Bill abolishes those wages councils. How does the hon. Member for Northfield expect those youngsters who are on a maximum of £80 or £90 a week to pay? If they take home more than £60·55 a week, there is no rebate. He should not tell the House of Commons about the rebate system, as it is non-existent.

Last year, 64,000 student nurses were told that they would receive an 80 per cent. rebate. Then, in the guise of a written answer, it was withdrawn. Unless Project 2000 is up and running—and that will take three or four years—there is no rebate for student nurses.

The 80,000 homeless teenagers in Britain will increase in number by those who leave home to avoid paying the poll tax. That is what has happened when youngsters have been forced to pay 20 per cent. of rates becauseof cuts in housing benefits and delays in the payment of that benefit.

What about women? On average, women earn between two thirds and three quarters of the average wage of a man, but they will have to pay the same poll tax. Five million women in this country cannot go out and take jobs, because they are underpinning the National Health Service or the local authority social services department by being carers who are looking after elderly or infirm relatives, or sick or disabled children. There is no rebate for them under the poll tax if they are not on income support.

What about black and Asian families? I come from a pit village in Yorkshire. When I left home at 18, I did not know that small families existed. I grew up with my mum, my dad, my grandma, my grand-dad, my great-uncle and two sisters. There were eight in our household. As I grew up in the 1960s and 1970s, I realised that people liked to leave their families earlier and move away.

That is not the tradition in West Indian and Asian households. Eleven per cent. of West Indian households and 29 per cent. of Asian households contain six or more adults because they look after their old folk rather than allowing them to go into residential accommodation. In Coventry, they could be living in a presently low-rated property and paying £300 or £400 in rates. They will face bills of £2,500 under the poll tax, so it discriminates against the black and Asian community.

We hear about exemptions. The only way to escape the poll tax is to be declared insane or to join a monastery or the Foreign Legion; and people have been trying that in recent weeks. One of the most disgraceful aspects of the poll tax is that those with a mental handicap, which is a disability from birth, can find some relief from the poll tax if they get the agreement of two doctors, but the level of disability is irrelevant for physical disabilities and there is no rebate or exemption from the poll tax. Some old folk develop Alzheimer's disease, even if it is not assisted by faulty water purification in the south-west. What about old people who become more confused and more infirm as they get older and who develop mental disabilities? They are not exempted from the poll tax.

What about youngsters who stay on at school to do A-levels? They are exempt while they are 18 and their mothers are still getting child benefit for them, but on the day of their 19th birthday, they will lose all exemptions. There are 76,000 families with youngsters who stay on past their 19th birthday to re-take their A-levels.

What about the dead? There are no exemptions for them. *[Laughter.]* That provokes laughter among Tory Members and I hoped that it would. I want to see them laugh when they hear about two real cases. Donald McLean from Elgin died at the age of 39 on 4 April, three days after he was due to start paying the poll tax in Scotland. His grieving father, whose wife also died recently, was sent a £1·43 poll tax bill for his son. That callous lack of sympathy led his father to complain bitterly:

> "It's a wonder he wasn't billed for the few hours he lived into the 4th day of April."

Donnie Young, a 43-year old trawlerman from Burghead, was killed at sea on 10 April. He set sail on 26 March and never set foot again on the Scottish mainland. A bill for £6·44 was sent to his widow. Mrs. Young is refusing to pay, and I congratulate her on that. Public pressure forced the Democrat chairman of the Grampian finance committee to back off on the case of Donald McLean and set a limit of £5 below which bills would not be sent out in cases of bereavement, but the Audit Commission has ruled that a poll tax bill has to be sent on every demand, even if it is as low as 72p. Let us see Tory Members laugh now about sending bills in cases of bereavement.

I give a clear warning to the new Secretary of State that millions of people in England and Wales will not be able to pay and that millions more will be unwilling to pay the poll tax because of the unfairness of the system. A movement of popular resistance is growing throughout the country. I and a number of my colleagues, including my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) have said that we will not pay the poll tax. We have been saying that since last July, and we repeat it again today.

That is not a decision we take lightly. We do not come here as law makers to argue universally in favour of law breaking. I do not go out of this Chamber and say that people should run bairns down on zebra crossings. There are certain morally justifiable laws which we all accept should be kept for the good running of society. But the poll tax is not morally justifiable; it is a class law, designed to benefit the rich at the expense of the poor.

Our great-grandparents broke the class laws at the turn of the century and gained the right for workers to join trade unions. Sixty or 70 years ago, in addition to those who threw themselves in front of horses in the Derby, women—and especially the working-class women at the cotton mills in Lancashire and the north-west—broke the class laws of the 19th century to give women the right to vote. The poll tax, which threatens people's democratic right to vote, their living standards, their jobs and their services from local councils, is in precisely the same mould as that class legislation of the 19th century.

I have no compunction about arguing that people should not pay. We shall not be alone. A major campaign is brewing up inside the trade unions. Only last month, the National and Local Government Officers Association at its conference in Blackpool passed a resolution that providing mass non-payment was a viable option and that there was a viable national campaign, the association would back that campaign. I have a message for the Secretary of State and his hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key), who keeps interrupting him from behind. People in factories and offices throughout the country are discussing the formation of anti-poll tax unions. By the end of the year, the numbers will run into four figures.

I can mention only briefly those who presently pay their rates within their rents. In Scotland, people find that they are paying the same rent and being charged the poll tax, and that is perfectly legal. There is opposition to the poll tax in Coventry. I have received letters from club stewards in working men's clubs, such as that from Mr. Ron Nicholson from Canley, asking whether they too will face the same problems those living in Scotland already face.

I have another question for the Secretary of State—to which I shall return in the next Session—which affects two of his major responsibilities. At present, water rates are based on the rateable value of a house. What will happen when we do not have rateable values because we have the poll tax? I can predict what will happen. Along with privatisation, the water authorities will take the opportunity to hike up the level of the water charges. They will bring in a mirror image of the poll tax, with a water poll tax based on the number of people who live in a house.

What will the effect be on civil liberties? There are dozens of local authorities, such as Solihull, where

*[Mr. Nellist]*

personal privacy has been invaded by over-detailed registration forms being sent out. *[Interruption.]* The Secretary of State should listen for a second. I have read many of the 736 sets of regulations, which we have not debated properly because they are introduced at dead of night, such as on 23 May, when we debated 94 pages in one and a half hours.

What will the Secretary of State do about a person who, at present, can go to the social services department of a local authority and say with confidence that he suspects that a bairn is being sexually or physically abused down the road? A person can give such information in confidence to the social services department knowing that an investigation can take place and he can hope that a tragedy like the case of Jasmine Beckford will be prevented. What will the Secretary of State say when those same officers are told by the community charge registration officer that they have to give up their confidential records and reveal to him the names and addresses of the people who had informed the social services department about potential child sex abuse? That is the depth of the invasion of personal privacy to which the poll tax reaches. I say to the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett): read the regulations, sunshine, to find out whether that is legal or not.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer may escape getting his head chopped off, which was the fate of the Chancellor in the peasants' uprising in 1381, but I predict that the new Secretary of State and his mistress, the Prime Minister, will not escape the political decapitation that awaits them in the poll tax battle. The Prime Minister said that the poll tax was to be the flagship of her third term in office. I shall make one final prediction. The poll tax will go down in the history books not as the flagship, but as the Prime Minister's Titanic—and with a bit of luck, the captain is going down with the ship.

5.59 pm

**Mr. John Marshall** (Hendon, South): This debate was billed in advance as a major assault upon the community charge. It seems to be a major assault for which most of the troops have no enthusiasm. Throughout most of the debate, fewer than 12 or 15 Opposition Members have been present. During his speech, the poor Democrat, the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor), had no support from any of his colleagues.

**Mr. Clive Soley** (Hammersmith): That is cheap.

**Mr. Marshall:** The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) may regard it as cheap, but the Opposition's motion, and the fact that his colleagues do not want to support it, says something about their enthusiasm for it.

Debates on local government generate a great deal of humbug and synthetic indignation from the Labour party. As one who served in local government for 17 years, I cannot help but compare the concern expressed by the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) about the level of community charges with the actions of Labour councillors. The Labour party objects to the fact that, in April of next year, voters in London will ask, "Why is the community charge £290 in Barnet when, in the neighbouring borough of Brent, it is £597, and, in the Labour-controlled borough of Haringey, it is £642?" Opposition Members know full well that Labour councils combine poor quality service with a very high price to the ratepayer. [HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish."] Opposition Members may say that it is rubbish. In the London borough of Brent the cost per secondary pupil is £2,142, which is 40 per cent. above the average for outer London boroughs. Every day of the week, 2,000 pupils become refugees from the people's republic of Brent and choose to get their education in the London borough of Barnet. The London borough of Brent charges 40 per cent. more and has such a poor service that pupils go in droves to Barnet and Harrow, and a large number of teachers also leave the borough.

**Mr. Douglas:** The poll tax will not help that.

**Mr. Marshall:** Of course the community charge will help that. If the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) did not make so many sedentary observations, I could point out very simply how the community charge will benefit that. The people in Brent will ask, "Why should we pay twice as much for an inferior service as the people in Barnet?" I will quote one statistic to show how the London borough of Brent is twice as expensive for a poorer service.

I refer to housing management. The London borough of Brent can boast of rent arrears of over £8 million, or 46·9 per cent. of its annual rent roll, compared with 3·7 per cent. in the London borough of Barnet. However, the London borough of Brent's housing management costs are 60 per cent. higher than in all the outer London boroughs. Anyone who believes that the Labour party is at all concerned about the level of the community charge should consult the ratepayers in Haringey who had to pay 61 per cent. more, or the ratepayers in Brent who had to pay 30 per cent. more. If anyone wants confirmation, he can ask the Leader of the Opposition himself. In the London borough of Ealing, he has had to pay 30 per cent. more in rates this year than he did last year.

The Labour party is against low rates. When I was a councillor in Ealing, we could boast that we had the lowest rates in west London. When the Labour party took control in 1986, the first thing it did was remove the sign from the town hall. The Labour party was determined that never again would Ealing have the lowest rates in west London.

The motion refers to increasing Government control. That comes ill from a party which, when in government, sought to legislate grammar schools away and to restrict the sale of council houses. One of the greatest benefits facing local government at present is the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering, a course of action to which the Labour party was always opposed. There is no doubt that compulsory competitive tendering is leading to a reduction of about 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. in the prices charged to the ratepayer.

**Mr. Peter L. Pike** (Burnley): Is it not a fact that that is at the expense of the conditions and wages of those who work for councils and those who compete for service contracts? We have seen it in the bus industry and we are now seeing it in local authorities.

**Mr. Marshall:** As the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) should know, a majority of the contracts that have gone out to tender have been won by direct labour organisations who, prior to compulsory competitive tendering, used working practices that were far out of date.

**Mr. Nellist:** How can the hon. Gentleman work in a place like this and say that?

**Mr. Marshall:** No views could be more out of date than those of the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist). If he regards the House as out of date, he can leave. There would be loud applause from Conservative Members and many of his own colleagues.

There is no doubt that compulsory competitive tendering gives local authorities the opportunity to provide better value for money and better services at the same time. In my experience of local authority work, whenever a contract went out to tender the ratepayer got a very much better deal, and the community charge payer will, too. In the London borough of Ealing, we were able to save hundreds of thousands of pounds on the school meals service. My son came back after a week and said, "Daddy, why are the meals so much better than they were last term?" I said, "Son, you are learning a basic political truth. When services are provided competitively, they are better than they otherwise would be."

The hon. Member for Copeland was concerned about the average community charge bill facing pensioners in the London borough of Barnet. He did not tell the House that the average rates bill there at the moment is £708 or that, next year, under the community charge, it will be £290, or that, if the misguided safety net could somehow be spirited away, it would be £235. Charges for the vast majority of single pensioners in Barnet, be they in my constituency or in those represented by my right hon. and hon. Friends, will be substantially lower than they are today.

It is all very well for the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East to talk about groups such as the disabled. He knows very well that all those groups are currently paying domestic rates. If the Labour party thinks that they should not pay the community charge, why did it not legislate to prevent them paying domestic rates?

The most irresponsible speech that we have heard today was by the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East, who talked about morally justifiable laws. To quote the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West, it is nonsense. It is a recipe for anarchy.

**Mr. Douglas:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Marshall:** No, I will not give way. The hon. Member for Dunfermline, West makes sedentary interventions which become tedious in the extreme. To give way to him would be to invite a lengthy speech with, no doubt, little relevance to the subject under discussion. He and the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East are seeking to incite——

**Mr. Alex Salmond** (Banff and Buchan): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Marshall:** No, not even to a fellow graduate of St. Andrews will I give way.

The hon. Members for Coventry, South-East and for Dunfermline, West and their boroughs are producing a recipe for anarchy. They are seeking to put forward a course of action that can only interfere with local authorities' cash flows and mean a decline in the quality of services provided next year.

**Mr. Nellist:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Marshall:** The hon. Gentleman spoke at great length. Throughout his speech he said that there was little time, but he proceeded to speak at great length.

**Mr. Nellist** *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. The hon. Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) has said that he will not give way.

**Mr. Marshall:** I now refer to the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson).

**Mr. Salmond:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Marshall:** As the hon. Gentleman is from St. Andrews, his intervention may be valuable.

**Mr. Salmond:** If I am not mistaken, the hon. Gentleman is a campaigner on behalf of refuseniks in the Soviet Union who are fighting against unjust laws. At the last election, when the poll tax was clearly declared as an election issue, the people of Scotland voted overwhelmingly against it. People in Scotland are fighting against unjust laws. Will the hon. Gentleman summon up some sympathy for the refuseniks in Scotland?

**Mr. Marshall:** When I visit Scotland this coming weekend, I shall compare it with the Soviet Union, which I visited last year. I suspect that the comparison will be very much to Scotland's advantage. It is absurd to relate the condition of the people of Scotland to the plight of the refuseniks in the Soviet Union. The people of Scotland are part of a unitary United Kingdom. They made England suffer Socialist Governments in 1964 and 1974. They should not be surprised that the Conservative Government of 1987 adhere to the policies on which they were elected.

I want to continue my remarks about the safety net, because people in the borough of Barnet feel as strongly about it as those represented by my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North. Under the safety net provisions for next year, the London borough of Lewisham—which the Department accepts is a heavily overspending authority—will receive a safety net provision of £293 and pay a community charge of £215. The London borough of Lambeth, which has long been recognised as one of the most profligate local authorities, will receive a safety-net provision of £246 and will pay a community charge of £297. That will be only £7 higher than that paid in the London borough of Barnet. Why should the ratepayers of Barnet pay £55 in safety-net provision towards the extravagant, high-spending authority of Lambeth?

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood): Perhaps, as a very late act of conversion, the former Secretary of State recognised the enormous problems in Lambeth. He might have thought that, as a substitute for the old equalisation scheme, it would be a good idea to transfer money from the richer boroughs to the poorer boroughs. That is what happened for many years under the old equalisation scheme.

**Mr. Marshall:** I agree that Lambeth is in enormous difficulty, but that is mainly because its borough council has done much to aggravate the problems.

The safety-net provision is a tax on low-spending authorities. It is a penalty for prudence and a premium for extravagance. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will reconsider the safety-net provision and, when he comes to the House in the autumn, tell us that it has been substantially refined.

6.12 pm

**Mr. Jeff Rooker** (Birmingham, Perry Barr): I join in the congratulations expressed by hon. Members to the new Secretary of State. As his former responsibilities concerned overseas development and Northern Ireland, our paths have not crossed very often. He will get away with his faux pas at the Dispatch Box today simply because of the regard in which he is held on both sides of the House—and I say that quite sincerely. The right hon. Gentleman has made many trips abroad and his experience is rather more global than mine. I was surprised that he did not bring to the Dispatch Box examples of other countries that operate a flat-rate poll tax system to fund local government.

Some of the sentences in the right hon. Gentleman's brief struck a chord with me. I had already heard them in Committee and on Report more than a year ago. I caution him to look behind the jargon to ensure that he is not fed a duff line. I have no doubt that he will come to understand the differences between tax units, households and individuals. There will always be arguments about the number of single pensioners who might gain from the poll tax, but the right hon. Gentleman should recognise the difference between a single pensioner and a single-pensioner household. The fact is that 1 million single pensioners will lose because not all single pensioners live in single-pensioner households. Such crucial distinctions in the terminology used about the poll tax can sometimes be used to feed new Ministers a bad brief.

In the short time available I shall concentrate, rather more positively than did the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor), on the effect of the poll tax on living standards. That is where the essential unfairness of the system arises. The poll tax cannot be separated from the changes in social security legislation, especially the compulsory 20 per cent. payment that was introduced in 1986, before the election, but did not come into effect until 1988, after the election. The analysis of how that is provided for in income support shows that it is a crucial factor. There is no doubt that some people will lose and some will gain because of the so-called average amount of 20 per cent. By definition, no one could be poorer than those on income support. Some of them will be worse off, because their income support will not take account of the 20 per cent. of poll tax that they will have to pay.

Any simple system is unfair. That is why life is so complicated in a country of 55 million people. If everyone received the same pay, paid the same amount of income tax and had the same outgoings, the system would not be so unfair. It would be a simple head tax. However, the income and outgoings of families are not the same, so the poll tax will unfairly affect household incomes and family budgets.

The Government argue that the cost of local services should not be hidden by allowing those on low incomes to pay a lower tax. There is a paradox—they want people to pay as high a tax as possible, but it is hidden in the rhetoric of rebates. However, the argument changes slightly when it comes to the safety net, which will severely affect those who will not receive rebates.

I want to give only one brief example from the tome that I collected from the Vote Office yesterday. An average poll tax couple with two children, claiming family credit and housing benefit and with a gross income of £100 a week, will receive a rebate of £2·62 a week. However, the interaction of income tax, national insurance, lost benefit and the poll tax rebate means that they will have to pay a marginal tax rate of 83p in the pound for every extra pound that they earn over £100 a week. Should that family have a gross income of only £80 a week, their marginal tax rate would rise to 94p in the pound.

Yesterday the Child Poverty Action Group produced a useful publication setting out certain calculations. They have not yet been challenged, but I do not doubt that Ministers will be put up to challenge them, if not tonight then during the recess. However we look at the figures on the poll tax, nothing can hide the fact that only the rich will gain. The poor will lose significantly and the middle-income groups will lose most of all.

Two examples are clearly shown in the publication. The first table gives a simple comparison between poll tax and rates, and ignores all the changes to social security benefits in 1986 and 1988. Only the top three deciles show a gain—the top decile gains £3·65 a week—and the other seven deciles show losses. The greatest loss is in the fifth decile—the middle range. Three quarters of all the families in the bottom 10 per cent. end up worse off. Fifty-six per cent. of families lose and 44 per cent. gain.

That is the position before we take into account the effect of the social security changes. Table 6.2 shows that 63 per cent.—not 56 per cent.—of families lose, and 83 per cent.—not 79 per cent.—of the bottom decile lose more than £1 a week on average. Again, the biggest single losers are the fifth decile, the middle-income groups, with an average loss of £1·72 a week. Only the top 10 per cent. gain. Those figures are produced using average poll tax figures which smooth out many of the unfairnesses. A high poll tax will be paid in deprived areas where income tends to be low. Everyone accepts that that is the case.

I make no apology for taking my constituency as an example. We were told last week that the poll tax for Birmingham will be £307, fully safety-netted. This year, Birmingham is one of five authorities with zero underspend and zero overspend. Were it not for the safety net, the poll tax in Birmingham would be £240 this year. As it is, it will be £307—a poll tax surcharge for the safety net of £67. I do not deny that it will be different in later years, but it is the first year that my constituents will be worried about next April.

There are 35,000 front doors in my constituency. Most hon. Members know the number of letterboxes in their constituencies. I have taken 50 roads, with 7,000 dwellings and 14,000 adults. They comprise one fifth of my constituency—the biggest in Birmingham. This year, those 7,000 dwellings will pay £3·3 million in rates. I have not taken rebates into account because I would not dream of asking for such personal information. Using national averages for empty dwellings and a figure of £307 for each adult's poll tax, the poll tax for the equivalent period would be £4·3 million—£1 million extra from one fifth of my constituency.

A few of the 50 roads that I chose will be gainer roads. I challenge anyone to say that I have not used a representative group of roads. My constituency will pay an additional £5 million in poll tax. The dislocation that that will cause to the local economy and to families in my constituency does not bear thinking about. The reality is not people refusing to pay; rather it is of paying the poll tax or buying food.

I have four wards in my constituency. Wards in Birmingham are all large, with electorates of between 18,000 and 21,000. In Tintern road in the Handsworth ward, which is fairly typical and being done up under the urban development scheme, the rates this year will be £33,535. The poll tax will be £70,600—almost double. In Leonard road the rates will be £64,600; the poll tax will be £125,000. The dwellings there are pre-first world war with a less than average rateable value, occupied by average families. However, in the Handsworth ward I am one of an ethnic minority. Some of those dwellings house extended families with six or seven adults and there is no way in which they will be able to pay such sums. In Freer road the rates will be £58,000 and the poll tax will be £111,000.

In the outer-city ward of Kingstanding in my constituency, with 12,000 dwellings built in the 1920s and the 1930s having rateable values within £5 of each other, every couple household will lose because of the nature of the rateable values. In Hurlingham road, the rates will be £69,000 and the poll tax will be £106,000. In Dovedale road, the rates will be £113,000 and the poll tax will be £174,000.

Perry Barr, an outer-city ward from which my constituency takes its name, is a middle-income ward. It is usually the only ward in Birmingham, along with the three wards in Sutton Coldfield, with a below average unemployment rate. Therefore, compared with the others, it is a middle income ward. In Rocky lane, where 800 people live in outer suburban semis—an awful lot of Tory voters—the rates will be £189,000 and the poll tax will be £245,000. In Mildenhall road, which is similar, the rates will be £113,000 and the poll tax will be £151,000.

The Labour party does not get the majority of the votes in those roads. It has come close to winning that ward, but it has not done so since 1963. That is middle-income territory in outer suburban Birmingham. I do not deny that there will be gainers and losers in those roads. In three of my wards, single people will gain, but those living in single dwellings, pre-first world war, in the Handsworth ward, will lose because their rates are less than they will pay in poll tax. That is the reality in low rateable value, deprived, inner-city areas. That is why there will be trouble next year.

No Conservative Member can explain how making a person pay more in poll tax than he pays in rates will put an extra burden of accountability on the city council. Why a constituency such as mine will pay £5 million more in poll tax than in rates cannot be explained away. When one examines the income distribution of other parts of Birmingham such as Edgbaston and Sutton Coldfield, that cannot be defended.

The poll tax is unfair. It is designed to be unfair. That realisation has not come in a blinding flash to me and my hon. Friends. It does not matter how one tinkers with the rebates or what the new chairman of the Tory party will say. There is no way in which, with the best will in the world, pushing back all his previous doubts, trying to present the package in another way and winning a few more million pounds from the Treasury, the Secretary of State and the new Minister for Local Government will ever be able to sell the poll tax. It is too hot to handle and they will soon realise that. The tax's inherent unfairness means that it cannot be sold to the electorate. The Government may face most pressure from Conservative Members in respect of the safety net, but when the bills start dropping through the letter boxes in marginal Conservative constituencies next year, the message will come home.

The Labour party did not want the poll tax and saw no benefit in its inherent unpopularity. We did not say to the Tories, "Please bring in the poll tax because we know that it will make you even more unpopular." Instead, we took every opportunity in Committee and on Report to alter the flat-rate nature of the tax. We also warned the Government that if they persisted, we would screw every ounce of political capital out of their policy at the hustings and at the ballot box. We shall do so, and we do not apologise for that.

Nor do we need to be defensive about out replacement for the poll tax. Any tax, be it based on the occupancy of a property or on the occupant's income, that is directly related to the occupant's ability to pay will always win the argument over a flat-rate tax. That is why the poll tax will not stand the test of time, a change of Government, or even a change of Prime Minister.

6.30 pm

**Mr. W. Benyon** (Milton Keynes): I warmly welcome my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on taking up his new appointment. He comes to it with a fresh mind, and his concluding remarks showed his appreciation of the great difficulties that confront him on the community charge.

I have always opposed the community charge and voted against it on every possible occasion. I do not intend to change my record tonight. I shall not rehearse the arguments against the poll tax, because right hon. and hon. Members have heard them over and over, and again this afternoon. Nevertheless, I emphasise to one or two Opposition Members that the tax is now the law of the land and that that law must be obeyed. Conservative Members have a particular duty to make the best of it, because to do so is extremely important in electoral terms.

Whatever method one uses to raise local government finance—be it rates, a community charge, local income tax, or the combination proposed by the Labour party —if the burden on local authorities is too high, people will resist the tax and blame not the local authorities but the Government. I sometimes wonder about the nature of the constituencies that some of my right hon. and hon. Friends represent. Not one of my constituents has said to me, "I am worried that my local authority will be extravagant." Instead, constituents have asked, "Will the local authority be given enough Government grant?"

Reading the Layfield report after so many years repays itself, because the situation is exactly as Layfield described it all that time ago. I say to the Government that they are being blamed now, and if things continue as they are, they will be blamed even more at the next general election. The Treasury's restrictions on any further relief on the tax will be bought at a very high price.

The solution is twofold. First, as has been mentioned by a number of my right hon. and hon. Friends, one must rid the community charge payer of the safety net, which must be borne instead by the Exchequer. I made the point to my right hon. Friend's predecessor last Monday that if there is to be accountability, which is the real reason for the tax, the community charge must get off on the right foot, so that the taxpayer can say, "I know that the community charge being imposed by my local authority is just that and not something different."

Secondly, either the revenue support grant must be increased or a major item of local authorty spending must

*[Mr. W. Benyon]*

be transferred to the Exchequer. If that is not done, the community charge will start life in the worst possible way. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) gave detailed examples of certain wards in his constituency, and they are repeated throughout the country.

If it is found after the community charge is introduced next year that concessions are necessary, they will have to be wrung out of the Government and will be confessions of failure, rather than tokens of success. I urge those of my right hon. and hon. Friends who have joined the Treasury Bench to act now, while there is still time.

6.34 pm

**Mr. George Howarth** (Knowsley, North): I congratulate the Secretary of State on his new appointment. He must realise from listening to his own hon. Friends on the Conservative Back Benches that the task ahead of him is not to be envied. The poll tax was bad enough in its conception, but its presentation last week by the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor was absolute chaos. The comments of all Conservative Members today, and particularly the eloquent remarks of the right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), must leave the Secretary of State in no doubt about the problems confronting him.

The former Secretary of State for the Environment tried to improve the poll tax by softening the blow in Tory constituencies through his use of the safety net. However, this afternoon, speaker after speaker from the Conservative Benches has complained about its effect on his own constituency. My constituency is, by any measure, one of the most deprived in the whole country, yet as a result of the safety net, each payer of the poll tax will have to find £311, for which there can be no justification.

That inequality is not confined to my own constituency. The hon. Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt), who has been elevated to Minister of State, Department of the Environment, may be aware that, as a consequence of the incompetence of the former Secretary of State for the Environment, the Wirral—which is represented also by the right hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) and the hon. Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Porter)—is the highest-rated on Merseyside, yet still it will contribute to the safety net. I speak up for those right hon. and hon. Members because they are not present in the Chamber to speak for themselves. The hon. Member for Crosby (Mr. Thornton) is in the same position.

Although Merseyside is, justifiably, barely represented by Conservative Members, the Government will penalise not only Labour-held constituencies such as my own but Tory-held constituencies in my area. The malice was bad enough, but the incompetence and chaos that followed penalises even Conservative constituencies.

The poll tax is a bad measure, made worse by the former Secretary of State for the Environment—and I do not think that the mess can be cleared up, even by his successor.

6.37 pm

**Mr. David Blunkett** (Sheffield, Brightside): I add my congratulations to the Secretary of State and to the hon. Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt) on their promotions. I shall miss the former Minister for Local Government, the right hon. Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer)—not because of his personality but because the Chamber will be free of the growling, barking and snarling that so upset my dog very time that the right hon. Gentleman rose to speak. Having now savaged the General Synod, the right hon. Member for Coastal has moved on to do something miraculous with loaves and fishes.

We are talking not about personalities or presentation, but about policies. This afternoon, the Secretary of State commented that the man has changed but the Government's policies have not. That sums up the dilemma facing the Secretary of State and the Government. I do not accept that the right hon. Gentleman believes in the Government's policy or in the words in the brief that he read this afternoon. If he does, he is a lesser man for it. Anyone who has a feel for progressive, reasonable and caring policies knows that the poll tax is not the solution to the problem of an alternative for the present rating system.

The poll tax is based on particular values and ideology that the former Secretary of State for the Environment was more than happy to articulate because he believes in inequality—and said so. He believes in reducing progressive taxation, and was honest enought to say so. It is difficult for someone who does not believe that to put forward a convincing case for a tax that involves equality and uniformity of contribution, but inequality in relation to the amount of misery that it produces. For that is what the poll tax is about: the poor will be hit hardest and the rich will gain most, not only in cash terms—although that is important—but in terms of services.

The Cheshire study carried out not long ago showed clearly that the better-off gained most from the way in which local spending was organised. That applied to education, road use and even the relative cost of emptying dustbins outside large houses with long drives in sparsely populated areas. They will not be charged extra for their services; they will be charged less. They will not feel the burden; it will be borne by the less well-off, the ragged-trousered philanthropists of the 1990s, who will contribute their income so that others may pay less for more advantageous services.

That burden, in terms of payment, is grossly distorted. the railway porter earning just over £100 a week could, in London, be paying 10 per cent. of his income in poll tax, while a Cabinet Minister will be paying 1 per cent. The ratio is 10 to one: that is how much worse off those in work but on low incomes will be than the better-off. That is the stark reality. There is no element of equality, or of payment for services received. It is the opposite: the less people receive, the greater the likely burden on their incomes.

That is why many of those who will gain believe that the poll tax is not only politically inept but morally bankrupt. Millions who will, at least temporarily, be better off will say, like us, that a system that takes from the poor rather than the better-off and distributes resources to the disadvantage of those who are struggling to escape from the poverty trap—as described by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker)—is immoral, and must be rejected on those grounds.

We must recognise that this is not a charge for services rendered, but an unfair and grossly distorted form of taxation. Otherwise, the myth will be put about that we are merely making people pay for the first time. Some interesting points have been made about that this afternoon. The hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) suggested—becoming caught in a tremendously tangled web as he did so—that council tenants would somehow be disadvantaged by an alternative to the poll tax. As his right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) knows very well and has pointed out, those whose properties have low rateable values will be hardest hit.

Owner-occupiers living in small terraced properties—the category that the right hon. Gentleman described in the Report and Third Reading debates on 18 April last year—may have thought of voting Tory in the past. Let us make no mistake, however: they will not think of doing so in the future, and that applies equally to the people to whom the hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire referred. We are talking not merely about the impact of the tax on each individual, but about the change in the distribution system that the Secretary of State described. The study carried out by the Child Poverty Action Group and the Local Government Information Unit has shown that, in the 50 most disadvantaged areas in the country, the average loss to the individual will be £58 a year.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State gave me some staggering figures on 25 November last year relating to the losses in the regions. The northern region would lose £156 million, the Yorkshire and Humberside region £256 million and the north-west £91 million. The Secretary of State described the abolition of the equalisation system as a great bonus for the country as a whole. Under that system, inner London loses £493 million. The south-east gains by £525 million, but that can hardly be described as the righting of a great wrong. Clearly the Government have not stepped in like a knight in shining armour to correct a distortion. The effect of what they are doing will be felt throughout the country.

The right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson) is rightly concerned about the impact of the safety-net provisions. I wondered whether the previous Secretary of State did not have a few tricks up his sleeve à la Lady Porter: if we examine the figures closely, some interesting political conclusions can be drawn. Is it not in the Government's interest for certain London boroughs to find that next year's tax is very high? Is it not in their interest that residents of the borough of Ealing, which they have been attacking, must pay an extra £21 each because of the safety net? In Brent, referred to by the right hon. Member for Brent, North, the figure is £36, and in Haringey it is £15. Is it not advantageous for them to award the borough that I live in, Wandsworth—the jewel in their crown, as they have described it, and the borough that the Conservatives are hanging on to—an incredible safety-net benefit amounting to a staggering £227, reducing my poll tax to £148? Bradford, the other jewel in their crown, will benefit by £36.

The chickens will come home to roost, but presumably, once next year's London and metropolitan borough elections are over, the system will be readjusted to take account of the approaching general election. The Secretary of State would be well advised to put his mind not only to the survival of his Back Benchers in the election—those representing marginal seats containing properties with low rateable values—but to whether the electorate as a whole will begin to suss out what is going on, and what their reaction will be.

I was pleased when the Secretary of State said that he would look again at registration after the shambles that we have already seen, but it is now far too late: people have filled up their forms, believing that they would be behaving illegally if they did not answer questions that have now been ruled intrusive and unnecessary. Any action would be welcome, however. It would also be helpful if the Secretary of State re-estimated the true poll tax average: the Government's 1987 estimate of £178 had risen to £275 in their latest estimate, produced last week. Even then they performed a conjuring trick, assuming that local authorities would be able to contribute the same amount from their balances as last year. Last year, the Government estimated the average poll tax at £274, so Lord knows what the figure will be when they finally get round to being honest about it.

We need an alternative to the poll tax, based on fairness and ability to pay. I give an absolute pledge from the Dispatch Box that our proposals will benefit not only the very poor but those on average incomes above the poverty line, who will pay according to their ability to find the cash. They will not be penalised through capital-value rating; they will not be discriminated against in areas with high property values. This party will treat them decently.

We believe in a system which is fair for the individual and equal in its distribution of the burden throughout the community, and which makes it possible to raise and spend money fairly and equally on decent public services. Our policy will be pitted against the Government's and although the cost of the poll tax must be borne by the people, its price will be paid by the Government in defeat at the polls.

6.50 pm

**The Minister for Local Government (Mr. David Hunt):** Unaccustomed as I have been for two years to speaking from the Dispatch Box, I welcome the opportunity to do so in a debate on a rating system that I have long believed to be discredited and unworkable. I welcome the community charge system, to which I was committed at the last election and to which I remain committed as a much fairer and better system.

I much appreciate the generous words of welcome from hon. Members to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and me. I much welcome the warm tributes that were paid to my right hon. Friends the Members for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley) and for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer)—[HON. MEMBERS: "What tributes?"]. The small group of Labour Members present would be much wiser men if they had listened more carefully to the debate, because they would have heard such tributes.

**Mr. Alex Salmond** (Banff and Buchan): Will the Minister use his previous experience in the Whips Office to tell the House whom of his hon. Friends will give him the most trouble? Will it be the hon. Member for Milton Keynes (Mr. Benyon), who, in ignorance, voted for the Scottish poll tax, rebelled against the poll tax in England and now wants us to make the best of it? Will it be other Conservative Members who, in ignorance, voted for the poll tax in England and Scotland but are now whining about its impact on their constituencies?

**Mr. Hunt:** Having had the privilege of being Government Deputy Chief Whip for two years, I do not recognise the meaning of the word "trouble" with my right

*[Mr. Hunt]*

hon. and hon. Friends. From time to time, we may have genuine disagreements, but we are united, especially about the unfairness of the present rating system and the importance of the new one. Concern was rightly expressed about how the community charge should be introduced.

I heard 12 speeches from start to finish. Although I disagree with many of the points made by Labour Members, I congratulate all hon. Members who participated in a good debate. Having sat for some time on the Select Committee considering the televising of Parliament, I think that a debate such as today's will do the House much credit when it is televised in the autumn.

Labour Members have not spoken to their motion, nor have they proved a word of it. It says that the community charge is unfair, bureaucratic and difficult to collect. Those allegations would be serious had Labour Members substantiated them, but they have not. Labour Members have been unable to prove their case. Thanks to some clever speeches from Conservative Members, Labour Members have been forced on to the defensive—*[Interruption.]* Those who are shouting loudest have been most noticeable by their absence from the debate. Labour Members have been forced on to the defensive because they have been unable to defend an alternative policy that changes every day. The Labour party has been unable to control Labour Members who advocate illegal action; we heard two speeches of that nature from Labour Members this afternoon.

Perhaps the most serious allegation made against the new arrangements is that of unfairness. The only way that Labour Members can begin to substantiate that charge is by deliberately not taking into account the generous rebate system that we have built into the new arrangements. I have much time and respect for the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker). I remember that he celebrated my appointment as Whip on the Finance Bill by leading for the Opposition on that Bill, which lasted longer than any previous Finance Bill. I came to know the hon. Gentleman reasonably well, and I believe him to be a fair man. Being a fair man, he will recognise that those little words at the end of his press release which say that he left out of his calculations rate rebates or community charge rebates in reaching his conclusions, throw his calculations into disrepute.

**Mr. Rooker:** The only way that one can compare like with like is to use unrebated figures. It is not possible for any hon. Member to ask a local authority, "What are the rates for a road net of rebate?" That is private information. I argued that the same would apply if one compared rebated figures, but that information is not available because it is confidential. When it is, I shall do the same exercise.

**Mr. Hunt:** The hon. Gentleman has shot his own fox. He said that, when comparing the effect of rebates, he failed to take into account the fact that the rebate system that we are proposing is far more generous than the present one, and he knows that.

**Dr. Cunningham** *rose*——

**Mr. Hunt:** Let me deal with the hon. Member for Perry Barr.

The hon. Member for Perry Barr said that the community charge is unfair, but I contend that it is much fairer than the domestic rating system. When the community charge is fully implemented, 58 per cent. of households—over 11 million adults—will gain; 83 per cent. of single-pension households will pay less in community charge than they pay in rates; and 75 per cent. of other single-adult households—widows and one-parent families—will gain. On average, the community charge will cost less than domestic rates for all income bands below £200 a week.

**Dr. Cunningham:** How can it be fairer to make people who pay nothing because their earnings are low pay a minimum of at least 20 per cent. of the charge?

**Mr. Hunt:** The hon. Gentleman ignores income support. When considering the overall impact of the community charge, we must not pick and choose. Labour Members already have the relevant information.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), who made a typically robust defence of the community charge, said that people must pay something for the local services they use, but that the community charge must not be artificially high. A number of hon. Members mentioned the safety net. We shall consider carefully what they said, but I emphasise that the purpose of the safety net is to phase in the new system over a relatively short period, so that those who lose have an opportunity to adjust to the new circumstances. Gainers will receive a substantial part of their gain in the first year, but they cannot receive all their gain if areas facing sharp increases are to be given time to adjust.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North suggested that the taxpayer—the Exchequer—should pay for the safety net. The proposals announced last week for next year's grant settlement envisage an 8·5 per cent. increase in the amount to be provided from Government grants and business rates. I believe that to be a fair and reasonable increase in Exchequer support. But we shall listen and consider: this is a matter of balance and it cannot be solved by throwing money at it.

**Mr. Nellist:** I have a question in two parts for the Minister. The first is about rebates. Is he aware that in Coventry, for example, where the poll tax will be £315, according to official Government figures, a single person aged under 25 will receive no rebate if he or she takes home more than £61 a week? Secondly, since when has the business rate been part of Exchequer contributions to local authority spending?

**Mr. Hunt:** Again, the hon. Gentleman has totally missed the point—*[Interruption.]* Far more serious was the speech he made earlier in the debate, in which he advocated support for illegality. How can the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) expect one day to become a Minister of the Crown without condemning the intemperate words used by his hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South East (Mr. Nellist)?

The policy of the Opposition changes day by day. When they have a policy, let them come to the House and seek support for it. I urge my right hon. and hon. Friends to reject the motion and support the amendment.

*Question put,* That the original words stand part of the Question:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 211, Noes 304.

**Division No. 320]** **[7.1 pm**

### AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ken Eastham and
Mr. Martyn Jones.

### NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger

Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Alastair Goodlad.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

*Question,* That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments), and agreed to.*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker** *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That this House supports the introduction of the community charge, the principles of which are manifestly fairer and simpler than those that now apply to domestic rates; welcomes the exemptions conferred on those who cannot be asked to pay and the generous discounts, rebates and increased income support available for those on low incomes; recognises that the unified business rating system introduces a valuable stability for non-domestic ratepayers; congratulates Her Majesty's Government on implementing proposals that will improve the accountability of local government by insisting that all who benefit from their services should have a say in their quality and cost; and notes that either a local income tax or a two-tax system based upon local income tax and capital value tax would be much more expensive to implement, much more unfair and make local government much less accountable.

# Health Policy

7.13 pm

**Mr. Robin Cook** (Livingston): I beg to move,

That this House welcomes with enthusiasm the Prime Minister's pledge that no-one will go private again for medical treatment; invites the Secretary of State for Health to demonstrate his commitment to her pledge by withdrawing the provision for tax relief for private medical insurance, and by abandoning his proposals that self-governing hospitals should trade for private patients and that general practitioners should use practice budgets to purchase private treatment; notes that general practitioners on a ballot have rejected the contract offered by the Secretary of State by a majority of three to one; regrets that the Secretary of State has threatened to impose the new contract irrespective of this vote; and calls upon the Secretary of State to reopen negotiations on his proposal to increase capitation-based payments which will give doctors an incentive to seek longer patient lists.

Tonight's debate is prompted by two important developments in the health debate last week. Half the motion is inspired by the Prime Minister, who last week addressed the 1992 Committee in visionary terms about the Government's intentions for the Health Service. [HON. MEMBERS: "1922."] I stand corrected. Plainly, the 1992 committee of the Conservative party will be smaller than the 1922 Committee.

I give assurances to Conservative Members, who may be worried about the Opposition quoting the Prime Minister in a Supply day debate, that this is likely to be the only time that we shall welcome anything that the Prime Minister has said. I suggest to Conservative Back Benchers who are unhappy with the Government's proposals for the National Health Service that this could be the easiest wicket on which to rebel. After tonight's debate, should they vote for the Labour motion, they will be able to look their Whips straight in the eyes and say that they voted to support the Prime Minister's pledge—and a very remarkable pledge it was. She said, "No one will ever go private again".

**Mr. Jerry Hayes** (Harlow): She did not say that.

**Mr. Cook:** I am interested to hear the comments of the hon. Gentleman, to whom I am happy to give way in a moment. I went to the Library and asked for a copy of the Prime Minister's speech to the 1922 Committee. I was advised that I could not have a copy because it was confidential. Since then, I have been distressed to see that, in the Government amendment, the reference to the Prime Minister is deleted.

I understand that the Secretary of State could not have heard the speech, because I believe that, like me, he is not permitted to attend those meetings. Perhaps some kindly Back Bencher——

**Mr. Hayes** *rose*——

**Mr. Cook:** As we now have one on his feet, perhaps he can tell me whether the words reported were used, and if so, how many of his hon. Friends were so impressed by them that they have since cancelled their premiums to BUPA.

**Mr. Hayes:** Perhaps I can breach a confidence and tell the House that the Prime Minister said, "What I aim to do is to make the National Health Service so good that no one need ever go private again."

**Mr. Cook:** I have to confess that the hon. Gentleman made me uneasy when he began because I thought he said that he had taken to writing the Prime Minister's speeches on the Health Service, and that would be a sad loss to debates in the House.

If that is what the Prime Minister said, two questions obviously arise from it. The first is a small matter of whether, if it is what the Prime Minister said, she includes herself in the commitment. It is not clear, at the moment, whether she was implying the royal no one. The Prime Minister is much given to referring to herself as "one", but this would be the first time that she referred to herself as "no one". The truth is, as hon. Members on both sides of the House know if they have been round the doorsteps discussing it, that the public do not believe that they can trust the National Health Service in the hands of the Prime Minister because she takes good care never to trust herself in the hands of the NHS.

The second, and rather more important, question is whether the Secretary of State will sit down during the recess and rewrite the White Paper in the light of the Prime Minister's prediction according to the hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes). Certainly the White Paper needs urgent revision if she is right. For example, there is the proposal to provide for tax relief on private medical insurance. One can understand why the Secretary of State might be loth to let go of that commitment in the White Paper, because it is the only reference to the health needs of elderly people. Excise that and the White Paper will be absolutely about the needs of an age group who account for almost half of the entire health output of Britain. The Secretary of State must face reality. If no one need go private again, it would surely be cruel to deceive elderly people into paying for what they will not need. However, I note that shares in AMI Healthcare Group, the largest private hospital group, have leapt by a quarter in the month since the White Paper was published. There is not much faith there that no one will ever need to go private again.

Paragraph 9.6 of the White Paper says that general practitioners

"will be able to use NHS funds to pay for treatment in the private sector".

What is that doing there if nobody need go private again? Why can NHS funds not be used to pay for NHS treatment in NHS hospitals?

Then there is the matter of paragraph 3.6 of the White Paper, which provides that opt-out hospitals may trade for private patients. I hope that the Secretary of State will save us from the humbug that this proposal will bring money into the NHS. Providing for private patients in NHS hospitals takes beds, staff and even blood out of the NHS.

That has already happened. A leaflet that has been distributed by Hillingdon district health authority advertises the authority's fixed price scheme. One can jump the queue in Hillingdon for a fixed price. For £370 one can have what is described as "removal of lumps and bumps". For £3,500, one can have a total hip replacement. On reading that leaflet, I felt a sense of rising outrage that a great public service that once prided itself on treating patients according to need was so reduced to chasing money that it touted its facilities by offering a fast track to those who could pay.

Against that record, no one will ever believe the Secretary of State and the hon. Member for Harlow when they promise that it is their objective to make the public

*[Mr. Cook]*

service better than private treatment. Fortunately, there are those in the Health Service who share that concern about where the Health Service is going.

I turn now to the other development last week which has prompted this week's debate on health.

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): Does my hon. Friend agree that many people feel that the White Paper's ethics are distinctly rocky? This has driven me, as my hon. Friend may recall, to make a challenge at a public meeting in Newham town hall to any supporter of the Government to debate in my constituency, and his or hers, the neutral question—I hope that it is neutral—whether the Government's domestic policies, particular those relating to the Health Service, are compatible with Christian values. I have tried to make that challenge public, but have had no takers yet. I should be glad to meet Government supporters in Nottingham, Putney or anywhere else. I hope that Conservative Members will advertise that challenge far and wide, and that it will be taken up in the recess.

**Mr. Cook:** I well remember that occasion. At the end of of the debate, in order to be present for a vote at 10 o'clock in the House, I left Newham town hall by car and my hon. Friend left by bicycle. I arrived only two minutes ahead of him.

My hon. Friend made an eloquent and moving plea. It was a pity that the only way in which one could fill up the platform was with supporters of his case against the White Paper. I should like to share my hon. Friend's challenge to any member of the Government who wishes to go to Newham and take part in a public debate with my hon. Friend. I am sure that any such person will be made welcome by my hon. Friend—provided, of course, there is a reciprocal agreement by which my hon. Friend can go into that person's constituency and carry the message to his or her constituents.

**The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke):** Come on.

**Mr. Cooke:** My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) intervened just as I was about to move on to a matter to which, I am delighted to hear, the Secretary of State wishes to come. Only a couple of months ago, the right hon. and learned Gentleman made a triumphal statement to the House that he had secured agreement with the British Medical Association on the GPs' contract. He said:

> "I am glad to say that it has been my experience that . . . after a dispute is over, people appear to forget it entirely and no one can quite remember what the fuss was all about."—[*Official Report*, 5 May 1989; Vol. 152, c. 484.]

On this occasion, the GPs have not forgotten entirely what the fuss was all about. Last week, they voted by 24·1 per cent. to accept the contract and by 75·9 per cent. to reject it. That is not the kind of result for which one needs a recount to get the picture.

On radio last week, I heard the Secretary of State commenting, no doubt under the pressure of interview, that good doctors had nothing to fear from the new contract, that only the lazy doctor need fear—all 75·9 per cent. of them, I suppose. It is not just laziness that has prompted GPs to put the contract into the incinerator. It is worth examining, more seriously than the Secretary of State has attempted to do, why they said no.

There is much in what the Secretary of State proposes to which I could say yes. I could give a mark of five out of 10 on the 10 major proposals for change. For reasons to which I shall come, I do not quite regard that as a pass mark. For instance, I would welcome his proposal to pay more to GPs who make their own night visits.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** They are against that.

**Mr. Cook:** I well understand—the right hon. and learned Gentleman says that the doctors are against that. I think that he is right. I shall come to those proposals about which he is wrong. His concession that those night visits may be shared with nine colleagues is generous, and it is not unreasonable to ask GPs to do one night in 10 on call.

I agree also with what I understand the Secretary of State is trying to do on targets for screening, but the way in which he is going about it is misconceived. The problem is that the targets set by the Secretary of State for full payment—90 per cent. for child immunisation and 80 per cent. for screening for cervical cancer—are so heroic, so far beyond the present figure for most practices, that there is a danger that many doctors will simply give up trying.

I noticed at Question Time today that the Secretary of State said that most practices met those targets. I have since checked on those figures for district health authorities. Only one in England has reached 90 per cent. immunisation for children, and that is High Wycombe.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** It is 70 per cent.

**Mr. Cook:** The Secretary of State says that it is 70 per cent. I concede that most district health authorities certainly meet the target of 70 per cent. I am sure that, in return, he will concede that for 70 per cent. the doctors get only one third of the payment. Full payment starts at 90 per cent., and only one district health authority is eligible.

This is not a matter on which it is necessary to have a party political debate. I refer the Secretary of State to the full scientific article in a recent edition of the *British Medical Journal* by a woman GP who, after working in a practice that has placed special stress on cervical smears and has been running a recall system for 15 years, still has not reached the target of 80 per cent. of the target population. Moreover, that GP was working in a suburban surgery. Achieving that target would be even more difficult in inner-city areas.

I should like to have the attention of the Minister of State, the hon. and learned Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor), who, I well understand, will wish to impress himself on the powerful friend next to him—the Secretary of State. In a television debate, the Minister of State made a statement that at the time rendered me speechless. He said that there was no evidence that it was more difficult to meet screening targets in areas of social deprivation.

I have since been through the figures for district health authorities. The percentages of immunisation by district health authority reads like a map of Britain by socio-economic indicators. The three lowest areas of immunisation are Merseyside, inner London and Manchester, none of which reaches 70 per cent. The three highest districts are Huntingdon, Winchester and High Wycombe. The only conclusion that one can draw from the way in which the Government have devised the centres for screening is that they are providing incentives for GPs to move into those areas that already have the most GPs and the fewest health problems.

It is not that the contract flopped on those matters. Anyone listening to GPs, rather than lecturing them, already knows what the key issue was: the proposal to increase the proportion received by GPs from capitation fees. GPs already get almost half their income from payments directly related to the numbers of patients. Under the proposal in the new contract, that proportion will increase from almost half to three fifths. This will give even more to those doctors who go for more patients, at the expense of those GPs who limit themselves to the number of patients that they can handle to a professional standard.

This is a flat reversal of a policy pursued for 20 years by successive Government, whether Labour or Conservative, which has aimed at reducing the number of people on patient lists. The Secretary of State proposes to turn the clock back, not to the last Labour Government, but to the Labour Administration before that. One must go back to 1966 before finding a time when the capitation element was so high.

The Secretary of State understands, of course, that more patients means more patient care. We know that he understands that, because he vigorously denies that his proposal can result in more people on each patient list. He claims that he is giving doctors the incentive to increase patient lists, while at the same time assuring patients that it cannot happen—that there will not be any more patients to go round, so the average will stay the same.

Unfortunately, I have to warn the Secretary of State that the number of GPs may not stay the same—at any rate, it will stop expanding. Already, practices from Devon to Glasgow have decided not to proceed with the additional partnership that they had intended to advertise. Their response to the Secretary of State's new contract is entirely rational. They are responding in Thatcherite terms to the financial incentives that they have been given to lengthen the patient list in the practice—although, as they understand, the result in terms of patient care is utterly perverse.

There is a simple way for the Secretary of State to demonstrate his good faith on this question of longer patient lists. He will be aware that the BMA, which he keeps telling us is opposed to any change, has proposed that the ceiling on patient lists should be reduced from 3,200 to 2,500. I ask the Secretary of State whether he will accept that reduction in the upper limit on patient lists. Will he take that obvious precaution to prevent GPs from doing what he assures us he does not want them to do —indeed, he keeps assuring us that they cannot do it—namely, going for longer patient lists? If he will not, there is an obvious conclusion to be drawn. The Secretary of State has designed, as a matter of policy, a contract that will sharpen the competition between GPs for patients, with an incentive to go for longer patient lists, and he has no intention of putting in their way an obstacle to prevent them from doing so.

The last word on the contract, however, must be left to an academic study which the Secretary of State himself chose as relevant to the new contract. On 27 June, in answer to a written question, the Secretary of State said:

> "Recent research by York university's centre for economics has demonstrated the wide range of quality of service to patients provided in different parts of the country under the old contract."—[*Official Report*, 27 June 1989; Vol. 155, c. *422*.]

The Secretary of State is perfectly correct that the study drew attention to the variations in quality provided by GPs and highlighted the fact that the poorer regions of Britain get a poorer service from GPs.

It is perhaps unfortunate that whoever drafted the reply for the Secretary of State did not draw his attention to the full press comments of the authors of the report, who said:

> "The new contract . . . is likely to widen the gap even further . . . Our prediction is that in five to 10 years there will be an even greater difference in standards of service."

It is a mark of desperation on the part of the Secretary of State to find friends for his new contract that he is driven to cite academics who believe that his contract will make matters worse.

This is a short debate, and I wish in conclusion to discuss the response of the Secretary of State to the result of the ballot. As I understand the Secretary of State's position, as far as he is concerned, the BMA need not have bothered balloting members. The GPs will get the contract whether they want it or not, because he will impose it on them. It does not count that 76 per cent. of GPs oppose the contract; nor, for that matter, does it count that, last month, the National Association of Health Authorities found in its opinion poll survey that 90 per cent. of patients were satisfied with GPs. But the Secretary of State reserves the right to know better than 76 per cent. of GPs and 90 per cent. of patients.

The Secretary of State will be aware that there is a small problem in imposing the contract. It is not for him to impose it; he requires a vote in the House in the autumn. I am happy to say that there has fallen into my hands a letter which turns out to be a letter from the Secretary of State to all his hon. Friends, which he ends by wishing them a good recess. Let me take this opportunity to associate myself with that wish to Conservative Back Benchers. I wish them a happy recess in their constituencies explaining to GPs why they propose to ignore the results of the ballot and vote to impose the contract all the same. Not that either they or we need be surprised by the Secretary of State's reaction: it is utterly characteristic and entirely in line with the attitude that he has adopted to the NHS since he returned to his post.

The Secretary of State presides over the largest resource of professional advice and scientific expertise anywhere in Britain. It is a matter of regret that he has shown no interest in listening to any of it. This year, it is the turn of the GPs. Last summer, it was the turn of the nurses who had imposed on them the guidelines in the regrading agreement. Last autumn, it was the turn of the opticians, who warned him that ending free eye tests would result in charges of more than £10 and a drop in the number of tests. I vividly remember the Secretary of State assuring the House that he did not believe them. This spring has been marked by the refusal of the Secretary of State to listen to the chorus of criticism of his White Paper from nurses, doctors, patients and the rest of the public.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman's own limited tolerance of criticism was expressed vividly in the circular that he sent out on consultation on the White Paper. This is how he defined consultation:

> "I look forward to receiving contributions, constructive criticisms and alternative suggestions"—

so far, so good—

*[Mr. Cook]*

"so long as they are aimed at putting the White Paper proposals into practice by 1991."

In other words, consultation is welcome as long as those consulted agree with the proposals. The right hon. and learned Gentleman's impatience of any other criticism was perfectly caught this afternoon when he told my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) that she was not qualified to vote on whether a hospital should opt out. The Secretary of State has defined a system of opting out that matches his view that his opinion is the only one that matters: he is the only person with a vote on whether a hospital should opt out.

It should not surprise anyone that the Secretary of State has chosen to ignore a defeat of three to one. It is of a piece with his management style, which, we are bound to suspect, he copies from the Prime Minister. They are both stubborn and opinionated in their own views and contemptuous and dismissive of the views of everyone else. It is a style of government of which the nation is now heartily sick, and I warn the Secretary of State that if he persists with it, he may succeed in his given task of undermining the NHS but he will almost certainly succeed in undermining support for the Government.

7.36 pm

**The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke):** I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

"welcomes the Government's proposals for reform in the National Health Service which will bring all parts of the health service up to the very high standards now achieved by the best, put the needs of patients first and secure the best value for money; recognises that to make the health service more responsive to the needs of patients as much power and responsibility as possible need to be delegated to local level in future, whether in directly managed or self-governing National Health Service hospitals; looks forward to large general practitioner practices being able to apply for their own budgets to obtain a defined range of hospital services so as to improve the quality of service to their patients; and fully supports the Government's decision to proceed with the implementation of the general practitioners' new contract, the contents of which were agreed with the general practitioners' leaders on 4th May."

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) has made his last speech before the recess, which, as he said, we all confidently expect to come shortly. The hon. Gentleman opened the debate rather like a football player who expected to be playing an end of season game before a rather desultory crowd. He produced a speech and an Opposition motion which simply do not contain any new or good ideas. He showed yet again that his role in echoing the criticism that exists outside the House of our NHS reforms is to represent the views of those who have absolutely no proposals of their own to introduce. The hon. Gentleman continues to do that.

I can recall being in opposition and I know of the difficulties involved in finding ways in which to fill the time on Supply days. The hon. Gentleman was reduced to going through his newspaper clippings to see what has happened in the health world over the past few weeks. He has composed an extraordinary motion combining a quotation from the Prime Minister at a meeting of the 1922 Committee with some of the newspaper reports that followed the GPs' ballot on their contract. His speech, though concise, hardly covered the great problems of the Health Service that we are tackling at the moment.

There is a problem with the quotation from the Prime Minister. As the hon. Gentleman said, I am not allowed to attend meetings of the 1922 Committee and, by singular good fortune, I seem unlikely to be attending a meeting of that committee for some little time yet. I have therefore had to rely on my hon. Friends for the quotation. Not for the first time, my hon. Friends do not entirely agree. My hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) has helpfully given us his account of what was said at the meeting but the recollection of my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) is that the Prime Minister said, "The National Health Service will be so good that no one will want to go private again." [HON. MEMBERS: "Yes."] That recollection seems to be shared by the majority of my hon. Friends on the Back Benches.

I am not surprised by that quotation, although I was not there to hear it and I did not know that my right hon. Friend was going to make it. It touched on conversations that my right hon. Friend and I had from time to time during the review. It is obvious that in our reforms to improve the NHS we shall aim at the best standards achieved anywhere and pose a formidable challenge to the private sector to maintain its standards to keep its appeal to those patients who want to use it for health care.

We intend that the better National Health Service that we aim to create will not set itself lower standards or goals than the private sector aims to achieve. The private sector would have less to fear from an unreformed NHS coping with out-of-date organisation and management and coming under ever-increasing strain to keep up with demand, despite all the extra resources that the Government keep pouring into it.

Patients turn to the private sector for two reasons. First, they exercise their undoubted choice to opt for private medicine for their family and secondly because of their perception of the shortcomings and inadequacies of the NHS. People have an exaggerated view of those inadequacies because they are fed by Opposition spokesmen who seize on local problems in this giant service and give the impression that waiting lists and shortages are a universal problem, when they are usually the result of purely local problems.

It is not new for the Opposition to feed critical views of the Health Service to the general public. I have said before that the best allies of private medicine in the past 10 years have been Barbara Castle and the National Union of Public Employees, whose behaviour in the late 1970s was of particular help. The Labour Front Bench team continue that unintended support for the private sector by defending the NHS against any attempt to improve it and continually producing a highly coloured version of the difficulties facing patients. We shall tackle the problems of the Health Service, and as a result of our reforms it will be a much more powerful competitor of the private sector.

**Mr. Allan Rogers** (Rhondda): The Secretary of State said that there were two reasons why people choose the private sector rather than the NHS. First, he said that they want to exercise their choice and secondly, that they perceived inadequacies in the NHS. Does he accept that one of the main reasons why people use the private sector is that they can jump the queue and get in early? They cheat the queue.

**Mr. Clarke:** That is why we need reforms to tackle the queues and to reduce waiting times. As my hon. Friend the

Minister of State said at Question Time, we could do that by making all operating theatres as efficient as the best. To resist reform is to preserve excessive waiting times and queues, which helps the private sector.

The hon. Member for Livingston included the quotation in his motion merely to make the unoriginal point about tax relief for the elderly, which we included in our White Paper. As he knows, the case for tax relief is based on our belief that, while we intend to make the NHS a competitor of the private sector and able to offer high standards, it is right that patients should have the choice. As society becomes increasingly affluent, people will have more disposable income and some will wish to choose private medicine for various reasons, including convenience and personal predilection. We have offered tax relief to address the particular injustice felt by many elderly people who chose private medical insurance during their working lives but then found that the premiums rose steeply in retirement, when their income dropped. I do not understand the disporportionate attack that is always made on the tax relief proposal, which has been widely welcomed by many elderly people and is a part of the White Paper that has caused the least fuss among the non-ideological public.

The hon. Gentleman raised the more substantial item of the GPs' contract. I am grateful to him for opening up that issue, because it enables me to explain it. I am grateful to him for conceding that he recognises the case for a new contract and that he sees merit in our proposals. He is therefore urging the General Medical Services Committee to accept the need for a performance-related contract which is more in tune with the needs of the late 1980s.

I would have preferred to reach an agreed contract with the GPs and the GMSC. My predecessors and I have bent over backwards to achieve just that. The origins of the new contract go back to the Green Paper of three years ago. Many public meetings were held as the basis for consultation. We had 19 meetings with the negotiators and 110 hours of discussion on 38 documents. Eventually, we reached agreement with the formidable team of GMSC negotiators representing GPs.

The negotiators commended our package to GPs. At a local medical committee conference, it was only just rejected by local medical committee representatives in a tight vote. Then a general ballot was held. So far as I can see, although the package continued to be commended, nobody made any attempt to campaign in support of the commendation. Few local medical committees tried to explain to GPs who had not followed the details where we were in the negotiations.

In the past few weeks I have met GPs from rural areas who thought that rural payments would be abolished and did not know that we had reinstituted seniority allowances in response to the negotiators' requests. As a result of widespread public campaigning against the reforms, there was a heavy vote against the commendation.

The Opposition must address the problem and say what we should do in response to that ballot. Undoubtedly, the Labour party will say that we should accept it and start all over again. That, indeed, is the position of the GMSC, which I met yesterday. I met exactly the same negotiators with whom I reached agreement on 4 May. At that time they left with what they regarded as a satisfactory package of arrangements which they commended to GPs. *[Interruption.]* I was at the meeting. The negotiators do not require the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) to speak on their behalf. They had agreed a satisfactory package which they commended to their members. Faced with a vote which did not endorse their commendation, they came back to me yesterday wishing to reopen negotiations on every item on which we had reached agreement on 4 May. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] They suggested a timetable that would take us until Christmas for reconsidering the whole matter.

The hon. Member for Livingston was good enough to say that he supports the principle of higher payments for the majority of practitioners who make their own night visits. The negotiators intend that to be the subject of fresh negotiations. He said that targets were a desirable principle, although he raised some points about the details, which I shall deal with in a moment. They wish to reopen negotiations about the basis for incentive payments for higher rates of vaccination and cervical cytology. They wish us to reconsider basic practice allowances although we had already made considerable changes. I asked whether the 26-hour availability for direct contact with patients each week was settled, but they said no, that could not be regarded as such. They wish to reopen negotiations on that as well as on capitation, to which the hon. Gentleman referred and to which I shall return.

The negotiators are in no position to agree to any changes. They already have many concessions in the bag; concessions which I made last time and which they offered to members. They now take them as read and wish me to contemplate further concessions although they have no negotiating mandate. Scarred by its experience, the GMSC did not feel able to say that it would be able to agree to any of this. Presumably, I was to make concessions on all those fronts, including those supported by the hon. Member for Livingston, and then it would put it to the local medical committees, and perhaps, in due course to another ballot of general practitioners.

**Mr. Spearing:** That is democracy.

**Mr. Clarke:** No, it is not democracy. I have to say that it is damn near anarchy.

I understand that in settling, in this case, the basis of payment to independent contractors, or more normally the terms and conditions of employees, that is a negotiation in which the person who pays and the person who is being paid have an interest. Obviously, it is right to seek a compromise between my role, which is to look after the interests of the patients and the service and to have a contract that stimulates higher standards, and the GMSC's legitimate role to have something that is acceptable to its members. If we concede everything and the GMSC keeps going back for a vote, we will wind up with a contract that is so completely dominated by those things that make life comfortable for the doctors and the medical profession that we will sacrifice all the aims of higher quality care, which must be a legitimate interest for a sensible and responsible Government to look after in such discussions.

**Mr. Spearing** *rose*——

**Mrs. Alice Mahon** (Halifax) *rose*——

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South) *rose*——

**Mr. Clarke:** I shall give way in a moment, but I want first to deal with two matters that I mentioned, which appear to be the only major doubts of the hon. Member for Livingston—targets and capitation.

It is a fond belief on his part that they are the only matters that need to be reopened at the request of the GMSC. I have said that the 70 per cent. target could be hit by most practices in England. I believe that is so in the case of vaccination. I introduced that as a big concession last time, because it is comparatively easily obtained by most of our English practices. My understanding is, however, that many Welsh and Scottish practices will have to raise their performance to get there—as, too, will some English practices. Therefore, a lower target was justifiable and I made a concession. It will stimulate practices to raise their performances to those that are being readily achieved in wide parts of England.

The 90 per cent. target is a World Health Organisation target. It is always stated that our agreed aim is for the National Health Service to be one of the best health care systems in the world. I cannot accept that the performance targets for vaccinations in our National Health Service should be below the level accepted by the World Health Organisation. The hon. Member for Livingston may be right—I have not looked it up—in saying that only High Wycombe hits 90 per cent. Why on earth should High Wycombe be the only place in the United Kingdom where it is legitimate for the GPs to strive to reach the best international standards? I believe that the hon. Gentleman should be committed to my principle of a performance-based contract.

When people looked around for other reasons why the GPs rejected the contract, the capitation argument was raised. As the hon. Member for Livingston said, we are talking about a contract where capitation is by far the largest single element. We are moving from 48 per cent. to 60 per cent., although that includes some new elements that we are counting as capitation. I do not accept, for the reasons that the hon. Gentleman has given, that that will have the slightest effect on average lists. The situation in the 1960s must be compared with one where we will make it much easier for patients to change their practice and for them to have access to information about the kind of services that their doctors will provide. We believe that it is right to spread the work load more fairly and to reinforce the efforts of those GPs to attract and retain their patients. However, they will not do so if they build up enormous lists. Any GP with an average or near-average list will strive to get performance payments that arise under the other part of the contract.

The hon. Member for Livingston claimed that partners are being turned away in some practices and that the number of GPs is being reduced. If that is happening, it can only be because the GPs have been carried away with their own campaigning. The only reason for not replacing a partner who has retired is that GPs are taking the view that they can earn more with four partners in the practice than they can with five. They are, therefore, somewhat irresponsibly deciding to increase their work loads, not to replace a partner when he retires and to cut back on the amount of time that they give to their patients. However, GPs will not benefit from such actions. They will lose their patients to those other GPs who will be inspired by the contract to set themselves a reasonable work load and to go after the performance payments that we are making for a good delivery of service to patients.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** If the Secretary of State accepts that longer patient lists would be at the expense of patient care and that it is not his intention that GPs should go for longer patient lists, will he accept the proposal that the upper limit for patient lists should be reduced from 3,200 to 2,500? If not, why not?

**Mr. Clark:** The extent to which any given number of patients reduces or does not reduce the amount of time given to patients depends on the amount of time that the doctor puts into his practice. We know from the last study of GPs that the average commitment of a GP to his practice is 38 hours a week. The contract requirement is for a minimum of 26 hours direct availability to patients. I do not see, however, why a GP who wants to have a larger than average list could not make himself available for more than 26 hours and still provide an adequate standard of service.

Patients will judge for themselves whether the amount of time that they receive from their doctors is adequate. I hope that, as we open the eyes of more patients as to what can be achieved by modern general practice, they will be particularly attracted to those doctors who have good standards of vaccination, who go in for the health promotion and the prevention of disease that we are stimulating and who offer minor surgery and all the other advantages to patients.

**Mr. Spearing:** The Secretary of State has ranged at great speed over other matters, but I wish to take him back to his complaint that the doctors wished to take up matters after the ballot. Does he recall that about 40 years ago, when the Health Service was founded, one of the big issues was that doctors were to be independent contractors and not employees? Is not the Secretary of State's complaint completely invalid, because he must accept that they are independent professional contractors providing a professional service, not employees like people on the railways or on the docks?

**Mr. Clarke:** That works both ways. I accept that they are independent contractors. However, I do not accept the Labour party's claim that, if one is an independent contractor, one is entitled to dictate from one's own side of the table all the terms of the contract.

**Mr. Spearing:** I am not saying that.

**Mr. Clarke:** That is exactly what the Labour party is saying. The motion says that, if the doctors do not want it, the matter should be reopened and we should carry on producing terms until they are wholly acceptable to the GMSC. Is the Labour party saying that, if they vote against it 60:40 next time, it might accept that some duty falls on the Government to ensure that the patients are looked after?

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman** (Lancaster): Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

**Mr. Clarke:** There are two sides to the contract. The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) is right to say that history repeats itself in many ways. The extraordinary way in which the Labour party—bereft of any ideas of its own on the Health Service—simply follows through newspaper cuttings of what the GMSC or the BMA is currently arguing is a strange reversal of previous form.

I shall not go back to the 1970s, when the Labour party had great battles with the doctors and the nurses and did not accept votes and the terms and conditions that they wished. I shall not go back either to the 1960s, when the Labour party had equally dramatic battles with the GPs, among others, and it settled the last contract when faced with industrial action by the GPs. It started with the whole National Health Service in 1946.

It is astonishing, when one looks at the present controversy, how much history has so far repeated itself. In March 1946, the BMA's main objection to the then Labour Government's White Paper was that it had not been consulted during the course of it being drawn up. Aneurin Bevan was repeatedly attacked for what was described as a dictatorial attitude and his insistence on imposing things on the profession. The BMA's main argument was that the new health centres should be introduced on an experimental basis and not introduced nationwide. A BMA member even compared Aneurin Bevan's proposals to a "regime which is now coming to its sorry end in Nuremburg". I regret to say that, in reply, Aneurin Bevan called them

> "a small body of politically poisoned people".

That is language to which my hon. Friend and myself would never resort.

About 56 per cent. of doctors opposed co-operation with Nye Bevan's proposed creation of the National Health Service. Indeed, they voted by 9:1 against accepting the terms and conditions offered in the Health Service. However, history has not repeated itself entirely, because I do not recall that the Labour party was on the side of the nine. Today's Labour party—the very much lesser figures who occupy their predecessor's shoes—are prepared to accept a re-run of history so far——

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton** (Macclesfield) *rose*——

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman** *rose*——

**Mr. Winterton:** I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend——

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** Hang on—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Winterton:** I take my right hon. and learned Friend's remarks seriously. There is considerable sense in what he says. However, will he pay credit to the overwhelming majority of general practitioners who play a vital part in the health care of this country and will he admit that they have done so since the foundation of the National Health Service? Will he also admit that the overwhelming majority of people in this country have confidence in our general practitioners?

I hope that, later in his constructive speech, my right hon. and learned Friend will say that he is prepared to enter into on-going discussions with the general practitioners to seek a satisfactory solution which, I believe, will be in the interests, not only of the doctors but of the patients.

**Mr. Clarke:** I am grateful for part of my hon. Friend's advice because I should acknowledge that our general practitioners provide a valuable service to the public and are committed to the National Health Service. Many of them voted as they did, believing that they would lose money through our proposals, when they will not. We are proposing to reward the services and work load that the best doctors already operate. Many of them will benefit from our proposals. It is up to the GMSC and ourselves —or certainly it should be—to explain yet again to the doctors what we have agreed. As I made clear yesterday, I am prepared to listen to the GMSC if it comes forward with any proposals, and to explain the difficulties.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way on that point?

**Mr. Clarke:** Yesterday I was faced with negotiators who have now lost all their negotiating mandate. There is nothing that they can conceivably agree to. They do not know what they want and wish to reopen the whole thing over a prolonged time scale, presumably then resorting —as the Opposition wish—to another attempt to ascertain whether that is acceptable.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the trend that he referred to about five minutes ago of patients transferring to doctors who offer a better service is already happening in my constituency, where some go-ahead GPs have set up exceptionally good premises, with a well-man and well-woman clinic, a hyper-tension clinic, their own night service and a 24-hour on-call service? Patients are already transferring to that practice from practices that do not supply such facilities. The doctors who are supplying these facilities will be infinitely better off in the future because at the moment they are providing those facilities out of sheer professionalism, but in the future they will be paid for what they are doing.

**Mr. Clarke:** My hon. Friend knows and supports the fact that we will make it easier for patients to change practices and that we will make it possible for them to be given more attractive information about what their practice offers.

The position of the Opposition and of some people in the profession is that rewards to attractive practices, such as my hon. Friend has just described, should not be so great in order to protect the position of those who are not offering new services or achieving the higher standards. That is not a glorious position for either the Opposition or the profession to accept. Indeed, it was not the position adoped by the GMSC. I pay tribute to the negotiators that I faced on 4 May, because they drove a hard bargain on behalf of their GPs. They got me to make concessions which, frankly, I would not otherwise have been minded to make, and they came up with a fair package. We should now explain to the doctors that we have achieved a fair balance in the interests of the patients as well as of themselves.

We are drawn over the history of these matters partly because we are going over the history of the Labour party's objections to our reforms as they pick them up as we go along. However, history needs not repeat itself. Indeed, it is not doing so, because the Labour party is on the wrong side of the barricades at the moment. As I keep saying to the BMA, the barricades should come down. It is a needless and continuing controversy——

**Mr. Spearing:** It was the Secretary of State himself who put up those barricades.

**Mr. Clarke:** If the BMA would abandon its extremely indiscreet newspaper campaign, if its members would stop frightening their elderly patients and if we got back to the

*[Mr. Clarke]*

undoubted agreement that exists between us on the future of the National Health Service and the principles upon which it is based, we could make progress.

Behind all the newspaper cuttings which the hon. Member for Livingston draws upon and the continuing controversy over the contract, the fact is that the common interest in the Service between many doctors and other professionals and the Government, and the common interest among most people in this country in seeing a better Health Service, is being put into effect. Yet again, as on previous occasions, I must advise the hon. Gentleman that he will be horrified to hear that the implementation of our White Paper reforms is going smoothly and well.

I shall shortly be sending members of all parties a briefing pack giving them all the detailed information that they require. The pack has recently been sent to managers and itemises in considerable detail the progress that has been made in preparing for the reforms and in putting them into place.

The review has already changed the climate in the Health Service to an extent that I would never had expected. I have never known a service which, in the past, has been so resistant to change, engaging in planning for so much change on such a wide scale.

Although all our debates are dominated by our unfortunate problems with the medical profession, we should remember that there are many other people in the Service. The chairmen and the managers of the National Health Service authorities are extremely keen on our reforms and are pressing on with them purposefully and well. There are wide agreements between doctors and nurses, who have not been mentioned so far, on a number of systems——

**Mr. Ian McCartney** (Makerfield): It is the Secretary of State who appoints those chairmen.

**Mr. Clarke:** I shall remind the House yet again that the doctors and the nurses—indeed, the great bulk of both professions—support the need to introduce new financial management systems. They support the need for clinical audit as a form of quality control. They all support the need to devise better methods of distributing our resources so that the money follows the patient. We are still discussing the details of our contract system.

**Mr. Cryer:** Will the Secretary of State give way?

**Mr. Clarke:** In my judgment about 80 per cent. of our White Paper proposals have achieved pretty universal acceptance and are now being put into place.

**Mr. Cryer:** Yet again, will the Secretary of State give way?

**Mr. Clarke:** No.

There continues to be controversy about self-governing hospitals and about GPs' practice budgets. They are the very systems that are causing most controversy, but they are also the areas in which we are proceeding most cautiously. We have said that we will expand them where we have people who wish to make a go of it, who see the potential and who are prepared to work hard with us. I expect only a limited number in 1991. However, as the volunteers develop those ideas, I believe that their great potential will be shown and it will be recognised that that is the way to organise both hospitals and practices to take advantage of the new systems, and that that will eventually move the debate on.

**Mr. Cryer** *rose*——

**Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop** (Tiverton) *rose*——

**Mr. Clarke:** No, I shall not give way because I have been speaking for too long.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** I am grateful. Would my right hon. and learned Friend tell the House why the letter from Mr. Nichol in his Department, which said that expressions of interest in going to National Health trust status by hospitals should be referred to regional health authorities for their comments before being sent to his Department when, in fact, those authorities have been completely bypassed, and that the expressions of interest have been sent to his Department without being placed before the South Western regional health authority, for instance, whose members have had no opportunity therefore to comment on them, contrary to the letter which was sent out?

**Mr. Clarke** *rose*——

**Mr. Cryer:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wonder whether we could have a brief Adjournment. The Minister of State has been giving information to the Secretary of State who clearly has not a clue about the point that has been raised and he obviously needs some conversation with the specific Minister so that he can answer his hon. Friend.

**Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. The House is anxious to get on with the debate. I call Mr. Secretary Clarke.

**Mr. Clarke:** I know that the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) is always desperate to get his name into *Hansard,* but I have never known him reduced to quite that desperation before.

Duncan Nichol, the chief executive of the Health Service, is perfectly entitled to ask for expressions of interest in self-governing status. Such expressions of interest are being handled at regional level in the first place and are then being passed on to us with the comments and judgment of the regional health authority management.

I understand that there is some controversy in the south-west about exactly who has seen them, but I have no doubt that that matter could properly be sorted out by the south western regional health authority, which is responsible for managing its own affairs. The process followed by Mr. Duncan Nichol, the chief executive of the Health Service, was perfectly proper and carried out with my knowledge and approval. He produced 178 expressions of interest in self-governing status from people who saw the potential of what we are proposing for their particular units.

The debate will move on as implementation proceeds. I have no doubt that a momentum for change will build up inside the Health Service and will at last oblige the Opposition to move on and to face up to the fact that the actions of my right hon. Friends and myself are the actions of friends of the National Health Service who see the way in which it should be reformed to improve the standards of service for patients in future years.

I believe that the Labour party and its allies and the more reactionary people in the professions and elsewhere will be overtaken by great events in the National Health Service over the coming years. The debate will be regarded as a footnote to the events taking place at the moment. I believe that the GPs' contract will shortly be resolved to the satisfaction of the best doctors and certainly their patients. That will be only the first step in a great process of reform which the Labour party cannot stop and of which we will be extremely proud when we have completed it.

8.10 pm

**Mr. William McKelvey** (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): I make a brief foray into the debate on behalf of Opposition Back-Bench Members to say that today the alternative select committee on Scottish affairs published its first report on the Health Service in Scotland. I recommend that the Secretary of State reads the document, which contradicts much of what he said. The vast majority of the evidence that we collected from people in Scotland working in and for the Health Service, from those who have benefited from the Health Service and from medical practitioners bears out much of what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) from the Opposition Front Bench.

Much of the document is relevant only to Scotland, and I shall not bore the House with details in which hon. Members may not be particularly interested. But there are great similarities between the Health Service in Scotland and in England and great comparisons are made in our document. I shall read out some of the document, a copy of which is in the Library. Additional copies can be purchased from my good self at the price of £1·50. The reason for the charge is that the alternative select committee for Scottish affairs has to provide its own funds for its investigations, due to the failure of the House to set up a proper Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. As we are not allowed to be financed by the establishment, perhaps on Thursday the new Leader of the House will be convinced to attempt to get Scottish Conservative Back-Bench Members interested in the Health Service and all Scottish affairs, and to organise a proper Select Committee to look into these matters.

We did quite well with the resources that we had, and the document is quite well presented. In its evidence to the committee, the British Medical Association voiced some of its worries. It said:

> "The introduction of an extended internal market, could have a number of adverse effects for consumers:
>
> 1. More patients would have to travel more often.
>
> 2. There could be particular problems for the elderly of those who have young children and friends/relatives could find visiting more difficult.
>
> 3. Post-operative follow up at out-patient clinics might not be carried out by the same consultant who performed the surgery."

The document continued:

> "The Committee was also unconvinced by the assertion that the form of internal market being proposed would increase 'consumer' choice. At present the decision as to where treatment will take place is made individually between the patient and his or her GP or consultant. The patient's relatives may also be involved, especially if the patient is mentally ill, mentally handicapped or elderly. If Health Boards entered into trading agreements with each other or with third parties to provide blocks of patient services, this individual choice would inevitably be reduced."

That is quite the opposite of what the Secretary of State was saying at the Dispatch Box. That difference should be noted.

The report continued:

> "Some witnesses raised concern that English codes of practice were inappropriate for Scotland. The Scottish Association of Local Health Councils pointed out that Scottish lists sizes are approximately 1,600, whereas English list sizes are approximately 2,000, that is 25 per cent. larger. The minimum list size for a General Practitioner to receive a budgetary allowance is 1,100. However there are increasing concerns that this is far too small."

I know that discussions are taking place, and perhaps agreement is being reached on these matters.

The report continued:

> "North American researchers have shown how volatile such budgeting would be if implemented at this level (for example, R. Scheffler writing in the *Lancet*, 1989). Alain Enthoven, the American economist who first proposed the concept of the internal market, has recently suggested in the *British Medical Journal* that the minimum size would have to be 50,000 if the scheme was to be operational. The Committee is concerned that if the minimum list size which determines the viability of budgetary-based trading is not known, then the proposals themselves will not be viable. The Committee recommends that some degree of experimentation is undertaken before any policy is implemented."

I picked up in my mail the "Parliamentary Newsheet" from the Market Research Society—a document which I seldom read or quote. It contained an interesting article entitled "GPs' reaction to the White paper".

It said:

> "Recent research by the British Pharmaceutical Market Research Group has found that GPs have become considerably more negative in response to the Government's White Paper proposals in the period since those proposals were first published. This is the overall finding of a study of 466 GPs.
>
> An earlier study was conducted immediately after the publication of the White Paper and revealed that half of GPs questioned disagreed that there were any patient benefits. That figure has now risen to 84 per cent. disagreeing that patients would benefit overall."

That was despite, or perhaps because of, the Government's propaganda on the White Paper, and their explanations, which were certainly not plausible to general practitioners or to members of the public.

The most mail that I have had for a considerable time comes from ordinary people who write to me—not the photocopied letters or postcards provided by general practitioners—with real concern that the Government are not genuinely attempting to improve the lot of patients in the National Health Service. My constituents are worried that we are turning the National Health Service into a profit-making business and putting that before patient care. I have received hundreds of letters, which I shall eventually dispatch to the Secretary of State, as I have promised my constituents, so that he can read some of the comments in them.

When the Secretary of State outlined his discussions with the British Medical Association, and said that an agreement had been reached by its representatives and then overturned by a small majority at its subsequent conference, he did not provide the figures. I agree that there was a small majority. On 21 June 1989, a special conference of local medical committees voted against by 166 to 150. In anybody's language that was a majority, so

*[Mr. William McKelvey]*

the representatives of the local medical committees did not agree with the General Medical Services Committee, which had agreed the deal with the Secretary of State.

The representatives of the local medical committees then insisted that a referendum was held of all general practitioners. I assume that they would have had to insist on that, whatever decision the majority had taken. Had the numbers been reversed, would the Secretary of State have said today that the majority was very narrow? Would the Secretary of State have demanded that, as the majority had accepted it, the majority should rule, and that the acceptance should be final and a burden on the rest of the medical practitioners?

When the general practitioners examined the offer which had been agreed by the GMSC negotiators, they disagreed completely with the representations made on acceptance. About 82·1 per cent. of doctors who work in the National Health Service voted and, of those, 24 per cent. voted to accept. There was a massive majority and the more the Secretary of State hurls insults at general practitioners rather than trying to explain the deal, the worse matters will become.

I hope that, as a mere Back-Bench Member, I may have the temerity to offer some advice to the Secretary of State. There are many people whose integrity one can attack. It is difficult to attack an hon. Member's integrity in the House, as it is not allowed, but outside the House, the integrity of Members of Parliament is attacked daily by their constituents; they seem to be fair game. It would be extremely difficult if one was to start to attack the integrity of some of the professional people whom we must regard with respect. In Scotland, we may get away with attacking the legal profession—sometimes that is quite fashionable. We may even get away with attacking ministers of religion, depending on which side of the fence we are on and the company we are keeping at the time.

However, neither in Scotland nor in the whole of Great Britain will one get away with attacking the integrity of doctors working in the National Health Service, who put in extraordinarily long hours on behalf of their patients, who look after the sick and the elderly and who do their best to look after the handicapped, often with services that are stretched to the limit. The public do not need a propaganda exercise to tell them that the doctors are under attack when the Secretary of State goes on television to say that doctors are reaching for their wallets.

The elderly in particular depend on their general practitioners, often in the middle of the night, when they are under stress and when there are epidemics of flu, for example. Elderly people feel passionately strongly for those who give them such good service, and they appreciate the kindness when they are under severe stress. I am afraid that on this occasion, as on other occasions, the Secretary of State has made a severe gaffe. He would do better to try to resolve the position by getting the general practitioners round the table to start afresh, if necessary.

As long ago as 1985, the general practitioners in the British Medical Association were seeking meetings with the Secretary of State on negotiations for a new contract. If such negotiations were resumed, if the Secretary of State took into consideration the genuine feelings of members of the public who, from the responses to our review, are almost 100 per cent. in support not only of the National Health Service, but of those who work in it, and if we tried to use the money that we have to inject more cash into the National Health Service, and use and monitor it properly, instead of trying to make the National Health Service cheaper—to make those who work at the Cinderella end of the National Health Service pay the price for the money that has to be saved to buy equipment that should have been provided anyway—I shall believe that we are making the real progress that people demand and will demand through the ballot box at the next election.

8.24 pm

**Mr. John Greenway** (Ryedale): It is worth stressing that the Government's record on the National Health Service and their proposals for the future of that service are arguably the most misrepresented feature of their policy. Over the past 10 years, we have seen resources increase by 40 per cent. in real terms. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development figures now show that we are talking of 6·1 per cent. of gross domestic product spent on health care, as opposed to 5·3 per cent. 10 years ago. That is a tribute to the efforts the Government have made.

I am sorry to see that the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) has left the Chamber. He alone is responsible for the most blatant misrepresentation of the Government's reforms. Even before the White Paper was published, he said that there were plans for hospitals to opt out of the NHS. There are no such plans. I see in the longer term—perhaps a decade and a half—a system in which there will be commissioning agents and bodies providing the service on a self-governing basis, whether hospitals or community services.

The Opposition motion seeks to exploit last week's vote by GPs to reject the contract agreed on 4 May between my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and the General Medical Services Committee. I must declare a personal interest in the matter in the sense that, as my hon. Friends are aware, the chairman of the General Medical Services Committee, Dr. Michael Wilson, is my own GP and a personal friend. I have had opportunities to discuss the matter with him on a number of occasions to a greater extent than one would normally expect as a Back-Bench Conservative Member.

I am pleased that my right hon. and learned Friend referred to the negotiations which took place in the weeks leading up to 4 May and the events of 4 May. There is no doubt that a fair and reasonable compromise was reached in those negotiations. My right hon. and learned Friend will accept that the many representations from hon. Members of all parties about features of the first version of the contract were helpful, especially in relation to rural practice payments, part-time allowances and targets for screening and immunisation.

I was interested to hear my right hon. and learned Friend's remark about yesterday's discussion, from which some believe that all the contract is up for renegotiation. Clearly, that is not possible. If I heard my right hon. and learned Friend correctly, he said that if there were some specific details in the contract on which further discussion might be appropriate, we should enter into further negotiations on them. However, there can be only a few. I have asked the chairman of the GMSC to let me and colleagues know whether there are any particular points that they feel are still a problem. I say that because I do not believe that it does either side of the argument any benefit to perpetuate a war of words. We now need constructive proposals for the future of the Health Service, and we must take the White Paper proposals forward as quickly as we can.

Conservative Members have had many letters that reflect the misinformation and misrepresentation that abounds about the White Paper. I received one letter from a lady who said:

> "I have been told by a visitor that when the new NHS starts, my GP will have a limited amount of money to spend on his patients. Because of this, when the money runs out, he will not be able to pay the District Nurses."

Fortunately, I was able quickly to send her a reply from the district general manager of the York health authority, in which he said that he could reassure the lady

> "completely that there will be no risk, whatsoever, of reducing our District Nursing Service . . . there are plans for a substantial increase in the number of nurses and physiotherapists and occupational therapists."

It goes on to say that there is every sign that the district health authorities would be able to increase community services because, in the world which the White Paper envisages, they

> "will have much more time to focus on determining what the public actually want and will get hold of the purse strings so as to be able to ensure that they get it."

At the 1922 Committee meeting last week, the Prime Minister stated a clear objective that we would want to see —namely, a National Health Service that is so good that people will not want private treatment. That is an objective for the future. Nevertheless, yet again it shows the Government's clear commitment to improving the NHS for the benefit of patients. In those circumstances, in trying to help doctors and their representatives to achieve the best for the NHS, Conservative Members have a right to ask them to reconsider whether the slogan of their current campaign, "SOS for the NHS", is appropriate. There is a meeting going on in York tonight under that very banner. It is sad that misrepresentations that will create yet more fear and anxiety in the minds of vulnerable patients are still being perpetuated, despite the comments of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

We need a constructive debate. Patients are rightly asked what difference the White Paper proposals would make for them. District health authorities will have a much stronger brief to find out from patients what they consider should be provided, rather than rely entirely on staff saying what they think they should have. In the York health authority area, several changes are to be implemented over the next two years, taking very much the same stance as the White Paper, to improve the Health Service, make it more responsive to patients, and cut waiting lists. That would inevitably mean changes for the staff. Perhaps one can begin to understand why some staff elements are opposed to further development towards a more flexible response.

Flexibility is one of the key strengths of the White Paper. It is not prescriptive. It provides freedom to develop the service that a regional health authority considers best for its region. Only today I spoke to the chairman of Yorkshire regional health authority, and it is his view that we in Yorkshire can develop the kind of service that we believe is best for Yorkshire. That is because the White Paper offers opportunities. As I have already said, it is not prescriptive.

In their misrepresentation of the Government's proposals, the Opposition have attempted to give the impression that the changes in the White Paper will be steamrollered through. That is not the case. The more one discusses these plans with district and regional health authorities and with FPCs, the more it becomes clear that they are long-term reforms. The implementation of the proposals will take time. It is clear also that, initially, it will be largely experimental.

**Ms. Harriet Harman** (Peckham): Will the hon. Gentleman support people in Yorkshire who want a say before any of their hospitals become self-governing NHS hospital trusts and opt out of the district health authority?

**Mr. Greenway:** They are not going to opt out of the district health authority. As I understand it from the working papers that have been issued, the district health authority will still have power to decide where contracts are placed.

**Mr. McCartney:** Is the answer no?

**Mr. Greenway:** The answer is that, until there are proposals for a certain hospital to take self-governing status, nobody knows what the consultation requirements will be.

**Mr. Hayes:** Is my hon. Friend saying that it is ridiculous to have ballots either in a hospital or the community at large and that, perhaps, the proper focus of attention, as happens now when a hospital opens or closes, is through a community health council?

**Mr. Greenway:** There will be improved opportunities for CHCs when health authorities are slimmed down in the way the White Paper proposes. If there were any kind of ballot, referendum, or public opinion test about the White Paper proposals, it would be difficult to see how the public could express a clear view, given the degree of misrepresentation about the White Paper proposals.

**Mr. Archie Kirkwood** (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Greenway:** I will not give way. I must get on, as other hon. Members wish to speak.

It is difficult to reconcile hon. Members' arguments on radio and television that the Government are steamrolling through the White Paper proposals, when every serious major structural change will be voluntary. Following my right hon. and learned Friend's statement two weeks ago about community care—we are to implement by April 1991 a positive and absolute change, when local social services departments will have responsibility for community care—we are accused of prevarication and delay. It will not be too many weeks or months before some social services directors begin to think that perhaps 1991 is too soon. Clearly, people will argue for or against the White Paper according to how it suits their political persuasions. I am much more concerned that we should now advance the proposals and take the next necessary steps to put the much-needed and imaginative reforms into place.

Task forces will have to be set up by regions to examine the opportunity for each hospital that has expressed an interest in self-governing status. From my discussions about what might happen in our area in Yorkshire, it is clear that consultants, district general managers and their management teams want more information. I understand that an additional working paper will be issued shortly. I should be most grateful if my hon. Friend the Minister of

*[Mr. Greenway]*

State would refer to the timetable that he envisages. We need to know how the trust will increase choice, which hospitals may want to be self-governing, how the management of self-governing hospitals will work, and what discussions about contract details must take place with the district health authorities.

In other words, before any hospital becomes self-governing, we need to establish whether a proposed self-governing hospital can deliver something that improves the current arrangements. In answer to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman), when we have got that far and we can publicise those arrangements, the public will have a much clearer impression of what is proposed.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** Does the hon. Gentleman recommend opting out?

**Mr. Greenway:** What I recommend will depend entirely on what is proposed. There is a community hospital in my constituency to which I referred my right hon. and learned Friend during Question Time several weeks ago——

**Mr. Kirkwood:** Is the Secretary of State going to close it?

**Mr. Greenway:** No, he is not going to close it. That hospital has expressed an interest in self-government. The doctors concerned have expressed a clear interest in having their own practice budget, combined with self-governing status for the community hospital. The Yorkshire regional health authority chairman and the family practitioner committee clerk have expressed the view that that is an exciting prospect.

In answer to the point by the hon. Member for Peckham, it is too early to tell whether that proposal can become a reality for that hospital. We need the information that I have mentioned, and we need to look at each case. That is why I am asking my hon. Friend the Minister of State to tell the House what further proposals there are for the additional working papers.

**Ms. Harman:** The hon. Gentleman misunderstands my question. I did not ask whether he would recommend that a hospital in his constituency should become self-governing. I asked whether he would recommend that people in his constituency should have a say in whether that hospital becomes self-governing.

**Mr. Greenway:** The Friends of Malton Hospital is an active association which, I am sure, would want to test local opinion on opting out. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has made it clear that any hospital that wishes to become self-governing must provide clear information on whether that will be to the benefit of the patients. There will have to be a proper management structure. At this stage, it is not valid to ask people about their reactions to the proposals when the necessary additional information is not available.

Once the contract for GPs is settled, health authorities will need to encourage their bigger practices to adopt a budget. My impression is that GPs are aware that they will face a choice between adopting a budget and being left behind. By voting against the contract last week, they have perpetuated the confusion about the contract and the White Paper. It is difficult not to conclude that the confusion of the two issues is a delaying tactic by some members of the medical profession.

It must be recognised that some elements of the Government's plans require more detailed explanation. That is especially so for indicative drug budgets. Initially, they will need to be very indicative if the reassurance that patients will not go without medicine and appliances is to be honoured. We must also take care not to discourage pharmaceutical research. Nevertheless, one question about drug budgets needs to be asked: why the Government are aiming to curb the worst excesses of drugs spending only by GPs and not by hospitals. The answer, of course, is that hospitals already have proper arrangements for generic prescribing to curb spending.

When the proposals in the White Paper are in place, there will be an opportunity for regional health authorities to hold the budget for drugs. That will create the opportunity for bulk purchasing. Will such opportunities be exploited? What purchasing role is envisaged for regional pharmaceutical officers appointed by regional health authorities? Surely their role should include ensuring value for money for regional health authorities as well as protecting the pharmacists.

There was some discussion earlier about how to square the circle between the Government's desire to introduce tax relief or private medical insurance for pensioners with the stated objective of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, to which I have already referred. Opposition Members may be interested—I can obtain copies for them if they are—in *Post Magazine The Insurance Weekly* last week, which published a series of articles about the future of private medical insurance. One article deals with the reasons why some people prefer private medical care. It states:

> "Why do people choose to go for private treatment when there is a free National Health Service? Market research indicates the reasons are that they can enter hospital quickly and they can choose their admission date, and thus avoid holidays and particular business commitments. They have a choice of which hospital they wish to be treated in, and they can choose their specialist when there is no choice on the NHS. They can have a single room with telephone and their own bathroom and there are flexible visiting hours for family, colleagues and friends."

It then states—this is the key point:

> "The NHS is making improvements as private hospitals have demonstrated how the patient environment can be improved."

Putting the patient first, as the White Paper states, is the purpose of the reforms.

I welcome the opportunity that the House has been given to debate these matters tonight. However, in securing this debate, the Opposition have scored something of an own goal. The vote against the contract last week was a sad embarrassment for the General Medical Services Committee, not for the Government. As my right hon. and learned Friend said, if he is forced to impose a contract, it will be the contract agreed to by the GMSC.

8.46 pm

**Mr. Archy Kirkwood** (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): The hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) made an interesting speech, although he looked very uncomfortable throughout most of it, especially when he was referring to the potential closure or opting-out of hospitals in his area.

I understood the hon. Gentleman to say that he was in favour of the Secretary of State renegotiating certain aspects of the proposed GP contract. I agree with that. He referred to his distinguished constituent Dr. Wilson, chairman of the General Medical Services Committee, who negotiated the contract that was so resoundingly rejected in the ballot. I am sure that Dr. Wilson conducted his negotiations in good faith and that he recommended the deal to GPs only because he thought that he could not get the Secretary of State to move an inch further. It remains to be seen whether he is right, but certainly the Secretary of State appears to be setting his face against any further movement—despite the advice of the hon. Member for Ryedale.

It is silly nonsense for good and useful hospitals such as Malton, in the hon. Gentleman's constituency, to consider opting out just to preserve their existence. I am sure that Dr. Wilson would agree that it would be better to turn it into a community hospital, run by GPs, to serve the local community.

I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman that the Opposition have shot themselves in the foot. The debate is both timely and important because of the result of the GPs' ballot last week. I shall concentrate my brief remarks on that. More than anything else, the profession is suffering from the Secretary of State's adopted attitude during the negotiations. I for one was surprised by the size of the vote to reject the proposed contract. It might, however, have been different had the right hon. and learned Gentleman been a little more conciliatory during the negotiations. He used insults when GPs needed answers; he used threats when he should have negotiated. He lost the argument not only because of the detail but because of his hostility to people's genuine concerns. It would be a major breakthrough if he accepted that doctors and patients have genuine concerns that need to be dealt with rather than sneered at.

The proposed contract is not entirely about pay and conditions of service; it goes much wider. It embraces the whole future of the development of primary care. I profoundly reject the Government's view that the row is simply one about how much income GPs will receive in the future. I object to the Secretary of State writing letters to Members of Parliament which include sentences such as:

> "The current argument over the GPs' contract which is often confused with the White Paper arises from contract negotiations involving doctors' salaries."

A great deal of the argument is about the future of primary care—and, for rural areas, the very existence of primary health care. The Government are attempting to switch the focus of the argument and make pay the issue, so that they can use salaries as a weapon to cut costs and to impose their vision of a market-led NHS.

Doctors would respond positively to a new and radically different contract. They are not interested only in pay and conditions. As evidence of that, as far back as 1985, the eminent Dr. Wilson wrote to the Department expressing his disappointment at the speed of progress on the contract. At that time he called for the development of

> "a comprehensive system of paediatric surveillance, by extending the cervical screening programmes and by encouraging GPs to undertake minor surgery for their NHS patients."

In that letter, Dr. Wilson outlined other proposals, including reducing the maximum list size, improving incentives to appoint additional partners to practices, encouraging the development of GP community hospitals such as the one in Malton under threat of closure, ending arbitrary restrictions on patient choice——

**Mr. John Greenway:** Will the hon. Gentleman accept from me that the chairmen of Scarborough health authority and Yorkshire regional health authority have categorically stated that Malton community hospital is not under threat of closure? There is only a review of the services of the peripheral units within Scarborough district. The hospital is not under threat of closure.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** I accept that. It is always dangerous to stray into another Member's constituency issues. I shall only say, in Mr. Asquith's famous words, that we should all just wait and see.

In 1985, Dr. Wilson was in the business of trying to promote some of the very matters that arise in the current draft contract. The list that he sent to the Government also included improving services in isolated rural communities. Those proposals could have been the basis of an exciting new and agreed blueprint for the future of primary care. Instead, because of the Government's ineptitude in handling negotiations, the contract will mean that GPs will spend less time with individual patients and less time on preventive medicine and health promotion. It will be extremely difficult to make the contract work in rural areas at all.

My constituency is a rural area and no one there is in favour of using competition as a way of improving primary care in rural areas. The Government's disinterest in the development of primary care is illustrated on the first page of the proposed contract document, where it says that central to the Government's plan for improving general medical services is

> "increasing competition between the providers of the services."

None of my constituents who have heard of that new proposal believes that competition is central to his other hopes for the development of primary health care in the NHS. The existence of facilities is the crucial factor. There are few practices within easy reach of my constituents or competing hospitals to which they can turn. I do not see how the new proposals sit easily with the provision of primary care in rural areas.

That applies in particular to how the proposals will tend to increase list sizes. Two years ago, when the original White Paper on primary care "Promoting Better Health" was published, we warned that establishing a direct link between the number of patients on a GP's list and GPs' remuneration would have severe consequences in rural areas. Since then, the position has been made worse. There is now much more emphasis on the income available to GPs in rural areas being related to the size of their lists.

In my constituency, the proportion of total income derived by GPs is in the region of 27 per cent. and the contract that we are debating takes that to 60 per cent. —55 per cent. plus marginal changes. That will have a catastrophic effect on income. I understand that the rural practice allowances are still under consideration and that the so-called tartan contract has been extended to cover other parts of the United Kingdom. But we cannot escape the fundamental problem in rural areas in Scotland that general practitioners currently receive 27 per cent. of their income from capitation fees; but under the new scheme that will be at least 55 per cent.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman):** Rural practice allowances are still being discussed. There has been no decision. We recognise and understand the pressures on rural practice in England, and an announcement will be made in due course.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** I am deeply concerned about rural practice in England, but I also have more than a passing interest in rural practice in Scotland. I accept that the Government made a concession, and I said that it was welcome at the time, but the effect in Scotland will be dire. Some practices face a massive loss in income and may go out of business. That will lead to doctors retiring early and to some practices not taking on new partners or waiting a year or two before deciding to do so. I accept that in wealthy areas some practices will have the means to attract entirely new patients; that is what the Government are trying to achieve.

Let me deal now with the effect of increased list sizes on prevention. Average list sizes will inevitably increase because of the fall in the number of GPs for the reasons that I have just explained. Within that average size there will be stark changes that will tend to act to the detriment of patients. Doctors will have less time with individual patients and less time for time-consuming preventive medicine and health promotion. Nor will there be time for doctors to visit factories and schools or to take the health promotion message to those areas which are missing out. If the increase in the link between pay and the number of patients is not designed to increase list sizes, what do the Government think they are doing increasing the capitation income?

I welcome the fact that, as the Minister said, the system of rural practice payments, is set to continue in England and Wales. We hope that that is true. They were properly taken out of the negotiations and, as I said at the time, we welcome that. However, will the Minister confirm that so far there has been no decision to impose changes to the rural practices payments and that he will continue to consult? Even if there are no other negotiations on the contract details, which the Secretary of State seems to be saying is the case, will discussions at least continue on that aspect of the rural practices payments scheme?

What other important areas will be changed by the draft regulations on rural areas that the Minister discussed with the doctors? There is great concern. I cannot believe that he does not know that already. People such as Dr. Farrow, the chairman of the rural practices committee of the General Medical Services Committee, described the original proposals as

> "a devious blow and would probably result in the rape of the rural practice."

Dr. John Ball, the chairman of the general medical committee, a Government-appointed committee, said recently that even if rural practice payments continue in their present form, the new proposals would mean that half the English and Welsh practices that have fewer than 1,500 patients will not survive. In Scotland, where list sizes are lower, 25 per cent. of practices would not survive. Those are the sort of terms that we are talking of.

Finally, let me deal with the unrealistic nature of target payments that are being proposed. The Borders area health board has achieved 92 per cent. immunisation. It has always given proper priority to achieving a high immunisation rate, which is in the interests of everyone. However, the Government system of performance-related pay is causing concern further south. The current targets for screening and immunisation remain unrealistic, and will be made more so because of the extra time spent dealing with the bureaucracy inherent in the contract. The systems of paediatric and geriatric surveillance that the contract stipulates are time-consuming and will produce very little reward in return for a high degree of effort.

The Government's system, even in its modified form, will not work. It will be difficult to decide on the base number of patients. FPC and general practitioners' lists rarely agree because of the lists' ever-changing nature. GPs in deprived areas will be penalised because the migratory population that they serve will make it difficult to trace target groups, and even then they must be convinced of the need for screening and other provisions. Cultural differences mean that many women are anyway reluctant to undergo smear testing.

There is also a need for exclusions from immunisation. I refer to whooping cough and the pertussis vaccination that is the subject of medical controversy of which the Minister is surely aware. A number of patients have medical histories that prohibit them from receiving vaccinations against whooping cough, and they should be excluded from any calculation of a general practitioner's vaccination target. Evidently I did not explain that point very clearly, because the Minister's brow is furrowed. Nevertheless the Government's system of target payments for cervical screening and immunisation schemes are unrealistic.

The Secretary of State must return to the conference table to renegotiate the terms of the new contract. If he does not, it will be the first contract in history that has not been implemented by agreement, and we shall move into a period of non-co-operation by general practitioners that will not be in the interests of the Government, doctors or patients. Certainly it will not be in the interests of people living in rural areas. I hope that the Government will properly consider all those matters when giving the right hon. and learned Gentleman future instructions as to whether to continue negotiating with the General Medical Services Council.

9.1 pm

**Mr. Jerry Hayes** (Harlow): The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) says that the Government should return to the negotiating table. The truth is that the Government reached an agreement with the General Medical Services Council and British Medical Association negotiators that was welcomed by Dr. Michael Wilson and recommended for acceptance by the BMA's membership in true trade union style. The trouble is that, in true trade union style, Dr. Wilson and the BMA so whipped up the blood of the association's members that they rejected the agreement. Only a few weeks after sensible negotiations, and after sensible concessions were made by Ministers, the BMA said, "This sort of agreement comes from the jaws of Hades," and the doctors became upset.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) was right, for once, to bring to the attention of the House the serious difficulties facing the Health Service, particularly in respect of waiting lists. It may be helpful if I quote the BMA's chairman on that issue:

> "The sum of human misery represented by those record figures is a scandal without parallel in any technically developed country."

I am certain that the hon. Member for Livingston and his right hon. and hon. Friends agree with that sentiment, as will the rest of the House. But it was expressed by Dr. James Cameron, chairman of the BMA, in 1978. Nothing changes very much. Lord Donoughue, writing in his memoirs about Labour Government cuts—I do not want to go too much into old history—commented:

> "It was the usual rag bag of random cuts in public investment . . . cuts in education, the National Health and public industry investment were imposed in full . . . Half the cuts were in capital investment."

I shall offer one more quotation from the past:

> "I do not believe that the problem"

of soaring waiting lists

> "would be solved by any means by simply holding on to a large number of small, uneconomic hospitals."—[*Official Report*, 10 May 1977; Vol. 931, c. 1087.]

One can imagine what the response of the hon. Member for Livingston and his right hon. and hon. Friends would be if that remark had been made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State, or by my hon. and learned Friend the Minister. In fact, that statement was made by the then Labour Secretary of State for Social Services, David Ennals.

What has changed, however, is the amount of money that is pumped into the Health Service. I do not necessarily agree with the argument that relates such expenditure to gross domestic product, but it is used from time to time. When the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), who is not now in the Chamber, was Health Minister in the halycon days of the Wilson Government, that Government were spending 4·8 per cent. of GDP on health. In the days of David Ennals and the Callaghan Government, the figure was 5·3 per cent. Now, in the wicked days of the Thatcher junta, we are spending 6·1 per cent., and that does not include private health care. Nor does it take into account the fact that the economy is positively booming, and not on the rocks as it was in the days of the last Labour Government.

The trouble is that none of us knows where the money is going. We do not know the cost of treatment and operations, and if we do not know that, how on earth can we plan for the future? That is the essence of the reforms in the White Paper, and what we should be discussing this evening.

It is probably the exception to the rule, but I have read the motion very carefully. It has all the balance of a wet blancmange. At one moment the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) wobbles on the subject of the Prime Minister; at another he wobbles on private health insurance. Not so long ago, it was easy for the hon. Gentleman to have a crack at the Prime Minister for using private health care. The fact is that we have a democracy, and people have the right to choose: that is the basis of Government policy, although the hon. Gentleman disagrees with it. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has done something very important in stating publicly that the Government's aim is to make the Health Service so good that people will neither want nor need to use private medicine. As the hon. Gentleman said, they use it now to jump queues. The White Paper proposals will stop the queues forming in the first place.

I cannot understand the Opposition's paranoia about private practice. I could understand that paranoia if the Government were proposing a Health Service that was not free at the point of delivery; I could understand it if they were proposing a Health Service that would not be funded primarily from taxation. Those, however, are the major principles behind the proposed reforms, as is made categorically clear.

The West Essex health authority, in my constituency, has one of the 22 longest waiting lists in the country. My people are waiting two years for hernia operations.

**Mr. McCartney:** That is how a Tory Government treat them.

**Mr. Hayes:** I do not consider it right or fair that my constituents should have to wait two years for a hip or cataract operation, when the health authority could have the opportunity of giving the patient the choice of going a little further up the road and having the operation done privately—provided that the patient does not have to pay for it and the health authority does not have to provide any more money. That strikes me as absolute common sense. We are proposing to allow people choice and the chance of having their pain and suffering removed quickly.

Judging by what we see on television and in the newspapers, hear on the radio and, indeed, hear from Opposition Members, one would think that the medical profession was 100 per cent. against the proposals. But those of us who go around the country speaking to the presidents of the royal colleges, to general practitioners and to hospital consultants can tell Opposition Members that those people—including the British Medical Association and the Joint Consultative Council—are in favour of medical audit. They have been pushing for it for years. They are also in favour of resource management: many of them have been pushing for that for years. They are in favour of money travelling with the patient, because they know that it will lead to the abolition of the efficiency trap.

Without those three fundamental foundation stones of policy, there will not be self-governing hospitals or GPs' voluntary practice budgets. If self-governing hospitals are as wicked as some people say, people will not want to take up the proposal. If voluntary budgets are as hopeless as some people say, GPs will not put their names in for them. It is a matter of choice. There is agreement about the fundamental reforms of medical audit, money travelling with the patient and resource management, and as the Secretary of State said earlier, those constitute 80 per cent. of the proposals.

I was bemused by something said about the GPs' contract. Many hon. Members have talked to a large number of GPs over the past few weeks. Anyone who has read the letter from Dr. Michael Wilson will see that they are in favour of the main thrust of the contract and have been pushing for many of the major proposals of the contract for a number of years. However, I am saddened when GPs tell me that they cannot see the point of visiting someone over the age of 75. They say that it is a waste of time. I cannot understand GPs who ask why on earth they should bother about screening when it simply means that they will find more things wrong with the patient. I cannot understand GPs who ask why they should have to immunise in the way the Government say, even though our figures are well below what the World Health Organisation advocates. That is absolutely wrong.

The Opposition were right to have some doubts about private medical insurance. However, they could have had more doubts if the Government were planning to offer overall tax relief for private medicine. That would be

*[Mr. Hayes]*

totally wrong because it would withdraw a great deal of funding from the Health Service. That is not the case. The Government are trying to help the elderly, many of whom may have been trade unionists, who had many options open to them through their companies and who find as soon as they retire that those options stop. It is all a matter of choice.

I am not criticising the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman), but when she goes home tonight she will go back to a nanny. There is nothing wrong with the hon. Lady having a nanny to look after her children. She does not receive tax relief for it, although some say that she should. She is probably not satisfied with the sort of cover available to her children in the community. However, it is her choice. There is not a great Labour party campaign against nannies and there is not a whacking great trade union of nannies which pays the Labour party. Therefore, it is hypocritical for the Labour party to criticise the Government's proposals in this way.

I have read the motion carefully. I hope that the hon. Members for Livingston and for Peckham will look carefully at the first line and welcome with enthusiasm the Prime Minister's pledge and support what she has been saying, as it is a laudable aim.

9.14 pm

**Mr. Ian McCartney** (Makerfield): Having listened to the hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes), I have decided to tear up my original speech. The hon. Gentleman and I have one thing in common—we are both members of the Select Committee on Social Services, which has considered the review being proposed by the Government. Its final report will be produced on 10 August. I am rightly bound by the rules of the House not to discuss its contents, although they have been widely discussed in *The Independent, The Guardian* and other newspapers.

Whatever the recommendations of the Committee, its members—including many Conservative Members—were influenced by the evidence received through cross-examination, personal interview and other means when considering carefully the Government's proposals. Throughout the Committee's investigations, the attitude of the Secretary of State, which he displayed today, was sometimes foolish and sometimes insulting. With one exception, he displayed the same attitude to and perceptions about the working role of the Committee, despite the attempts of its members to try to tease out of him the Government's intentions for implementing their proposals.

The hon. Member for Harlow is a barrister. He proved tonight that if a barrister is given a brief he will argue that black is white. On 24 May, the Committee produced an interim report based on evidence received and the cross-examination of the Secretary of State and his senior officials. The hon. Member for Harlow signed that report. Time will not allow me to go through all the report's conclusions, so I shall read only two with which the hon. Member for Harlow agreed. The report says:

> "'A programme of persistent improvement . . . will provide a more effective way forward for the National Health Service than the search for a radical reconstruction of the service.'"

The hon. Member for Harlow agreed with the report's final conclusion, which says:

> "If the Government's proposed timetable for introducing the vastly greater changes to the health service proposed in the White Paper is adhered to, we have serious fears that the stability of services and continuity of patient care may suffer during the years of transition to a new, untested system. As we said in our Report last year:
> 'the strengths of the NHS should not be cast aside in a short-term effort to remedy some of its weaknesses'.
> That remains our considered view."

That was the considered view of the hon. Member for Harlow on 24 May. I am saying not that he is trying to bring his profession into disrepute, but that in the white heat of argument this evening—

**Mr. Hayes:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. McCartney:** I will give way in a minute.

The hon. Gentleman is trying to protect the Government, which is an honourable intention for a Conservative Member, but he is suffering from amnesia about the evidence that he assisted in taking, which he supported only a few weeks ago.

**Mr. Hayes:** The hon. Gentleman should read the report carefully. Although I am unable to talk about the report until 10 August, a minority report will be produced in due course. Everything with which I agreed in the report is a matter of public record. I have never said that I wholeheartedly agree with the Government's timetable. The part of the report to which the hon. Gentleman referred was written after we had heard from the Secretary of State. As will be apparent from the next report, the Secretary of State made it clear that the projects will be pilot projects in all but name. He further said that they would be evolved and run in, which satisfied me, and I hope will satisfy the hon. Gentleman. I should be grateful if he did not misrepresent the work of a respectable Committee.

**Mr. McCartney:** Far be it from me, a member of the Committee, to misrepresent it. I fear that, following the example of many barristers in tight corners, the hon. Gentleman is wriggling. The report in question was produced and voted on after interviews with the Secretary of State, accompanied by officials of his Department, on two occasions.

**Mr. Hayes:** It was written before that.

**Mr. McCartney:** I have made my point, and the hon. Gentleman will have to be content to allow history to determine whether my or his version is more acceptable to the nation—if indeed the nation decides to take note of what either of us has said.

Rather than being acceptable to the communities covered by the district health authorities, the review is provoking panic in many areas. For example, I have in my area the Wigan health authority, one of the largest metropolitan areas in Britain in terms of population and geographical size, with four parliamentary constituencies. It contains a number of district hospitals.

That authority has reached the interim conclusion not to support the concept of opting out, but it is fearful that competition will mean that the district hospitals will not be able to compete in the ever-increasing scramble for resources. The health authority takes the view that resources have been cut consistently every year by the Conservatives through the north-west regional authorities and through political appointments such as the chairmen of the region and district health authorities.

In other words, the district health authority's political chairman and the politically appointed district general manager have come up with a radical new idea following the decision not to opt out. Their idea is to close all our district general hospitals. Their proposal would asset-strip and sell off the land to whatever speculator would like to purchase Whelley, Billinge, Atherleigh and Astley hospitals and the Royal Albert Edward infirmary in Wigan. Their argument for asset-stripping such a large organisation of its district resources is to amalgamate them into one component.

Within the last 48 hours, on the ground of an emergency financial crisis, it has been decided to close one of our hospitals which cares for the mentally confused elderly and people suffering from senile dementia. Because it is claimed that an emergency exists, it is proposed not to consult the community health council, the patients' representatives or the patients' relatives.

I understand that, perhaps even this evening, those patients are being moved out into the private sector. The community health team, the social services and those involved in the care of the people in that hospital have not been consulted about the adequacy or otherwise of the alternative arrangements in the private sector. Astley hospital is to close following an announcement in recent days.

A few months ago, a Minister came to Wigan to make a triumphant speech about the local Royal Albert Edward infirmary, stating that that hospital was safe in the Government's hands and that a multi-million-pound development project would go ahead. On that occasion, my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) and I stood outside in the rain trying to make the point that a scheme was afoot to close that hospital. That was greeted with denials. Last week the health authority, in closed session, was informed that the Wigan Royal Albert Edward infirmary was indeed to close.

Assurances were given by the regional chairman, and even by the Department, that new developments taking place at Wigan infirmary would continue. We were assured that it would have a place in the 1990s as a modern district general hospital. Last week, the authority was informed that it was to close.

Not three years ago, the Department said that Billinge hospital would be developed in the 1990s on a district basis with the latest maternity facilities. We were also assured that it would have facilities for the short-term care of the mentally ill. On that basis, we agreed to the closure of a nursing facility in Leigh. That was closed and sold off for a housing development.

It was announced that weekend facilities at Billinge maternity hospital would close, and there is a long-term proposal that the maternity unit at Billinge hospital will close completely. It does not service just the Wigan health area, but also parts of the St. Helens and Knowsley health authority area, which are two of the most socially and economically deprived areas in the north-west region, which is one of the most socially deprived regions in the United Kingdom.

The facilities for the mentally confused at Billinge hospital are so overstretched that Wigan borough council social services department is having to retain patients who would, under normal conditions, be contained in the units at Billinge and at other facilities at the Leigh end of the authority. Because of the cash crisis, the social services department is having to take on the nursing requirements of the mentally confused and the elderly ambulant, in growing numbers. That is the reality of, and the background to, the Government's proposals.

Not one part of the Government's proposals has shown that there will be any new financial resources available to my authority. What is happening, in advance of the proposals, is an asset-stripping job on a grand scale. Public assets worth hundreds of millions of pounds will be sold, and not one local person will be asked if they would like Wigan hospital, Billinge hospital, Leigh infirmary, Atterleigh hospital and Astley hospital to remain open.

None of us is in the ball game of keeping open hospitals that need to be closed if alternatives are provided, but we are opposed to the naked opportunism of those politically motivated people in the Health Service—people who have been appointed by Conservative Members and Conservative party members—who are asset-stripping on their behalf in advance of the Health Service reviews.

I ask the Secretary of State—with whom I have clashed several times—to institute an immediate inquiry into why Wigan health authority, on the grounds of an emergency, is taking patients out of hospitals and dumping them into the private sector, without any consultation with the social services or with those people who are currently responsible for looking after them. The least that the Secretary of State can do is give them a commitment that he will look into that within the next 24 hours.

I hope that, when the report is produced on 10 August, the Secretary of State will respond effectively to it.

**Mrs. Audrey Wise** (Preston): I have listened with the utmost attention, as my hon. Friend represents a constituency in the north-west, to the catalogue of disasters that are befalling his area. I do not want to compete with him by raising larger issues, as he has done, but I would like to draw my hon. Friend's attention to a small but significant matter which has occurred in my area, which shows the madness caused by the so-called search for efficiency.

Preston district health authority has saved the magnificent sum of £1,500 during the past year by cutting the availability of free incontinence pads for elderly ladies. Whether we look at the large scale, as my hon. Friend has done, or at the small scale, as I have done, the picture is the same.

**Mr. McCartney:** My hon. Friend is correct. On the day that the former Under-Secretary visited Wigan and salmon sandwiches and a huge banquet were provided in Billinge hospital, babies were being born and the supply of nappies had to be restricted. That shows the Government's priorities.

I hope that the Secretary of State will, after 10 August, take into account the views in the majority report, and that he will assure the public and Opposition Members that he will not ride roughshod over the doctors, the midwives and the nation, who are totally opposed to the proposals.

9.29 pm

**Mr. Tony Baldry** (Banbury): I hope that the House will understand if, given the short time left in the debate, I do not propose to give way as much as I would like.

I think that hon. Members agree that the ultimate purpose of the National Health Service must be to improve services to patients. The White Paper's proposals will do that by giving doctors and medical staff more

*[Mr. Tony Baldry]*

control, by cutting central administration controls, devolving managerial power and by allowing general practitioners to become budget holders and hospitals to become self-governing—all within a framework of a publicly funded Health Service. In that way, patients will come first. The ambition of everyone must be to ensure that each and every patient in the NHS is treated as an individual.

Central to the NHS, as with every publicly funded service, must be money. It is interesting that, during the debate, we have heard little about money. The Opposition's motion must be the first motion on the NHS tabled by the Leader of the Opposition that has not alleged that the NHS is underfunded. That is perhaps because the Opposition have recognised that, whatever funding proposal they put forward, the Government will always more than match it.

Over the past 10 years, the Government have persistently and diligently provided more money for the NHS. In 1978-79 the Health Service budget was £7·75 billion and in 1989-90 it is about £26 billion. National Health Service spending has increased by 36 per cent. more than inflation and has grown more rapidly than the rate of growth of the real economy. Health spending has risen from 4·8 per cent. of GDP 10 years ago to 6·1 per cent. now. If we reverted to the funding of the NHS when the Labour party was in government, we would have to cut the number of doctors and dentists by about 14,000, the number of nurses and midwives by 67,000 and the number of hospital patients by 1·5 million.

Of course, the National Health Service always faces fresh challenges. For example, 70 per cent. of NHS costs are labour costs, and there has been a dramatic and welcome increase in the number of NHS employees over the past 10 years—5,800 more doctors and dentists. Their pay has grown 25 per cent. more than inflation since 1979. Nurses, whose pay fell under Labour—they received increases below the rate of inflation for three years—have seen their pay rise by 45 per cent. more than inflation since 1979.

As well as trying to ensure that doctors and nurses and those working in the NHS are well remunerated, there are also the challenges of an ageing population and of medical advance. In response, the Government will clearly have to provide ever more money for the NHS, but we all have an interest in ensuring that that money is well spent. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has said many times, the NHS is not a business, but clearly it can be more businesslike.

It is right that the Government should devolve greater powers and responsibility to local levels. For far too long, the NHS has been over-administered and under-managed. This has led, for example, to the Public Accounts Committee discovering, according to a report published last year, that in the five districts whose operating theatre usage was studied, only 72 per cent. of available sessions were regularly scheduled for use and of those about 23 per cent. were cancelled, often at short notice. Consequently, only half the daytime operating theatre sessions were used —no wonder we continue to have long waiting lists for cold surgery. The Public Accounts Committee concluded:

> "Traditional practice and habits, framed for the convenience of consultants and staff must be reviewed as necessary."

Furthermore, all too often the lunatic situation arises that if a hospital does more work it simply runs out of money more quickly. That is a lunatic efficiency trap. The proposed internal market will replace that efficiency trap with a much better system whereby the more contracts that are won to provide services, the more work is done and the more money secured. Hospitals that increase their referrals will also increase their income.

Let us be clear that there is a consensus on the need for an internal market. In a speech a year ago at Guy's hospital, the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said:

> "Personally, I can see merit in greater flexibility that permits health authorities to convert cross-boundary flows of patients with cross-boundary flows of cash."

That is exactly what the internal market is about—correlating cross-boundary flows of patients with cross-boundary flows of cash.

The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) observed that

> "bringing the disciplines of the internal market into the NHS is the most important single reform I would advocate, for it can work with the grain of the NHS and not weaken its ethical basis."

As the Prime Minister has made clear, the internal market has nothing to do with privatising health services but everything to do with improving them.

That leads us to the background of the general practitioners' contract and the recent debate. The House should recollect that the GPs' draft contract has had a long gestation period. We have almost forgotten, in the mists of time, the Green Paper "Promoting Health Care—An Agenda", which came out in April 1986. That Green Paper was followed by the White Paper "Promoting Better Health" in November 1987 and that, in turn, led to long negotiations with representatives of the GPs on the detailed proposals.

All hon. Members will have had a letter from Dr. Wilson factually reporting that the general practitioners have voted against accepting that contract. Interestingly, no argument was advanced in that letter to explain why general practitioners had rejected the contract. It would have been very difficult for Dr. Wilson to advance such arguments, because the General Medical Services Committee contract was the very contract that he and the other negotiators had recommended for their own members.

I am looking forward to a happy recess because the general practitioners in Oxfordshire voted in support of the proposed contract.

**Mr. Mike Watson** (Glasgow, Central): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Baldry:** No, there is very little time and I made it clear at the start of my speech that I did not intend to give way. The hon. Gentleman, who was not even present then, can hardly expect to intervene now.

It is difficult for Dr. Wilson and the GMSC to suggest that a contract that they negotiated and agreed is flawed in some way. I have yet to see, and I suspect that other hon. Members have yet to see, any detailed proposals from the GMSC on how the contract should be improved.

The background to the contract is that spending on GP services has risen by 50 per cent. over and above inflation during the past 10 years. The number of GPs in practice is up by 20 per cent. and their support staff are up by 50 per cent. Despite that, real concerns remain about the present GPs' contract because it does not sufficiently reward zeal or quality and it is not sufficiently sensitive to patients.

It seems to be suggested that by increasing the proportion of doctors' remuneration that comes from capitation, we shall force doctors to take on more patients and undermine the quality of care. The case for making a significant proportion of GPs' income dependent on capitation is not new. That case was made by one of the authors of the National Health Service, Nye Bevan himself, on the founding of the NHS. He said:

> "I cannot dispense with the principle that the payment of a doctor must in some degree be a reward for zeal, and there must be some degree of punishment for lack of it. Therefore, it is proposed that capitation should remain the main source from which a doctor will obtain his remuneration."—[*Official Report*, 30 April 1946; Vol. 42, c. 55.]

Nye Bevan saw capitation as one of the underlying principles on which general practitioners should be rewarded. Moreover, nothing in the Government's proposals would increase doctors' average list size. Patients will register with the practice of a doctor who they think gives the right quality of care and the right amount of time. GPs' list sizes are falling from an average 2,200 to under 2,000 now. Just as it is impossible to invent new patients, so it is mathematically impossible to increase the average list size.

I hope that, during the summer, GPs will reflect that the contract that they have been offered is a good one and that many concessions have been made by my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Government, after listening to representations that they undoubtedly received from hon. Members on both sides of the House. While the Government's health proposals will not solve everything, they will make several important advances, extend patient choice, encourage enterprise in hospitals and among GPs and improve the quality of patient care and treatment in the framework of a publicly financed Health Service.

9.46 pm

**Ms. Harriet Harman** (Peckham): It was evident from the Secretary of State's speech that he did not welcome the debate this afternoon, but he rose to the occasion with his usual combination of trying to distract attention from the real issues and a dose of abuse for the doctors. *[Interruption.]* Hon. Members who were present will agree that that is a fair description of his speech.

Our main concern about the contract is the incentive that it provides to GPs to increase the number of patients on their lists. Successive Governments have encouraged GPs to reduce the number of patients on their lists. That was for the good reason that, if GPs are to make the correct diagnosis, give appropriate treatment and prescriptions, and manage long-term illnesses properly and sensitively, they require time. Doctors want more time for each patient and patients want more time from their doctor. Yet the Government will make good doctors into bad doctors by paying them to take more patients on to their lists, so that each patient will have less time.

Most people are happy with their GP. A poll in *The Daily Telegraph* showed that 80 per cent. of people were happy. The 20 per cent. who said that they were not happy said that the doctor always seemed rushed, did not have time to explain and was not interested in them as a person. Increased patient list sizes will increase dissatisfaction with GPs. Studies of what patients want from general practice consistently show that they want a doctor who listens, understands, takes trouble and is prepared to explain. In other words, they want a doctor who has time for them.

Not only doctors take the view that an increase in the percentage of doctors' pay attributable to capitation will result in increased list sizes. The Patients Association, the Association of Community Health Councils and a range of other voluntary organisations and academic institutions that have no vested interest and no axe to grind believe that that will be the effect. So do organisations such as the Centre for Policy on Aging, Age Concern, the Health Visitors' Association and the National Children's Bureau. The Government are alone in believing that performance relates to the number of patients treated rather than the quality of care.

The Government believe that the Health Service centres on cost rather than on care. That is why they are obsessed with the GPs who refer more than the average number of patients to hospital, but are blithely unconcerned about the GPs who under-refer and whose patients suffer because they are not referred to hospital.

The Government are obsessed, too, with GPs who prescribe more than the average for their patients, but they are blithely unconcerned about patients who suffer because their GPs under-prescribe. They are not concerned with the appropriateness of the referral or the prescription; all they are concerned about is the cost. Their real interest is in cash, not care. Their prime concern is a healthy bank balance, not a healthy patient, and the doctors know that.

We have seen what cash limits have done to hospital services and how hospital services have been squeezed. We all know that cash limits will come down on family doctors. The Health and Medicines Act 1988 put in place cash limits on ancillary services for GPs' practices and practice premises. The White Paper plans to cash-limit the rest of GP services—prescriptions and referrals to hospital.

I do not see any shaking of heads, but the Government have up to the present day been denying cash limits on GP services. However, it is clear that they will be cash-limited. I shall use an example that makes it clear that that is what is intended by the White Paper. When a patient goes to the accident and emergency department and is subsequently admitted to hospital, the bill for that treatment will go to the hospital, if it is an opted-out hospital, or to the district health authority. When a patient is referred to hospital and is admitted on the basis of a GP's referral, the GP's practice budget will have to bear the cost of that treatment.

The Government are afraid that GPs faced with a cash-limited budget, who see a patient who needs treatment in hospital, will, instead of referring him to the out-patient department, advise him to go to the accident and emergency department, because then the bill will be paid by the hospital of the district health authority. That is why, in working paper 3, the Government are advising hospitals to have watchdogs in their accident and emergency departments to see whether the hapless patients are real accident or emergency cases or whether they are refugees from cash-limited GP budget holders. That is clear evidence that GP's practices will be cash-limited. The Government anticipate that GPs will try to escape the cash limit by advising their patients to go to accident and emergency departments rather than referring them to hospitals in the normal way.

*[Ms. Harriet Harman]*

The most important difference that the Government have with just about everyone else is the substance of the proposals in the contract and the White Paper. We cannot let the debate pass without a comment on the way in which the Secretary of State has handled the issue. Doctors and the public have disagreed with him. His hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) said that the public were too thick to be allowed to have a say on the White Paper. On "Any Questions" a couple of weeks ago, when a doctor disagreed with him about the White Paper proposals, all the Secretary of State could do was to rubbish him and to say, "You have not read the White Paper." He has accused GPs of reaching for their wallets. Anyone who disagrees with him is accused of misunderstanding the proposals. Those people who want change other than that which he is proposing are told that they want no change at all.

The problem is that the Government have not been prepared to listen to those people who work in the Health Service, who use the Health Service and who have been crying out for change. That shows not just sluggishness or bullying, although it certainly shows that, but it shows the Government's inability, refusal and unpreparedness to listen to views that do not fit in with their ideological dogma. It is that same authoritarianism that will prevent people from having a say in whether their hospital opts out.

The Prime Minister has said that she will make the Health Service so good that no one will want to use private health care. Nobody believes that, but if that were the case, we should welcome it. However, as the Prime Minister wants competition and market forces in health care, it is clear that that statement has no credibility.

When we return to the House in the autumn, the Government will try to impose the new contract on the doctors, despite a ballot in which there was a vote of three to one against. We are told that there will be no new discussions. We will oppose the Government's attempt to force a contract on the GPs. The Secretary of State will have to fight his contract through. Any time that Conservative Members vote to impose the new contract, that will simply serve to remind their constituents how little they now have in common with their Member of Parliament.

The more the Government berate the doctors, the more they widen the gulf between Government and public opinion because people do not accept that doctors are stupid or greedy. They do not accept that doctors are interested only in their pockets, not in their patients. When Conservative Members return to their constituencies for the recess, they will discover the huge consensus against the Government's proposals. There is literally nowhere in the country where they will find support for the contract or the White Paper. There are no places to which the Government can run with this proposal.

We often hear talk of Tory heartlands, but even the Tory heartlands are opposed to these proposals—to the contract and to the White Paper. There are no Tory heartlands when it comes to the National Health Service. When Conservative Members vote tonight, they will simply be voting to increase the gulf between themselves and the people they are supposed to represent.

9.51 pm

**The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. David Mellor):** I begin by thanking my hon. Friends the Members for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway), for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) and for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) for their supportive speeches. My hon. Friends' penetrating speeches have made my task easier. I must advise especially my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale that I should like to write to him on the specific points that he raised because time is pressing and I want to make other points tonight.

It is clear that the Labour party has cobbled together an end-of-term assault on the Government based on the lowest common denominator of opposition to some of the moves to reform the Health Service. It is interesting that the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) laboured so mightily to denounce a contract which, for the first time, offers the better doctors rewards for doing more to treat their patients.

What can be wrong with a contract which, for the first time, introduces basic payments to include opportunistic screening and check-up invitations for the healthy every few years to give us a chance to be a service for health, not just for sickness? What is wrong with a proposal that all newly registered patients should be offered a check-up? What is wrong with a proposal that doctors should be paid a higher capitation payment for having elderly patients on their lists—an argument that is totally distorted by the suggestion that the contract will somehow provide a disincentive to treat the elderly when the opposite is the case?

What is wrong with extra payments for looking after the very young and for immunising them against preventable diseases when our record on immunisation is far too low compared with that of many other countries and leaves a great deal to be desired? What is wrong—I should have thought that this point would be of particular interest to Opposition Members—with extra payments for doctors who practise in deprived areas to try to do something about the inequalities of health standards that so many research projects have shown exist in some inner-city practices and practices elsewhere?

It seems astonishing that, in the cynical cosy-up between the Labour party and the BMA, all those facts should be disregarded while both the hon. Members for Livingston (Mr. Cook) and for Peckham—the Opposition's Front-Bench spokesmen—have done nothing more than parrot the BMA's case. Indeed, that was taken to absurd lengths by the hon. Member for Livingston when he set out to prove that it is not possible to reach targets of 70 per cent. in inner-city areas. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is perfectly possible, as the public health laboratory service study showed in 1985, given proper incentives, for everyone in the country, wherever they live, to have the opportunity, and to take it up, to have their children immunized. It seems extraordinary that Labour Members should share the patronising view that somehow people who live in inner-city areas are less interested in the health care of their children. When places such as Doncaster and Rotherham, which are not exactly bastions of the middle class, can achieve 90 per cent. immunisation rates for polio, why cannot other parts of the country do the same? For the first time, we are giving people an incentive to do that.

As the York university study showed only too clearly, the problem at the moment is that innovative practises sit alongside those which are practising the medicine of 20 years ago, but there is no difference in the remuneration to the innovative practice. How are we to redress the imbalance in quality between one group of GP practices and another unless we have a contract which, for the first time, rewards good performances? I am astonished that that view cannot be shared on both sides of the Chamber, as all our constituents will gain from the introduction of such a contract.

It is even more astonishing that the Labour party should see fit to put forward the BMA's obstructive arguments against the contract, since whenever any Government have sought to make changes, whether those changes were right or wrong, they have run into difficulties with the BMA.

**Mr. Sam Galbraith** (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): That is not true.

**Mr. Mellor:** The hon. Gentleman says that it is not true, but I shall demonstrate that it is.

In the past 25 years there have been two substantial periods of Labour Government. In the 1964 Parliament it took four months of a Labour Government before the BMA, in February 1965, was advising its members to give three months notice of termination of their contract with the NHS. That is the background against which the contract that we are now replacing was put into place by the Labour Government. In the 1974 Parliament, it took 18 months before the BMA council was condemning what the then Labour Government were doing as unsound and a threat to fundamental freedoms. In 1977 Mr. Anthony Grabbham, now Sir Anthony Grabbham, a spokesman for the BMA then as now, said of Labour's pay policy:

> "It is a catalogue of broken promises, a cynical disregard of agreement and progressive emasculation of review body procedures all leading to inexorable degradation of consultants' status."

The attempt to suggest a common cause between the BMA and the Labour party is specious, and the mess of potage which Labour Members have sold is the rights of their constituents to a good and consistent policy of health care that modern reforms can bring about.

Once again, we have heard so much from the Opposition, but not a word about a coherent alternative to address the NHS's central problems. The Opposition motion specifically criticises the Prime Minister's words when she set out the aspiration that she wants to see the National Health Service so good that people will not need private medicine. I consider that to be a perfectly estimable aspiration. It provides an interesting contrast with the Labour party. In the 1970s, the Labour party was prepared to drive the Health Service into total disarray to abolish private medicine. Its latest policy document shows that it seems to have learnt very little from that. The problems of the National Health Service, such as the long waiting lists which have caused some people to go private, are not the source of proper analysis by the Labour party, but simply used as a crude stick with which to beat the Government.

In a free society where people must have the right to make private provision out of taxed income if they choose, the best way is to make them feel that they do not need to do that. One way to make people sure that they do not need to do that is to cut waiting times. We have research that shows that if every district health authority was able to use its operating theatres as effectively as the average, we could get rid of long waiting times overnight. That will come about only if a coherent set of proposals is pursued, which involves not only additional resources for the National Health Service, but a proper and sensible way of ensuring that those resources are set in the right management framework. I hope that the House will reject the Labour party's opportunistic motion tonight.

*Question put*, That the original words stand part of the Question:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 207, Noes 315

**Division No. 321]** **[10 pm**

**AYES**

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John

Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex

Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

## NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard

Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen

Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine

Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John

Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

*Question,* That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments), and agreed to.*

MR. SPEAKER *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That this House welcomes the Government's proposals for reform in the National Health Service which will bring all parts of the health service up to the very high standards now achieved by the best, put the needs of patients first and secure the best value for money; recognises that to make the health service more responsive to the needs of patients as much power and responsibility as possible need to be delegated to local level in future whether in directly managed or self-governing National Health Service hospitals; looks forward to large general practitioner practices being able to apply for their own budgets to obtain a defined range of hospital services so as to improve the quality of service to their patients; and fully supports the Government's decision to proceed with the implementation of the general practitioners' new contract, the contents of which were agreed with the general practitioners' leaders on 4th May.

# Road Safety

**Mr. Speaker:** I must inform the House that I have not selected the amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken).

10.14 pm

**The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Michael Portillo):** I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 4303/89 on road safety, 9228/88 on seat belts, 4252/89 on maximum permitted alcohol concentration for vehicle drivers, and 4156/87 and 4305/89 on speed limits; and endorses the Government's commitment to resist proposals in this area which are outside the field of Community competence, and not clearly related to the objectives of a common transport policy of the internal market.

This debate comes late in the Session, for reasons that I have explained. It deals largely with road safety matters. First, it might be appropriate to say how inadequate to the task I feel. One would normally have expected to see here my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) who has long been associated with road safety matters. He gave evidence to the Select Committee on European Legislature whose report we have.

It is obviously important that the House should have the opportunity to express its views on the Commission's overall approach to road safety and on the specific proposals now under consideration. I am sure that the House is grateful to the Select Committee for its most helpful report. The Committee fitted in an oral evidence session and should be congratulated on producing a report very quickly so that we could have this debate. It is a fair report, summarising the arguments on both sides, and there is nothing significant in it with which the Government disagree.

In one crucial respect, there is nothing between the British Government, other Governments and the Commission. We all want to reduce the appalling toll of death and injuries on Europe's roads and we all want to find the most effective ways of doing so. However, we must recognise that the task cannot be carried out by simple solutions. Safety measures need to be suited to different geographical, cultural and economic conditions. They need to be carefully judged, targeted and monitored.

Two separate groups of issues are involved in the debate. First, there is the broader political and legal question about the rightness of community action in this area. Secondly, there are the safety merits of the Commission's proposals. The basic issue is whether it is politically sensible for the Community to act on road safety matters which relate almost entirely to human behaviour. Clearly, where the Community has to grapple with difficult areas to ensure the achievement of its primary objectives—economic progress and the completion of the internal market—the British accept that, and we play a constructive part in trying to find a Communitywide solution. However, we do not see road safety as one of those areas. Road conditions, social habits and outlooks, driver behaviour and police enforcement practices vary enormously from country to country within the Community.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): We seem to have a potential problem. The British people thought that road safety laws were a matter for the competence of the

*[Mr. Tony Marlow]*

United Kingdom. The European institutions, probably aided and abetted by the European Court, using procedures based on a majority vote on the basis of initiatives coming from the Commission, composed basically of bureaucrats with no democratic control, seem to have taken from the British people the power that they thought they had over road safety. If that proves to be the case, how shall we recover those powers?

**Mr. Portillo:** My hon. Friend puts his finger on the crux of tonight's debate and that is the very issue that I am addressing. The issues have been clearly set out in the Select Committee's excellent report. I was trying to expound some of those issues. I was saying that road conditions, social habits and outlooks and driver behaviour vary from country to country, as does police enforcement practice. I agree that to try to legislate effectively from Brussels to encompass such variation risks imposing over-simple solutions on complex issues. We do not need harmonisation in this area to obtain the primary objectives of the treaty. The principle of subsidiarity should apply. Road safey measures are best decided by national Governments to suit different circumstances. I think that my hon. Friend would agree with that.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** (Southend, East): I am grateful for what the Minister said. It gives us a splendid idea of what the Government think. But my hon. Friend must be aware that the Commission's representatives have said clearly and categorically that practically all these measures are covered by the common transport policy which enables any other appropriate provisions to be made. The House would like to know whether the Government take the same splendid view. If the Commission's view is wholly different, as it is, what can we do about the proposal before us and a host of other imminent proposals, in which the Community is extending the EEC's powers by stretching the treaty of Rome and the Single European Act?

**Mr. Portillo:** We are dealing here with a disagreement between the Commission and the British Government, which the Select Committee report describes well. I point out to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) that all the matters covered by the report and which are the subject of tonight's motion were taken before the Council of Ministers but did not find favour there. The British Government opposed Community competence, and fortunately our view found favour with other member States. None of the provisions included in the motion has been adopted by majority voting, contrary to the wishes of the British Government, because a blocking minority in the Community clearly shares our view.

**Mr. Marlow:** My hon. Friend said that there has been a blocking minority, but I understand that when it came to tyre tread depths, that blocking minority evaporated. Therefore, we found that we were outvoted and that the measures were imposed on us. These are more important measures, to do with road safety, drink-driving, seat belts and road speed signs. My hon. Friend said that he is opposing what the Commission is trying to put forward. Supposing that my hon. Friend is defeated.

Supposing that the Government are defeated, and the Commission, through its various machinations and through use of the European Court—to help it to use majority voting where the Government do not believe that it should use majority voting—succeeds? What then will we do about it? How then are we going to get the powers back to this House? That is what we are here for—to exercise powers, to exercise the sovereignty of the British people. We had it recently over signs on cigarette packets, when we lost that one. How are we going to get it back?

**Mr. Portillo:** My hon. Friend asks a series of hypothetical questions. He is saying that, so far, our Community partners and ourselves have formed a blocking minority so that the proposals in question could not be adopted. Therefore, our policy must be to continue to oppose the proposals and to encourage our Community partners who form the other part of the blocking minority to maintain the same view.

My hon. Friend asked me also about the measure on tyre tread depths. He will appreciate that that is not the subject of tonight's motion, but he is right to say that, in that instance, the blocking minority evaporated. The motive behind the decision by some of our Community partners not to back us on that issue related to their belief that there were broader considerations relating to freedom of trade within the Community. Whether or not one agrees with that point of view—as the British Government do not, they voted against that proposal—the same argument was advanced by other member states. Therefore, that would not be a promising case to take to the European Court.

As to the proposals now before the House, I give my hon. Friend a pledge that we shall continue to resist the Commission's proposals. If we are defeated in due course —although I have no reason to think that we will be—we should have to consider taking our case to the European Court.

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): With this measure, as with 1,001 others emanating from Brussels, we are witnessing the continuing diminution of British parliamentary sovereignty. To answer the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor), there is little or nothing that the Government can do about Community measures relating to road safety or to the fishing, steel, and many other industries. We are witnessing the remorseless diminution of our parliamentary sovereignty.

**Mr. Portillo:** We are witnessing the consequences of a series of decisions, taken by Parliament over a period, to bring the United Kingdom into the European Community and to make it a signatory to the Single European Act. The British Government doubt the Commission's competence to advance proposals arising from that.

There are two ways in which those proposals can be resisted. In the first instance, the British Government can oppose them and seek to make common cause with other Governments who take the same view: that tactic has been deployed successfully in the case of the measures that we are discussing this evening, which were not adopted owing to a blocking minority. If, however, we were unable at some future time to sustain that blocking minority and some of the measures were adopted, and if we continued to doubt the competence of the Commission or the Community, it would be open to the British Government to take the matter to the European Court, where the treaty of Rome and any other relevant provisions could be interpreted.

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford): If our Government and the legal advisers to the Select Committee on European Legislation consider that a measure goes beyond the competence of the treaty, there are other options, not least the opportunity to exercise a veto. It really is not good enough to assume that the only possible route leads to the European Court of Justice: that is a protracted and uncertain route, especially in view of the political integrating policy of that court. Will my hon. Friend be good enough to tell us whether the Luxembourg accord has been considered, and whether we propose to exercise it in this case?

**Mr. Portillo:** So far, consideration of that has not been necessary, because it has been possible to bring about a blocking minority in the matters that we are discussing. The United Kingdom Government will, of course, be willing to consider any means of carrying forward their view that such matters go beyond the competence of the European Community.

**Mr. Roger King** (Birmingham, Northfield): May I pursue a slightly different tack? Why can we not adopt a common policy on drink-drive levels within the European Community? Presumably we have common standards for airline operation because the flights transcend national boundaries, but does not the same apply to motor cars, heavy goods vehicles and coaches? What is wrong with arriving at common standards on a voluntary basis?

**Mr. Portillo:** In the unlikely event that I am allowed to progress with my speech, I intend to deal with that later. I see no reason why we should not have the same standards in every country, but I think that there is a strong argument against the imposition of that by the Community. Perhaps my hon. Friend's question should be my cue to make faster progress.

We consider our line of argument to be one endorsed by the treaty of Rome. The founding fathers were political realists as well as idealists; nothing in the general articles at the beginning of the treaty—or in the transport chapter—suggests that the development of common road safety policy and rules was ever perceived as a necessary part of Community activity.

Arguments may be put to the contrary: the issue has never been tested head-on before the European Court. One particularly relevant case, mentioned in the Select Committee report, is the Schumalla case, which goes a long way to suggest that the court would share our view if the matter was ever tested to the full. In that case the Court's Advocate-General, in his analysis of the legal issues involved, suggested that road safety could be seen as an objective of the treaty, and it is on that opinion that the Commission relies. In its final judgment, the court seems studiously to have avoided endorsing the wider arguments suggested by the Advocate-General. The omission of any endorsing comment suggests that the full court, when confronting those arguments, had serious misgivings about them.

The Commission relies on what it calls the "precedents" for legislation on transport safety. The main examples are the drivers' hours legislation on road transport and various maritime transport measures which have significant safety implications. In each case, the primary purpose of the measure [illegible] something other than "pure safety". The drivers' hours legislation is primarily about competition; the maritime measures are primarily about Community trade. We have no problem with measures which serve the primary objectives of the treaty and have related safety benefits. We give a positive welcome to the concept that the Commission should give more weight to safety considerations in many of its proposals, but that is different from bringing forward pure safety measures which have little or no relevance to the Community's primary objectives.

The House may wish me to go into the safety merits of each of the proposals later, so for the moment I shall be brief. The essential point is that the content of the proposals heavily underlines why it is unnecessary and inappropriate for measures such as this to be enacted at Community level. We are far from satisfied with the United Kingdom's road safety record, which is why we set the target of reducing road casualties by a third by the year 2000. We are constantly on guard against complacency, but the fact remains that we have the best road safety record in the European Community. Although we are not among the best on some specific aspects of road safety, the Commission's proposals are concerned not with any of them but with driving and occupancy of motor vehicles, on which our record is second to none.

On drinking and driving—this answers the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King)—the Commission proposes setting a legal limit of 0·5 per cent. The legal limit in the United Kingdom is 0·8 per cent., as it is in most other Community countries. Even in the United Kingdom, where drinking and driving has been falling significantly over recent years, over half those convicted have consumed more than twice our current legal limit. Moreover, there is little evidence of a significant accident or casualty problem for drivers who have consumed between 0·5 and 0·8 per cent., although evidence is not easy to obtain.

In the light of those considerations, we do not believe that it makes sense to invite the police to diversify their enforcement effort instead of continuing to concentrate on the worst offenders and those above the current limit. We believe that the same applies for most Community member countries. If circumstances in other countries are different, we should be the last to suggest that they should adopt a strategy that does not fit their circumstances.

Much the same is true for the proposal on speed limits. The Commission has addressed only passenger transport and goods vehicles. In general, those vehicles have a better than average safety record. In this country at least, many coaches are equipped with speed limiters. As 75 per cent. of casualties occur on local urban roads, the speed limits suggested by the Commission have little relevance to casualty reduction. If another car or person is hit by a bus, coach or lorry, even at much lower speeds than those under discussion, the results can be serious.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** We have been provided with helpful papers showing that under the EEC's proposal we might have to spend many millions of pounds changing our road signs from a speed limit of 30 miles per hour for vans and goods vehicles to 31 miles per hour, which is quite a significant change. Will permanent derogation ensure that that will not happen? Does the Minister accept that it would make not only the Common Market but the Department of Transport look terribly stupid if we were made to change our signs from 30 mph to 31 mph? May we be assured that we have a permanent derogation from the metrication which would make 50 km an hour apply?

**Mr. Portillo:** Although I am anxious to answer my hon. Friend's question, I fear that my inadequacy must show, being a late stand-in for my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham, who would have been able to answer immediately. I shall, however, take pains to answer my hon. Friend before the end of the debate.

As to whether I believe that it would be foolish for us to have to change our 30 mph speed limit to 31 mph, I concur with my hon. Friend, who gave an extremely good illustration of the problem that faces us in this area. He has done more than anybody to point out the ludicrousness of some of the suggestions that are being made.

There is the proposal to make seat belt wearing mandatory. Here, the content causes us fewer difficulties. Front seat belt wearing is already compulsory in this country, and we have already made it clear that the compulsory wearing of rear seat belts is our aim. The point at issue is, again, whether it is sensible to legislate on this at Community level.

Our 95 per cent. compliance rate with front seat belt wearing stems almost entirely from the fact that public opinion was ready for, and supported, the regulations when they were introduced. If we want the same to apply to rear seat belt wearing, we need to assess again the readiness of public opinion for such a change. With front seat belt wearing so widely accepted, I do not believe that there will be any significant difficulty. We also need to consider the proportion of vehicles that are equipped with rear belts. There is little point in making the requirement mandatory until, at the very least, half the vehicles on the roads are so equipped.

As it happens, that is likely to be the case in this country by about 1992, which is the date the Commission proposes for the introduction of mandatory belt wearing. But although that is true here, it may be possible to move faster in some countries, while others may not be ready for many years longer. In principle, we support the safety aspects of this Commission proposal, but again, it illustrates the difficulties and potential dangers of seeking to legislate, in this sort of area, at Community level.

We are all striving for the same objective—the reduction of deaths and serious injuries on Europe's roads. But for fundamental legal reasons, and for the sake of effectiveness, measures should be considered, initiated and monitored at the political level which is most appropriate. In the case of the proposals under discussion, the right level is that of national Governments in co-operation with local authorities. They are not right for action at Community level.

10.37 pm

**Ms. Joan Ruddock** (Lewisham, Deptford): I must at the outset acknowledge our disappointment at the departure of the hon. Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) from his post and the loss of his unusual sense of humour, which we were beginning to enjoy.

We are considering tonight five European Community documents relating to road safety. As the Minister said, the debate must address not only questions of policy and the issues arising from the European Commission's proposals, but whether, at a more fundamental level, the commission is going beyond its powers in drawing up these proposals.

The Minister argued that there is no competence within the Community's legal framework for these measures—that is, that there are no,or only dubious, legal grounds to justify the Commission's measures. The Government argue that article 75 of the treaty of Rome provides for the adoption of measures within the framework of a common transport policy to implement the treaty's objectives. Those objectives are the removal of restrictions on trade and the removal of obstacles to free competition. The Minister is therefore arguing that where those primary objectives are not met, the European community has no power or competence to adopt any other measures relating to transport.

The Government have made it clear that they will accept Community competence only in the area of harmonising vehicle standards which relate directly to competitiveness. But they have set their face against measures proposed on safety grounds alone. My hon. Friends and I note that that view is not unanimous in member states, although the Government have said that Germany and Denmark at present share their position.

In an interesting presentation to the Select Committee on European Legislation, to which the Minister referred, the European Commission set out its justification for the measures. According to the Commission, article 25 left it open to the Community to adopt

> "any other appropriate measures relating to the implementation of a common transport policy."

Hon. Members may be aware that the treaty of Rome mentions transport, agriculture and fisheries as sectors that are moving towards a common policy and, in the Commission's words,

> "In these sectors you have all room to manoeuvre".

The Commission cited a legal case to which the Minister referred, the Schumalla case, in which the Advocate General has advised that road safety of itself was an objective of the treaty, as was rail and inland waterway safety. The Commission argued that safety issues directly affect the play of market forces and that accidents have economic and financial consequences.

It seems clear to us that a court decision is needed to settle the issue, which appears to hinge, as the Sub-Committee states,

> "on different interpretations of the Schumalla case".

However, we believe that a legal framework that is so narrowly based on freeing up the market and allowing unfettered competition is an inadequate basis for promoting a coherent and integrated Community transport policy. Much is made of the need to harmonise standards in preparation for 1992 and the single market. Should not equal attention and value be given to the social and human consequences of 1992, to improving working conditions and safety standards and to giving environmental considerations a far greater role and value than hitherto? Unless that is done, if the Government's view prevails, the single market will work for the benefit of the few, not the many.

If the European Commission puts forward sensible proposals within the transport sector that advance road safety or, for instance, stimulate the commitment of member states to protect the environment as a key factor in their transport policy, we believe that the Commission should be supported. The Opposition support good proposals, whatever their source.

**Mr. Marlow:** The hon. Lady has just said that the Opposition would support good proposals from the Commission. Would they do so even where the Commission did not have competence?

**Ms. Ruddock:** I have made it plain that the issue of competence is not clear, either in the Select Committee's report or in the Government's statement, and that, to determine this matter, there would have to be a court case. However, the hon. Gentleman will understand from looking at the Select Committee's report and at the evidence of the Commission's legal adviser that the Commission believes that the Government's case would not succeed in court, because article 75 allows for the possibility of proceeding on the ground of road safety measures alone, without additional measures relating to competitiveness.

**Mr. Marlow:** The hon. Lady's original statement was wider than that. She said that she would support good ideas from the Commission, not necessarily just the ideas that we are considering in the debate. Does she mean that she would support any good ideas, whether or not the Commission had competence?

**Ms. Ruddock:** We would support any ideas on their merits. It is always possible, even if there is not agreement among all member states, for states to support good ideas and introduce them in their national Parliaments. The Minister has argued that such measures are best left in the hands of national Governments who are more in tune with national behaviour and social norms. I do not see why both paths cannot be pursued.

I acknowledge and applaud the efforts by the former Minister for Roads and Traffic in reducing road casualties and in promoting road safety. I hope that the Minister for Public Transport and his new colleagues will continue to make road safety a priority, as the Opposition have long argued. The former Minister acknowledged in his evidence to the Sub-Committee that, if he were the Commission, he would try to find every peg on which to reduce road casualties, and surely that must be the duty of all of us. He spoke also of the progress that could be made on those measures where there was doubt about Community competence, principally on design modifications to vehicles. We would support all the measures to which he referred, such as technical changes, improved seat belts, softer steering wheels and better protection on motor bikes.

The proposal that is most contentious and most strongly resisted by the Government is the draft directive on the maximum permitted alcohol concentrations for vehicle drivers. We have heard that the Commissioners propose to set the maximum alcohol limit at 50 mg. It is currently 80 mg in the United Kingdom. The Minister has outlined his reasons for his opposition to lowering the limit, and in what he says there is much with which we agree. Working to influence attitudes towards drinking and driving at all levels is vital, and a focus on the drinking limit may have the effect of implying that it is safe to drink up to that limit.

A strategy of public education and stricter enforcement has resulted in a gradual reduction in accidents resulting from drinking and driving, but the toll still remains unacceptably high. About 900 to 1,000 people are still killed on Britain's roads as a result of drink-driving, and more than 20,000 are injured annually. More steps are needed further to reduce the rate, and it may be that a reduction in the limit will be part of a package of measures designed to reduce drink-driving, although, like the Minister, we are doubtful of its effectiveness as a single measure.

A more productive measure, for which there is widespread support in the House and outside, would be the introduction of random breath testing. We would support highly visible, systematic mass testing at roadside check points, but because of the possible abuse of people's civil liberties we would not support providing the police with unfettered powers to stop and test at their own discretion.

The value of random breath testing is as a deterrent to drivers. Its secondary role is as a detector. We would support such a measure, and we hope very much that the new Minister for Roads and Traffic, the hon. Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins), will soon be making it clear to the House where the Government stand.

I move on to the draft directive on seat belts. There is little disagreement between ourselves and the Government.

**Mr. Rupert Allason** (Torbay): I think that I might have missed something. Perhaps the hon. Lady will be kind enough to explain what the difference is between random breath testing and calling drivers into the side of the road in a visible way, as she described, which is surely random breath testing as well. I do not understand the difference between the two.

**Mrs. Ruddock:** There is a significant difference. Accompanying the introduction of random breath testing is the need scientifically to randomise it. The check must be truly random. For example, one would stop one vehicle in 100, 500 or whatever. If discretion is left entirely to the police officer, there is always the possibility that that individual will choose certain types of vehicle or drivers. That can arouse suspicion among drivers that they have been picked on for some purpose other than pure random testing. It is a serious consideration for civil liberties. I can say from my constituency experience that there are many complaints from young black people who consider that they are stopped disproportionately often. If we have a random system, we must be careful that we can demonstrate that it is truly random.

**Mr. Bowen Wells** (Hertford and Stortford): Does the hon. Lady believe that the type of testing which she has described, with which I have much sympathy, should be imposed by national Parliaments' decisions or by the Commission? She appears to be willing to consider imposition by the Commission.

**Ms. Ruddock:** We are not talking about a measure that the Commission has proposed.

**Mr. Wells:** Not yet.

**Ms. Ruddock:** The hon. Gentleman may be correct.

We agree with the Government that what the Commission is currently proposing—a reduction in the permitted alcohol level in the blood—is not the present priority. I acknowledge that in the fight to reduce the number of drink-drive offences we need to introduce new measures. The priority of groups such as the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety is deemed to be that of random testing. If the Commission were to bring that forward, I am sure that it would have

*[Ms. Ruddock]*

our support. We know that with 1992, drivers will be constantly crossing national boundaries. There is sense in having measures equalised throughout the Community.

Perhaps, I can continue with my speech, or I shall be taking too much time from other hon. Members who wish to participate in the debate.

There is virtually no disagreement between the Government and ourselves about seat belts. The Commission proposed to make the wearing of seat belts compulsory for all occupants of cars, with certain exceptions. Again, we know from the surveys by the road research laboratory that only 6 per cent. of adults use rear seat belts, but that the use of them could save about 70 per cent. of rear seat fatalities. There were 25,000 casualties in 1987, 4,000 of which were fatalities. We very much support the wearing of rear seat belts. There is a difference between the projections of the Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Transport Safety and of the Government about the percentage of cars that will be fitted with rear seat belts. PACTS believes that 45 per cent. of all cars will be fitted with rear seat belts by the end of this year. I urge the Minister to re-examine the figures, because it may be possible that, even if we are not going to act within the Commission, we can act on the national question sooner rather than later.

The Commission has justified its proposal to harmonise speed limits on several grounds, the least persuasive of which was that speed limits have a direct effect on prices and that a distortion of competition could result from different speed limits in different countries. We tend to agree with the proposition that adequate signing is equally important, so that drivers crossing borders are aware of the different speed restrictions. Secondly, speed limits are closely related to congestion problems in each country and, as such, are not perhaps appropriate for community harmonisation. Having said that, we acknowledge that there are arguments for bringing down some speed limits. Evidence shows that reducing speed limits can reduce the accident rates, although a judgment needs to be made as to at what point a reduced speed limit may result in it being disregarded.

There is a strong case for lower speed limits for buses and coaches, as outlined in the Commission's proposal. Many motorists feel threatened by the speed and size of coaches travelling in the fast lanes of our motorways and passengers in such coaches, especially in double deckers, are frequently concerned about safety.

**Mr. Roger King:** Clearly, the hon. Lady will have studied the accident record of coach travel in this country and on our motorways. Is she aware that the biggest operator in western Europe has not harmed a passenger in three and a half years?

**Ms. Ruddock:** I am aware of that. I did not make any claims about safety. I simply referred to the effect on other drivers on the motorways and the feelings of many passengers on those coaches.

**Mr. King:** They do not feel that way.

**Ms. Ruddock:** They do.

**Mr. King:** I travel on coaches.

**Ms. Ruddock:** The hon. Gentleman may have travelled on them, but many people who have also travelled on them have spoken to me about their concerns. Anyone who is driving down a motorway at 70 mph, and is passed by a double-decker coach, is somewhat intimidated.

The points which I wish to make on speed do not just concern safety. We need to work to increase an awareness among motorists of the environmental consequences of speeding. High speeds produce higher vehicle emissions and lower speeds reduce vehicle emissions, especially nitrates and oxides. The Commission states that a reduction in average speeds in the Community to 100 km per hour could reduce car emissions by 10 per cent. That is an important factor which we also need to take into account.

All the specific proposals are set out in the context of a continuing programme of road safety work undertaken by the Commission, as set out in its document on road safety. The arguments about the legal basis of the Commission's proposals have already been rehearsed. They should not obscure the fact that, with 50,000 people dying and 1·6 million injured each year on Community roads, much work still needs to be done.

We note that the legal adviser to the Commission has said that a proposal related to road safety per se would stand a good chance of being accepted as falling within article 75. However, as the Minister has said, the matter is currently academic because of the blocking action of member states, and we are content to leave it as it is.

10.54 pm

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** (Southend, East): I hope that the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) will listen carefully to my brief comments. She said that the Commission is saying some wise and knowledgable things. Perhaps it is because I am sure that there is no group of people in the world that does not say wise things from time to time, but we may differ about their wisdom.

I hope that from the point of view of constitutional democracy, the hon. Lady will be careful about what seems almost an obsession to pass over the right to make decisions to something that is not democratic in the sense in which British people have always understood our way of making laws. I hope that the hon. Lady will accept that when proposals come forward from an unelected body such as the Commission, when the powers of the various organisations are decided by the non-elected European Court, and when the final decisions are made by the Council of Ministers, who often "swop" support in different councils on the basis of what is happening, we are moving many miles away from democracy as we understood it. I therefore hope——

**Ms. Ruddock:** I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is entirely innocent in this matter, but it was his Government who agreed to all these measures and powers for the Community.

**Mr. Taylor:** I accept that the decisions on the treaty of Rome and on the Single European Act were made by Parliament—I happened to vote against them and that is my own business—but they are now the law of the land. I hope that the hon. Lady will bear very much in mind the fact that if those powers are consistently and regularly extended by the Commission when there is insufficient protection for member states to do something about it, we have a serious constitutional problem.

We know that there are only two things that the British Government can do if a directive is brought before the Council which they think is in excess of the powers of the Community under the terms of the treaties that we have approved. First, they can seek to get the Council unanimously to say no, if it is a question of majority voting. However, it is very rare for that to happen and I am not aware of any decision in which that has happened—*[Interruption.]* Yes, at its first meeting the Council of Ministers can say no unanimously, but to my knowledge that has not happened.

Secondly, one can go to the European Court. The hon. Lady will be aware that in a large majority of the cases —even in the minority, there were other factors—the court has consistently supported extensions to the powers of the institutions of the Community.

**Dr. Godman:** Is it not the case that domestic legislatures have little or no control over the decision-making of the European Commission and that domestic Parliaments have no control over Council of Ministers' decisions? Therefore, is it not almost inevitable that over the next decade or so the Strasbourg Parliament will gain more and more power as Parliaments such as this lose power?

**Mr. Taylor:** I agree with almost all that the hon. Gentleman has said, but there is no question of the Strasbourg Parliament getting all the power. When the EEC is based on the initiating power of the Commission, on the decisions of the Council of Ministers, and on the extension of its powers by the Court, there is no role for the European Parliament. There could be a role if we had a European Government. If we had a European Foreign Secretary, a European Chancellor of the Exchequer and a European Parliament, with nothing but a county council at national level, those powers could rest with that Parliament.

The hon. Gentleman must be well aware that for the present, and in the immediate future, if the European Parliament were to disappear, tomorrow, nobody would notice. Indeed, on these issues, if this Government and this Parliament were to disappear nobody would notice. Even if all of us decided—I exclude the new Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, because he may feel that this is not one for him—to reject this whole business, it would not have the slightest effect on what the Minister might do.

We must appreciate that we are facing a serious democratic issue. That is why some of us have asked the Government, if they think that this is an extension of Community powers, to try to do something about it. We must remember that we have given certain powers to the EEC, and if it is going out of its way to extend those powers unreasonably, the Government must do something about it. That is why we have to go all the way to the European Court. Although the answer might be no, we have to make it clear that we are not happy with the way in which things are going.

Ultimately, given the way in which the Commission is working, almost nothing will be our business. Almost every decision will be taken by the European Community, sadly, in a society which is basically not democratic. That should worry us, and the Government.

The Minister, sadly, did not refer to what I regard as terribly important proposals—those on driver licensing. The Minister will be aware of the Common Market's latest ploy, which involves those wonderful vehicles to which some of us have subscribed—the special minibuses which transport blind and disabled people. They are run by wonderful charities and driven by volunteers, and have fabulous safety records. The latest proposals are for a special licence category and trained drivers.

I have received many letters from charities asking what will happen to them. I have had to reply that I cannot do anything about it, as it has all been decided in Brussels. Will the Minister make the position abundantly clear? Is he saying that the proposals are blocked? Can the charities therefore forget about the matter? Alternatively, is the question still open? The Minister must be well aware that the proposal is causing the charities huge concern and they would like to know exactly where they stand. It is on page 3 of the memorandum issued on 8 March 1989.

**Mr. Roger King:** I believe that the matter has been resolved successfully and that it is all right for existing drivers to continue operating minibuses with up to 17 seats. In future it may be necessary to have a higher standard of test for such vehicles. We would welcome that as it would improve safety records. Running those vehicles is an important task. We need to ensure that those who drive the vehicles, which are often loaded with scouts, cubs, football teams and so on, attain a very high standard of driving.

**Mr. Taylor:** My hon. Friend the Minister will probably disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) as he is aware that the standard of driving of those volunteer drivers is about the highest of any group of drivers in the country. My hon. Friend should also be aware that some of our leading charities have written to say that if they are forced to take all their new drivers as trained drivers, unfortunately those vehicles will have to stop carrying blind and disabled people, not because of a decision taken by the Government, but because of the directive. The Commission may consider it appropriate for Europe, but why on earth should we be forced to say that trained drivers must drive the minibuses for which most of us have collected cash or contributed to and believe are important to take disabled people on trips to the seaside and regularly on other journeys?

I hope that the Minister will tell us the score. Will new drivers have to be specially qualified, adding enormously to the costs of operating the minibuses, or has the matter been entirely blocked? It does not say so in any of the documents, and we should like to know.

My second question concerns speed limits. The Opposition did not comment in detail on the proposals for speed limits. I was hoping that they would. I hope that those who study such matters will look at page 2 of the document issued on 22 February which puts forward proposals that for a large number of vehicles, the 30 mph speed limit should change to 31 mph, the maximum rate for certain goods vehicles should be reduced from 70 mph to 62 mph and for others the maximum of 60 mph should be reduced to 50 mph. Those are fundamental and important changes. The Government have said that to change the signs for some of those limits would cost £10 million. There are many worthy causes for which £10 million could be used, but I do not see how it will help society or the cause of the Common Market to spend £10 million on changing signs from 30 to 31. Apart from the road signs, many official forms would have to be changed.

I understand that we can get out of this if we obtain something called a permanent derogation. Even the Commission, despite what the hon. Member for Deptford says—I know that she agrees with it—and a commissioner who wants a united Europe would say, "If they have a 30 mph limit and we want a 31 mph limit, it does not make a great deal of difference." We could split the difference and call it 30·5 mph. I think that it is something that we can resolve.

The Minister may say, "Do not worry about it, we have a blocking minority"; but he will know that such a minority disappears. We have to ask whether we can stop provision being made long term, and the answer is that we can—if we have a permanent derogation. It would be crazy and confusing if some vehicles had a speed limit of 62 mph, others had a limit of 44 mph, and still others had a limit of 50 mph.

What is wrong with our speed limits? If they are wrong, we can probably sort them out. If the buses are going too fast in the constituency of the hon. Member for Deptford, we can resolve it. What is the need for this obsessive commitment to get everyone harmonised on 31 mph? If, as the driver of a van, my speed limit was 44 mph, I would say not that that improved road safety but that it added to confusion.

The Government agree with me. They say that the proposals would lead to unsafe bunching, to an increase in journey times, to increased costs and to a reduction in the competitive position of road transport and the freight industries in relation to other transport modes. I should have thought that they would appeal to the Labour party—they will undermine public transport. I am sorry to see the Labour party fulfilling the role that we used to expect from the old Liberals, now the SLD or whatever it is called—that everything from the Common Market is to be approved of. It seems that the more that we can give to Brussels, the more likely we are to get the uniform Socialism that Labour wants. In view of that, I hope that the Government will appreciate that we have a problem. We must do something to stop silly, costly measures.

I refer only to the Front Bench of the Labour party. Quite a number of Back-Bench Labour Members are still sensible and do not want this nonsense. They want to try to preserve the rights of a free democracy. I hope that they will exercise the same power over their Front Bench as some of us are exercising, with great success, on our Front Bench, which has resulted in a change in the Government's attitude to these issues.

We must accept that the Government have said that there is a problem of competence here. They told the Select Committee on European Legislation that they have substantial objections on competence grounds. The Commission said that it can do almost anything because article 75 refers to, "any other appropriate provisions". That means a lot.

I was sorry to hear the Minister say that the Schumalla case confirmed that everything is okay because the Commission's chief legal officers took the opposite view. The title of the case was "Road Safety", and a sentence in the penultimate paragraph of the judgment said that the safety of transport by road, rail and inland waterway was indeed an objective of the common transport policy.

I hope that the Government will give us some idea of where they intend to go on this extension of policy. They cannot simply ignore it and say that they have a blocking minority in the meantime. This is a growing and continuing problem, and we would like to hear from the Government what their long-term policy on such matters will be. Can we stop silly things happening? Can we stop a 31 mph speed limit permanently?

I hope that the Government will make it abundantly clear to the Common Market that, although there may be some wise and even sensible men there, we do not like their seizing powers, and that the Government are determined to do something about it.

11.9 pm

**Mr. Roger Livsey** (Brecon and Radnor): I know of no proposals from the Commission to abolish miles, nor of any to abolish hours. There needs to be an injection of common sense into the debate. The hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) made points of academic interest. I hope that common sense will prevail and that we shall retain a 30 mph speed limit.

I would like the Minister to reassure us, as his predecessor did some weeks ago, that the problem of volunteer drivers has been overcome. I am a volunteer driver on some weekends and I expect to be able to continue to be one under a licensing system that makes allowances for the vast number of volunteer vehicles on the roads. His predecessor said that he would make strong representations on the matter, and I trust that they have borne fruit. Perhaps the Minister will confirm that later.

The objectives of the documents are desirable, although the means of achieving them are somewhat contentious, and that has taken up much of the debate. However, having signed and voted for the Single European Act, there is little we can do to unscramble some of these matters. The element of common sense should, perhaps, be applied here.

One of our problems is the need to strengthen the European Parliament. We receive many directives, like tablets of stone, from the Commission, which we are supposed to follow to the letter. If the European Parliament were stronger, it might have more impact on the Commission and be able to bring about some reforms in that respect.

**Mr. Cash** *rose*——

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): The hon. Gentleman seems to have stirred up a hornets' nest. Will he remind the House when it was explained to the House, how it was explained to the House and how clear it was to him at the time that the Single European Act meant that transport policy would be totally within the competence of the European Community and that it would be totally within the competence of the European Community on the basis of majority voting? I was here all the time and it never occurred to me.

**Mr. Livsey:** As I understand it, transport was one of the points incorporated in the treaty of Rome. That is now history. We are involved in a rather academic debate about it now. We are confronted this evening with documents that the Commission wishes to implement.

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): The hon. Gentleman is perfectly correct in saying that the Single European Act did not particularly affect the issues we are discussing. However, is he aware that, neither under the Single European Act nor previously, would these matters have gone for a second round to the European Parliament after the initial opinion? Is he therefore advocating that they should do and that many other issues should do? In that case, what is he expected to be doing here?

**Mr. Livsey:** The hon. Gentleman must recognise that we are set on a path to greater European integration. That will undoubtedly take some time, and it is taking a long time already. Some Europeans believe that we are not moving fast enough and there are a variety of views in the House on the topic. However, we should get back to the documents.

The objective of reducing deaths on the roads of Europe is laudable. The figure for those injured—other hon. Members have mentioned a figure of 1·6 million—is enormous and the number of injuries in a single year on the roads of Europe equates with figures for the second world war. When 50,000 people a year die, it is equivalent to wiping out a town the size of Hereford or Merthyr Tydfil, for example, every year. It is a serious problem, and we should not sell ourselves short in wishing to improve matters.

I know that the Government are attempting to improve matters. Britain's record on road safety and road deaths is extremely good, but that does not mean that there is no room for improvement in future. I would certainly support measures to achieve improvement. Successive Governments have introduced measures to reduce the number of road deaths. We are somewhat ahead of other Community countries in that respect.

We must consider each item on its merits. Stringent tyre tread depths have been implemented in Europe, and that will help road safety in this country. It is difficult to achieve the harmonisation of speeds, because there are different road conditions in this country. It is highly desirable to reduce the alcohol limit—50 ml per litre of blood is a controversial figure, but, none the less, it is a move in the right direction. To achieve adequate road safety, no driver should drink at all.

Many crocodile tears have been shed about Europe's powers, but, whether or not we like them, they exist. We must try to see the matter through in the best possible way.

**Mr. Bill Walker** (Tayside, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Livsey:** I will not give way, as I am coming to the end of my speech.

We must examine road safety and related matters in greater detail. I refer in particular to speed, in relation to which it is more difficult to achieve harmonisation.

11.16 pm

**Mr. Bowen Wells** (Hertford and Stortford): Hon. Members are, or should be, dealing with a common-sense matter—the way to reduce deaths and injuries on our roads. The Commission should proceed in the time-honoured and traditional manner in which many European states have constitutionally proceeded, and that is to devolve this type of decision-making to national Governments, local governments and other authorities. These matters concern culture, tradition, and road conditions, which differ greatly in various parts of the Community.

I direct the Minister to the idea of subsidiarity when arguing these matters in the Council of Ministers. Europeans would understand such an argument. It is not offensive to greater European unity. It is a method by which we could proceed harmoniously to produce the road safety measures that we are discussing. Such measures would be understood by the people who use the roads in the Community and they would be enforced by the police. We will enforce such measures only if they are supported by ordinary people in the Community.

**Mr. Cash:** My hon. Friend invokes the principle of subsidiarity. That is based on the assumption that the Commission is the remotest degree interested in reducing its powers to the point at which it would leave such matters to member states. Does my hon. Friend agree that, if it is proposing to invoke a common transport policy as the basis upon which it would take up this matter and proceed with it as it is at the moment, there is not a cat in hell's chance that it would agree to the principle of subsidiarity?

**Mr. Wells:** My hon. Friend makes an extremely good point. The Commission is entrusted with the duty of taking all initiatives and making all proposals to the Council of Ministers. Our hon. Friend the Minister will attend the Council of Ministers, so it is to there that our arguments and ideas must be directed. We want to reject the proposed legislation on the three matters before the House. The Council must ensure that road safety is a

*[Mr. Wells]*

matter of subsidiarity. Although there is some dispute about the powers of the Commission, they might prevail in a court. Nevertheless, for the reason of common sense, the Commission should not proceed.

The first matter relates to the amount of alcohol a driver can consume before committing an offence. In this country, the permitted level is 80 ml of alcohol per 1,000 ml. of blood, but in the remainder of the Community the level is 50 ml. The question is, what are the cultural traditions on the drinking of alcohol in the various Community countries? In Bavaria, for example, employers regularly supply workers in their factories with cold drinks —not Pepsi Cola or other soft, non-alcoholic drinks, but Bavarian lager. It is normal practice for them to drink lager throughout the day. In Britain, such a practice would probably induce a large number of people leaving work to drive while over the alcohol limit. That is just one example of how cultural traditions play an important part in the decision on the correct level under which people are permitted to drive.

In other parts of the Community access to alcohol for young people is severely limited. If they took in as much as 50 ml it would be dangerous because they are not used to alcohol and their judgment and driving skills would be affected. Decisions on this matter should therefore relate to national traditions and be covered by national, not Community, legislation.

It has been argued that one should not drink and drive at all, but that is not the law of this country or that of most of Europe. The law allows people to drive below a certain level of alcohol in the blood. The decision on what alcohol limits should be set has nothing to do with competition between the various Community countries, and it is through the anchor of the competitive element that we should try to make Europe a common market.

If, by having different regulations, one Community country achieved an advantage over another, there should be a common European standard. However, alcohol content and back seat belts cannot be anchored to a competitive advantage for any country. There might be a slight argument of competitive advantage on the issue of speed limits. However, as speed limits on roads in any Community country will apply equally to any driver, from wherever he comes in the Community, they are in fact all on the same level. All drivers should check the speed limits applying to roads—whether 30, 60 or 70 mph—and they should remain continuously aware of them. Having the same speed limits throughout Europe—especially the ridiculous change from 30 to 31 mph—would make absolutely no difference to road safety. It would not save a single life or a single limb.

This is not just a matter of whether the Community has competence in this matter, it is simply a matter of common sense. I appeal to the European honoured tradition of subsidiarity—that a law should not be made at a higher level if it can be made at a lower level and thereby gain consent for that law and aid its enforcement.

11.24 pm

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): The hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) has put his finger on the important difference between scientific specification, particularly for vehicles, depth of tyre tread or places for seat belts, which is a physical and clear matter which can be tested, and human conduct, social habits and custom. The two are different. One can be measured exactly and the other is local.

I agree with genuine co-operation on standards, particularly on safety matters, but in matters of human conduct, where compliance is subtle, deterrence is important. My hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) illustrated that in her remarks on random breath testing.

We all know that compliance, deterrence, penalties, sentencing policy and the way in which police operate are sensitive matters even in different parts of our own land. Therefore, it is fundamental that we should leave this to a level where there will be the best practical result. The evidence given by the hon. Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) to the Committee was strong in that respect.

However, the evidence given to the Select Committee on competence was not reassuring. One of the Commission's witnesses appeared before the Committee and the Chairman asked:

> "I am wondering if you could indicate to us, on your interpretation of the Treaty, what you would regard as being appropriate for a national government or parliament as legislation within the sphere of transport? As you have explained it, one would assume that there was none. Am I right in that?"

The reply was ambiguous and at question 44 the Chairman again said:

> "As you have answered that, it would appear to us that as transport is clearly an economic activity, nothing would be excluded. I am not sure whether you would agree with that?"

Mr. Gosalbo-Bono replied:

> "Legally speaking, according to the Treaty of Rome, every possible subject that will come in the field of transport—there will need again to be established a common transport policy —will fall inside the competence of the Community."

That was the view of the legal officer to the Commission's Director General of Transport. It is not necessarily that of the European Court, but that is clearly the case that the Commission would argue if it ever got there.

I would have hoped, along with the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford, that common sense would intervene. Irrespective of whether it is a good thing or not, and even if it could be proved that it was within the competence of the treaty, surely any wise Government would not push legislation to the limits of its own constitution. Some Governments may do that. Some politicians, even some Prime Ministers, may do that. But whether that is wise is a different matter.

I hope that Ministers will argue that, irrespective of whether there is competence—the Commission thinks that there is, but Ministers think not—it would be unwise to use it in this respect. That would be in accordance with good human nature and so would be more likely to yield the practical results that we all wish to see.

11.29 pm

**Mr. Roger King** (Birmingham, Northfield): I listened with interest to right hon. and hon. Members in all parts of the House, and agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) in his criticism of the European Community inflicting ideas and legislation on this country. However, in respect of motor transport policy and of motor vehicle construction and usage, it may be to our advantage to arrive at a consensus throughout the Community, in establishing a legal framework within which all member states could operate. The opening of the

Channel tunnel and the broadening of Europe's motoring horizons will bring a far higher number of heavy goods vehicles on to our roads. Some commonality of speed limits, driving hours and usage would only be sensible.

We must ensure that the message goes from this House that the Commission's proposals are unacceptable as they stand. Annex 1 to the Committee's report shows the percentage distribution of blood alcohol concentration across a sample of 728 road accident fatalities. Thirty-five per cent. of fatalities occurred among drivers having an alcohol level of 0·09 per cent. in their bloodstream. That is a tiny limit, and one wonders whether the accidents could be blamed on other factors or were wholly attributable to the drivers concerned being in a highly inebriated condition. The same question arises in respect of the 29 per cent. of the sample having an alcohol concentration of 0·5 per cent.

The majority of accidents occur among drivers having an alcohol level of 0·8 per cent. and above. Our limit is 89 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood, and experience over many years shows that most fatalities occur among drivers with an alcohol concentration well in excess of that limit. We should try to ensure that the standard adopted throughout Europe is that which the majority of member states already apply.

Much greater controversy surrounds speed limits. British road conditions, widths, signposting and other variables make it difficult to apply to our motorways the limits that are imposed elsewhere in Europe, and the reverse is true in respect of German autobahns. British roads consisting of three lanes and a generous hard shoulder may be classified as motorways, whereas two-lane roads with narrow shoulders in Germany may be designated as autobahns. Nevertheless, it is probably safer driving fast on a British motorway than it is on an autostrada—even though the motorway has a higher speed limit. It would be difficult to establish a pan-European speed limit for motorways.

Nevertheless, a European scale of speed limits seems sensible as we move gradually towards a more integrated Europe. The 30 or 31 mph limit exemplifies the ludicrousness of some of the proposals: what we mean is that we will stick to 30 mph, and if the rest of Europe wants to do 31 mph who is going to argue? Surely it is not necessary to insist on a 30 mph limit if the rest of Europe can accept 31 mph, because of the difficulties involved in translating metric speeds into miles per hour.

The hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) discussed proposals for heavy goods vehicles and coaches. The European requirement that coaches should be restricted to 62 mph on motorways is clearly ludicrous; there is no evidence to suggest that that is much safer than our standard 70 mph limit. Coach travel—which many people have had an opportunity to sample as a result of the rail strike—has become more popular since deregulation, and there is no evidence that passengers travelling at 70 mph on the top deck of a Rapide coach are frightened out of their wits. On the contrary, drivers on the M1 passing Scottish Citylink coaches on their way to Glasgow in the late evening will see the passengers sound asleep, or perhaps watching a video, at speeds at and over 65 mph.

I am also appalled at the suggestion that expressway vehicles—whatever they are—should be limited to 50 mph. We would certainly wish to contest such a restriction. I note from the requirements that coaches will be travelling at, or very near, the same speed as heavy goods vehicles. The present speed limit for coaches makes a good deal of sense, and experience has suggested that coach travel is extremely safe.

Perhaps the European Commission should have a look at our railways: some of the trains do not seem to hold the track nowadays, as we have seen recently. I doubt whether they will get round to it, however, as far too many environmental lobbies favour rail transport and are constantly seeking to place more restrictions on motor vehicles and travel.

We are lucky in this country: because of our attitude to coach travel we have built up a very popular system, which enables passengers to journey from one end to the other at an economic price. That is not possible in Europe, because coaches travelling at 50 or 60 mph cover ground so slowly that it is not an attractive form of transport. If we wish to retain the competitive nature of our transport—road versus rail versus air—we must ensure that all modes of travel are encouraged in the right way. I favour a limit of 75 mph for cars, with higher speeds for quieter motorways.

Let us consider the legislation carefully: we need to get matters exactly right.

11.38 pm

**Mr. Portillo:** I welcome the generous remarks made by the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) about my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley): he put his heart into his efforts to improve road safety, and I believe that he has a good deal of achievement to his credit. I also welcome the many points that she made in agreement with the Government's position, as set out by me. I shall, however, study with great interest what she said about giving support for good ideas, whatever their source. My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) responded quickly to that feature of her speech.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East also asked me why I had not mentioned minibus driver licensing. The answer is that it is not included in the documents that we are discussing. I refer my hon. Friend to a written answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham on 21 July 1989, in which he said that he had made good progress in direct discussions with the Commission about minibuses. He thought that the Commission's proposals on the second driver licensing directive could be modified to allow ordinary car licence holders, including the deaf, to drive minibuses with up to 17 seats under wide-ranging circumstances, which are set out in the written answer. Obviously, at this stage, the modifications are only proposed, but the discussions have been highly encouraging. I thank my hon. Friend and other hon. Members for the support that they have given the Government, which has been instrumental in persuading Community officials that they should suggest such a compromise.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) referred to speed limits. It is clear that the Commission has not thought sufficiently about the practical implications of harmonising speed limits or, in particular, the cost of harmonising speed limits or, in particular, the cost of conversion. We robustly pointed out the difficulties to the Commission. Opposition to harmonisation of speed limits among other member countries is so firm that so far no attempt has been made

*[Mr. Portillo]*

to begin Council negotiations. Derogation does not arise because there is no community law on speed limits. It is clear that harmonisation will not be pressed, because, if it were, ludicrous consequences would result. I am happy to assure my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East that we would be prepared to go to the European Court if necessary, but a strong issue would have to be involved.

The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) said that it is not sensible to try to legislate Europewide on local custom or human behaviour. I believe that we have used that argument in the past, but I am happy to endorse the hon. Gentleman's remarks.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) stressed subsidiarity, and I agree that we should press that important principle. We should like it to be applied in the United Kingdom as well as in the European Community. We depend on local authorities for much of the good work that is done.

The principle underlying our approach to road safety is that we should concentrate on measures on which we can be reasonably sure that our proposals will reduce casualties. Many questions have been asked about whether the Community has competence to deal with this matter. We doubt whether some of its proposals meet the test of having been proven to improve road safety——

*It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion,* MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted Business).*

*Question agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 4303/89 on seat belts, 4252/89 on road safety, 9228/89 on maximum permitted alcohol concentration for vehicle drivers, and 4156/87 and 4305/89 on speed limits; and endorses the Government's commitment to resist proposals in this area which are outside the field of Community competence, and not clearly related to the objectives of a common transport policy or of the internal market.

## Freedom of Movement

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd):** I must inform the House that Mr. Speaker has not selected the amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken).

11.43 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Patrick Nicholls):** I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 5786/89 relating to freedom of movement for workers; supports the broad objective of free movement for workers within the Single Market; and endorses the Government's intention of seeking amendment of inappropriate provisions.

The Commission's proposals aim to amend the basic Community law on the free movement of workers which was established more than 20 years ago. We adopted the principle of free movement when we joined the Community and continue to support it as an essential element of the free market. The right of a national of any member state to take or seek work throughout the Community gives everyone a stake in the success of the free market.

The existing rules have provided that right for 20 years. They also require workers from other member states to be treated equally to nationals of the host state, and allow them to be accompanied by their immediate family dependants of any nationality. The Commission now proposes to amend and extend those rules. The proposals are at an early stage and we are seeking the views of the House before they come to be discussed in the Council of Ministers.

However, it is already clear that a number of member states, including ourselves, would have difficulty accepting all the proposals as they currently stand. The proposals are detailed and technical, but they also contain some general principles the effects of which are far from clear. It seems that in some respects they go beyond what is appropriate to the free movement of workers and that they raise some questions about Community competence on the admission of people who are not themselves nationals of member states.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): I hope that I am in order in harking back to the previous debate. The theme running through that debate was concerned with Community competence, and the Government said that what the Community was trying to do was not within its competence. My hon. Friend is saying that on the important matter that is now before the House, which touches the basis of statehood—immigration—he believes that the Community does not have competence.

I ask my hon. Friend the question that was asked in the previous debate. Supposing that the Community gains competence by the use of these measures, uses the European Court and uses the majority voting procedures that are available to it. What then will the Government do? The Government know well that the British people would regret, would resent and would be totally against the Community gaining competence over immigration measures. What would the Government do? We need to know the answer.

**Mr. Nicholls:** As I said when I gave way to my hon. Friend, there is a question of competence here. Although this is a wide-ranging proposed regulation, the Government take the view that in one respect at least the question of competence is not made out, and that relates to what is proposed as regards those members of a family who are non-EC nationals. The question of competence is whether the Community is competent to make regulations or directives about non-EC nationals. The Government take the view that the right way to approach the issue is to try to negotiate it in the usual way, and to make sure that the Community is confined so that it deals with matters of competence, because, as my hon. Friend knows——

**Mr. Marlow** *rose*——

**Mr. Nicholls:** —or he would not make the intervention that I suspect he is about to make—there is no way in which competence can be challenged before the event. One cannot go to the court and say, "Here is a measure which, if it were to be made, would be ultra vires." If, at the end of the day, the directive or regulation is made and it is alleged that it is ultra vires—because the Community was incompetent—that could be challenged before the court, but that is a long way down the road. Obviously, the correct procedure is to negotiate, and take the view of the House at an early stage, to make sure that the Community confines itself.

**Mr. Marlow:** As my hon. Friend looks at this issue—an individual issue—in prospect, that might be right. But we have had examples in the past where the Government fought Community competence and that competence was established, and measures which the Government did not like were passed. Once a directive or regulation is in, even if it is challenged, it is the law of the land until the court overthrows it. So one is saddled with Community legislation until the court overthrows it.

The court, as my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) said in an earlier intervention, is a political court, biased towards Community competence. Time and again the Government have been defeated, and it is becoming an accelerating process; the Government are more and more being defeated over Community competence. When will the Government do something about that? We are being rolled over and we do not like it.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I have been accused of many things, but never of rolling over my hon. Friend, and I would like to think that tonight will be no such occasion. My hon. Friend just made an interesting and telling intervention in which he set out again his views on qualified majority voting. He has his views on that and he expresses them with his usual moderation and eloquence. But with respect to him, that is not the point with which we are dealing tonight.

Whether or not my hon. Friend likes it, the Single European Act is a fact. It allows for qualified majority voting, a subject to which I shall return. It is not a question of a one-way street, and we acceded to the Single European Act because, candidly, we reckoned that there was something in it for us. To that extent, the Government are prepared to take the rough with the smooth. My hon. Friend wants to take the smooth with the smooth, and I am afraid that in an imperfect world that option is not available to him.

The Commission has looked carefully at the experience over the past 20 years and at relevant judgments of the European Court of Justice, and it has proposed a number of detailed technical amendments to bring the regulation and directive up to date.

For example, the right to receive vocational training becomes a general right, not limited, as at present, to training in vocational schools. The right to equal treatment in housing is explicitly extended to cover housing finance. All this is welcome clarification, which we support.

We support, too, changes to simplify the granting of residence permits to people with the right to work.

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): In paragraph 13 of an explanatory memorandum dated 5 May, the former Minister of State, Department of Employment—the right hon. Member for Northavon (Mr. Cope)—said:

> "There is a widely shared concern that as drafted the proposals are much too uncertain in their effects and that in some areas they go beyond the reasonable scope of Article 49 . . . into areas concerned with the freedom of movement of persons generally."

Given the comments of the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) and this imprecision, do not these proposals conflict directly with section 14 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988? It was designed specifically to exclude 95 Spanish fishing vessels from fishing in contravention of United Kingdom quotas. Do not these proposals confound not only the Merchant Shipping Act but the ruling of the other place in favour of the Government? Are we not seeing, once again, a diminution of parliamentary sovereignty and an increase in the power of the European Commission?

**Mr. Nicholls:** I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept that, tempting though it may be, I shall not pass an opinion on whether the Merchant Shipping Act begs that interpretation. However, I agree wholeheartedly with the more important part of his remarks when he said that there was some imprecision in the language of the regulations. As I said in my opening remarks, we want to hear what the House has to say. I do not disguise the fact that the language is imprecise. Not only the United Kingdom but other member states want the legislation to be much tighter. You would probably restrain me, Madam Deputy Speaker, if I tried to use all the available time to make out a case against some of the imprecise language. We are considering this matter at an early stage so that we can ventilate our anxieties and highlight the possible advantages. We want to ensure at an early stage that we do whatever we can to tighten the language.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** (Southend, East): My hon. Friend has kindly said that he wants the views of the House, so will he say whether the Government believe that this proposal, which would give non-community nationals right of access to this country, is a matter for majority voting or for unanimity? It would help the House a great deal if my hon. Friend said that the Government believe that this is a matter for majority voting.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I have said in the main part of my speech and in responding to the interventions of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) that the question of competence comes into this. If the EC purports to deal with the rights that may attach to non-EC nationals, there is—to put it at its most neutral—an argument about competence. We are taking that argument

*[Mr. Nicholls]*

back to Europe. That is one factor that will come out of this debate, and I make no apology for saying that. After all, I raised this matter in the earlier part of my speech. I concede that the question of competence is directly relevant.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** What about majority voting?

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Government believe that this is a case in which majority voting will apply.

**Mr. Taylor:** I thank my hon. Friend very much.

**Mr. Nicholls:** In case my hon. Friend attaches more importance to that than he might otherwise do, let me say that that is how it seems to us at this stage. It remains to be seen whether that remains the position in the light of events.

We and other member states have said that these proposals cannot be agreed as they stand without looking further at the effects that they might have and seeing whether they should be considered under that part of the treaty that deals with the free movement of workers.

First, the current regulation gives the right of free movement to the worker's spouse and dependent children of parents. That is quite right, and clearly has a bearing on whether the worker will feel able to move to another member state. The Commission proposes to extend those rights to cover relatives who may or may not be dependent. This includes people who may not be nationals of member states. The Commission has not attempted to define the scope of the further family members concerned, other than that they are dependent on the worker or live under the same roof. We are concerned that this could include remote relations who have little to do with the worker. The worker's ability to move and take work is not influenced by whether he can take these family members with him. In our view, those people should not be covered by a Community instrument on rights of workers because their movement is not necessarily connected with that of the worker.

Giving the right to enter and move within the Community to more distant relatives or to ex-husbands and ex-wives would be difficult to control. It would make the job of deciding who had such rights very difficult and could lead to false claims to free movement rights from non-Community nationals. If such people are to be given the independent right to free movement, this should be in the context of general rights of residence, on which the Commission has other proposals, not in the context of free movement of workers. The Commission has other current proposals on rights of residence, but as they stand they would not deal with the rights of the remote relatives of workers whom I have mentioned. That is no reason why the issue should be dealt with in these proposals on the movement of workers.

The second difficulty is the proposed general principle that anything that happened in another member state should be treated as though it had happened in the state where someone is living, for the purpose of getting a tax or social advantage. That goes beyond the existing principle of equal treatment because United Kingdom citizens do not necessarily have the right to have anything that happened to them abroad taken into account to qualify for tax or other social advantages. Whether such experience is counted will depend on what the rights in question are, which is not at all clear. Rather than agree to such a general principle without knowing the implications, we would want to examine exactly which rights and which circumstances it refers to, and ascertain whether they are acceptable on an individual basis. That might or might not be appropriate to this Community legislation.

Finally, the Commission proposals seem to imply that there would be a duty on the Governments of member states to take action to pursue any case of apparent infringement of the principle of free movement. Remedies for that already exist. Anyone who feels that he has been discriminated against can take action under the race relations legislation, or can use existing Community law which has direct application. Cases of such discrimination are extremely rare. Laying an extra duty on member states would seem to us unnecessary and over-bureaucratic.

We are keen to encourage full application of the principle of free movement—for example, by breaking down barriers caused by failure to recognise professional qualifications. Many of the Commission's proposals will be helpful, but unfortunately others seem to go beyond what is needed and cause problems because their implications are so uncertain and wide-ranging. We, and no doubt other member states, will be examining them closely to try to get them clarified and amended as necessary to ensure that the changes finally agreed will contribute to the process of completing the single market and not cause unnecessary difficulties and uncertainties.

I repeat that the Government are interested in hearing the views of the House on this matter. It is clear from the amendment that hon. Members share our concerns about the wide issues that the Commission intends to cover in this measure. The proposals are in the early stages of negotiation and we believe that the best way forward is to deal with the concerns that are highlighted by the amendment during the negotiation process and by identifying other member states that share our concerns. We can welcome in general, and do, the principle of updating rights for the free movement of workers in preparation for the single market, and therefore we cannot accept the amendment. I assure the House that the underlying sentence in the amendment is something with which we have a great deal of sympathy, but we believe that the way of taking forward the concerns expressed lies very much in negotiation.

11.59 pm

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** (Stretford): When the Minister replies to the debate, I hope that he will expand on his final comment. He said that he has a "great deal of sympathy" with "the underlying sentence in the amendment". The amendment is clear——

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order. I must make it clear to the House that Mr. Speaker has not selected the amendment and that therefore it is not under consideration.

**Mr. Lloyd:** I accept what you are saying, Madam Deputy Speaker, but it is fair to point out that the debate covers such matters as the majority——

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order. I have made clear what we are debating.

**Mr. Lloyd:** That the Minister should tell the House that he has considerable sympathy with the underlying view that the majority voting system is wrong will be news to the Prime Minister. Hon. Members on both sides of the House will remember that she was instrumental in dragooning the necessary legislation through the House against the will of the bulk of hon. Members on the Government Benches.

I also point out to the Minister that when his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) created a mini-debate earlier, he raised the important issue of where we stood on the issue of majority voting. It is clear that, in the case of freedom of movement, the Government are not in a position one way or the other to decide what will happen, because the decision for that has passed from the hands of the British Government into the domain of majority voting in the rest of the European Community.

Whether the Government like it or not, the Prime Minister, in fairly unequivocal terms, gave a commitment when she described freedom of movement. That is one of a number of legs on which Mr. Delors' "infamous" social charter stands. The Prime Minister made it clear that the measure was to be a test case for the Court of Justice in Luxembourg. Perhaps, the Minister can tell us how that test case will be instituted, because it is clear that no test case will be possible unless the Government are able to bring freedom of movement outside the majority voting system. I do not believe that they will be able to do that.

It is fair, too, that I should point out that freedom of movement is part of what the Prime Minister described as the Marxist interventionism into which the Commission is now leading us. That is the point at which the Labour party clearly will draw the line and say that we will go no further with the Government. The Government are becoming increasingly isolated in their views on the need for some form of social charter for employment rights. Whether we accept it or not, the Government have put themselves and the nation into the position of having to accept that many parts of the social charter will be implemented by the majority voting system. It will be interesting if the Minister could tell us what other parts of the social charter will be implemented by the majority vote and whether it is the Prime Minister's intention to go to the Court of Justice. If it is her intention, what parts of the social charter will she challenge?

The most disappointing aspect of the Minister's speech was what it did not say about the Government's views on, and attitudes towards the social charter generally and the particular aspect of freedom of movement. The Minister did not say that the freedom of movement of workers must be considered in the context of the rest of the social programme that the European Commission has proposed. If we have only the narrow interpretation of the freedom of movement put forward by the Minister, where he welcomes, for example, as we do, some movement towards ratification of common qualifications, of course we accept that. If the Minister is, however, seriously saying that the only important aspect of freedom of movement concerns such things, he is taking a very mechanistic and economic view of the arguments.

It is significant that when, in January, the Chancellor made his speech about freedoms, while he was prepared to talk about freedom of capital and other freedoms, the one that he left off his list, importantly, was the freedom of movement, of workers, because that did not play any significant part in the Government's thinking. The Government must accept freedom of movement of workers, because that was enshrined within the treaty when Britain acceded to it.

There is no going back on the principle of freedom of movement. I am sorry that the Minister seems prepared to skirt around and perhaps to pander to the more unpleasant aspects of the Government's opposition to the freedom of movement, because we know that it would bring Britain's immigration laws into conflict with the European Community.

As one whose constituents suffer considerably from the impact of such laws, I would have to welcome anything that forced an easing of that problem. We have the ludicrous position where, on marriage, my constituents can take their spouses into any other city in Europe—as long as it is not one in the United Kingdom—where they can live under Community law with their spouses, but they cannot bring those same spouses into this country. I find it not only ridiculous but disgraceful that my constituents can be treated in this way by the Government. It is just as disgraceful that the Minister has skirted round that issue tonight and that he is not prepared to address it straight on. That is, in effect, what the Government are saying.

**Mr. Marlow:** Is the hon. Gentleman saying that he would like to see much higher levels of immigration, and is that the view of his constituents?

**Mr. Lloyd:** No, what I am saying is quite clear. Like the European Community, I believe—as the Government claim to believe—that there should be a right for spouses of British nationals to join their husband or wife in this country. That is a principle that the Government claim to believe and a principle that the hon. Gentleman, who supports the Government, obviously accepted when he stood for election as a Conservative Member of Parliament. There is nothing unique about that, except for the fact that the Government dishonourably and dishonestly pretend that that is what they stand for, when they are administering the system in a way that makes that impossible. That is outrageous.

I want my constituents to be able to be joined by their spouses, irrespective of where they come from—be it Italy, Wales or, as it happens, from India, Pakistan or anywhere else. I hope that establishes my point clearly. There should be that right. Indeed, it is accepted in both Community and in British legislation. In principle, the United Kingdom says that it supports that right, but in practice the Minister skirts round the fact that the Government are afraid that they will lose the power to keep people out of this country by administrative means, generally on the ground that they are black, which I believe is the hon. Gentleman's position—and it is one with which I have no sympathy.

When freedom of movement and the other issues in the social charter came to the fore earlier this year, it was significant that the Secretary of State for Employment, when speaking to the other European Community Ministers, was isolated when he said:

> "It is seriously misleading to draw a sharp distinction between what is in the interests of business and what is in the interests of citizens."

I fully concur with that, although I do not concur with his conclusion that we do not need any social legislation or assistance for the work force. The Minister has made it clear again tonight that he has less sympathy with the aspects of freedom of movement for workers that provide

*[Mr. Lloyd]*

social support or other things to make the life of individual workers easier and that allow them to transfer the benefits of one country to another. In wanting to withdraw from that social debate, the Government are not only completely out of step with public opinion in this country, as was amply demonstrated in the European elections, but they have made themselves almost totally isolated among other European Community countries. The vote on the social charter in the meeting of the heads of state in Spain was 10:1, with only Denmark abstaining for a technical reason, not because it was hostile to the proposals.

The British Government do not just stand alone within the member nations, the British Government and British employers stand almost alone in all European opinion on this matter. When the economic and social committee was asked to look at the social charter, the vote in favour of proceeding along those lines managed to unite the bulk of business opinion throughout Europe and the bulk of trade union opinion throughout Europe. We also had the odd position of British employers being in alliance with the French Communist trade unions as the only groups opposing the social charter. The Minister may derive some satisfaction from the fact that the Government are in that uncomfortable alliance with the French Communist-led trade unions. The Minister may glory in that isolation, but he and his colleagues appear not only isolated but foolish in the eyes of Europe.

If the Minister is prepared to accept the freedom of movement of workers as they move around Europe in the interests of the freedom of capital, but does not recognise that the bulk of opinion in Britain and throughout Europe is that that freedom of movement can exist only with the rest of the social charter, with protection for workers in Britain and throughout Europe, his vision of Europe is so barren and irrelevant to the long-term needs of Britain and the rest of Europe that it will be rejected, as it was rejected by the electorate in the European elections.

The Minister and his colleagues talk about a Britain based on the principle of a low-wage economy where capital will magically appear. But we will end up with the branch-plant economy that has bedevilled British economic history for the past 10 years. We know that Ford in Europe regards Britain as a low-paid, low-tech economy and prefers to locate high-tech production and investment in West Germany, which has higher labour costs but higher levels of skills. The Minister must accept that the future without the social charter puts Britain in the low-tech, no-tech league with low pay and not much future as we head into Europe.

That is why the Opposition believe that the future is clearly with the social charter. We understand why the Prime Minister described the social charter as a piece of European Socialism. If the Minister and his colleagues care to read the Labour party's policy review, they will find that many of the better features of the social charter run parallel to the views expressed in that document. That would not appeal to the Prime Minister or to the Minister because they know that the tide of public opinion in Britain and throughout Europe is moving to that view of the future—a Europe where people in employment are offered not only the spurious employment rights that the Government claim they have, but proper protection.

**Mr. Marlow:** Perhaps the hon. Gentleman, if there is one, could tell the House his limit and the Labour party's limit as to the level of competence the European Community should have over social policy. Should they decide on social security benefit levels or on housing? Where should it stop? We have heard one speech already from the Labour Front Bench which says that Europe ought to have competence where it has good ideas. Where does the hon. Gentleman feel, if there should be a limit, that limit should be with regard to European competence?

**Mr. Lloyd:** It is only fair that I point out to the hon. Gentleman that the Labour party's views on the Single European Act were quite consistent. It was not a Labour Government that forced that Act through Parliament. The hon. Gentleman will remember that the Labour party made its position quite clear at the time.

**Mr. Marlow:** How many opposed it on Third reading?

**Mr. Lloyd:** The hon. Gentleman will also know the Government's position at the time. He supports the Government. He may care to rebel against them at moments of pique and angst, but he keeps them in power, and has done so for some years now. On that basis the hon. Gentleman does not have much credibility. It is one thing to talk about rebellions and grand gestures, but the serious politics of the European Community is an entirely different matter. He has been prepared to sustain the Government in power so that they could give away those rights under the majority voting system.

The hon. Gentleman has to accept that fact. He has been part of the process that has given the Commission considerable control over the decision-making of this House. He will know that most social policy and some employment rights are not subject to the majority voting system. We are where the Government have put us. That is what we are debating.

Which parts of the social charter do the Government think they will be able to take to the European Court of Justice? The Prime Minister is on record as saying that she will go to that court, but it would be helpful to know what aspects of the charter are preventable on that basis and what aspects the Government have already given up the right to oppose. Their crass and pig-headed operations in Europe guarantee that they will not be listened to in any debates on improvements or amendments to this document.

**Mr. Marlow:** Will the hon. Gentleman now answer my question? What level of competence should the European Community have over social policy? What is his view and that of the Labour party on that? How far should it go?

**Mr. Lloyd:** The hon. Gentleman is asking a question that has no relevance, because the Government have already sold the pass in areas where majority voting applies. There is nothing that a Labour Government can do to withdraw it. Where majority voting might be extended is not an issue.

The Labour party will be fully supportive of the European Community in efforts to bring in a social charter that guarantees people's rights to be members of trade unions—unlike the Government, who have tried to prevent that. Labour will support a social charter where it enhances social benefits and brings uniformity of pensions, and increases pensions. Britain is the poor pensioner nation of Europe. Labour will support a social charter where it enhances benefit rights, and where it enhances people's rights at the workplace in terms of health and safety. The Government fight shy of and run away from all of those things because of their misguided view of Britain as a low-wage and, they claim, high employment economy. In fact, it is an increasingly vulnerable economy as it depends on the whims of outmoded technology and employment practices. Theirs is a future which simply does not work.

The Minister made a narrow and fairly technical speech about freedom of movement. He has not answered the broader questions about why the Government oppose parts of this document. I suggest that the reason lies in the Government's desire to protect our rather nasty immigration rules. To discuss the freedom of movement of workers without the wider context of the social charter is simply to misunderstand why there is value in freedom of movement from the point of view of employees. I hope that he will put his mind to the serious issues that are raised in the document.

12.18 am

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford): This is an open-ended provision. There seems to be no limit to the number of people who can come in or to the benefits that they can seek. It strikes me that it is extremely peculiar that, at this late hour, we are discussing something which should never have seen the light of day in its present form.

Why is the Commission given the opportunity by member states to make proposals that are so open-ended, when it would be far more sensible to retrench its powers by giving greater powers to the Council of Ministers? I concede that that would have to be done by way of treaty amendment, but in the light of the Single European Act, it seems highly desirable. I have said repeatedly that I am not, in principle, against the Single European Act. I voted for it and I have said that I would do so again. However, a fundamental difference has occurred since the passing of the Act.

Before the Act, proposals such as the one we are discussing tonight could be justified in terms of their being produced and drafted by the Commission, because there had to be an on-going negotiating process with the Commission as part and parcel of the watchdog apparatus of the treaty of Rome. Now that we have the Single European Act and far more majority voting, I cannot see why we cannot have a treaty amendment, the effect of which would be to give greater power to the Council of Ministers. However, the time is coming—particularly in the run-up to the intergovernmental conference and in the context of matters such as extensions of the economic and monetary union—when we should look seriously at the other side of the coin—amendment of the treaty. The aim would be not to get away from the benefits of the Community, but to put on a more sensible basis the manner in which legislation emanates from the Community.

The power of the pen—that is, the power of the Commission—to produce proposals such as this is so open-ended that there seems to be no limit to the extent to which it can come forward with proposals which then inevitably end up either having to be cut back as a result of meetings of working groups behind closed doors, or in the European Court of Justice itself. Most of these matters could be resolved at a far earlier stage.

I hope that we are also about to improve the procedures in this House for dealing with the scrutiny of European legislation. This is not an airy-fairy, ivory tower exercise, but the serious business of trying to make Community legislation relevant to the electorates of the member states. Can we not examine the way in which legislation is produced and prevent it from being so open-ended? We should do what we can to ensure that greater clarity is obtained in the documents at an earlier stage. I have a suspicion—which I cannot prove—that there is sometimes an intention to produce grey areas and ambiguities in Community legislation, precisely because there are those who are conscious of the fact that it is bound, therefore, to end up in the Court of Justice.

The hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) talked about the social charter. If one examines the provisions of the Single European Act, as opposed to the original provisions of the treaty of Rome, in the area of competence to deal with matters relevant to the social charter, one sees that they are riddled with grey areas and ambiguities. The opportunity to clarify these matters was when the Single European Act was negotiated. Instead, we have been put in a position where we can guarantee that proposals will go to the Court of Justice. As I said in an intervention on the previous directive, we are then in the unhappy position of knowing that, because of the tendency in the Court of Justice towards political integration, it will interpret the proposals in favour of that objective at the expense of the rather more narrow and specific approach that would be taken in this country.

As the bottom line, I am talking about democracy. I have constituents in Stafford, as the hon. Member for Stretford and all other hon. Members have constituents, who will be affected by the proposals. We have an absolute right to require that the basis upon which the documents are prepared in the first place are far clearer before they reach us. The Council of Ministers should seize the opportunity, in the run-up to the intergovernmental conference, to try to identify ways and means of ensuring that documents come before us and the Council of Ministers on a far clearer and more specific footing.

1.24 am

**Mr. James Wallace** (Orkney and Shetland): I support the call for clarity by the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash). No regulation or directive does anyone any good if there are large grey areas in it. The Minister referred to the Government entertaining some doubts about the part of the measure that relates to enjoying certain social services in other countries. I do not think that hon. Members have much idea of what we would be letting ourselves in for if that point were to go forward. To that extent, greater clarity would be welcomed.

My right hon. and hon. Friends and I believe in the concept of freedom of movement throughout the European Community, not least for those in employment. That matter is at the heart of what we are considering. We would like the European Community to be more than an economic club—one that actually impinges on all aspects of people's lives and gives them a greater opportunity to exercise freedom of movement throughout the Community.

At present, only 4·8 million European Community nationals live in other European Community states—in other words, in a state other than their own national state

*[Mr. James Wallace]*

—which, at one point, was 5 per cent. of the total European Community population. That is far lower than the degree of internal migration in the United States of America, for example.

Certain aspects of the measure will help to reduce some of the barriers that otherwise operate against freedom of movement. For example, equal treatment in housing loans and grants is important, and we should welcome it. Other things could be done. I welcome what the Minister said about reducing the barriers that result from different professional qualifications. We could look to allowing workers to transfer private pension rights across frontiers and to giving migrants free access to job agencies. They would be positive developments.

I cannot accept what the hon. Member for Stafford said about this proposal being an open-ended commitment to all and sundry to move between countries X and Y in the Community. If the hon. Gentleman looks carefully at the words of the motion, he will see that that is not the case. It is confined to people in the ascending line and to descendants. We must look at the issue in practical terms. Of course, descendants could theoretically be a larger number. Ascendants are restricted to parents, parents-in-law, grandparents, and grandparents-in-law. It is unlikely that great-grandparents would want to move.

One thinks of what happens within the United Kingdom. Families often move from what has been the family home, and couples often move with their children. It is probably more the rule than the exception that the whole family moves—grandparents, great-grandparents, the lot. When my wife and I set up home in Orkney, I do not think that either set of parents thought of moving with us. They had their own lives and occupations in places where they had been for a long time. We are not necessarily opening the doors for a great influx or efflux of people. There might be circumstances in which, for reasons that fall short of dependency, a close, integrated family, including the grandparents and the children who are not necessarily dependent, would want to move to another part of the European Community.

Those of us who have a slightly greater vision of the European Community than one confined to business purposes see nothing wrong with families being able to move and stay together. Other parties may genuinely support the concept of the family and would be prepared to accept that there are circumstances in which non-dependent children and grandparents may wish to move with the family. It would not lead to a great number of people going to and fro, but it might prove a worthwhile provision in certain family circumstances.

**Dr. Godman:** Does the hon. Gentleman agree that there is some ambiguity about the proposals as they were outlined by the then Minister of State on 5 May? He said that they shaded into

"areas concerned with the free movement of persons generally."

Does not such ambiguity give some comfort to the Spanish quota hoppers?

**Mr. Wallace:** I do not think that there is ambiguity, because the definition of who is and who is not covered is quite clear. There is no reason why that should not be extended to non-Community nationals. It is a fine dividing line if a worker's grandchild happens to be Austrian or Swiss rather than West German or Italian.

The position of Spanish quota hoppers is different from that envisaged in the proposals. The whole concept of fisheries quotas could be said to be contrary to the concept of the internal market. The quotas exist for good reasons, which I am sure are fully understood on both sides of the House. The Commission was wrong to challenge what we did, with all-party support, in the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 and to try to impose rules that might be generally applicable for the purpose of achieving a single market, but are not relevant or applicable under a system for fisheries, set up by the Community, that allows for national preference and does not accept a common market.

It might have been wise had the Government—they may yet do so—told the Commission that we were trying to preserve the integrity of the national quotas that had been accepted by the Commission. The whole Community should accept that. The legislation is a step towards ensuring that what the Community has agreed as proper for fisheries is implemented. Until the Commission can come up with a better means of doing that, within its rules, it should not challenge us for trying to uphold the quotas. The onus should be put on the Commission to find a way to deal with quota hopping, which actually flies in the face of what the Commission tried to achieve when it established fisheries quotas and total allowable catches.

The proposals allow divorced spouses, widowers and widows to remain in a country after a marriage has broken down or a spouse has died. If a Portuguese person has settled in Spain, or a Spanish person in the United Kingdom, it is humane to allow them to remain following the death of a spouse and not immediately or after a short time to lose their residency qualifications.

I want to emphasise what the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) said about the importance of the social charter in ensuring that what we are trying to achieve is not just a business men's club but something that actually affects people. The Government, and Britain as a whole, could lose out if it is perceived that other European Community countries have better rights for employees. We could be in danger of losing some of our best-equipped and skilled people if there are better opportunities in other countries. If the prospect of employee rights is better in Bonn than it is in Birmingham, our skilled workers might take employment in Bonn, which would be our loss. To see a narrow advantage in having lower standards, hopefully to attract capital, is short-termism at its worst.

The Government would do well to look at popular opinion. The Euro-barometer survey reported by the *Financial Times* earlier this month confirmed that three out of four Europeans regard the social charter as a good thing and welcome uninhibited movement across internal borders. That is one of the advantages that ordinary people perceive from greater European integration. It happens readily in the United States. No one there stops to think about moving from Florida to California to North Dakota. That could be achieved in Europe, and we must progress towards it. It does not imply moving to a united states of Europe, as I understand is feared in other parts of the House. Ordinary people would see European integration coming closer to reality, and we support the general thrust of the document.

12.35 am

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): I apologise profusely for taking up the time of the House at this late hour, but is it appropriate that such important issues are regularly debated at such a late hour in such a thinly attended House? The two European Community matters that we have debated tonight are pregnant with great relevance for national competence and national sovereignty and have a great potential impact on the British people, how they are governed and the laws by which they are governed.

I was fascinated by the speech by the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd). He complained at great length about the way in which the Government railroaded the Single European Act through the House. One would have thought from that that he was vehemently opposed to it, but no. He effectively went on to say that he hoped that before long the Community would take over the running of the United Kingdom's social security budget. I may be thought to be traducing the hon. Gentleman for saying this, but he also seemed to imply that he hoped that the Community would take over the running of British immigration law. He did not go quite that far, but in certain respects he implied that, if the Community gained competence over some aspects of our immigration law.

We now know that the Labour party wants to surrender control of our social security budget and our immigration laws because it believes that the unelected undemocratic Brussels bureacrats, the Commissioners at Brussels, are more competent to do that.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State made an eloquent and brilliant speech in opening the debate, as one would expect from a lawyer. He said that we have accepted the Single European Act. My hon. Friend knows that I voted against it, but that is irrelevant. It is the law of the land. In accepting that, we accepted majority voting. We accepted majority voting over the single market, but we did not accept majority voting over immigration policy. If my hon. Friend can show me anything whereby the Government said, or implied that they understood or anticipated, that any respect of our immigration policy would be subject to majority voting by the EC, I shall stand corrected. However, I doubt whether my hon. Friend will be able to do that.

The explanatory memorandum refers to freedom of movement for relatives. They do not have to be relatives in the ascending and descending line of the worker and spouse, but relatives who are dependent on the worker or living under the same roof. What does "dependent on the worker" mean? Could it be a nephew, or a sort of nephew, or a second nephew, or a cousin's nephew living under the same roof? We know what we in Britain mean by right of abode, but what does living under the same roof mean? Does it include someone who has come on a visit from north Africa or the Indian subcontinent who happens to stay with a relative, the nephew of a second cousin staying with a relative who has come from Morocco who is living in France, if the Moroccan who has become a French national then decides to come to Britain? Can he bring all those "nephews" with him? Is that what this regulation implies? Is that what the hon. Member for Stretford believes that his constituents want, and that they want it decided at the European level?

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) said that when he went up to live in Orkney, his great-grandparents and the rest of his family did not necessarily want to come up with him. All right, but it is a beautiful place and they may change their minds and want to go there later. That is not really what we are talking about. If they want to go to Orkney, splendid—and if they are living in my constituency and are inclined to vote Liberal, it is a very good idea if they go up there. I put it to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland that that is not what we are really concerned about.

We have a problem in Europe and in the United Kingdom, in that there are vast numbers of people in the Third world who are poor—poorer than us—and, for very genuine and sensible reasons, they want to migrate. For economic reasons, they want to migrate to the rest of Europe. It is a very powerful move, and we have got to have very clever, fair, and sophisticated laws to deal with it. That has nothing to do with whether or not the hon. Gentleman's great-grandfather wants to move to Orkney. The pressures are different. The situation is wholly different, and the hon. Gentleman is not talking about what we are talking about in this debate.

The proposed regulation states:

> "All such people would have the same rights . . . and other social advantages generally".

What does that mean? I think that it means social policy. But if they are going to gain rights to social policy, and if the Community is going to decide on these aspects of social policy, where is it going to stop?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor** (Truro): At the Orkneys.

**Mr. Marlow:** I think that the answer to my question is that it will stop at Calais.

The regulation also states that people ought to have the right to come to this country after the dissolution of marriage. Somebody could come to this country who was from a different culture or background, who could have had several spouses in the past. All those marriages could have been dissolved five years ago, 10 years ago or 15 years ago. Where do the records exist? Is it not going to be a problem? Is it not going to be difficult? People who have never been in this country—ex-spouses—would, under the regulation, be allowed to come to our country. I think it is nonsense, and if the hon. Member for Stretford thought about it, he would agree that it is nonsense.

Paragraph 6 of the regulation states:

> "Member States would be required to take action to curb discrimination against those entitled to free movement."

We know that the Irish have for a long time been entitled to free movement in this country, and we do not complain about that. But there is evidence—and it is very difficult to get clear facts on this—that an Irishman in Ireland who contracts AIDS or who becomes drug-dependent will for preference, and for reasons of anonymity—and perhaps because of pressure from the Catholic Church and for reasons of better treatment—wish to come across and have his AIDS or drug dependency treatment in this country. I think that a lot of people go to the Parkside health authority.

The average AIDS treatment costs about £20,000 or £30,000. Perhaps that is something that we would want to do something about. If we accepted that

> "Member States would be required to take action to curb discrimination",

we would not be allowed to do anything. If somebody wanted to come here for any such reason, because the

*[Mr. Marlow]*

treatment was better or because they would get a better deal in this country, they need never have been here in their lives before—never have worked in this country before.

Maybe at the moment we can do something about it, but if we allow the regulation to go through, all those things will be beyond our competence—beyond the competence of this sovereign House—to control. It would be beyond the competence of the hon. Gentleman's constituents to get their elected representative to do anything about it, because it would be outside their control.

In the text of the regulation, the Province of Northern Ireland is mentioned. We have problems of terrorism in Northern Ireland. How will the regulation, directive, ordinance, or whatever it is, from the European Council affect our right to prevent potential terrorists from going to Northern Ireland?

The legal basis is being dealt with under a qualified majority. This is pregnant with significance for our immigration policy, and it is to be dealt with by a qualified majority. If this gets through on the basis of qualified majority, it means that the whole of the immigration policy of the United Kingdom is potentially subject to be decided by qualified majority in the Council of Ministers.

I believe that when we signed up with the European Act we did not anticipate that. I believe that we did not want it, and I believe that we do not want it now. Furthermore, I believe that my hon. Friend who so eloquently opened the debate—and the rest of the House, by and large—do not want it. But if it happens—if the single majority vote forces it through—and if we then take it to the Court, which is quite likely because it is a political court, as has been said several times in the House this evening, and we are defeated, what then are the Government going to do?

Time after time, issues are put before the House; time after time, the Government say that they are reluctant; time after time, the Government say, "It is on the wrong treaty article, and it should not be by majority vote. If it does go through we will take it to the court." Time after time, these issues come to the House, are disclaimed by the House, go to the Community and are agreed by the Community—and then they are forced on British people.

We never anticipated, when we signed up with the Single European Act, that many of these things would come through. It was never explained to the British people that the Community would gain competence over these issues. We never wanted the Community to gain competence. But day by day, mile by mile, the Community is gaining competence. What are we going to do about it? That is what this debate is about; that is what the previous debate was about; and that is the answer that we want to hear from my hon. Friend in his eloquent, lawyerly way.

12.46 am

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The hour is late, and I promise that my speech will be brief.

According to paragraph 4 on page 16 of the document 5786/89, one objective is

"strengthening the rule of equal treatment for nationals of the host State and other Community nationals".

As I said in an earlier intervention, just two months ago the former Minister of State pointed out a degree of ambiguity in that: it seemed to deal with much more than the free movement of workers, and to drift into the sphere of free movement of persons generally.

I suggested to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) that, given their ambiguity, the proposals might provide some comfort for the owners, managers and crews of the 95 quota-hopping Spanish fishing vessels. The hon. Gentleman was absolutely right when he said that the Government's Merchant Shipping Bill—which became the Merchant Shipping Act 1988—received the undivided support of the whole House, especially what became section 14, which provided that a fishing vessel should be eligible for British registration only if it were British-owned and managed from within the United Kingdom.

Might not some of the workers defined in the somewhat ambiguous phraseology of the documents be managers of such vessels? Section 14 sought to exclude them from fishing against the United Kingdom quota. This is an important issue, because between now and the end of 1991, the United Kingdom fishing fleet must divest itself of some 35,000 gross registered tonnes. In crude terms—we can offer only a rough approximation—that might constitute between 600 and 800 vessels, and affect fishing communities from Shetland down to Cornwall.

If, however, the United Kingdom Government were to win their case in the European Court of Justice—the case will end up there—those 95 Spanish vessels might total some two thirds of the gross registered tonnage that must be shed by the United Kingdom-registered fleet in just over two years.

With the active encouragement of the Spanish Commissioner, Manuel Marin, the other Commissioners are maintaining proceedings against the United Kingdom. Despite the House of Lords ruling in support of section 14, all 17 Commissioners have said that there is a powerful case to be developed in the European Court of Justice against the Government. An important point of principle is involved, because if the Commissioners win their case will not the Government have to amend the Merchant Shipping Act? Would not section 14 be thrown into the wastepaper basket? The decision is important for the fishing communities scattered around the United Kingdom coastline.

The Commission claims that the nationality requirements in section 14 of the Merchant Shipping Act contravene article 7 of the treaty on discrimination on the ground of nationality. The Commission's imprecise proposals might strengthen its case on section 14.

The primacy of parliamentary sovereignty is an important issue. Is the Merchant Shipping Act powerful enough to withstand——

**Mr. Wallace:** It is an English doctrine.

**Dr. Godman:** From a sedentary position, the hon. Gentleman rightly says that it is an English doctrine.

We have a clash between the European Commission and English legislation. It may be two years before the European Court of Justice reaches a decision. In the meantime, what will happen to the British fishing fleet, bearing in mind all the vessels that will be stripped from it? Will the European Court of Justice instruct the Government to amend important legislation—section 14 of the Merchant Shipping Act?

12.53 am

**Mr. Nicholls:** When I opened the debate, I said that I looked forward to hon. Members' comments on the proposed regulation. I said that I expected hon. Members' comments to be helpful to the Government, and they have been.

I thoroughly enjoyed the speech made by the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd). How anyone can combine such genial eloquence with brazen cheek in equal measure is quite remarkable. To listen to the hon. Gentleman, one would have thought that he had spent his political life advocating the virtues of the Common Market in a way that would have made my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) apoplectic with outrage. The hon. Gentleman had the nerve to describe the Government's view of Europe as a "barren view of Europe." If anyone had wanted to listen to a barren view of Europe over the years they could have done worse than listen to speeches made by Labour Members, including the Leader of the Opposition, until recently. If we needed any lectures—and we do not, at this time of night or any other time—about the virtues of being communautaire or having a proper commitment to the European ideal, the last people to whom we would go would be Front Bench spokesmen of the Labour party.

What the hon. Gentleman described as barren was described by other hon. Members as narrow. I accept that tonight I have set out a narrow view of the issue. I have dealt with the document that is before the House, and it does not relate to immigration policy in general. It does not even relate to the question whether EC nationals should have an automatic right of abode in other countries in the Community.

It deals with amendments to principles that have been accepted in the Community for the last 20 years concerning the circumstances governing the ability of workers to travel around the Community with—in layman's terms—those dependent relatives whom they might wish to take with them. We have agreed with the Commission and said that, after 20 years, those rights may need to be uplifted. The hon. Gentleman may have thought I was being narrow, but in fact I was simply attempting to stay in order.

The hon. Gentleman went on to express surprise that I might find anything with which to sympathise in the amendment in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). One must address the underlying concerns, and I referred to them at the beginning of my remarks—underlying concerns about imprecision of language, which is in nobody's interest except that of the lawyers, along with matters relating to competence.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) made an interesting point, as usual. He has considerable knowledge of the workings of Europe. He made some proposals, which amounted to saying that we might have gone down a different path from the point of view of qualified majority voting. He seemed to suggest that perhaps it was not too late even now to consider doing something about that. That is a broader point, which does not touch on the issues which concern us tonight.

I have had many dealings over the years with the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) in Standing Committees on employment matters. I am never certain how the hon. Gentleman will end his remarks, whether he will sympathise with the views of hon. Members on these Benches or on the Benches opposite. He seems to take the classic mugwump's view, in that he leaves his mug on one side of the fence and his wump on the other, and one never knows until he has finished of whom he has been speaking in favour.

The hon. Gentleman thought that there was no imprecision that mattered in the definitions about which we are talking. I disagree with him. There is a great deal of imprecision, and my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North referred to it. The explanatory memorandum produced by the former Minister of State states:

> "Workers who are Community nationals, and their spouses and dependent children and parents of any nationality, are currently allowed to live and work anywhere in the Community."

So far so good, and even my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North might be with me in that.

It goes on:

> "This right would be extended to all relatives in the ascending and descending line of the worker and spouse, whether or not dependent, and to all other relatives who are dependent on the worker or living under the same roof in the home country."

I was asked what that meant. I do not know, but I say as a lawyer that it is pregnant with possibilities. I can imagine, in a previous incarnation, doing massively well on behalf of whomever briefed me, arguing that it meant one thing or another, or both things or neither. It is in nobody's interest to have that sort of imprecision in measures that come before the House, so our business tonight is to try to ensure that imprecision of that type does not exist.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland then raised a fair point relating to people who may have retired or to the dependants of people who may have died. Those moving to take up work or to set up in business, and their dependants, are given right of residence. If they stay for more than six months, they are given a resident's permit, which is renewed so long as they are working and, perhaps more to the point in view of the hon. Gentleman's concerns, they can remain with families in the host state on retirement and families can remain after the death of a worker who has worked for two years, and those rights of residence do not depend on the issue of a permit.

My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North made, as always, a splendid speech. I had heard it before and I am sure that, if my luck is out, I shall hear it again. He makes an old song sound fresh every time he sings it. He does something which, were I to share his views, I would do also. But I do not, so I shall not. He takes us through the situation that might arise when, as we know, such matters cannot be challenged for ultra vires in advance.

What would happen, asked my hon. Friend, if one went down all the paths of negotiation, debates in this House and finally to the court, where the wicked old Europeans, as my hon. Friend would have it, again exercised their political judgment? My hon. Friend has an honourable tradition of not liking Europe and its works, so in advancing that course, he is bound to see the very worst side all the time. The difficulty is that those of us who are committed to Europe see the advantages in the system as well—advantages in freeing up and having sensible voting systems through qualified majority voting, because at times it works in terms of 1992. It is very much a matter

*[Mr. Nicholls]*

of taking the rough with the smooth, but from my hon. Friend's point of view, there is never any smoothness in respect of Europe—it is roughness all the way.

**Mr. Marlow:** If my hon. Friend does not mind my correcting him, he has got it wrong. I am in favour of Europe, but unto the Europeans that which is Europe's and unto the United Kingdom and the sovereign territories of Europe that which should be their sovereign matters. We have the Single European Act, and we all understand that there is agreed majority voting on the single market. What we are rightly concerned about and what I wish my hon. Friend would be concerned about is the creeping competence of the European Community. It is trying to gain majority voting competence over issues and areas that we never contemplated would be controlled in that way.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I assure my hon. Friend that I understood that that was his position. He said that it was never intended under the Single European Act that, for example, immigration questions should be brought within the Community's competence. To some extent, it depends on the way that one uses the language. My hon. Friend may see this as primarily an immigration matter; I see it more prosaically, as no more than a recognition that, if there is to be freedom of movement of workers within a common market, it seems to make sense logically and morally to allow them to take their dependent relatives with them. Whether the term "dependent relatives" should be extended widely is another matter.

I accept the point that the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) made about section 14 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988. I hope that he will accept that, at this time of night, I should write to him about that matter, rather than try to deal with it at the Dispatch Box.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 5786/89 relating to freedom of movement for workers; supports the broad objective of free movement for workers within the Single Market; and endorses the Government's intention of seeking amendment of inappropriate provisions.

## EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(5) (Standing Committees on European Community documents).*

### WASTE

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8066/88 relating to waste; and supports the Government's intention to seek to ensure that the provisions of these Directives are necessary to protect human health and the environment from the danger arising out of waste disposal.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

*Question agreed to.*

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.)*

### HOVERCRAFT

That the draft Hovercraft (Application of Enactments) Order 1989, which was laid before this House on 22nd June, be approved.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

*Question agreed to.*

### NORTHERN IRELAND

That the draft Appropriation (No. 3) (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, which was laid before this House on 29th June, be approved.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

*Question agreed to.*

### REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

That the draft Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Regulations 1989, which were laid before this House on 6th July, be approved.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

*Question agreed to.*

### HOUSE OF COMMONS (SERVICES)

*Ordered,*

That Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones and Mr. David Hunt be discharged from the Select Committee on House of Commons (Services) and Mr. Alistair Goodlad and Mr. David Lightbown be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

## PETITIONS

# NHS Reform

1.2 am

**Mrs. Alice Mahon** (Halifax): I beg to ask leave to present a petition containing 5,500 signatures. It represents the voice of the people of Yorkshire and Humberside telling the Government of their fears for the future of the National Health Service. They have reached the clear and logical conclusion that, if their NHS hospitals are set up as hospital trusts and become businesses with information systems, giving the costs of every treatment in detail, and can borrow money in the City, set their own wage rates and hire and fire staff at will, they are set for total privatisation, and the people want none of it. The Government should listen to their voice.

The petition states:

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled. The humble petition of the people of Yorkshire and Humberside showeth that they are opposed to the Government NHS White Paper proposals, particularly on the opting out of local hospitals.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable house does not approve these proposals and maintains the NHS as a truly national service. And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, etc.

*To lie upon the Table.*

1.5 am

**Mr. David Hinchliffe** (Wakefield): The petition which I wish to present to the House has been organised by members of the National Union of Public Employees and signed by about 5,500 people from various parts of Yorkshire and Humberside who oppose the proposals that are contained in the White Paper on the National Health Service. The petitioners believe that the Government are effectively breaking up the NHS by proposing to allow the formation of independent hospital trusts whereby individual hospitals, or health units, opt out of local health authority control. They are concerned that the setting up of a series of separate, individual competing units will result in the ending of the comprehensive nature of Britain's health care and believe that it is nonsense to introduce a system whereby the health provision and treatment available in any locality will be dependent upon the business acumen of individual health managers.

The petitioners are worried that the proposals in the White Paper are part of a longer-term plan to pave the way for health care provision that is based entirely on market forces. They stand by the original principles of an NHS based on need and not ability to pay. Accordingly, they urge the House to reject the White Paper in its entirety. I am happy entirely to endorse their wishes and concerns.

The petition states:

To the honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled. The humble Petition of the People of Yorkshire and Humberside showeth that they are opposed to the Government NHS White Paper proposals, particularly on the opting out of local hospitals.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House does not approve these proposals and maintains the NHS as a truly national service.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

*To lie upon the Table.*

## Health Service (Cornwall)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

1.6 am

**Mr. Matthew Taylor** (Truro): I welcome this opportunity to express my concern about the conditions and future of the National Health Service in Cornwall. I thank the Under-Secretary of State for being in his place in the early hours of the morning to respond to my concerns. The hon. Gentleman is most welcome. It is not always easy to wait for other debates to finish, to wonder what time we shall finish and to keep awake. I make no apology for holding the Minister here, however, because I believe that health is of immeasurable concern to my constituents. The Health Service is the issue on which I have received the largest post bag in recent months.

It is sad that people nationwide, but especially in Cornwall, have grown to expect the problems that are associated with long waiting lists. Despite considerable investment in the county, which I acknowledge and welcome, we have failed to keep pace with growing needs. Cuts have been made, but not as a result of a rational examination of the county's health needs. Instead, they have been the result of an immediate cash crisis. Even now, we are concerned about the future of the Tehidy hospital and the possible privatisation of St. Mary's hospital within that context.

The publication of the White Paper, with proposals for general practitioners' contracts, has horrified people as never before. The concern of many Cornish doctors centre around the likelihood that the proposals outlined in the White Paper, especially on the proposed doctor's contract, will be detrimental to the welfare of rural practices in particular and to the people whom they seek to serve.

The purpose of the document appears to be to increase competition between the providers of health care in the hope that this will mean a better service and the better use of resources. Unfortunately, for the people of Cornwall, the Government are so certain in their faith that competition is the answer to everything that they have seemingly failed to assess the effects of their policy on different and peculiar parts of the country. People who are ill are not interested so much in having the right to exercise choice about the form of treatment that they will receive and which hospital they will attend. Instead, they want confidently to expect that they can rely on receiving quality care when they need it and within easy access of their home.

In my view, the current proposals could all too often mean no choice at all. The Secretary of State, when defending the reforms in early May, recommended a study of the magazine entitled *Medeconomics*. I am glad that I took the trouble to follow his advice. I found that those who write for the magazine had examined a small rural practice in the south-west which is based in Constantine in Cornwall. The article looked at the proposed changes, and in its conclusions said:

"Unfortunately, there seems to be little scope for these GPs to increase their income. The isolated areas in which they work means that outside appointments are difficult to come by. The GPs have none. The list is a stable one biased towards a higher than average proportion of elderly patients and there is little prospect of change.

Once the GPs know how their remuneration package will change, they will need to take careful stock of their position.

*[Mr. Matthew Taylor]*

If economic realities prove harsh in the future, they should not overlook the possibility of eventually ending the practice and joining partnerships in a more populated part of the country."

In other words, the magazine, which I read at the recommendation of the Secretary of State, says that they may have to give up. That is a practice that has been referred to me by doctors in Cornwall as an example of best practice and of the kind of service that other doctors would ideally like to offer to their patients.

The doctors' contract will have a devastating effect on rural health care. The measures to tie the level of pay to list sizes and the reduction in basic practice allowance will not benefit rural doctors, but will penalise them in order to offer incentives to busier practices in wealthier areas. In many practices in Cornwall, it will be impossible for doctors to acquire more patients, leaving practices either financially untenable or at least less attractive. What kind of choice is that for those for whom it is their only source of health care for many miles? Unlike the views of Conservative think tanks, competition as such is far from central to rural patients' hopes for the NHS. How many areas have different practices with easy access between which a choice can be made? How many areas have a range of hospitals which doctors can play off against each other?

The reforms for rural practices appear to run counter to the Government's expressed aims. Rewards for larger list sizes puts in to reverse the attempts by successive Governments of all parties to encourage GPs to take fewer patients on to their lists so as to improve individual care. How can preventive medicine truly be encouraged, when it is best achieved with a small list size and time with the patient? In the rural areas of the south west, the distance between split-site surgeries, the difficulties that the patients have with transport and the travelling time required to visit patients are all real problems that the Government have singularly failed, as yet, properly to address.

A poll conducted by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly local medical committee found that 98 per cent. of patients registered with GPs in Cornwall think that there will be little or no improvement in patient care following the changes proposed in the White Paper. Incidentally, 96 per cent. view it as nothing but a cost-cutting exercise. Not only are patients disaffected with the Government's proposals, but all the polls show that the very people who are expected to implement them are also overwhelmingly against them. The result of the ballot of GPs announced last week was a clear indictment of the new GPs' contract devised by the Government. At a meeting of the Cornwall division of the BMA in April, the White Paper was also overwhelmingly rejected.

My experience of meetings with GPs has shown to me their overwhelming condemnation of the Government's proposals. I believe that that condemnation springs not out of interest in their wallets, as the Secretary of State has tried to suggest, but out of concern about the impact that they will have on the treatment of patients. Indeed, at the meeting organised by the BMA in Plymouth, which I attended, I witnessed the most unexpected sight of a doctor breaking down in tears over the proposals, when he tried to ask a question. It shook the Conservative Member of Parliament, who had been asked by the Secretary of State to attend that meeting and defend the proposals, as much as it shook everyone else in the audience.

Many of the doctors and patients who are now protesting so vehemently are people who have told me that they have voted Tory all their lives. They have been driven to the point of condemning their Government, because they are so acutely aware of the vital services that rural practices and hospitals offer and of the vulnerability of the situation in which such practices and hospitals now find themselves.

I wish to take the opportunity to call on the Minister, together with his colleagues, to publish immediately a paper on the future of rural doctors, detailing how the proposals will affect them. I look forward to hearing specific comments from the Minister in response to the points that I have made on this. At the very least, it must be clear from what I have said that Ministers have yet to prove their case. They have failed to convince any of those involved that there are not major pitfalls in the proposed reforms. One wonders why, at the very least, the reforms cannot be tried out experimentally in a few districts before being imposed on them all.

I ask the Minister to comment also on the position of GPs who spend much of their working week in community hospitals. Will that time be included in the number of hours that GPs are required to be available in their surgeries? The Minister is well aware of my concern on this point. Indeed, the Minister's recent response to me on this subject seems to hold the clear suggestion that at least at the margin there will be financial penalties for engaging in community hospital work. Those community hospitals are considered to be of great importance by many of my constituents. I hope that the Minister will be able to find ways to protect their position.

I turn now to the crippling problem of lengthy waiting lists. At the end of March this year the waiting list in Cornwall for orthopaedics was 1,207 for in-patients, of whom 434 had been waiting more than a year for treatment; a further 231 were waiting for care as day-patients. In general surgery, a total of 1,768 people were waiting to go into hospital and 1,264 were waiting for day care; 459 people had waited more than a year for in-patient treatment and 224 were waiting for out-patient treatment. Those figures are poor, as are the figures for the number of consultants per patient in the county. I do not believe that the Government's current plans will reduce those waiting times.

How, in practice, can people be sent to another hospital with a shorter waiting list without at the very least breaking their contact with their own community and with their friends and relatives when there is only one main hospital in the whole county? The Government may well conjure up a way of doing so by forcing on doctors, through practice budgets, the task of limiting the numbers treated. However, that does nothing for patients who want treatment. It does not speed things up; it simply disguises the problem. It breaks down the trust between GP and patient as the useful alliance between GP and patient in attempting to get treatment turns to a relationship in which the patient cannot be sure whether the doctor who says, "You do not need treatment just now," is thinking of the practice's accounts or of the patient's needs. That will be intolerable for patients on a waiting list and it should be unacceptable to all of us.

The Government have an opportunity to do something about this matter and to instil some hope in those who had begun to despair of the situation ever improving. Cornwall district health authority has bid for two extra posts of the

100 extra consultant posts that the Government have said that they will provide for the whole country. If granted, they could well lead to a reduction in the waiting list and I implore the Government to meet their request. We need more specialist staff.

Ministers and the Department acknowledge that we have special difficulties and needs at present. Like it or not, those problems come down to the level of funding and the provision of staff and, as I have said, the opportunity to improve things is there.

A specific issue concerning funding for the Cornwall health authority is the issue to which I turn next. Cornwall health authority is an unusual position in that it does not currently receive the total funds due for its population. Some of this funding due to Cornwall goes instead to north Devon and to Plymouth. This is because of the area known as the overlap, where people in Cornwall use Plymouth and north Devon hospitals and facilities for acute services. Cornwall does, however, provide these people with community health care and for the needs of the handicapped and elderly. I would hope that all the funding due to Cornish people would now go to Cornwall as it does to other areas in similar situations. This is probably worth an extra £17 million, which currently goes to Plymouth health authority. The Cornwall health authority can then purchase services from Plymouth and north Devon hospitals for the overlap area, as happens elsewhere. More comprehensive packages of service can be possible if Cornwall health authority has responsibility for all the various aspects of its health care. I ask the Minister for an assurance that Cornwall be fully funded for its total resident population.

A final issue, and one of much local concern, is the funding of our air ambulance. Cornwall has the first air ambulance in the country, which receives no Government funding. The generosity of the Cornish people is fulfilling what should be the role of central Government in providing necessary health services. I have pressed the need to take account of the special costs of providing transport services in a rural scattered area. The advantages of an air ambulance in providing such services are considerable. It can reach geographically isolated areas rapidly and areas not served by land ambulances, even as far as the Isles of Scilly. The journey back time can be much shorter than that of a land ambulance. More importantly, it is a highly mobile resource which can be moved, around the county to stand back-up for an area when land ambulances are fully committed.

In a geographically large area, even one land ambulance called to an accident can leave a vast part of the county without effective ambulance cover. The air ambulance is uniquely able to prevent that. If the Minister doubts that, I recommend that he looks at the map on the wall of the Truro ambulance station to see just how wide an area one ambulance may have to cover at any one time, particularly in north Cornwall.

Added to those basic principles is the fact that it appears to have a proven record of success. When the air ambulance is available, the response to emergencies within 20 minutes is 95 per cent. but only 90 per cent. when it is not available. Thus the Government target of 95 per cent. response rate within 20 minutes is met only with the air ambulance in operation.

Currently it costs £22,000 a month to fund the air ambulance. That is cost-effective as, although the cost is equivalent to that of seven land ambulances, it would take 17 to provide the same level of back-up due to the distances involved. It is a vital and unique experiment in the provision of health care in a rural scattered area. It is unique in this country and the first figures seem to demonstrate that it is a success—it is saving lives.

So why is it that a service which has proved so necessary should have to live with the uncertainty that arises from being dependent on donations by the general public however generous they may be? The Government should respond to the generosity of the Cornish people who have given so much to this scheme by recognising this and agreeing to provide funding themselves. Extra financial allowances have to be made for the transport difficulties of a long rural area surrounded by sea, yet I understand that Government funding is being provided for the London air ambulance rather than the Cornish one.

Currently, an evaluation of air ambulance services has been proposed by Ministers, but so far, although I have pressed for Cornwall to form an essential part of it, Ministers have been reluctant, partly on cash grounds. Yet Cornwall has a unique service. I would welcome at least an initial commitment by the Minister to find funds for an independent evaluation of the Cornwall air ambulance. I hope that he can make that promise tonight.

If, once again, funding is refused, Cornwall will conclude that the Government have no interest whatsoever in this innovative method of improving health care in rural areas. I repeat tonight an invitation I have made before. Will the Minister agree to come as my guest to see the service offered from Truro?

I have outlined some of the issues on which I would like a specific response from the Minister. I contacted his offices and spoke to him earlier today to give him the opportunity to examine some of the issues that I hoped to raise. I look forward to his reply and I hope that he will offer a message of encouragement and a promise of Government action that I can take back to my constituency.

There is great advantage in having had the opportunity of the debate and I am grateful for that. At the very least I know that the Minister and his civil servants have taken a special look at the needs of the county. I hope that in future when they examine the needs of the Health Service in Cornwall they will remember some of the things that they have heard tonight.

1.24 am

**The Parliamentary-Under Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman):** I congratulate the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) on securing time for this Adjournment debate on the Health Service in Cornwall, in which he has always shown a keen interest. I also note that my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) is in his place. He also takes an extremely close interest in health care in his county.

The subject is wide, and I hope that I shall be able to deal with all the points that the hon. Member for Truro raised. I thank him for his courteous opening remarks and for forewarning me of some of the issues that he would raise.

It is as well to start with a general overview of the way in which things have improved recently. Cornwall and Isles of Scilly comes under the purview of the South Western regional health authority, which is responsible for the allocation of resources, for approving districts'

*[Mr. Roger Freeman]*

programmess and for reviewing their performance. Cornwall figures large in the region's plans. The district general hospital at Treliske, which is in the hon. Gentleman's constituency, is subject to major capital development. Phase 4 is under construction at a cost of more than £8 million, and a further phase is planned. A new acute geriatric assessment unit has been approved for the West Cornwall hospital in Penzance at a cost of £2 million.

On revenue, Cornwall is the second highest spender in the region, with an allocation of nearly £98 million for 1989-90, which is a real-terms increase of about 2 per cent. over the previous year. Since 1978-79, the region's recurrent resources are expected to have risen by about 35 per cent. in real terms, and Cornwall has benefited from these large injections of cash. Cornwall has also managed to release more than £4 million in its cost improvement programmes cumulatively during the past three years for use in developing and improving services. I congratulate it on that achievement.

All these extra resources have fed through into additional services by more patients being seen in better accommodation. The number of nurses, doctors and other front-line staff has risen steadily, as has their proportion. Patient activity has continued to grow. In-patient, out-patient and day care activity have all risen significantly.

These figures are evidence of substantial improvements to health services in Cornwall recently, as I am sure the hon. Gentleman will acknowledge. In spite of the significantly increased number of patients who are being seen and treated, however, waiting lists have grown. The hon. Gentleman gave some statistics, and I do not disagree with the impression that he has given the House. We have recognised the problem, as has the region and the district. That is why Cornwall and Isles of Scilly was one of the 22 districts which this year received special attention from an independent management team to help find a way in which to reverse the trend.

The waiting lists are no reflection on the hard work put in by Cornwall's consultants; they are simply an expression of demand rising even faster than available resources and improvements in efficiency can match. To help ease the pressure, I understand that the district has put in a bid for two of the 100 additional consultants who were promised by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State when he launched the White Paper "Working for Patients". All regions in England have been asked to submit bids for additional consultants by the end of this month. My Department will then assess priorities with the steering group on "Achieving a Balance", and we aim to make an announcement in October.

Meanwhile, I understand that the district will add a new consultant post in urology to its staff in September. During the past three years, Cornwall has been allocated more than £450,000 from the waiting list fund which, by the end of this year, will have been used to treat some 3,000 additional in-patients and day cases.

Among the many local initiatives, I am impressed by the success of Cornwall's first air ambulance service in terms of public support. It has caught the imagination of the public, who have responded magnificently with financial support. However, I must resist the hon. Gentleman's specific call for special funding for the service. It is a local initiative and a local service, and it is therefore a matter to be handled by the health authority. However, I am examining the possibility of some help in evaluating the service, in which there will be wider interest. I expect to reach a conclusion on that in due course and I shall ensure that I write not only to the hon. Gentleman, but to my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives, who I am sure has an interest in the subject.

The hon. Gentleman raised the subject of community hospitals and general practitioners.

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** Before the Minister moves on, I must say that over the past 18 months, I have repeatedly tried to get a Minister to come down to have a look at the authority. Perhaps this is the moment for the Minister to agree to do that.

**Mr. Freeman:** I am trying to answer the points raised in the debate. I very much regret that I cannot commit myself to visiting the authority in the near future. I very much hope that I shall be able to do so at the appropriate time.

I was referring to community hospitals and the responsibilities of general practitioners towards those hospitals. General practitioners spend part of their time working for community hospitals. They are paid for that valuable service and we all recognise how important that is. However, we believe that, if general practitioners are to work full time, they must be available for 26 hours over five days a week and that includes surgery consultations, clinics and home visits.

As I hope I have made clear to the hon. Gentleman in the form of a recent letter, and as I want to put on the record now, where those general practitioners are working in community hospitals—I recognise their importance, especially in the rural areas—we believe that they should apply to their family practitioner committees for a waiver of the five-day requirement, so that they can spread their commitment of 26 hours a week over four rather than five days. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will find that a constructive comment.

The hon. Gentleman also raised questions about the general practitioners' proposed contract, especially for rural areas. I want to deal first with rural practice payments, to which the hon. Gentleman referred. The payments recompense the general practitioners for the additional time and expense that might be incurred in caring for patients in rural areas. The main criterion for payment is, briefly, that at least 10 per cent. of patients on the general practitioner's list are resident in his or her rural practice area and live at least three miles from the main surgery. Each of those patients attracts units of monetary value depending on the distance and difficulty in reaching him or her.

Earlier this year, we agreed with the General Medical Services Committee that the special nature of practice in truly rural areas should continue to be recognised in the system of fees and allowances. We also agreed that the current scheme was not as well targeted as it could be. The whole question of payment to general practitioners in rural areas in England, such as Cornwall, is therefore being referred to the central advisory committee on rural practice payments. That is what the doctors' leaders wanted and we are considering how to carry this forward. Meanwhile, the current scheme will continue in operation.

The hon. Gentleman implied that general practitioners and some of their patients are in great turmoil. I believe that general practitioners should await not only the proposed contract, which must be laid before Parliament —and will be in the autumn—but more importantly, the report of the doctors' and dentists' review body, which must price the contract. I hope that I can deliver a message on the contract through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the doctors of Cornwall tonight. My message is that they should wait and consider what action they feel they must take in the light not only of the contract, but of our conclusions on rural practice payments and the doctors' and dentists' review body. Doctors will then be able to reach rational judgments on whether they should change their practices, particularly their working practices, and the size of their patient lists.

We understand that doctors in rural areas will have smaller lists. It is very difficult for patients to change doctors. It is not the Government's intention to frustrate the provision of general practice service to patients in rural and scattered areas. We want to improve the quality and quantity of that service.

I welcome the hon. Gentleman's implied support for our funding proposals and also for contracts. Following the Resource Allocation Working Group, we will fund districts such as Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly on the basis of residence in the district. It will then be up to the health authority, through the medium of contracts, to pay for the provision of services outside districts such as Plymouth. We believe that that will be a fairer and more flexible system. The hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives will join me in welcoming the aim of the White Paper, if not the specific proposals, and the doctors' contract—to improve the quantity and quality of health care, not only in Cornwall but in England as a whole.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty-five minutes to Two o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Wednesday 26 July 1989*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (No. 2) BILL
*Order for consideration, as amended, read.*
*To be considered tomorrow.*

CITY OF LONDON (VARIOUS POWERS) BILL *(By Order)*
*Order for consideration, as amended, read.*
*To be considered tomorrow.*

HAYLE HARBOUR BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

QUEEN MARY AND WESTFIELD COLLEGE BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
*Orders for consideration, as amended, read.*
*To be considered tomorrow.*

CARDIFF BAY BARRAGE BILL *[Lords]*
*Order for Second Reading read.*
*To be read a Second time tomorrow.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## ENVIRONMENT

### Homelessness

1. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to deal with homelessness.

4. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any proposals to increase the supply of accommodation for single homeless people in London.

**The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Patten):** I am reviewing the homelessness legislation and hope to announce conclusions soon.

**Mr. Martlew:** Does the Minister find anything obscene about the contradiction between homelessness doubling in the past two years and the squalid episode of Cabinet Ministers trying to decide which country mansion they should have? I understand that the Leader of the House is satisfied with his home, if not with his job. Will the Minister compare that with the plight of young homeless people that we see day after day in London? Many of them have come from constituencies in the north and in Scotland and Wales. They have taken the Government's advice to come to London for jobs, but they find no hope, no jobs and no future. Now that the Housing Act 1988 has failed, will the Minister take as much interest in the problems of the homeless as the Prime Minister does in the housing problems of her Cabinet?

**Mr. Patten:** Perhaps I could deal with the serious part of that speech. In our review of homelessness legislation we are looking in particular at three matters. We are looking, first, at scope for greater consistency between authorities, secondly, at the need for improved management, and thirdly, at the need to achieve better use of existing stock by reducing the number of empty properties and cutting relet times. Some housing authorities have improved their performance on those scores, but we want to see all doing as well as the best.

**Sir George Young:** In the review to which my right hon. Friend has referred, will he ensure that the potential of the tenants' incentive scheme is fully explored? Does he recognise that the quickest and most cost-effective way of tackling homelessness, especially in London, is to use that scheme to persuade existing council tenants to move out, particularly if they have retired and no longer wish to live in the city?

**Mr. Patten:** That is one of a number of initiatives that we need to examine carefully. I know how much my hon. Friend knows about this issue and I shall, of course, want to consult people such as my hon. Friend before reaching any conclusions.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I apologise because in the excitement I forgot to call Mr. Harry Cohen.

**Mr. Cohen:** This week several Ministers are moving on, but the single homeless have a more serious problem. Does the Minister recognise that there are more than 50,000 homeless single teenagers in London alone and that the figure is increasing rapidly? The London boroughs' working party on the single homeless has said that there is a shortfall of at least 5,500 places per year, resulting in the hostels silting up with people who want more permanent accommodation. The working party describes it as an acute problem. Will the Minister provide resources and free the local authorities and housing associations to help the single homeless?

**Mr. Patten:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to our hostels initiative, which has helped to deal with the problems of young people without accommodation. We have provided about 20,000 places under that initiative, and are increasing our grants to voluntary bodies. It is also important to take into account the £74 million that we have provided for the authorities with the most acute problems to get empty property back into use for the homeless. That initiative was rightly welcomed by the Select Committee on the Environment.

**Mr. Heddle:** Does not homelessness have its foundations in rootlessness? Does my right hon. Friend agree that families, and particularly parents, have a real part to play in this? Will he confirm that the Housing Corporation and the voluntary housing movement also have a real part to play and that the corporation has had an extra £40 million this year and by 1991-92 will provide a further 24,000 homes for those in genuine housing need?

**Mr. Patten:** There are social reasons for at least part of the homelessness problem, and my hon. Friend was right to draw attention to them. He was also right to point to the importance of the Housing Corporation and housing associations. This year, a quarter of the Housing Corporation's increasing programme for rent is going to schemes designed to help the homeless.

**Dr. Cunningham:** Will the Secretary of State investigate Westminster city council's so-called "building stable communities" policy? Is he aware that the council's housing department has described the consequences of selling flats in eight key wards in the City of Westminster as resulting in the council being unable to meet its statutory obligations under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977? Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that even Conservative councillors such as councillor Patricia Curwen describe the policy as gerrymandering? Is he also aware that Queen's Counsel has given an opinion, on the record, that the policy has an "utterly unlawful purpose"? How much longer can Ministers keep silent in the face of overwhelming evidence of abuse of power right under their noses, in the heart of the capital city? Is it because they want to criticise local government only when it is Labour controlled, but turn a blind eye when councils are Tory controlled?

**Mr. Patten:** I can give the hon. Gentleman a simple and straightforward answer. The points that he has raised and the allegations that he has made are matters for the council's auditors.

### Chlorofluorocarbons

2. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the reduction of chlorofluorocarbons use which will be achieved in the United Kingdom by the end of the year.

**The Minister for Environment and Countryside (Mr. David Trippier):** I expect that by the end of this year the consumption of chlorofluorocarbons in this country will have been cut by at least 50 per cent. This is required by the Montreal protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer, but only by 1999. We will therefore be 10 years ahead of our international commitments in this area.

**Mr. Hind:** I congratulate my hon. Friend on his well-deserved promotion, and we welcome him as our green Minister. His answer will be welcomed throughout the country, but he will be aware of the concern of the public generally about the need to accelerate the process of dealing with CFCs. What does he intend to do about that, and how will he deal with the little-known problem of halons?

**Mr. Trippier:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his compliment. On the substantive point, we should like to move faster. The United Kingdom and the whole of the European Community are calling for cuts in CFCs of at least 85 per cent. as soon as possible, with the elimination of CFCs by the end of the century. Timing has to take account of the speed with which industry can move away from CFCs. Halons must also be phased out eventually, but as yet there are no acceptable substitutes. In the meantime, the emphasis should be on CFCs, although it is important to keep halons under careful scrutiny, particularly in the light of the welcome steps by the fire prevention industry to curb unnecessary and wasteful use of these substances.

**Ms. Walley:** Does the Minister agree that although there has been some progress, it has not been as a direct result of Government action? Will he agree that there must now be Government intervention to deal with the rest of the CFCs, and that a reduction of 90 per cent. in 12 to 18 months would be a realistic objective? Is he aware that the Heating and Ventilating Contractors Association is concerned about the general level of uptake of refrigeration in recycling services, and will he give the House some idea of what provision there will be in the green Bill to deal with that? Finally, what advice has the Minister to offer the new Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who will have to make a big contribution to ensuring that industry has Government support to deal with this great problem?

**Mr. Trippier:** It was less than generous of the hon. Lady to suggest that the Government had not taken a number of initiatives in this area. It was British scientists with the British Antarctic survey, sponsored by the Government, who first obtained conclusive evidence of the depletion of ozone in the stratosphere. In 1985, the Government were the first to sign the Vienna convention for the protection of the ozone layer, which was then ratified in 1987. It was this Government's initiative to host the saving of the ozone layer conference in London in March, which was so successful. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I are determined that the United Kingdom Government should remain in the lead on these initiatives—a fact which is recognised in the international community, even if it is not acknowledged by the small-minded and ungrateful Labour party.

**Dr. Michael Clark:** Will my hon. Friend join me in praising the chemical industry for finding alternative propellants to CFCs and will he consider legislating in favour of those CFC replacements for aerosols and refrigerators?

**Mr. Trippier:** I cannot respond as positively as my hon. Friend would like in relation to legislation, but I am happy to take this opportunity to praise British industry for the way in which it has responded to the initiatives taken by the Government and within Europe. The British Aerosol Manufacturers Association has promised that at least 90 per cent. of aerosols will be CFC-free by the end of this year. The polyurethane foam manufacturers expect a 60 per cent. cut in CFC use by the end of 1993. Extruded polystyrene used as food packaging and in building installation should be free of CFCs by the end of the year. That is a good record on which we should compliment British industry and encourage it to do even more.

### Carbon Dioxide Emissions

3. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information his Department has on the relative sources of $CO_2$ emissions into the atmosphere in the United Kingdom.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Virginia Bottomley):** Statistics on carbon dioxide emissions for the years 1977 to 1987 from domestic, industrial, transport and other sources were published in the Department's digest of environmental protection and water statistics, no. 11, a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

**Mr. Wallace:** I thank the hon. Lady for that helpful reply. It is clear that a substantial proportion of these emissions—up to 16 per cent.—come from road traffic use. Given the Government's projections of increased road traffic, there will be an increase in carbon dioxide emissions from cars until the year 2005. The Minister's answer showed that the causes include energy, transport, industrial and domestic sources, all of which are the responsibilities of different Ministries. What powers are available to her Department to co-ordinate all those sources and to ensure that there is one co-ordinated policy to deal with carbon dioxide emissions? Does she agree that the problem should not be tackled by being dispersed among several Ministries?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** Having heard the hon. Gentleman's question, I hope that he will pay a warm tribute to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister for her seminar at Downing street on climatic change, which was precisely an attempt to draw together the various Government Departments concerned with carbon dioxide emissions. Fifty-seven per cent. of carbon dioxide emissions come from power stations, 14 per cent. from domestic properties and 16 per cent. from road transport.

**Mr. Squire:** As my hon. Friend mentioned the recent conference, can she confirm that the advice from the Harwell scientists to that conference is that 50 per cent. of the solution to our problems will come from energy efficiency, and some 15 per cent. from nuclear power? Is she satisfied that the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) is fully prepared to go along with the outcome and the means of dealing with the problem, rather than merely raising it?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** I fully endorse what my hon. Friend has said. Energy efficiency has an important part to play, as do land use and the economic pricing of fuel. It is clear that there is a role for nuclear energy—which produces neither acid rain nor carbon dioxide, leading to the greenhouse effect.

**Mr. Morley:** Will the Minister join me in congratulating the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Commission on their initiative in urban fringe forestry? Is she aware that the pilot schemes are substantially limited by the amount of financial resources available? Does she agree that the extension of those forests will do a great deal to absorb carbon dioxide, improving our environment and providing recreation facilities? Will she give the House an assurance that more resources will be made available to extend that very worthy project?

**Mrs. Bottomley:** I congratulate the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Commission on that important initiative. More than that, I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment on his initiative in tackling the problem of the rain forests and forestry on an international basis. Although forestry in Britain may have a part to play, deforestation in the Third world is a far more significant factor in climate change.

### Bathing Water

5. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to require water authorities to make public their long-term plans to improve the quality of bathing waters at coastal resorts; and if he will make a statement.

**The Minister for Housing and Planning (Mr. Michael Howard):** The Department is in discussion with the water authorities about the accelerated programmes of improvement that they have drawn up to bring bathing waters up to European Community standards by the mid-1990s. They will be made public in due course.

**Mr. Taylor:** While bathing waters at Southend on sea have been vastly improved by the installation of an extended sewage pipe which, happily, has transferred our problem to other constituencies, is my hon. and learned Friend aware that we do not have the slightest idea about the long-term plans of the Anglian water authority, despite the endeavours of energetic Members of Parliament to establish what they are? As the water authorities are wholly non-elected bodies, answerable to no one but the Secretary of State, would it not be appropriate to require the water authorities to tell the people what their long-term plans are, as it is the people who are paying for them?

**Mr. Howard:** I cannot accept my hon. Friend's assessment of the effect of long sea outfalls, which were recognised by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution as the most effective way of dealing with sewage. However, I agree that more information needs to be made public about the long-term plans of the water authorities. That information will be made public shortly.

**Mr. John P. Smith:** Does the Minister recognise that something must be done about the indiscriminate discharge of raw sewage into the sea, and in particular into the Bristol channel? Not only is the Welsh water authority failing to attain the standards that should be expected in this day and age, but the quality of water is declining. In my constituency, on Fontygary beach, the voluntary coast guards—the courageous men and women who safeguard our beaches—are advised not to go into the water except in emergencies because of the level of pollution, and I had the appalling experience of seeing those men and women coming out of the water covered in human excrement. That is not acceptable in this day and age.

**Mr. Howard:** A great deal is being done to improve present conditions. The water authorities are spending £100 million per year on improving the quality of our bathing waters. I have asked them to accelerate their programme of improvement, and I expect to make their plans public shortly.

**Sir Hugh Rossi:** Is my hon. and learned Friend aware that a long outfall policy is analagous to the tall chimney policy which led us into such great difficulty with air emissions, based on the principle of "dilute and disperse" which is now somewhat discredited?

**Mr. Howard:** I have great respect for my hon. Friend's views on the matter, but I do not think that his analogy is apt. All the available evidence suggests that long sea outfalls are an effective way of dealing with sewage, and that the action of the sun and the sea is a natural reproduction of the artificial method of treatment employed in sewage treatment works.

**Mr. Allan Roberts:** Now that there is a new boss at the Department of the Environment I expected that the Government might have started to tell the truth about the environment and our bathing beaches. Does the Minister accept that the 300 beaches designated as bathing beaches is a gross underestimate and that the Royal Commission on environmental pollution identified 600 bathing beaches? In any event only 30 per cent. of the 300 designated conform to EC standards. It is not surprising that all the beaches on the north-west coast are polluted, whether designated or not. It is not surprising that Albert and Mrs. Ramsbottom took their chance with the lions because if they had gone into the sea neither of them would have come out alive. When will the Government prepare plans and commit the necessary expenditure to stop raw sewage going into the sea, including through long sea outfalls, and when will they stop dumping sewage sludge in the sea?

**Mr. Howard:** The hon. Gentleman is entirely wrong. The number of designated bathing waters is not 300, but 403, and the proportion complying with the EC directive is 67 per cent. The hon. Gentleman's complaints are paricularly rich coming from a party which when in government failed to designate any bathing waters at all in this country four years after the directive came into force.

**Mr. Paice:** Can my right hon. and learned Friend tell us a bit more about bathing beaches on the other side of the Channel? Is it not true that many European bathing beaches fail to meet the EC directive? Surely it is more important for the Community to consider the problem throughout Europe rather than concentrating on the state of British beaches.

**Mr. Howard:** My hon. Friend is entirely right. France is one of five countries in respect of which the Commission has made complaints about the standard of bathing waters. In this, as in so many other respects, our record compares extremely well with the rest of Europe.

### Inner Area Programme

6. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to increase funding resources available for the inner area programme above the inflation rate.

**The Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities (Mr. David Hunt):** Future resource allocations for local authorities preparing an inner area programme will depend on the outcome of the public expenditure discussions now under way.

**Mr. Pike:** I congratulate the Minister on his new post. Will he confirm that dealing with areas of urban deprivation is still a Government priority and that adequate resources will be available to deal with that problem? Will he also categorically state that there are no plans to remove from the inner area programme any area currently receiving help from that programme?

**Mr. David Hunt:** I agree with the hon. Gentleman's first two propositions. With regard to the cities involved in the inner area programme, I have received a number of representations from right hon. and hon. Members for further inclusions in the programme. I can therefore give no categorical assurance about future numbers involved. I pay tribute to the hon. Gentleman's constituency of Burnley, where the IAP strategy is clearly presented and soundly based. That is why so much increased funding has been made available to Burnley.

**Mr. O'Brien:** It is a fact beyond dispute that since the "Action for Cities" statement was made little has been achieved by the Government. Even the £34 million allocated for city grant has proved abysmal and is less than a quarter of that requested to meet demand. Will the new Minister pursue the argument in favour of the inner area programme and urban regeneration and seek to convince his colleagues the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister that it is important that resources should be made available to meet the demand for inner city and urban regeneration?

**Mr. Hunt:** I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman would like to say all that again, as he not only got his facts wrong, but he got most of the statistics wrong as well. The urban programme was the first major public spending programme targeted solely on inner cities. It has been a tremendous success. The latest expenditure plans show that substantial increased resources are available. Within urban block expenditure there are more resources for the urban development corporations and city grant, because these items are much more successful in attracting private sector investment to inner cities.

### Sewage Discharges

7. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek powers to enable him to override those local authorities which permit new outlets for the discharge of raw sewage into the sea.

**Mr. Howard:** Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution is responsible for granting authorisations for the discharge of sewage into the sea, although this responsibility will transfer to the National Rivers Authority from 1 September 1989.

**Mr. Speller:** May I ask my hon. and learned Friend, who represents Folkestone—another seaside town—how long it will be before his Department accepts responsibility for what goes into the waters around our coasts? Does he recall that, over the past four weeks his Department has told me in answer to questions first, that there is no target date for our beaches and water meeting the EEC standards; secondly, that all planning requirements are the responsibility of local government; thirdly, that all matters relating to pollution are matters for water authorities, but those concerning new pollution are within the responsibility of Her Majesty's barely formed inspectorate of pollution; and, fourthly, that all new sea outfalls are to be considered as the logical way of disposing of raw sewage? May I finally ask my hon. and learned Friend——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. That will be the fifth question.

**Mr. Speller:** Fifthly, may I ask my hon. and learned Friend whether, in answer to my question, which he has not answered, he will seek to revoke the permission whereby Welsh Water, Wessex Water and South West

**Water may each pollute the Bristol channel over the next 12 months? Will my hon. and learned Friend stop that happening?**

**Hon. Members:** Answer.

**Mr. Howard:** The accelerated programme of dealing with bathing waters is intended to achieve compliance with the European Community's directive by the mid-1990s. Although we are always prepared to examine new evidence that will help us assess the effect of the schemes to which my hon. Friend referred, all the evidence, including that of the Royal Commission on environmental pollution, suggests that dealing with sewage by long sea outfalls at coastal resorts is in many circumstances the most effective way of dealing with the problem. If my hon. Friend has fresh evidence to bring before us, of course we will be happy to consider it.

**Mr. Loyden:** Does the Minister agree that in most cases we are talking the lack of investment in what amounts to a massive slum below the surface for almost every major city and town? When will the Government recognise that only by tackling this problem will they begin to deal with the pollution of rivers and streams?

**Mr. Howard:** The hon. Gentleman will remember, no doubt, that the Government that he supported cut investment in sewerage services by 50 per cent. The Sandown dock scheme in Liverpool, which will shortly be in operation, will provide a method of treating sewage produced in Liverpool which, until now, has been pumped into the Mersey—not through long sea outfalls but in a way that I imagine no hon. Member would condone. Vast improvements will be achieved as a result of the Sandown dock scheme. That is an example of the investment in these facilities that has taken place under the present Government.

**Mrs. Ann Taylor:** Does the Minister realise that the majority of the British public cannot accept his complacency on this issue and that they believe that the Government should take a lead? Is it not a fact that at present only the British EEC representatives object to an EEC proposal for a directive that will prevent the dumping of sewage sludge at sea and long sewage outfalls for raw sewage being put into the sea? Why is Britain out of line, given all the recent evidence on this subject? Do the Government object because they favour the dumping of sewage at sea, or because they do not want the privatised water companies to have to pick up the bill for compliance?

**Mr. Howard:** The hon. Lady is wholly wrong; we are not objecting. We have yet to see the text of the draft European Commission directive on these matters because it has not yet been published. The hon. Lady should recognise that there is no easy solution to the problem and that many people would regard with dismay a requirement to construct sewage treatment works on the front at every seaside coastal resort with the consequent lorries going to and fro taking sludge away from the works. Perhaps the hon. Lady would prefer an incinerator with all the environmental consequences which would follow from that method of dealing with the matter.

## Housing Corporation

8. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the level of funding for the Housing Corporation in *(a)* 1987-88 and *(b)* 1988-89.

**Mr. Howard:** The Housing Corporation's gross capital expenditure was £752 million in 1987-88 and £791 million in 1988-89.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that over the years, the Housing Corporation has done an excellent job, but that there are two matters about the Housing Corporation that concern people at present? First, they are concerned about alms houses because of the change in the law. I have had letters, as I am sure other hon. Members have from alms house residents who are fearful of the bureaucracy and heavy handedness of the Housing Corporation in regard to well-established alms houses. Secondly, has my hon. and learned Friend had time to read the Housing Corporation's recent report about housing associations, in which all money spent is meant to be for those on lower incomes? As a result of changes in the rental system, too many people are stuck in the poverty trap. Housing benefit is too little and those who have little housing benefit have too low an income to pay the increased rents. Will my hon. and learned Friend examine that problem and ensure that the Housing Corporation is helpful?

**Mr. Howard:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his tribute to the Housing Corporation. I have studied the advice given by the Housing Corporation to alms house charities that are registered with the corporation. Its advice is useful and wholly innocuous. I have seen the remarks by the chairman of the Housing Corporation in his introduction to its latest annual report and I hope to meet him soon to discuss his observations.

**Mr. George Howarth:** Does the Minister accept that although there is a growth in the approved development programme available to the Housing Corporation to fund housing association schemes, the system that his predecessor introduced last year is in such a mess that the budget is likely to be dramatically underspent? Instead of producing more houses, as was predicted, the system now produces fewer.

**Mr. Howard:** I do not accept that. These are relatively early days in the new system and we should study how it works before rushing to such judgments.

**Mr. Raison:** Given the drying up of council building, will my hon. and learned Friend ensure that in areas such as mine there is a substantial expansion of the funding made available to housing associations? There will not otherwise be enough housing to rent.

**Mr. Howard:** I understand my right hon. Friend's concern. That is the objective of Government policy in this area. I shall examine my hon. Friend's comments when I come to consider these matters.

**Mr. Soley:** It says something about the Government's housing policy that they give responsibility for housing to a Minister who is already overworked with the water privatisation problem. How is it that the housing associations, which have not yet reached the level of provision they achieved in the mid-1970s, are expected to solve the acute crisis of a lack of low-cost accommodation for rent or sale when we have such an absurdly inadequate programme through the Housing Corporation and through other means under this Government?

**Mr. Howard:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his concern about my work load. I assure him that the whole range of Government policies in these matters is designed to deal with the problem to which he referred and that we will be seen to be dealing with that problem with increasing effectiveness as time goes on.

### Pollution

9. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further steps he is taking to reduce environmental pollution.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** We are setting higher standards to reduce pollution; we have brought forward, and will bring forward, legislation to reform pollution control systems and to strengthen the powers available to control pollution at source and we have taken the lead in developing international initiatives on the environment.

**Mr. Adley:** I do not recall any hon. Member doing this so far, but let me welcome my right hon. Friend wholeheartedly to his new position—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] The whole House looks forward to his achieving the objectives that he stated in that answer.

Does my right hon. Friend agree that he now has the opportunity to stamp his mark irrevocably on the environment of Britain and that the internal combustion engine might be a good place for him to start? Does he agree that the oil companies and the motor manufacturing industry have for years dictated a slow pace of change in cleaning up the environment? Will he examine what is happening in California, where legislation is contemplated to eliminate the internal combustion engine by the year 2007 and to replace vehicles that use it with electric vehicles? Does he agree that, if we could do that here, the Patten Act, if it ever came to pass, would stand the test of time on the statute book?

**Mr. Patten:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks. I should quite like to be in California at the moment—*[Interruption.]*—or, indeed, at any time. The hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) will know that in California there was a revolt against a tax based on the value of property rather similar to the tax that he proposes.

Let me answer my hon. Friend's question. California's problems are much worse than anything that we face here, partly because of the number of cars, partly because of the climate and partly because, as I understand it, meteorological factors trap pollution in the air at a lower level. That said, I think that we should examine evidence from other countries and be ready to learn from them when we can. The environmental problems that we face are global and we must co-operate in solving them.

**Mr. Alton:** I endorse the congratulatory remarks that have been made to the Secretary of State. As he goes about making his mark, will he give some thought to part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and in particular to the way in which it is enforced by the water authorities? Is he aware that last year the North West water authority brought just 23 prosecutions against companies involved in pollution and that the average fine was £670? Given the scale of the problem, does the Secretary of State agree that that is a paltry fine to impose on those responsible for pollution and that fines need to be looked at again in accordance with the principle that the polluter must pay?

**Mr. Patten:** Whether deliberately or inadvertently, the hon. Gentleman has made a powerful case for the establishment of a strong new pollution control body, such as the National Rivers Authority proposed by the Government, which will enforce controls on a consistent national basis.

**Mr. Marland:** On environmental pollution, is my right hon. Friend aware that substantial efforts are being made by some private firms to rebottle CFCs from the back of old refrigerators and deep freezers? Bearing in mind that it is estimated that there are some 30,000 tonnes of CFCs banked in refrigerators, does my right hon. Friend think that his Department may be able to give some assistance in that vital development work in the interests of a cleaner environment?

**Mr. Patten:** It should be in the interests of industry itself to produce the technology to deal with the problem, although I shall certainly look into my hon. Friend's suggestion. It is, of course, difficult to deal with existing CFCs in the back of refrigerators, but it is a technology which must be cracked.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Does the Secretary of State agree with me that perhaps the single most important step taken by the Government recently to reduce environmental pollution was to remove the right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley) to the Department of Trade and Industry where he can pollute officially to his heart's content?

Will the Secretary of State, who is new to his job, look closely at the problem of acid rain which is causing so much concern not only in this country but in Scandinavia?

**Mr. Patten:** The great thing about the hon. Gentleman's jokes is that one can see them coming from the bottom of Victoria street. We are spending a considerable amount more on reducing emissions and the right hon. Gentleman—sorry, I was presumptuous—the hon. Gentleman——

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Don't worry, I can wait.

**Mr. Patten:** The rest of the House will join the hon. Gentleman in that.

We are spending £2 billion on reducing sulphur dioxide emissions from existing large plants and we will continue to give the issue the priority that it deserves.

**Dame Peggy Fenner:** Will my right hon. Friend accept that my delight at his new role is tempered only by my disappointment that he has left a role in which he could have been the first international Minister to try to do something about the destruction of the rain forests? Will he join me in commending the action of the Countryside Commission in establishing forests in this country, recognising that the rest of the world should follow that example to counter the destruction of the rain forests?

**Mr. Patten:** I agree with my hon. Friend that it is a bit thick for us in Europe and north America to lecture developing countries about the destruction of the rain forests when we have made such a fist in the past 200 years of destroying our own forests. The work carried out by the Forestry Commission is particularly important both nationally and internationally and we must consider issues such as reforestation from an economic as well as a topographical and ecological point of view. That is why I appointed today Professor David Pearce, the professor of economics at University college London and director of the London environmental economic centre, as a special adviser to provide me with economic advice on environmental matters.

**Dr. Cunningham:** With reference to the Secretary of State's remarks about taxes in California. I remind him that the poll tax is constitutionally outlawed in California.

With regard to safeguarding the environment, has the Secretary of State had time yet to study the paper produced for the Prime Minister by the energy technology support unit about global warming and the greenhouse effect? Does he recognise the force of the argument in that paper which points out that energy conservation can make a four times bigger contribution to reducing those problems than developing nuclear power? Will he therefore, in developing his policies to safeguard the environment, press for a major programme of energy conservation on which he will have the support of Opposition Members?

As the Secretary of State's predecessor said that it was the Government's intention to produce an environmental protection Bill in the autumn, will the Secretary of State consider discussions across the House about the nature and content of such a Bill? There should be a great deal of room for agreement on what such a Bill should include. I can tell the Secretary of State, as I told his predecessor, that the Opposition are willing to bring that co-operation to the House if there can be discussions.

**Mr. Patten:** On the first point, I totally agree that improving energy efficiency has a vital role to play in dealing with the problem of global warming and in dealing therefore with the associated problem of climate change. That is true of this country and of all developed and developing countries. With regard to the hon. Gentleman's second point, I want to make it clear straight away that I would not regard legislation that we might bring forward this autumn as our last word, or anyone's last word, on environmental protection.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** People are not very happy with the former Secretary of State's proposals.

**Mr. Patten:** That is not the point and I will get to that if the hon. Gentleman will allow me to.

There is an argument, which many people have put forward, that in addition to the legislation that we introduce this autumn, we should in due course publish a White Paper setting out longer-term objectives for the environment. I will want to consider that with my right hon. and hon. Friends.

I shall be happy at any stage, both in regard to legislation and in regard to any further statements of national policy that we produce, to talk to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) and to his hon. Friends about how we can try to ensure that we meet the priorities of the environmental agenda as effectively as possible. It would help if, just from time to time, Opposition Members would not regard every environmental statistic from the Government as a provocation. It would be nice if, occasionally, the Labour party would recognise achievements when they are made.

## Community Projects

11. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will increase the amount of money allocated by urban development corporations for the purpose of community projects and voluntary sector initiatives; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** It is for each urban development corporation to decide, within the total budget we have provided, what degree of resources to devote to community projects and voluntary sector initiatives.

**Mr. Michie:** On 24 May, the Minister told the House that a miserly 0·7 per cent. of the budget for the Sheffield UDC would be allocated to the voluntary community initiative. If the Government want to convince the community that UDCs are good for it, instead of criticising hon. Members who, with good reason, continue to knock UDCs, why do the Government not get their own house in order and guarantee that more money and more resources will be available for the community initiative?

**Mr. Hunt:** It is for the hon. Gentleman's own UDC to decide how to allocate funds, and the proportion of the budget that it allocates to community groups and projects. I pay tribute to Sheffield, which is one of the few areas that have actually appointed a community director. That is a very good move. UDCs should actively seek good relations and co-operation with local community groups.

**Mr. Rowe:** Does my hon. Friend agree that there are alleged to be two great problems? One is the rundown of the inner cities and the other is the enormous increase in the number of elderly people? Does he agree also that the second is not a problem but an opportunity? If more elderly people could be persuaded and helped to offer their skills and experience as volunteers, they could make an enormous impact on the problems of inner cities. To do that, they require a certain amount of pump-priming finance, and I hope that his Department will carefully look at that matter.

**Mr. Hunt:** I certainly hope that those involved in decision making within UDCs will pay attention to what my hon. Friend has said. I prefer to recognise the problem as the challenge of the young-old. Those who retire earlier have a tremendous potential contribution to make to the community, particularly to inner cities.

**Mr. Rooker:** Does the Minister accept that there is nothing at all wrong with new administrative organisations and activities to solve new problems? We accept that UDCs have a role to play. Will he look at what has been happening in docklands and the UDC there? It is reported that hundreds of new dwellings that cannot be sold are being rented by the private sector at over £200 a week, fully funded by housing benefit. Surely it was not the intention that urban development corporations should result in such mismanagement of public funds.

**Mr. Hunt:** The whole point of our positive policies is to try to encourage people to want to live and work once again in those crucial areas. The docklands UDC has been a marvellous example of a stimulus to that area. I would not want to deride its progress as the hon. Gentleman has.

### Bathing Water

12. **Mr. Bevan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which bathing waters were identified for the purposes of the 1975 European Community bathing waters directive in *(a)* May 1979 and *(b)* May 1989.

**Mr. Howard:** The European Community's bathing water directive was adopted in December 1975 and gave member states two years to identify suitable bathing waters. By May 1979, no bathing waters had been identified by the then Labour Government. By May 1989, 403 coastal bathing waters had been identified. A full list of the identified bathing waters has been placed in the Library.

**Mr. Bevan:** While thanking my hon. and learned Friend for that reply, I invite him to contrast the non-existent policy of the previous Labour Government with that of this Government. When he considers the challenge of clean beaches and holidaying, would he prefer a warm resort with beautifully clean water in Britain or one in the mucky Mediterranean or the atrociously dirty Adriatic, particularly in Italy?

**Mr. Howard:** I would, indeed, no doubt in company with my hon. Friend, prefer a beach in this country. My hon. Friend is entirely right. The figures speak for themselves and no further comment would be necessary if it were not that the Labour party consistently criticises the Government's performance and record on these matters, while it is blind and deaf to its own.

### Building and Maintenance (Competition)

13. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultations he has had with local authority organisations over changes in the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** My right hon. Friend and I have not had such consultations although our predecessors did.

**Mr. Barron:** Will the Minister take notice of the comment of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities that the consultation on the new definition of emergency work is unworkable? It believes that the extension of competitive tendering to maintenance contracts where the value does not exceed 10 per cent. of the original contract would create chaos, not only in the direct labour organisations in the public sector but in the private sector. The tenders would be for small amounts and the administrative costs would be higher than the costs of doing the job.

**Mr. Hunt:** On the first point, we are trying to redefine the exemption of emergency work and I shall take note of the comments to which the hon. Gentleman referred. We want to make sure that only genuinely unpredictable work is exempt and we are considering comments on our proposed redefinition. On the second point, it is important to extend competition to all building and maintenance work, to increase value for money for ratepayers and, in future, community charge payers.

**Mr. Latham:** Before my hon. Friend proceeds with legislation to implement the proposals in the town and country planning White Paper of a few months ago, will he consider it again carefully? It has the unique disadvantage of annoying county councils, district councils, house builders and the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

**Mr. Hunt:** I shall certainly consider what my hon. Friend has said.

**Mr. Blunkett:** On 4 April, the Under-Secretary of State told us in the Local Government and Housing Bill Standing Committee that treasurers and directors of finance knew exactly the implications of the Bill's proposals for capital expenditure. Does he accept that that is simply not the case and that unless local authorities are informed quickly of the implications of that legislation, capital programmes in education, buildings, social services, roads and housing will be considerably disrupted? The result will be a threat to services and jobs, brought about by the inability of the Department of the Environment to come up with the answers.

**Mr. Hunt:** The hon. Gentleman will recall that before the Bill setting out the proposals for this new system of capital finance was drafted, a consultation document was produced outlining the main objectives of the new system. We had the widest possible consultation on it and all the views expressed were taken into consideration when drafting the Bill. Since then, there have been six meetings of the capital programmes working party, at which proposals were discussed. As the hon. Gentleman knows, the working party is attended by representatives of the local authority associations and Government Departments.

### East Quayside Development (Newcastle)

15. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the decision by the Tyne and Wear urban development corporation to concentrate the £20 million subsidy on the East Quayside development in Newcastle; and if he will make a statement.

17. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the decision by the Tyne and Wear urban development corporation to concentrate £20 million of subsidy on the East Quayside development in Newcastle; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The answer is none. The Tyne and Wear development corporation has yet to determine the precise extent of its contribution to the proposed development at East Quayside.

**Mr. Cousins:** The Minister may not yet appreciate the enormous potential for commercial and financial services development in the city of Newcastle, so will he investigate why the urban development corporation in the city is obsessed with that one site on East Quayside, when at the west end of Central station there is a larger, flatter and more accessible site already in its ownership, but which does not figure in its plans or programmes?

**Mr. Hunt:** I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman has discussed what he has just said with the city council, but as I understand it, the city council supported this proposal which I believe represents a major opportunity for a comprehensive redevelopment of a prominent riverside site, which will help change the perspective of an area which was previously semi-derelict.

## Local Government Finance (Scotland)

3.30 pm

**The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement about local government finance in Scotland.

First, I wish to announce my decision on grant for Scottish local authorities in respect of 1990-91. In reaching that decision, I have had in mind the views expressed to me by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on its estimates of what it regards as required spending levels next year. I have also had in mind the substantial increase in the planned volume of spending by Scottish authorities this year, and the scope that undoubtedly exists for economies and efficiency improvements. A further factor is my undertaking given some time ago that—subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary legislative changes—I would make substantial initial progress next year in reducing the rate burden on Scottish businesses.

What I am announcing today is the total of aggregate Exchequer grant—that is, the total of specific grants and revenue support grant—that will be paid to Scottish local authorities for 1990-91.

I propose that aggregate Exchequer grant for 1990-91 should be set at £2,739 million. This is £242 million or 9·7 per cent. higher than the corresponding figure for this year. This figure, however, includes extra grant to allow business rates to be substantially reduced in line with the Government's stated objective of eliminating the difference in non-domestic rates between Scotland and England.

My new proposals on business rates, which I announced on 8 May, have been widely welcomed in Scotland, and we lost no time in presenting legislative proposals to the House on 14 June. I am happy to announce today that I propose that the rate bill for Scottish business next year should be reduced below what it would otherwise be by the sum of £80 million. The Confederation of British Industry has estimated the excess rate burden on Scottish business to be around £250 million, and we will therefore be closing that gap by almost a third in a single year. This represents very substantial progress. I know that this, together with the other steps that are being taken on harmonisation of valuation procedures north and south of the border, will be warmly welcomed by Scottish business and industry and by all those for whom the private sector in Scotland provides employment.

Local authorities will be compensated by increased grant of £67 million, which is included in the total figure of aggregate Exchequer grant which I have already given. As their contribution to this reduction in business rates, and in recognition of their welcome support for this policy, I am asking local authorities to recover the balance of £13 million by efficiency savings. This compares with total current expenditure for next year estimated by COSLA to be over £5,000 million. I am confident that it should be well within their capability to achieve these modest savings without threat to standards of service. My Department has already had useful discussions with COSLA on implementation of the new policy, details of which will be announced in the autumn.

The remainder of the total of aggregate Exchequer grant represents an increase of 7 per cent. on this year's figure. Taken together with business rate income, it should enable local authorities, if they are prepared to take a grip on their spending, to set community charges not significantly higher on average than this year's levels. I hope that many authorities will already have recognised their excessive budgeting for this year and, in the knowledge of the reasonable grant settlement that I am announcing today, will now plan for reasonable levels of spending and of community charge next year. Detailed proposals for grant distribution will be put to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities for consultation, in the usual way, in the autumn.

I also wish to take this opportunity to announce a number of changes that I am proposing to make to the arrangements for administering the standard community charge in Scotland. As hon. Members are aware, the standard community charge is paid by owners, or long-term tenants, of houses such as second homes which are not used as someone's sole or main residence. I have received a significant number of representations about the standard community charge and recently received a paper from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities outlining suggestions for change. I am quite clear that many of the problems that have arisen can be attributed directly to local authorities' decisions in almost every case to set their standard community charge multipliers at the maximum of two times the personal community charge, when they had been given discretion to set the multiplier anywhere between one and two.

Nevertheless, and in the light of the real problems that have as a result arisen, I have decided to make the following changes to the present arrangements. First, I intend to take powers to define certain classes of premises for which I will be able to prescribe a maximum multiplier. I will use that power to tackle, in particular, the very difficult case of the house that is unoccupied because the owner has to live with friends or relatives because of illness or infirmity. That is one situation in which a multiplier of up to two seems too high. If other categories of a comparable kind emerge, those powers will enable me to make provision for them.

I will also make provision to allow local authorities to determine, subject to certain conditions, their own classes of premises for which they could set different multipliers. That will allow them to take account of circumstances not covered by classes that I might prescribe, but which it is right should be the subject of local decision. That will give them, for example, discretion to set a different multiplier for the homes of old people in general who are living with relatives and for the homes of people obliged by their jobs to live in tied houses. Local authorities could also create other classes, depending on local circumstances; and a regional council would be able to set different maximum multipliers for its classes in different district council areas, something specifically requested by COSLA in the proposals which it put to me.

As a result, local authorities will have considerably greater flexibility in their operation of the standard community charge arrangements. I know, therefore, that the new arrangements will be welcomed. I am proposing that the necessary amendments to the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 to allow for the introduction of those changes should be made in the context of the Local Government and Housing Bill, and amendments to that Bill will be tabled. The changes will come into effect for the financial year 1990-91.

Lastly, I propose to redefine the boundary between domestic and non-domestic property so that single dwellings available for holiday letting are subject to non-domestic rating rather than the standard community charge.

These proposals tackle the main problems that have emerged in relation to the incidence of the standard charge and are a direct response to the concerns expressed by local authorities and others. I hope that local authorities will reciprocate by using the additional discretion that they have now been given.

**Mr. Donald Dewar** (Glasgow, Garscadden): This is clearly a significant statement. It is good to see some signs that the Government have been listening and, perhaps, even learning. The aggregate Exchequer grant is more generous than in some previous years. I hesitate, but it would be pleasant, to ascribe that to the increasing influence of the new chairman of the Tory party in Scotland. However, that is probably optimistic.

The increase of 9·7 per cent. sounds generous, but a number of caveats must be made. It includes the £67 million for the reduction in the non-domestic rate. I hope that the Secretary of State will accept that the true increase is about 7 per cent. As he knows, inflation is running at more than 8 per cent. at present, so there is certainly no way in which that could be said to represent an increase in the aggregate Exchequer grant in real terms. Will the Secretary of State accept that a great deal depends on the indexation of the non-domestic rate, which I understand is a question for the Chancellor? If that were to be below the retail prices index figure, it would directly affect a council's income.

I welcome the move to help the non-domestic ratepayer. The total allocated this year is £80 million. Will the Secretary of State give an estimate of the gap to be closed? I have seen figures for the subsidy required, which varies between £250 million and £400 million. No doubt, much depends on the harmonisation of rateable value and, as well as commenting on the gap, could the Secretary of State say a word or two about how that is progressing and whether it will be completed in the revaluation of 1990? In particular, can he say whether his approach, when using the £80 million, will sharply reduce the disparity in the central belt, where the non-domestic rate is highest, or whether he intends to reduce the differential, taking Scotland as a whole? What will be the impact of today's announcement on industrial derating? Will it be held at 40 per cent.?

I welcome any signs of flexibility on the standard community charge. Many people—all hon. Members will know of such cases in their constituencies—have modest second homes, perhaps cottages and flats, whose value is reflected in a low rate bill. They have suddently been faced with a massive increase of £400 or £500 with the arrival of the poll tax. I am glad that something has been done about the glaring injustice of an old person who moves in with relatives finding that his or her house is suddenly classed as a second home.

Am I right, however, in thinking that the general power to vary the standard charge between a multiplier of nil and two must be exercised on a district basis? For example, will a regional council be competent to decide that certain categories of houses, perhaps those that were below a certain rateable value in the last year of the old system, should attract a lower multiplier than others in the same district? If that is not so, regional councils will be put in the difficult position of having to take a blanket approach that will inevitably create anomalies.

Does the Secretary of State accept that it is almost impossible to reconcile the treatment of second homes, by means of what is unashamedly a property tax, with the poll tax, which is a form of individual taxation?

While we are dealing with injustices, can the Secretary of State say whether he has had second thoughts about Alzheimer's disease because of the strong medical case which suggests that there is no essential difficulty in assessing when the illness has reached the point when exemption is justified? Is not the present situation, where patients with exactly the same presenting symptoms are treated in different ways for poll tax purposes, completely indefensible? Will he move on that matter?

The Secretary of State and his PR department have worked hard to try to establish this as a generous settlement. In fact, it is worse than a standstill, and it does nothing to undo the damage done to essential services and to the fabric of local democracy in recent years. He will certainly have to do better.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I think that the last two sentences were the only part of the hon. Gentleman's comments that were written before he saw the statement, as they bore little relation to his other comments. I thank the hon. Gentleman for his opening remarks, which described the settlement as "more generous than in recent years". I appreciate that his view of recent years may not be the same as mine. Nevertheless, I think that, by his standards, that amounts to a compliment. I confirm that the increase, when one removes the element relating to business rates, is 7 per cent. The hon. Gentleman suggests that is not sufficient, but it was COSLA itself which said that that was what it needed.

**Mr. Dewar** *indicated dissent.*

**Mr. Rifkind:** It is no use the hon. Gentleman shaking his head. Mr. MacIver, the general secretary of COSLA, said that it required at least 7 per cent. to meet its needs —[HON. MEMBERS: "At least."]—and that is exactly what it has been provided with. [HON. MEMBERS: "When did he say that?"] I am happy to give that information. He was quoted in an article in the *Glasgow Herald* on 20 July as saying:

> "We are certainly hoping for an increase of at least 7 per cent. for the coming year."

The Government have been happy to respond to that aspiration, and that is the least that we are entitled to claim.

The hon. Member for Garscadden welcomed the proposals on business rates. I am grateful to him for that. The figure—or the gap—that has to be accommodated is £250 million. The CBI in Scotland has identified that figure and the Government have endorsed it as their best assessment of the gap. Meeting that to the extent of £80 million in the current year is a massive step towards eliminating a discrepancy that has been caused primarily by the high level of Scottish local authority expenditure, which the previous Labour Government made no attempt to deal with. Distribution will be dealt with later in the year when we announce the distribution of grant available.

*[Mr. Rifkind]*

Industrial derating will continue until the gap between rating levels in Scotland and England is eliminated. The original purpose of industrial derating was to assist with that difficulty.

I welcome the hon. Gentleman's friendly comments on what the Government propose to do about the standard charge. I have to emphasis that what we are proposing is not a property tax—*[Interruption.]* No. As I explained, it is quite simple. The level of discretion available to the local authority will not depend on the kind of property that it is dealing with, but on the personal circumstances of the individual concerned. That is why it is consistent with the community charge principles on which we have put forward these matters.

The hon. Gentleman asked about Alzheimer's disease and whether the Government had anything to add on that matter. We have emphasised all along that if a method of dealing with the matter in a responsible way is identified in the way that my hon. Friend the Minister of State has explained on several occasions, we would have no objection in principle to seeking to accommodate people. I have nothing to say to the House today about that matter and I do not know whether it will be possible for such a distinction to be identified.

**Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith** (Kincardine and Deeside): Does my right hon. and learned Friend acknowledge that the difficulties in which the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) found himself underlined the success of the statement? I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend will not be surprised if I concentrate on the standard community charge, on which I have campaigned and plagued him and our hon. Friend the Minister of State in recent months. I thank him warmly for his announcement. We are less worried about the classification of the charge as long as it moves in the right direction—as it does.

I should like to ask two questions. First, is my right hon. and learned Friend quite sure that it is right to leave discretion about some aspects with local authorities, given the way that local authorities have extracted the maximum that they are able to extract in the current year? Secondly, what is the position of people with a second home which may or may not be let but which may be held by someone of modest means who has not been paying much in rates? Will that be covered? If it is not, it should be.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I very much hope that even now local authorities will seriously consider whether they should insist on the maximum multiple or whether, as a generality, it would be appropriate to have a more modest figure. That option is available to them and I hope that they will take it. I thank my right hon. Friend for his warm welcome for the standard charge proposals. He explicitly asked about matters being left to the discretion of local authorities. We gave considerable thought to that question and think that it is appropriate that it should be left to local authority discretion.

As I sought to explain earlier, we are essentially dealing with the personal circumstances of individual standard charge payers. It would be difficult, either through primary legislation or by methods determined entirely by central Government, to distinguish in a way that would be sensitive to the personal circumstances of such standard charge payers. I am pleased that, in its paper to us, COSLA said that if given these powers it would wish to use them and would recommend to local authorities that they should be used for the purposes that I have indicated. Therefore, we have every reason to assume that local authorities will use the powers that they asked for and have been given.

**Mr. David Steel** (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): We too welcome the sinner who repenteth. The Secretary of State will remember that only a month ago we moved a new clause to provide exactly this provision in the English Bill. It is a great pity that it was not accepted at that time. Some of us wish that the sinner would sound as if he repenteth. Does the Secretary of State accept that his repeated assertion that local authorities decided to apply a multiplier of two ignores the fact that the revenue support grant formula that he imposed assumed that they would apply that multiplier? In view of what the Secretary of State has said, will he say that if they do not do so in future they will not suffer under the revenue support grant system? As I understand it, if they had applied a multiplier lower than two in the past, they would have had to pass on the excess charge to all community charge payers at a level of perhaps £2 or £3 a head. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman come clean and admit that that is so?

Secondly, I should like to ask about the 7 per cent. support assumption in the coming year. As we have not yet got the NALGO pay settlement and as inflation is already running at 8·3 per cent., is that assumption not yet another sign that local government will continue to be severely squeezed? Local authorities in my area which are careful spenders will strongly resent that. Will he explain how it is that under this system Scottish poll tax payers will end up facing an average of well over £300 next year, compared with the English average of £275 and the Welsh average of £175? How has the Secretary of State for Wales managed to screw more out of the Treasury than the right hon. and learned Gentleman got?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The right hon. Gentleman has asked me three questions, to which I shall respond. First, I am intrigued by this assumption that local authorities paid complete attention to the assumption in the rate support grant settlement with regard to the multiplier. If that was of such importance to them, I shall bear it in mind when determining what the assumption should be next year and we shall see what effect it has on local authority use of that discretion next year. I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for putting that proposition to me.

Secondly, the right hon. Gentleman referred to the NALGO pay settlements, which have not yet been resolved. Local authorities are the employers, so they have it in their own hands to determine what settlement they will agree to. I assume that COSLA had that in mind when it said that a 7 per cent. grant would meet its needs and that that was what it expected.

Thirdly, I am delighted that the right hon. Gentleman has asked me to explain the different assumptions that are being made about the likely level of community charge in Scotland compared with England and Wales. The reason is a simple one, which relates entirely to the different levels of local authority spending. Despite high grants from the Scottish Office—probably a level of grant that compares extremely favourably with either England or Wales—the expenditure of Scottish local authorities per capita is £978, while in England it is £773 and in Wales £776. That is for comparable services, eliminating services, such as water, that are carried out by local authorities in Scotland, but not in England. Therefore, for exactly comparable services, there is expenditure per capita of £200 more in Scotland than in England or Wales. Therefore, I say to local authorities, "Physician, heal thyself."

**Sir Nicholas Fairbairn** (Perth and Kinross): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on his excellent statement. I ask him to remind Scottish local authorities that it was purely for political reasons that they used the multiplier of two. When he comes to see what comparable categories emerge in the orders that he proposes, will he use as general a concept as possible so that it is not restricted to individual types, such as those that he mentioned, but in general gives equity to all who deserve it and should not be paying such a high charge?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I agree with my hon. and learned Friend that the purpose of the discretion that has been made available is to deal with what both sides of the House would recognise are the particularly difficult cases—for example, an elderly person who might be living with a son or daughter, keeping his home empty for the time being while deciding whether he wishes to return to it, or a person who might have bought a house for his retirement but is still living in tied accommodation, or other such categories. When dealing with such cases, it is important that the full standard charge is not insisted upon. Local authorities have said that they would wish to use the discretion if they were given it to help in such cases and we are happy to enable them to do so.

**Mr. Dennis Canavan** (Falkirk, West): If the Government are intent on introducing amending legislation on local government finance, will the Secretary of State also take the opportunity to introduce an amendment to stop the disgraceful practice whereby people are being hounded for the poll tax even after they are dead?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I ask the hon. Gentleman to address any such complaints to the local authority in which he lives. The local authority is not answerable to me for the way in which it chooses to go for any debts to which it may be entitled.

**Mr. Allan Stewart** (Eastwood): I warmly welcome what my right hon. and learned Friend said about business rates, which are of great importance to jobs and the competitiveness of Scottish industry. Was not my right hon. and learned Friend's generous rate support grant for this year simply followed by excessive increases in expenditure by far too many Scottish local authorities? Does not the success of what he has said about RSG, and his welcome moves on the standard community charge, depend on the assumption that Scottish local authorities will act reasonably? If that assumption is not fulfilled, there will be outrage in Scotland.

**Mr. Rifkind:** My hon. Friend can take some comfort from this: given that the increase in revenue support grant is equivalent to the projected level of inflation and at a figure that the local authorities themselves said corresponded to their needs, and if, as a consequence of the overall position, there is higher expenditure and there are higher community charges than necessary, the finger of responsibility can be pointed in only one direction. I believe that that will concentrate the mind wonderfully.

**Mr. Andrew Welsh** (Angus, East): Surely, at 7 per cent., the settlement is below the rate of inflation and a poorer deal than the one obtained in England and Wales—especially at a time of high interest rates. It must mean a cut in local government services.

When making these changes, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman look into the problem of those with Alzheimer's disease and explain what is holding him back from doing something about the inherent unfairnesses in the legislation?

**Mr. Rifkind:** On the second point, I cannot usefully add to what my hon. Friend the Minister of State has said on several previous occasions.

On the earlier point, the hon. Gentleman should appreciate that the rate of inflation that is relevant is not the current rate but the projected rate for the financial year in question. That is presumably why COSLA itself has said that 7 per cent. is appropriate.

**Mr. Dick Douglas** (Dunfermline, West): When removing the supposed anomaly in relation to the standard rate, will the Minister have a care? Apparently, it will apply prospectively in England and Wales but not retrospectively in Scotland, because people will have already paid on properties that the right hon. and learned Gentleman says should be excluded.

In relation to the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan), I have today received a letter saying that the local authority in Fife has gone for a four-day period. A man aged 55 died in Kincardine, and the authority has gone for £3·21. What feelings must be in the mind of the man's widow now that the local authority has imposed that on her? The Secretary of State must not tell us that the local authority is doing this willingly; it is doing it because it knows that the Accounts Commission would be on to it if it did not.

**Mr. Rifkind:** That is not true. I seem to recollect reading of a similar case in Grampian region in which, once the authority had identified the circumstances, it immediately declared them a de minimis case in which the sum would not be requested.

The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that local authorities can use their discretion to decide whether the circumstances are such that they will not seek payment. Naturally, we would all hope that local authorities will apply appropriate sensitivity to cases of personal tragedy of this sort—it is within their power to do so. The local authority in the Grampian region, in circumstances with which the hon. Gentleman is familiar, did just that. I do not know the circumstances of his particular case, but if the local authority believes that it is justified to do so, it has complete discretion to act in the way that the hon. Gentleman has suggested.

**Mr Harry Ewing** (Falkirk, East): Does not the Secretary of State understand the reason why £200 per head more is spent in Scotland than in England and Wales? It is because of his activities of the past few years in relation to local government services such as education, housing, roads and social work. We have more problems

*[Mr Harry Ewing]*

in Scotland with these local government services precisely because of the activities of the right hon. and learned Gentleman and other Scottish Office Ministers.

Why, having included a multiplier of two in the legislation for the poll tax, does the Secretary of State now complain because local authorities are using that multiplier? He wants none of the blame for putting it in the legislation, but he now wants the credit for changing the legislation which he was responsible for imposing on local government in the first place.

As for the point raised by my hon. Friends the Members for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) and for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas)—the problem of the sending out of accounts to people who have died since the last payment of the poll tax—I want the Secretary of State now to give every regional and islands authority in Scotland, and its councillors, an absolute guarantee that if they do not charge this poll tax they will not be surcharged. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is obliged to provide such a guarantee.

**Mr. Rifkind:** On the hon. Gentleman's final point, questions of surcharge only arise—*[Interruption.]* I hope the hon. Gentleman will do me the courtesy of letting me answer his point. Such questions arise only when there is a recommendation from the Accounts Commission; but it goes without saying that if a local authority is faced with a personal tragedy, where the sums involved are very small, and it exercises its discretion not to seek payment of the account, I cannot conceive of any situation in which a Secretary of State would want to surcharge the councillors in question. I do not think that I can be more explicit than that in expressing my views.

The hon. Gentleman made comparisons with England and Wales. He tries very hard, but he knows perfectly well that the policies pursued by the Government apply to Scotland, England and Wales. Many Labour-controlled authorities in Wales appear to live with levels of expenditure not just marginally but dramatically—as much as £200 per capita—less than Labour-controlled authorities in Scotland. That cannot be explained on the basis of Government policy, which is consistent throughout the United Kingdom, although local authority expenditure is not consistent throughout the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths** (Edinburgh, South): Does the Secretary of State not realise that the statement is bitter news to thousands of carers—*[Interruption.]* Conservative Members may laugh but this year those people are being driven from their original homes because they have chosen to move in with and look after disabled and elderly relatives, often leaving country dwellings for which the rates were under £100. They are now having to find up to £500 and £600 this year. Why does the Secretary of State not offer them more help now? By the time the statement comes into effect, they will have sold the original properties and will have no way back.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I would not be able to accuse the hon. Gentleman of humbug if he had put that proposition to Lothian regional council when it was contemplating applying the full multiplier with the full support of the hon. Gentleman and his Labour party colleagues.

**Mr. John McAllion** (Dundee, East): If the Secretary of State thinks that 7 per cent. in Scotland is sufficient to cover the projected growth of inflation for next year, will he explain why it was necessary for his right hon. Friend to announce an 8·5 per cent. increase for England and Wales last week? Furthermore, will he explain why it is necessary to have a full-year transitional safety net to cushion the impact of the poll tax in England and Wales but not in Scotland? If he believes that the people of Scotland should remain part of a unitary United Kingdom, why does he persistently allow Scotland to be treated as an inferior, less deserving and less worthy part of the United Kingdom?

**Mr. Rifkind:** First, my right hon. Friend did not announce an 8·5 per cent. increase for England and Wales. Secondly, it is not only my view that 7 per cent. is sufficient; it is also the view of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. Thirdly, the hon. Gentleman appears to be completely ignorant of the fact that there is a safety net in Scotland, which is applied in much the same way as that for England and Wales.

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing** (Moray): While most of us in the House recognise that the Secretary of State has shown an element of flexibility on the community charge, perhaps his end-of-term report card should be stamped, "Could do better". Why has he not produced clearer definitions of the sole or main residence for individuals? That is particularly important in rural constituencies, where people who live away from home for the purposes of work are being charged standard rate community charge in their digs while paying the personal community charge at the family home.

Secondly, in regard to poll tax accounts being issued to families of the recently deceased, will he advise the House what he regards as a small amount, as in my constituency, the sum has been as small as £1·34? Is it not the Government's responsibility to give clear guidance to our regional and islands authorities on the matter, because the reply that I received from his colleague the Minister of State, who was then responsible for the community charge, said that councils must take account of what the auditors say? If the auditors recommend that the poll tax on the recently deceased has to be collected, the councils are placed in a difficult position. It is therefore up to the Government to produce clear guidance stating that poll tax will not be charged for the month in which a person died.

**Mr. Rifkind:** Naturally, I will give some thought to whether guidance to local authorities would be helpful, but the hon. Lady will appreciate that it can be only guidance and the local authority must take its own decisions in the light of the circumstances. Individual local authorities have already shown a willingness to use common sense and their discretion in this matter, showing that that is perfectly available to them if they choose to use it.

The hon. Lady also asked about sole or main residence, but she will appreciate that, in particular cases, that is primarily a matter for the community charge registration officer. Today I have said that local authorities will have much greater local discretion to deal with particular classes of situation, which may be a way in which to meet the point raised by the hon. Lady.

**Mr. John Home Robertson** (East Lothian): The Secretary of State said that the Government might be prepared to do something about the imposition of the poll tax on people suffering from conditions such as Alzheimer's disease if someone else can come up with some suitable suggestions. May I gently remind the Secretary of State that he is, whether anyone likes it or not, the government of Scotland? He is responsible for the poll tax and he is responsible for the unfair application of the tax on such people. I am sure that all of us welcome the fact that the Government have acknowledged that the standard poll tax is unfair and unworkable, although we are now left with multiple discretion among local authorities and the Scottish Office, which could make things even worse. Does he accept that the basic iniquity still exists, because a family on a low income in a small house will still pay more than Her Majesty the Queen with a second home at Balmoral castle?

**Mr. Rifkind:** On Alzheimer's disease, may I gently remind the hon. Gentleman that those suffering from that disease were liable for the payment of domestic rates for many years without the hon. Gentleman feeling obliged to argue that that was iniquitous or undesirable. *[Interruption.]* No, they did not get exempted if they were the ratepayers of the property concerned. Many people with Alzheimer's disease were obliged to pay domestic rates for many years and the Labour party never seemed to think that that was a matter against which it should campaign. The Labour party could at least have the integrity not to suggest that, somehow, such payment has only now become an issue because of the introduction of the community charge. We shall continue to consider the possibility of a proper system of assessment being devised. If that happens, we will then be happy to respond, but until we are able to do so, obviously there is nothing that I can add.

**Mr. Alistair Darling** (Edinburgh, Central): Does not the Secretary of State accept that the amount of money distributed to each local authority is the major factor in determining how high or low the poll tax is? Is he proposing to follow the example of the previous Secretary of State for the Environment by fixing the amount of the settlement in each case depending on the likely political fortunes of the Conservative party or is he prepared to treat each local authority in the same way? Is he aware that, had Lothian received the same safety-net arrangement as Strathclyde this year, the Lothian poll tax could have been between £60 and £80 lower than it is? Is he prepared to carry on rigging the figures in a desperate attempt to gain advantage in the regional elections next year in one of the few parts of the country where the Tories do not face an absolute rout?

**Mr. Rifkind:** Obviously, the hon. Gentleman could not find anything to say on the statement and therefore he wants to broaden the exchanges that we are having. He will know that it is a tradition in Scotland that matters of distribution are dealt with later in the year, after consultation with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. He will also know that, usually, the formula that is applied for the distribution is agreed with COSLA.

The hon. Gentleman seems to be blissfully unaware of the fact that the subsidy of certain Scottish local authorities continued for many years with the acquiescence and indeed, enthusiasm, of the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends. It is this Government who are, for the first time, eliminating that subsidy, but rather than doing it all at once we are phasing it out over several years. The hon. Gentleman was happy to live with a subsidy when there was one, but now complains because we are phasing it out and says that it should be phased out all at once. That shows that he changes his views as quickly as he changes his mind.

**Mr. Tom Clarke** (Monklands, West): If the relationship between the Secretary of State and COSLA is as cosy as he seems to suggest why is it necessary for him to produce an obscure and selective comment from the *Glasgow Herald* to justify that assertion? Can he tell the House precisely what discussions he has had with COSLA and what it has said to him about his proposals? As part of that precision, when he talks about projections can he tell us the projected figure for inflation, because the House has not been told? What is the projected figure for wage settlements? We have not heard about that either. As the Secretary of State has referred to interest rates what projected figure does he have in mind for interest rates in respect of small businesses as well as local government? As we are anxious to hear what COSLA had to say, and as COSLA could not possibly have known about the Government's response to the Griffiths report, is there an extra ha'penny in the statement to recognise the new responsibilities for community care?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I have already said that certain of the preparatory work that may need to be done will be taken into account in the RSG settlement.

Our relationship with COSLA could never be as cosy as it was when the hon. Gentleman was its distinguished president, in the Government's early years. Clearly, the hon. Gentleman's departure from his local government responsibilities has inevitably had its effect. He asked me what COSLA's representations were. When I last met COSLA, it suggested, not only to me but publicly, that the Government were going to give it a grant increase of only 1·7 per cent. It went on record as saying that it needed at least 7 per cent. if it was to meet the needs of its local authorities. That is exactly what it has got. The hon. Gentleman should be the first to welcome that.

**Mr. Brian Wilson** (Cunninghame, North): On the right hon. and learned Gentleman's latter comments on Alzheimer's disease, I remind him, although he surely needs no reminding, that the difference is that the poll tax is a personal charge, which, according to the Government's rhetoric, is accompanied by accountability by local government to the individual. I unreservedly welcome the relief that the right hon. and learned Gentleman's announcement will bring to those who care for the sick and elderly at home while the temporarily empty house is retained. The scandal is that it has taken three years of planning and four months of implementing the poll tax and will take another eight months of waiting for this cruelty to be addressed, under duress from the Opposition and local authorities.

Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that the fundamental second home problem has still not been confronted by his statement because a district council will still be unable to differentiate between a second home single-end and a second home castle, and therein lies the endemic unfairness of the standard community charge?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The main reason why it has been necessary to respond in this way is that the local authorities throughout Scotland, with the honourable exceptions of Shetland Islands and Western Isles, have sought to impose the maximum standard charge, irrespective of the consequences to which the hon. Gentleman has referred. If those local authorities had not done so, these problems would not have arisen. The hon. Gentleman should reflect on that point.

## Scottish Enterprise

4.11 pm

**The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement. Last December, I published the Scottish Enterprise White Paper on my proposals to integrate the functions of the Scottish Development Agency, the Highlands and Islands Development Board and the Training Agency in Scotland. I invited comments by 31 March 1989.

I have been delighted by the volume and constructiveness of the 420 responses and by the extent of support demonstrated. In reaching my decisions, I have sought to build on that support. There was overwhelming agreement for the principle of creating two new bodies, in which the functions of the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board would be integrated with those of the Training Agency in Scotland.

Many welcomed the name "Scottish Enterprise", but some called for the retention of the names "Scottish Development Agency" and "Highlands and Islands Development Board", and there was strong insistence from the north, whatever title was chosen, to retain the word "Islands". We are creating a distinctive new structure which will be more than the sum of its parts and which requires a new identity. I have therefore concluded that the new bodies should be called Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise respectively. The SDA and HIDB logos are widely recognised, and I see merit in retaining them to provide an element of continuity, but that will be for the new bodies to decide, as will the way that they market themselves abroad.

There was virtual unanimity for the proposition that the network of local agencies, or enterprise companies, as we now intend to call them, should have a contractual relationship with Scottish Enterprise, in keeping with their private sector focus. The constitution of the companies means that there are important issues of public accountability, propriety, control of public expenditure and value for money to resolve, and I have asked my officials to seek ways of ensuring that public funds are properly safeguarded.

In the light of comments received, I am now proposing a network of 12 companies in the lowlands and eight in the highlands and islands. I have made available a map showing the proposed areas for each company, but where consortia feel that the map that I am proposing does not fit in with their ideas, I should, of course, be willing to consider specific proposals for variation. As regards functions, I can confirm that the full range of statutory powers that the SDA and HIDB now possess will be available for Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and I accept the recommendations that the latter should discharge the environmental role in the Highlands and Islands currently undertaken by the SDA.

I was impressed by the extent of support for devolving substantial powers relating to enterprise creation to the local enterprise companies from the outset, and against that background, my proposals now involve a major step in the direction of local delivery of economic as well as training functions from the start. We shall, of course, continue the SDA and HIDB policies of withdrawing in favour of private sector provision wherever that is practicable and sensible.

I found it a great attraction as an initial step in the SDA's approach that the enteprise companies should operate within spending limits that would enable them to take responsibility for the great majority of projects, and that responsibility for major projects outside those limits should be retained at the centre. I intend to apply that principle to both Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. I intend also that the extent of delegation to local enterprise companies should be increased progressively.

The central bodies will have a strong strategic role and will therefore set the policy framework and monitor the local companies; design, develop and secure the implementation of projects and programmes, particularly in industry and enterprise development with an applicability across their areas; approve major projects that fall out with the companies' competence; and handle certain functional activities including major investments, inward investment attracted by Locate in Scotland, marketing and the design and implementation of major physical programmes. They will ensure that the Government's Great Britain-wide training policies and priorities are pursued and Government guarantees fully satisfied. They will also ensure that programmes in support of enterprise delivered on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry are being satisfactorily discharged and provide central support services.

Local enterprise companies will have the following functions, depending on their capability and the spending limits agreed. In the Scottish Enteprise area, large and strategic projects apart, they will have SDA functions in respect of the development of property, land reclamation and environmental improvement projects, advice and assistance to business, and urban renewal. In the highlands and islands area, the same approach will apply to the range of HIDB functions. In both areas they will carry out the range of training functions presently delivered by the Training Agency's area offices and seek to stimulate greater involvement by employers in training. They will also have the scope to devise specific initiatives to meet local needs.

There will be differences in approach between the Scottish Enterprise area and the Highlands and Islands Enterprise area, reflecting their different population, geographical and other characteristics, but there will be an underlying consistency. I have asked officials to work up proposals to ensure that there is a clear framework within which the local enterprise companies are to operate, and that the companies have maximum flexibility, compatible with public accountability, to tailor their activities to local circumstances.

In the light of the comments received on two of the programmes at the interface between industry and education, I have concluded that the Training Agency's technical and vocational education initiative—TVEI—should now move to the Industry Department for Scotland and that PICKUP, the professional, industrial and commercial updating programme administered by the Scottish Education Department, should transfer to Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

The resources for the new bodies will initially be broadly those that would have been made available in total to the SDA, HIDB and the Training Agency in Scotland.

Turning now to management, many have suggested that an increase to 12 for the Scottish Enterprise board would offer considerably more scope, while retaining the efficiency advantages of a compact board. I propose a board of not less than nine and not more than 12 members inclusive of the chairman and the chief executive, who will be an ex officio member. I propose a similar approach to Highlands and Islands Enterprise but, in recognition of the fact that the number of those able to serve will be circumscribed by distance and sparsity of population, I propose a 7:12 formulation. There is broad support for our proposals that two thirds of the board should be drawn from the private sector and members of both boards will be chosen on a personal basis, for the contribution that each can make. We need the best people in their own right.

With regard to the boards of the local enterprise companies, we shall wish to see directors chosen for their individual contribution, reflecting the range of local interests. Two thirds will come from the private sector, and there will be a board of not fewer than nine or more than 12 in the Scottish Enterprise area and between seven and 12 in the Highlands and Islands.

However, the bigger the range of local interest that supports the company the better. I have been pleased by the enthusiasm expressed by the local authority sector, by education and training specialists, the voluntary sector and the trade unions for the objectives of Scottish Enterprise and their desire to be involved.

As regards staffing, it is important that staff are given a clear indication about their future. There are three aims to be fulfilled: Scottish Enterprise should have a single ethos and staffing structure, as should Highlands and Islands Enterprise; local enterprise companies should have as much freedom as possible to choose their own staff; and the arrangements should meet the best interests of existing staff.

I therefore propose that every member of staff employed by the Scottish Development Agency should be offered, three months before the establishment of Scottish Enterprise, employment on no worse terms with Scottish Enterprise, with scope for voluntary secondment to an enterprise company. I propose a similar approach for HIDB staff, As regards the training agency, every member of staff employed in Scotland should be offered, three months before the establishment of the new bodies, the choice either of employment on no worse terms with Scottish Enterprise or Highlands and Islands Enterprise as appropriate, with scope for voluntary secondment to an enterprise company, or alternatively of secondment to Scottish Enterprise or Highlands and Islands Enterprise, with up to three years to decide whether to transfer on the same basis permanently or to return to Civil Service. I am sure that the local enterprise companies will recognise the value of taking most of their staff on secondment terms from the skilled and experienced pool of existing staff, but they will also have scope to employ their own staff.

Finally, let me say how I now see the way ahead. I shall seek an early opportunity for legislation to bring Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise into being as soon as possible. As there is overwhelming enthusiasm for our suggestion that it might be possible to go ahead with some local enterprise companies in advance of legislation, within the next few weeks I shall be launching a prospectus which will invite the business community to form consortia to bid to become local enterprise companies in lowland Scotland. That will be followed by a prospectus for the highlands and islands. The companies will operate within existing legislative

*[Mr. Malcolm Rifkind]*

powers and within existing public expenditure provision. The number of consortia to be given the go-ahead at this time will depend upon the quality of bids. Consortia throughout Scotland are already making plans in the hope that the Government will take this approach. Their commitment has been a major factor in confirming to me the fact that our proposals for Scottish Enterprise are soundly based.

It gives me great pleasure to commend to the House these proposals, which have caught the imagination of the people of Scotland.

**Mr. Donald Dewar** (Glasgow, Garscadden): That statement might be described as hard going; it reminded me of stirring very thick porridge. The rather natty, glossy brochure containing the Secretary of State's statement also contains a photograph of the right hon. and learned Gentleman with the legend "The way ahead is clear". He could have fooled all of us this afternoon.

I accept that the statement contains important issues and deals with a part of our economy in which there is no doubt about the scope for improved performance. But as the Minister knows, Opposition Members have doubts about the structure of Scottish Enterprise and the decision to merge training and the key role of the SDA in one body.

Let me make it clear to the House that those doubts remain, but there is some evidence in the Minister's statement—if one reads it carefully—that he has listened, and it would be churlish not to acknowledge that. We will, however, want to be satisfied that the role of Scottish Enterprise will not blur or blunt the enterprise and investment role pioneered by the SDA in recent years. If the Government press ahead, it will be important to ensure that the enterprise companies are a success and bring about the revolution in training that is so clearly needed. We should certainly want to see that achieved.

It is right that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has agreed that Highlands and Islands Enterprise should be created on the lines outlined and that the environmental role should be transferred to it from the SDA.

I welcome the guarantees given to the staff who, I suspect, will nevertheless face an uncertain period in the months ahead.

I have one or two specific questions. The new boards are to be based on private sector involvement, and I note the Secretary of State's statement that there is "broad support" for that principle. I suspect that that is largely confined to the private sector itself. We now know that two thirds of the board directors are to come from private industry. Does the Secretary of State accept that there is real and understandable concern about the involvement of other interests? Does he accept that there is a genuine role both for local authorities and for trade unions? I note that there were some nods in that direction in his statement, but will he undertake that the participation of those other sectors will be a key factor in deciding on the suitability of a bid?

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman note in passing the distinction between local authority involvement as such and simply the recruitment of a local authority figure to give colour to a board? Will board members be salaried, as recommended by the SDA in its representations? Will he also say more about the realities of the power structure? We understand that Scottish Enterprise will monitor the activities of the enterprise companies locally. Will they be allowed to take over the assets and investments of the SDA and Scottish Enterprise, as it will become, as the consortium bidding for the Lanarkshire franchise has requested?

I understand that there will be a delegation of projects to the enterprise companies below a certain cut-off point. What will that be? Will it be roughly along the lines presently operated for the regional bodies of the SDA? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman also comment on the level of independence in policy making that will be given to Scottish Enterprise?

In defining the new body's duties, the right hon. and learned Gentleman said that it will

> "ensure that the Government's Great Britain-wide training policies and priorities are pursued and Government guarantees fully satisfied".

Does that mean that the Department of Employment, as the lead body, will lay down all training policy? Will the local enterprise companies—I believe that this is very important—be able to tailor employment training and YTS to local needs? Without that flexibility, many people will think that all the talk about the practical devolution of power is no more than a sham.

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman explain the remit of the national training task force and how it impacts on Scottish Enterprise, reporting, as it does, to the Department of Employment? Will he accept that the test will be what is delivered? We strongly support a Scottish solution to training policy, but we are not convinced that the independence of action that is required has been wrested from the Department of Employment by those plans. There must also be a willingness to fund innovation and local initiatives. Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman really believe that the present standstill budget, simply amalgamating the existing budgets, can do the job?

**Mr. Rifkind:** If my statement was a hard slog, the contribution of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) was a forced march. Nevertheless, I welcome the generally constructive tone of the hon. Gentleman's comments, and I will respond to his points.

I am happy to confirm that we see a genuine role for local authorities and trade unions; I referred to that specifically in my statement. We hope in the generality that salaries would not be required by the members of the boards in question, but there may be particular circumstances in which some flexibility would be appropriate, and we will consider them on their merits.

The hon. Member for Garscadden asked whether the enterprise companies would own the assets currently owned by the SDA in their localities. We certainly envisage that they will be able to have effective control of those assets. Whether the legal ownership should transfer to them is a more difficult matter, which we are considering at the moment.

The hon. Gentleman asked what would be the cut-off point for delegation to the local enterprise companies. I can confirm that that would be broadly compatible with the existing delegation that the SDA gives its regional offices. He asked whether the Department of Employment would be laying down policy on national training. The Government will lay down the policy and the Department of Employment and the Scottish Office will together determine the national framework of training policy. The national task force, to which the hon. Gentleman referred, answers both to the Department of Employment and to the Scottish Office in its advisory role. We certainly envisage that the local enterprise companies should have a significant flexibility and autonomy within their frameworks.

It would appear that the only major difference remaining between the Opposition and the Government is over the fundamental question as to whether the SDA and the Training Agency should be merged into a single body. The hon. Gentleman said that he has doubts about that structure and he said today, as he has said on a previous occasion, that the Labour party would prefer two free-standing bodies in Scotland instead of a single agency. He is in very lonely company in respect of that view.

The House might like to know that 297 respondents to the White Paper favoured a combination of the SDA and the Training Agency into a single agency and only 17, including the Labour party, expressed the view which the hon. Member for Garscadden has professed today. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman will agree that, although he is entitled to his view, it is not shared by Scotland. The overwhelming response from right across the industrial, political and economic spectrum in Scotland supports the Government's proposition and disagrees with the view that was expressed on behalf of the Labour party.

**Mr. Allan Stewart** (Eastwood): Will my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) found it difficult to criticise his first statement and finds it impossible to criticise his second? I warmly congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on spelling out in detail the Scottish Enterprise proposals which will be warmly welcomed in Scotland. What does he envisage as the role of enterprise trusts? There is considerable scope for enterprise trusts to continue their excellent work under Scottish Enterprise. Will my right hon. and learned Friend say how they will work?

**Mr. Rifkind:** Yes, I certainly see a continuing role for enterprise trusts. As my hon. Friend will be aware, they essentially deal with much smaller localities, rather than the larger geographical areas that are covered by enterprise companies. I have no doubt that the enterprise trusts, as they have already publicly said, will wish to be involved in encouraging local consortia to come forward, and be involved in other ways in continuing to stimulate the local economy in the constructive way that they have already demonstrated.

**Mr. Tom Clarke** (Monklands, West): May I ask a constituency question first? As it is not clear what local enterprise companies Strathkelvin district council may be associated with, will the Secretary of State clarify the matter? Secondly, as the Secretary of State referred to the halcyon days when he arrived at St. Andrew's house as a young Minister, pro-devolution and all the rest, he might recall that, at about that time, there was a committee called the Stodart committee, of which I was a member. Based on the evidence that it received, it strongly supported the role of local government in industrial promotion and enterprise.

Has the Secretary of State received any evidence to the contrary? Does he accept that many local authorities in Scotland, including Monklands district council, feel that they have a contribution to make, that the Government are deliberately ostracising that contribution, that that is not in the interests of Scottish Enterprise or Scottish industry, and that the Stodart committee could have told the Government so?

**Mr. Rifkind:** On the two points that the hon. Gentleman has raised, first, Strathkelvin district council would come under the proposed Dumbarton enterprise company, and that is made clear on the map that is available to hon. Members. On the hon. Gentleman's second point, his comment is not fair. He will recall that, in the allocations that we gave local authorities for the current year, there was a particularly generous increase in the general services allocation for the purposes of industrial workshops in their areas. If that was not a recognition of the contribution that can be made in matters referring to the local economy, it is difficult to know what would be.

**Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith** (Kincardine and Deeside): I welcome my right hon. and learned Friend's statement for the very constructive and full way in which he has responded to the representations that he has received. Will he say a little more about training? Does he acknowledge that there is not only a shortage of skills but a need for new skills in Scotland and that, in the midst of all the new business enterprise, the importance of training should be given a high priority? Is my right hon. and learned Friend getting a constructive response from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Trades Union Congress for his efforts?

**Mr. Rifkind:** Clearly, training is important. There are clear signs from the STUC and from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities that, despite their original proposals to boycott the new training scheme that was introduced by the Government, they will seek to become involved in the enterprise companies, in the knowledge that that will involve co-operation in the delivery of training on the basis of the Government's current training policy. I welcome what appears to be a change of heart in that respect.

**Sir Russell Johnston** (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that both his statements have been incredibly long-winded? It appears that he has a future as a speaking clock, because the enormity of the statements was barely concealed by the rapidity of his delivery.

I ask two questions. First, on the availability of business men to serve on the boards that are to be established, is he satisfied that there are enough competent people to go around and to make them work properly? Secondly, on Highlands and Islands Enterprise, is he satisfied that the differential that can now be provided is sufficient to make the area genuinely attractive to industry?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The speaking clock is universally recognised as both accurate and of great public benefit, so I am happy to be compared with it, if the hon. Gentleman chooses to do so.

In response to the hon. Gentleman's detailed questions, the original concern or scepticism of some people about whether the business community would come forward has been completely overtaken by the evidence now available to us. Even in anticipation of the statement, consortia throughout Scotland were already being formed with a view to coming forward as soon as the Government invite them to do so. That is extremely encouraging. The new

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opportunities available in the highlands and islands where, for the first time, training will be controlled locally by the Highlands and Islands Enterprise and local enterprise companies, are a dramatic change in the opportunity for the north of Scotland to control its own destiny.

**Sir Nicholas Fairbairn** (Perth and Kinross): May I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on his excellent statement this afternoon, even if it was a little complicated and long for the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) to understand before he fell asleep? Will he note that the new Perthshire enterprise venture set up with such enthusiasm in a partnership between private and public enterprise is an example of what his policies are achieving? Will he remind the House again this afternoon, and unceasingly, that these excellent advantages can be maintained only if we do not drive away investment—from wherever it comes—by having an Assembly, separation or differential taxation?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I certainly congratulate the Perthshire venture. It is an excellent example of the local business community and others coming together to help the local economy, and it is to be welcomed. My hon. and learned Friend's remarks are also correct. Clearly, anything that discourages investment is to be deplored and my earlier statement today on business rates will be another way in which the potential disincentive of higher taxation will be removed, to the benefit of our economy.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** (Dundee, West): Exactly what will happen to the Dundee project, which is the only example in Scotland of a one-door approach to incoming industry within this new framework? It would be an absolute disaster if the project were simply absorbed into Tayside. How many of the 297 responses to the White Paper did not suggest that an emphasis different from the national emphasis on training was needed in Scotland, particularly given the experience of the previous mode B young people who find it extremely difficult to stay in training employment as it is presently structured?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I, too, am happy to acknowledge the great importance of the Dundee project. I sought to make it clear in my opening remarks that, apart from the matters delegated to individual enterprise companies, certain projects would continue to be dealt with by Scottish Enterprise, either because of their national significance or because of the size of the resources involved or the scale of the project. We shall consider existing projects and decide which should be in that category. Dundee may be one, but I should not like to come to a conclusion on that without studying the scale of the resources involved and other matters.

On the hon. Gentleman's final point, the 297 representations on the White Paper were about the basic question whether the Scottish Development Agency and the Training Agency should combine into a single agency. Two hundred and ninety-seven said that they should, and 17 said that they should not.

**Mr. Adam Ingram** (East Kilbride): The Secretary of State said that his announcement would catch the imagination of the people of Scotland, but that will not be the case in the new towns in Scotland. Two weeks ago, the Secretary of State announced his intentions about the future of the new towns. It will be a matter of some concern in the new towns that no mention was made today of the relationship or the role of the new towns in these new enterprise agencies. Will the Secretary of State explain how the new towns will interface with the new enterprise agencies? Which body will have responsibility for the on-going development of the new towns prior to the dissolution of the development corporation boards?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I am sorry, but I am not sure that the hon. Gentleman is entitled to say that the proposals have not caught the imagination of the people in the new towns, because as far as I am aware they have been welcomed there as well. With regard to the precise implications—*[Interruption.]* I am talking about the responses to the White Paper. On the precise implications, the new towns and their successor local development companies may seek to join a local enterprise company as participants in a consortium, or may act as sub-contractors to local enterprise companies to provide specific local economic development services or, at the instance of Locate in Scotland, they may contract with Scottish Enterprise direct to provide sites for inward investment. Therefore, there are equally exciting and important opportunities for the new towns as well as for the rest of Scotland.

**Mr. Mike Watson** (Glasgow, Central): Does it not make a mockery of the so-called consultation process when, as the Secretary of State has said, after several hundred responses, it is clear that many of them have been ignored, and when he confirms that the boards of the local enterprise companies—as we hear they will now be called—are to comprise two thirds private sector nominees? Is it not far more important that the recommendations that were made in many of the responses to the consultation process, calling for local authorities, trade unions and the voluntary sector to be involved, should have been taken on board, and should that not happen before a Bill is brought to the House? I noticed that the Secretary of State referred to the general role of trade unions and local authorities, but will he spell out what that will mean, because I fear that that role will be woefully inadequate?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman is misinformed. There has been a wide welcome for the principle that local enterprise companies should have boards with two thirds of the members drawn from the private sector. That has not been a matter of controversy. The overwhelming number of representations received has supported that view. There has also been the view, which the Government have also accepted, that local authorities have a legitimate role to play in the enterprise companies. My statement acknowledged that point. I expect that, when consortia approach Scottish Enterprise in most of Scotland, they will come primarily from the private sector, but I shall be surprised if they do not also include local authorities, the voluntary sector and possibly trade unions and others.

**Mr. William McKelvey** (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): Will the Secretary of State take steps to ensure that the mangement boards are not loaded in the same fashion as the health boards in Scotland have been loaded with Conservative or former Conservative supporters? Will he guarantee that a maximum will be set so that only two thirds of the management boards will be drawn from the private sector? I hope that the members of the management boards who are drawn from the private sector will be Scottish business men who live and work in Scotland.

On the point about the area enterprise boards overseeing certain projects, what would the Secretary of State consider to be a large project that would not necessarily be in their domain? Can he guarantee—I should welcome the formation of the enterprise areas a little less cautiously if he could do this—that the Cinderellas who have suffered under the redistribution of SDA grants and moneys before, such as Kilmarnock, will no longer fail to receive their fair share of the budget that is available centrally?

There should be two separate training bodies. One reason why we want a separate body for training is to ensure that training is properly carried out and, most importantly, that the business men who so anxiously want to manage these enterprises have the opportunity to play their part in what should be proper training. Furthermore, those who are training should be paid the appropriate trade union rates.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I agree with the hon. Gentleman that industry should be prepared to make its contribution to the cost of training. That is something that one hopes that industry will acknowledge and to which it will respond. On the hon. Gentleman's point about the membership of the boards of the enterprise companies, I agree that what we are looking for are senior figures from Scottish industry who will be able to make a major contribution to the work of the enterprise companies in their locality.

The hon. Gentleman asked for an example of a project which, despite its local impact, might be considered more suitable to be retained for central control. The Glasgow garden festival is an example. If the festival had been coming into existence under the future structure, although its impact was intended to be within Glasgow, the scale of the project would have justified its being dealt with by Scottish Enterprise rather than by individual enterprise companies. We shall have to consider individual projects and determine that issue on the basis of such criteria.

**Mr. Alex Salmond** (Banff and Buchan): Yes, but why has the Secretary of State maintained the two-thirds business majority on the boards against calls for a genuine partnership between the public and private sectors, especially when those calls have come not just from every Opposition party but also from the National Federation of Self Employed and Small Businesses Ltd. and from Mr. Ron Lander, the chairman of the CBI's training committee in Scotland? Does not the fact that the Secretary of State has maintained the two-thirds majority betray the political bias behind the plans and show that they are a Tory solution to Tory needs rather than a Scottish solution to Scottish needs?

Why did the statement make no mention of the European dimension? Is it not the case that the Department of Employment processes applications for the European social fund, which is a major provider of training funding? Why has that role not been delegated to the Scottish Office or Scottish Enterprise? In the light of the Secretary of State's earlier remarks about the relative positions of the Scottish Office and the Department of Employment in relation to training, does he not remember that the White Paper announcing these proposals described the Department of Employment as the lead Department in these matters? Has anything changed?

**Mr. Rifkind:** It was described as the lead Department because it is the lead Department. There has never been any secret of that fact. It would be odd if it were not the lead Department, given that it covers such a large proportion of the population of the Unied Kingdom. This is not the occasion to have a debate on European matters, but I believe that my statement is free-standing in its own right.

In response to the hon. Gentleman's initial points, I advise him that he should study the representations before he makes a slight fool of himself——

**Mr. Salmond:** I have the submissions here.

**Mr. Rifkind:** In that case, the hon. Gentleman has even less excuse for the questions that he has asked—*[Interruption.]* Yes, indeed, but the two-thirds private sector ratio has been widely accepted right across the spectrum of opinion. What people were quite properly——

**Mr. Salmond:** What about Mr. Ron Lander?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The hon. Gentleman refers to one individual, as if one individual out of 420 should determine the course of the Government's response——

**Mr. Salmond:** Mr. Lander is the chairman of the CBI's education and training committee.

**Mr. Rifkind:** Well, the CBI strongly supports what is in the White Paper. The fact that the hon. Gentleman has identified one individual who takes a different view shows the paucity of his case. The balance that the Government are proposing in the White Paper has been welcomed right across the political and industrial spectrum. The hon. Gentleman may not like that, but I am afraid that he will have to live with it.

**Mr. Norman Hogg** (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): Will the Secretary of State return to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram), and will he undertake to write to the chief executives or the chairman of the Scottish new town development corporations setting out in some detail the precise relationship between what is proposed and the existing development corporations? Could he then go a little further and deal with the question of the new development companies so that there is absolutely no doubt about the role of the new towns in the new context?

**Mr. Rifkind:** Yes, we will happily give such advice to the new town development corporations. The answer that I gave the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram) related both to the existing new town development corporations and to the future local enterprise companies. We shall happily discuss the matter with the new towns so that there is a clarity of understanding about this matter.

**Mr. Charles Kennedy** (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): If I followed the Secretary of State's statement correctly, he suggested that, as well as its training function, Highlands and Islands Enterprise will take on the environmental function from the SDA. Will he give an absolute guarantee that it will have a requisite increase in its finances for both those functions, so that its prime and legislative

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development role is not undermined or diluted as a result of the greater range of activity that it will have to undertake?

Secondly, I stress to the Secretary of State that at the weekend my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston), in anticipation of this week's statement, met representatives of the CBI in the highlands and islands of Scotland. *[Interruption.]* I assure hon. Members that it was a perfectly open meeting. Those representatives of the CBI were exactly the kind of business men to whom the Secretary of State will be looking to make this a success. One issue about which they were anxious was whether this would lead to a diminution in the almost unique status of the existing HIDB within Scotland, as it is brought more on a par with Scottish Enterprise generally, and whether the potential is there for this to be a long-term disincentive or disadvantage for the highlands and islands as a whole. Will the Secretary of State address himself to that, too?

**Mr. Rifkind:** Yes. We have said that the initial funding of both the new agencies would correspond to the funding that currently goes to the various bodies that deal with those matters. In the case of the highlands and islands, if one combines, for example, the existing funding of the HIDB with that of the Training Agency in Scotland, we are talking of funding of about £50 million. I take the hon. Gentleman's point about the environmental aspect. We essentially wish to start from the position of replicating the existing funding in the highlands, wherever it comes from, and that will go to Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

On the hon. Gentleman's second point, I believe that he can be greatly reassured, because, far from being to the disadvantage of the highlands and islands, we are saying that major areas of policy and resources, which up to now have been carried out within the highlands from outside, will in future be determined within the highlands and islands themselves. For the first time, Highlands and Islands Enterprise will have many millions of pounds to spend on training in the highlands and islands—training which up to now has been run from Sheffield. That will now be with the local enterprise companies. There is the point, too, about the environmental functions of the SDA now being controlled from Inverness rather than from Glasgow. The hon. Gentleman and his colleagues can properly recognise what is being proposed as an exciting and substantial decentralisation of power to the highlands and islands.

**Mr. John McAllion** (Dundee, East): The Secretary of State has tried hard to give the impression this afternoon of an entirely Scottish approach to the important area of training. Will he tell us whether the Department of Employment will continue to have a remit for training provision in Scotland, and, especially, whether the pilot schemes for the workfare-type jobs interview guarantee scheme will continue to go ahead under the Department of Employment, or whether it will be transferred to Scottish Enterprise? In any case, whoever has responsibility, will the Secretary of State guarantee that there will be comprehensive consultation with the local communities before implementation of that scheme?

**Mr. Rifkind:** There will be relatively few residual functions of the Department of Employment in Scotland, but, overwhelmingly, its current responsibilities are being transferred, with the appropriate resources, to the Scottish Office. There will be a continuing joint responsibility for national training standards in the United Kingdom as a whole, where both Departments will liaise in order to identify Government policy. Within that national framework, we accept that, both at Scottish level and in the various parts of Scotland, there will be substantial flexibility and local autonomy that has not existed up to now and will be a major feature of future arrangements.

**Mr. Harry Ewing** (Falkirk, East): Does the Secretary of State understand that these are very wide powers, which have been given to a very small number of people, drawn from a very narrow band of Scottish society, over a wide area of Scottish society and highly unrepresentative of Scottish society? That in itself requires the most extensive debate. The Secretary of State mentioned public accountability, but to whom will those local enterprise companies be publicly accountable? Will it be the local authority or the Scottish Office and, through the Scottish Office, the House? The Secretary of State did not mention Locate in Scotland, possibly because nothing is happening in relation to it. I would be grateful if he could confirm that. Finally, if legislation is required—when?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I shall take the hon. Gentleman's points in reverse order. My statement said that I envisaged early legislation to create Scottish Enterprise. However, even in advance of that legislation, much will be able to be achieved under the existing statutory position.

I am happy to confirm that Locate in Scotland is not affected in any way by the statement. Enterprise companies will be accountable to Scottish Enterprise in the first instance and, through Scottish Enterprise, to the Scottish Office and thereby to Parliament as a whole.

The hon. Gentleman said that those powers will be used by unrepresentative individuals. I ask him to compare what we propose with the existing situation and to see which he prefers. At the moment, the training powers are carried out by people answerable to the Training Agency's headquarters in Sheffield, while the SDA powers are exercised by officials of the SDA in the localities in question and are rarely considered in any depth by SDA headquarters. Compared with the status quo arrangements, a local enterprise company, which consists both of the private sector, and I am sure of local authorities and other local interests, will be considerably more representative and able to identify the needs of the local community than the existing arrangements, which, of course, have existed for a good many years.

**Mr. Dick Douglas** (Dunfermline, West): Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that one of the intriguing aspects of discussing this initially with Bill Hughes was the fact that he suggested that money should be taken down to the local level? What appears to be happening is that we are creating multifarious bureaucracies. The real danger is that money, especially for training, will not get down to local level. How does he propose to devise a mechanism to obviate that?

Will the Secretary of State give us some indication of how those local companies will be registered? Will they be companies registered by guarantee, and will we, additionally, have an annual report on Scottish Enterprise and on Highlands and Islands Enterprise, too, so that we might have an opportunity of discussing those matters, appropriately in Scotland? One thing that we should keep an eye on and ventilate in Scotland is this proposed set-up.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I am happy to pay credit to Mr. Hughes for the stimulation that he, as well as others, gave to these ideas. These proposals represent a massive transfer of resources to the local level. At the moment, the effective decision on training are taken in Sheffield and those on the functions of the SDA in Glasgow. We are proposing a contractual relationship with enterprise companies, which have been brought out by the local communities, where they will not be carrying out simply a policy laid down by Government as agents. We would clearly not attract people of calibre to carry out someone else's policy. They will be given real decision-making powers in important areas, which is why the business sector and others have already responded so enthusiastically to what is proposed. I agree that those matters should be debated and discussed, for which there will be many opportunities. What is encouraging is that the public response to the White Paper has given rise not only to so many comments from so many quarters, but such a unanimous endorsement of what is proposed.

**Mr. Dennis Canavan** (Falkirk, West): When does the Secretary of State expect Scottish Enterprise to achieve a reduction in Scottish unemployment to the level which existed at the time when the Scottish Development Agency was set up by the last Labour Government?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The hon. Gentleman will recall that, after the SDA was set up by the last Labour Government, unemployment—no doubt for other reasons—substantially increased during the remaining period of that Labour Government. It increased further during the early years of this Government, but I am pleased to say that it has been dramatically falling over the past two years and looks set to continue to fall. The Scottish CBI's latest survey shows substantial optimism in Scottish industry. No doubt that is because of a clear realisation that the hon. Gentleman is unlikely to be sitting on this side of the House in the foreseeable future.

**Mr. Bill Walker** (Tayside, North): My right hon. and learned Friend will be aware that Scotland has a unique history of skill training—that, certainly during the industrial revolution and afterwards, Scotland led the world in its level of skill training. Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that this new training arrangement will allow training to be conducted in such a manner that, if one wished, one could extend the training period to three years or more to give the opportunities for the levels of skills that are required to meet the needs of the future?

**Mr. Rifkind:** We certainly envisage that, increasingly, Government requirements will not be expressed so much in terms of the procedure and the detailed way in which training is delivered, as in terms of output and the results. If we are satisfied that enterprise companies are producing the results, the out-turn and the quality of training that is required, we shall be happy for them to have a significant flexibility and autonomy as to how they do that throughout Scotland.

## Points of Order

4.59 pm

**Mr. Barry Jones** (Alyn and Deeside): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask whether you have received any requests from Ministers to make a statement on the salmonella outbreak in Clwyd? There is considerable anxiety on Deeside and throughout that county. I believe that, before the end of the day, a statement should be made on this serious outbreak. We need to know whether the outbreak has affected 48 people in Clwyd, whether there are 13 hospital cases, whether there is a seriously ill pensioner and whether children are affected——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The point of order is to me and to ask whether I have received a request for a statement. The hon. Member should not go into detail. I must tell him that I have not had such a request.

**Mr. Jones:** I was about to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that there is widespread anxiety in my constituency and in neighbouring constituencies. We want to know whether there are enough environmental health officers to assist locate the seat of the outbreak. We urgently want to know from Ministers what the Government are doing so that public anxiety can be allayed. Can you help to establish whether a Minister from the Welsh Office will come to the Chamber and make a statement about this serious outbreak of salmonella? Public opinion demands that that information be given.

**Mr. Speaker:** I repeat that I have not had any request for such a statement. I am sure that what the hon. Gentleman has said will have been heard on the Government Front Bench. We never know what might happen tomorrow.

**Mrs. Alice Mahon** (Halifax): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will have heard the Secretary of State for Health during Question Time yesterday make some insulting remarks that implied that my constituents are not fit to vote on whether they want hospitals to opt out of the National Health Service. Would you examine the record, Mr. Speaker, and consider asking the Secretary of State for Health to withdraw those deeply offensive remarks?

**Mr. Speaker:** I must tell the hon. Lady that I was here and I did not hear any offensive remarks. In any case, the time to raise a point of order on a matter like that is when it occurred, not now. I cannot go back to it today.

**Mrs. Mahon:** Further to the point of order——

**Mr. Speaker:** No—I am sorry, the hon. Lady's argument is not with me. She will have to find other ways to take it up.

**Mrs. Mahon:** Further——

**Mr. Speaker:** No. I cannot hear it.

### BILLS PRESENTED

### Nutritional Labelling of Food

Mr. Nigel Griffiths, supported by Ms. Diane Abbott, Ms. Joan Walley, Mr. Harry Barnes, Mr. Andrew Smith and Mr. Peter L. Pike, presented a Bill to ensure that the consumer is provided with full and accurate information on the nutritional content of food: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 20 October and to be printed. [Bill 200.]

### ANTI-LITTER (RING-PULL CANS)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths, supported by Ms. Diane Abbott, Ms. Joan Walley, Mr. Harry Barnes, Mr. Andrew Smith and Mr. Peter L. Pike, presented a Bill to require the manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers of ring-pull cans to ensure that the ring-pull cannot be detached when the can is opened: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 20 October and to be printed. [Bill 201.]

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

*Ordered,*

That the draft Passenger and Goods Vehicles (Recording Equipment) Regulations 1989 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

# Industrial Disputes (Compulsory Arbitration Procedures)

5.2 pm

**Mr. Roger Knapman** (Stroud): I beg to move,

> That leave be given to bring in a Bill to compel parties providing essential services and involved in industrial disputes to seek arbitration.

The aims of this Bill are best attained by preventing those who are engaged in providing essential services from undertaking strike action, either on a full-time or part-time basis, while recourse to existing arbitration or tribunal procedures remain available to the parties to the dispute. This is certainly not a bash-the-unions exercise, but it is very much a protect-the-public measure.

We have come a long way since the days of Red Robbo and Jack Dash—the days of "I'm all right Jack"—and of scenes in factory car parks which involved a brief speech, a forest of hands in the air, and an immediate walk-out. Few doubt that such antics played a significant role in Britain's relative decline as an industrial power in the 1960s and 1970s. They certainly played a large part in the perceptions that many foreigners—including potential investors—formed of Britain's economic performance.

Few people would want those dark days to return. Even fewer would agree with the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), who said on June 19 this year:

> "The Trade Union was born in illegality and it will be re-born in illegality".

At present, some groups, such as members of the police forces and the armed forces have no right to strike. Also, doctors, dentists and nurses have their pay settled by review bodies, although there must be some concern about the inflationary aspects of some of the awards.

I was encouraged by the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to a question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford North (Mr. Bendall), who is in his place, last Thursday. She said:

> "We are looking at the possibility of further legislation and examining European legislation which usually includes some protection against unions in the public sector going on strike. European legislation and history tend to be very different from ours, but we are looking at it all to see whether we can learn something from it . . . With due respect, I do not think that it would make much difference to have only one union. It is much more complicated than that, but I hope to bring forward in the future any proposals that we may have."—[*Official Report*, 20 July 1989; Vol. 157, c. 514.]

I am quite sure that any such proposals will be positive and realistic and will build on the substantial trade union reforms over the past decade, which have met with the approval of the vast majority of the British electorate. One effect of these proposals is that strike action is legal only after a democratic ballot. It logically follows that, where trade union members have authorised strike action, there is greater legitimacy for them to do so.

I suggest that it is for the employers and the unions to decide whether they want to accept the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service, either as an arbitrator or as a conciliator, and whether to accept pendulum arbitration or no-strike deals.

There has been much comment recently on the negotiation of no-strike deals, which typically involve single union deals, such as that between the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union and Japanese new technology companies, often on new green-field sites. The agreements prohibit industrial action while the disputes procedure is being followed. If the agreed procedures fail to resolve the dispute, an independent arbitrator, sometimes ACAS, either must or may be called upon to make a final decision.

Some agreements specify the use of pendulum arbitration, whereby the arbitrator must choose between the employer's offer and the union's demand rather than strike a compromise between the two.

Many industrial relations experts point out that there is not much difference between a no-strike agreement and the type of collective agreements involving peace clauses and provision for arbitration which have been negotiated in many industries in the past.

Perhaps the present situation is best summarised by a recent article on single-union deals in the *Industrial Relations Review and Report* dated 27 June 1989. It said:

> "There is nothing new about peace clauses or disputes procedures which set out the steps through which disputes and grievances must proceed".

It continued by analysing the 1984 workplace industrial relations survey and found that nearly 80 per cent. of unionised workplaces had such arrangements. In many cases, these arrangements are specifically referred to as procedures for the avoidance of disputes.

It is difficult to see why the public should be inconvenienced where these procedures are adopted. The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) said in a television interview on 11 December 1974:

> "naturally the trade unions see their clearest loyalty to their own members but the social contract is their free acknowledgement that they have other loyalties to the members of other unions, to pensioners, to the lower paid, to invalids and to the community as a whole".

It is interesting that loyalty to the community as a whole came last. The convenience and needs of the public always seem to come last during industrial disputes. I suggest that it is the duty of the House to ensure that the needs of the public come not last, but first in order of priority.

Like other hon. Members, I have recently received a letter from the secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen that stated, in its second paragraph:

> "I am only too well aware of the considerable inconvenience caused to the travelling public by the current industrial problems so let me begin by emphasising once again that the NUR is anxious to achieve the earliest settlement of the dispute".

Later in the same letter comes the statement:

> "We have consistently argued that ACAS is the necessary and appropriate forum for such negotiations".

What that letter does not, and cannot, explain is why it is necessary to have a strike, such as the one today, while both the tribunal and ACAS procedures are still available to the parties concerned. As my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State observed on 30 June:

> "Use the established procedures if you are so keen for a settlement—start talking and now. The British public is waiting."

I am well aware that other countries have different approaches to these problems. As Mr. Philip Bassett observed in the *Financial Times* as long ago as 2 January 1986:

> "In West Germany . . . it is illegal not only to break an agreement, but also to encourage others to do so. In the US, all agreements are legally enforceable and most contain elaborate grievance procedures and no-strike peace clauses. In France agreements are enforceable as civil contracts."

Until major legislation is introduced—that was mentioned in our 1983 manifesto—and until our position on those major issues is made clear, we surely cannot continue to allow the public to be blackmailed. The man or woman on the tube, on the railway or, quite literally, on the Clapham omnibus, should not face strike action until all procedures to avoid such strikes have been exhausted. Some 80 per cent. of unionised workplaces already have peace clauses for disputes procedures. The very least we should ensure is that those engaged in providing essential public services should not strike before such procedures have been fully explored. It is the duty of this House to protect the public.

5.11 pm

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): This is yet another attempt by Tory Back Benchers to restrict or take away the right of employees, especially those in the public sector, to take strike action. It was interesting that the hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) made no reference to the wages of those involved in today's dispute. Even after an 8·8 per cent. increase, many railway workers would have a basic wage of £116 a week before tax. I note that the hon. Gentleman is a partner in a family firm of builders. He is a member of a Lloyd's underwriting syndicate. He is an associate partner in a firm of chartered surveyors. What income does he take home, and how does it compare with some of the railway workers who take home less than £100 a week, which often includes overtime?

No group of workers takes industrial action lightly, although I do not expect Tory Members to understand that. Some of my hon. Friends take the view that Tory Members are opposed to all forms of strikes. Perhaps that is a slight exaggeration, so I shall make the qualification that they are opposed to all forms of strike action—unless it happens to take place in eastern Europe.

The very powers that the hon. Gentleman advocates were, in fact, part of the emergency provisions of the Industrial Relations Act 1971—a very discredited piece of Tory legislation. There was a dispute, as a matter of fact, on the railways in 1972 and strike action was to be taken. The then Secretary of State for Employment applied to the National Industrial Relations Court—we all remember that body—which granted a cooling-off period of 14 days. That is exactly what the hon. Gentleman is now advocating.

During those 14 days, the union complained that there was only minimal negotiation with the employers. The Government then ordered a postal ballot of all those eligible to take strike action. Some 85 per cent. of NUR members voted, and of those, 84 per cent. voted in favour of industrial action. The Government, realising that the game was up, authorised British Rail to go beyond the previous offer, and fresh negotiations soon resulted in a satisfactory settlement. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman has done his homework and whether he is aware of what happened in 1972. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that what he advocates has already been tried. It could not prevent strike action, and the Government recognised that a further offer was necessary.

The hon. Gentleman is keen on arbitration. Is he aware that there has been arbitration in the Civil Service since the 1920s? Since 1982, however, the Secretary of State has refused the Civil Service unions permission to go to arbitration, always arguing that, as there was no further money on offer, there was no purpose in arbitration.

In a democratic society, the employers and the unions should negotiate for the kind of agreement that they want. The hon. Gentleman referred to various existing

*[Mr. David Winnick]*

agreements, and that is fine, but it is surely for the employers and the trade unions, as part of the collective bargaining process, to agree on the procedures that they want, whether it be arbitration or something else. ACAS plays an important role, but that role would undoubtedly be discredited if compulsory arbitration was imposed. The current problems do not call for compulsory arbitration; they call for a recognition by the Government that many workers, including those in the constituencies of Tory Members, are deeply dissatisfied with what they take home. That is part of the reason for the large amount of industrial unrest at present, and more so because of the rising inflation rate.

It is no good dismissing those people as troublemakers and anarchists who want only to cause the public the maximum inconvenience. It is nothing of the kind. As I said earlier, no group of working people takes industrial action lightly, and certainly those employed on the railways have not done that. Strikes are part of the price that a society pays for remaining free and democratic—*[Interruption.]* Tory Members may jeer, but they should remember that in the Soviet Union and Poland, as those societies improve and reforms are undertaken, the working people have resorted to the strike weapon. The only way to end strikes is through a dictatorship. Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin had their ways of dealing with industrial disputes, but in a democratic society people should have the right to take industrial action if they so wish.

What the hon. Gentleman advocates in his Bill, far from resolving industrial unrest, will only further aggravate it. It is all part and parcel of the determination of Tory Members to take away the right to strike action from workers in the public sector. We will oppose the Bill in the Lobby.

*Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 19 (Motions for leave to bring in Bills and nomination of Select Committees at commencement of public business):—*

*The House divided:* Ayes 118, Noes 109.

**Division No. 322]** **[5.17 pm**

AYES

**Alexander, Richard**
**Alison, Rt Hon Michael**
**Alton, David**
**Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy**
**Atkinson, David**
**Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)***
**Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)***
**Beaumont-Dark, Anthony**
**Bendall, Vivian**
**Bevan, David Gilroy**
**Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)***
**Bowis, John**
**Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard**
**Brandon-Bravo, Martin**
**Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick**
**Buck, Sir Antony**
**Burns, Simon**
**Butler, Chris**
**Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)***
**Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)***
**Carttiss, Michael**
**Cash, William**
**Conway, Derek**
**Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)***
**Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)***
**Couchman, James**
**Cran, James**
**Davis, David *(Boothferry)***
**Day, Stephen**
**Dover, Den**
**Dykes, Hugh**
**Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas**
**Favell, Tony**
**Fearn, Ronald**
**Fenner, Dame Peggy**
**Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey**
**Fishburn, John Dudley**
**Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)***
**Gardiner, George**
**Gill, Christopher**
**Glyn, Dr Alan**
**Goodhart, Sir Philip**
**Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)***
**Greenway, John *(Ryedale)***
**Gregory, Conal**
**Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')***
**Hague, William**
**Hanley, Jeremy**
**Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')***
**Harris, David**
**Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)***
**Hill, James**
**Holt, Richard**
**Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)***
**Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)***
**Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)***
**Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)***
**Irvine, Michael**
**Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey**
**Johnston, Sir Russell**
**Jopling, Rt Hon Michael**
**Kennedy, Charles**
**Kilfedder, James**
**King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)***
**Kirkhope, Timothy**
**Kirkwood, Archy**
**Knapman, Roger**
**Latham, Michael**
**Lord, Michael**
**McCrindle, Robert**
**Macfarlane, Sir Neil**
**Maclennan, Robert**
**McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael**
**Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)***
**Miller, Sir Hal**
**Mills, Iain**
**Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)***
**Molyneaux, Rt Hon James**
**Morris, M *(N'hampton S)***
**Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)***
**Owen, Rt Hon Dr David**
**Page, Richard**
**Paisley, Rev Ian**
**Pawsey, James**
**Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth**
**Porter, David *(Waveney)***
**Raison, Rt Hon Timothy**
**Riddick, Graham**
**Ross, William *(Londonderry E)***
**Shersby, Michael**
**Skeet, Sir Trevor**
**Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)***
**Speller, Tony**
**Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)***
**Stanbrook, Ivor**
**Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John**
**Steel, Rt Hon David**
**Stevens, Lewis**
**Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)***
**Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)***
**Summerson, Hugo**
**Taylor, Ian *(Esher)***
**Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)***
**Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)***
**Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)***
**Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)***
**Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)***
**Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)***
**Walker, Bill *(T'side North)***
**Wallace, James**
**Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)***
**Wells, Bowen**
**Widdecombe, Ann**
**Wiggin, Jerry**
**Wilkinson, John**
**Wolfson, Mark**
**Wood, Timothy**
**Woodcock, Dr. Mike**

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Jacques Arnold and
Mr. Malcolm Moss.

NOES

**Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)***
**Armstrong, Hilary**
**Ashton, Joe**
**Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)***
**Barron, Kevin**
**Battle, John**
**Beckett, Margaret**
**Bell, Stuart**
**Benn, Rt Hon Tony**
**Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)***
**Bidwell, Sydney**
**Buckley, George J.**
**Caborn, Richard**
**Callaghan, Jim**
**Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)***
**Campbell-Savours, D. N.**
**Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)***
**Clelland, David**
**Clwyd, Mrs Ann**
**Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)***
**Corbett, Robin**
**Corbyn, Jeremy**
**Cousins, Jim**
**Cryer, Bob**
**Cummings, John**
**Darling, Alistair**
**Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)***
**Dixon, Don**
**Dobson, Frank**
**Duffy, A. E. P.**
**Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth**
**Eadie, Alexander**
**Eastham, Ken**
**Evans, John *(St Helens N)***
**Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)***
**Fatchett, Derek**
**Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)***
**Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)***
**Flannery, Martin**
**Flynn, Paul**
**Foot, Rt Hon Michael**
**Foster, Derek**
**Fraser, John**
**George, Bruce**
**Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)***
**Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)***
**Hardy, Peter**
**Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy**
**Haynes, Frank**
**Heffer, Eric S.**
**Hinchliffe, David**
**Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)***
**Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)***
**Home Robertson, John**
**Hood, Jimmy**
**Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)***
**Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)***
**Ingram, Adam**
**Janner, Greville**
**Leighton, Ron**
**Lewis, Terry**
**Litherland, Robert**
**Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)***
**Loyden, Eddie**
**McAvoy, Thomas**
**McGrady, Eddie**
**McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)***
**McNamara, Kevin**
**Madden, Max**
**Mahon, Mrs Alice**
**Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)***
**Michael, Alun**
**Morgan, Rhodri**
**Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)***
**Mowlam, Marjorie**
**Mullin, Chris**
**Murphy, Paul**
**Orme, Rt Hon Stanley**
**Patchett, Terry**
**Pike, Peter L.**
**Prescott, John**
**Radice, Giles**
**Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn**
**Richardson, Jo**
**Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)***
**Rogers, Allan**
**Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)***
**Salmond, Alex**
**Short, Clare**
**Sillars, Jim**

Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ian McCartney and
Mr. Tony Banks.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Roger Knapman, Sir Bernard Braine, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, Mr. William Cash, Mr. James Cran, Mr. Vivian Bendall, Miss Ann Widdecombe, Mr. Christopher Gill, Mr. Andrew Hargreaves and Mr. Timothy Kirkhope.

### INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES
### (COMPULSORY ARBITRATION PROCEDURES)

Mr. Roger Knapman accordingly presented a Bill to compel parties providing essential services and involved in industrial disputes to seek arbitration; And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 199].

## Points of Order

5.29 pm

**Mr. Max Madden** (Bradford, West): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Press Association is reporting that the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) has been appointed a Government Whip. He is, as you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, the director of Eversure Textiles Ltd. in Sheffield. The workers at that plant have been on strike for the past five weeks, seeking trade union recognition, which has been refused by the management and the hon. Member for Hallam.

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd):** Order. What is the point of order for me?

**Mr. Madden:** It is this. Can you tell the House whether, on appointment as a Government Whip, hon. Members are advised to relinquish directorships?

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** I think that I can help the hon. Gentleman. The Chair has an enormous number of responsibilities, but the appointment of Government Whips—or the notification of this by the Press Association —is not one of them. We should now proceed to motions Nos. 1 to 3.

**Mr. Madden:** On a point of order.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Is it a fresh point of order?

**Mr. Madden:** Yes. I am grateful for your advice, Madam Deputy Speaker, but would you go a little further? If it is not within the jurisdiction of the Chair to say whether the hon. Member for Hallam should relinquish his directorship, would you at least say, from your vast knowledge of these matters, that it would be a good idea for him to do so, as that would enable the management and the workers of the company to go to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service to secure arbitration and a settlement of this unnecessary dispute?

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Flattery about the Chair's responsibility will get the hon. Gentleman nowhere. I am not inclined to make any such statement.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Has any information gone to the Speaker's Office concerning the responsibilities of the Prime Minister, and what exactly they are? In the past 24 hours, our attention has been brought to the fact that she has started letting houses. I am not sure whether that comes within the general ambit of her responsibilities. Will the Speaker look into this matter to see whether such a role comes under the powers of the First Lord of the Treasury?

I should also like to know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been given the right to purchase because he has done this before, and he had a big mortgage. I want to know whether this one will be bigger, and whether Lady Porter is involved.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** I assure the hon. Gentleman of one thing—whatever powers it comes under, it does not come under the powers of the Chair.

# Social Security

5.33 pm

**The Minister for Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Scott):** I beg to move,

That the draft Community Charge Benefits (General) Regulations 1989, which were laid before this House on 21st July, be approved.

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd):** With this it will be convenient to take the following motions:

That the draft Income Support (General) Amendment No. 2 Regulations 1989, which were laid before this House on 21st July be approved.

That the draft Social Security (Unemployment, Sickness and Invalidity Benefit) Amendment No. 2 Regulations 1989, which were laid before this House on 21st July, be approved.

**Mr. Scott:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has, for reasons that he has explained to the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett), to be elsewhere at the moment, but he hopes to join us later. I hope that my hon. Friends, and the rest of the House, will give a warm welcome to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard), who has joined us in the Department as an Under-Secretary.

The three sets of regulations before the House have the common thread that they all relate to the provision of social security benefits. They do, however, relate to two distinct aspects of benefit provision which I intend to deal with separately. I shall take first the community charge benefits regulations and then come on to the two sets of regulations dealing with the provision of benefits for the unemployed.

The community charge benefits regulations are an integral part of the community charge arrangements. The scheme will ensure that the amount people have to pay will be related to their ability to pay it. People on low income will be able to claim rebates of up to 80 per cent. of their liability, and people on income support will be helped to pay the 20 per cent. of their liability that is not covered by the rebate through the adjustments that have been made to the income support rates. These regulations prescribe the details of how the community charge is to be rebated, and they will apply throughout Great Britain. During the current year, that is April till March 1990, community charge rebates in Scotland are being provided under separate regulations, which will cease to have effect in March next year, and will be replaced by the regulations that we are debating.

The community charge benefit scheme will be operated by levying authorities in Scotland and by charging authorities in England and Wales in accordance with the rules laid down in these regulations. The benefit may be claimed by anybody who is liable either for a personal community charge or for collective community charge contributions. The only people who will not be able to claim benefit will be full-time students who are registered as being liable for only 20 per cent. of the charge.

The maximum rebate will be 80 per cent. of the amount that a person has to pay. This will mean that all charge payers have to pay at least 20 per cent. of the charge in the same way that all ratepayers now have to pay 20 per cent. of their rates. The Government hold firmly to the view that everybody should be as aware of the costs of local authority services as they are of the benefits. The maximum rebate will be available automatically to everybody who is getting income support, and also to those people on equivalent incomes. We estimate that this 80 per cent. maximum rebate will be awarded to about 6 million people in Great Britain. We also estimate that a further 4 million to 5 million people in Great Britain will get a rebate on the community charge of less than the 80 per cent. maximum. For them, the amount of rebate they get will depend on three factors: their financial resources, their personal circumstances, and the amount of community charge that they have to pay.

The way in which rebate is calculated will follow closely the way in which rate rebate is calculated now. First, the capital resources of claimants will be considered, because we believe that if people have access to a significant amount of capital they should be expected to use it in meeting their necessary expenses. Then their net weekly income will be calculated, and personal circumstances taken into account, using the same applicable amounts, made up of personal allowances and premiums, as are now used in housing benefit. The applicable amount will be subtracted from net weekly income, and the maximum rebate will be reduced by 15 per cent. of this difference. Rebate will be payable only where it is 50p a week more. I hope that the House will welcome the fact that the taper for the community charge rebate scheme is 15 per cent. as opposed to the 20 per cent. taper used in rebating rates. We estimate that about 1 million more people will be brought into rebate because of this.

Our objective in formulating the community charge benefit regulations has been to maintain alignment with the housing benefit regulations wherever practicable. This has a number of advantages, which I hope the House will recognise. It is easier for claimants to understand, and we expect virtually all housing benefit claimants to get community charge benefit, and it is also helpful to the local authorities who will be administering the scheme. It also maintains the overall simplification and alignment of the income-related benefits that we achieved with the 1988 reforms. As well as retaining the same procedures for calculating capital, net weekly income and applicable amounts, we have retained broadly the same procedures for the making of claims, and for determinations, notifications and reviews.

The small number of changes that we have had to introduce are there because rebating an individual liability is not exactly the same as rebating a property-based liability. These changes are most obvious in the case of couples. We have retained the principle that the resources of the two partners in a couple should be considered jointly, so, although in nearly all cases the two partners in a couple will each be liable for the community charge, only one of them will need to claim community charge benefit. Their community charge liabilities will be aggregated, their financial resources will be assessed jointly, and their circumstances will be assessed using their applicable amount as a couple. On this basis, the amount of rebate due to the couple will be calculated, and divided between the two partners.

I wrote to all right hon. and hon. Members at the beginning of May describing the most important aspects of the community charge benefit scheme, and giving some examples of the levels of income at which various categories of claimant could expect to receive a rebate. I do not intend to repeat those examples now, but I should add that we expect about a quarter of all the people who are liable for the charge to benefit from rebates, and in our view this represents the right balance between providing help for people who need it and ensuring that the taxpayers' money is properly used.

I stress that we do not underestimate the need to ensure that claimants move readily from rate rebates to community charge benefit, and the need to help local authorities in their task of implementing the new scheme. To this end we will be introducing a number of special arrangements to facilitate the introduction of the scheme, and these will be prescribed in the Community Charge Benefits (Transitional) Order 1989, which we intend laying before the House as soon as the benefit regulations come into effect. These transitional provisions are not before the House today, and therefore not the subject of our debate.

In commending the regulations to the House, I should like to make clear the extent of our consultation, since the autumn of 1987, with the local authority associations, and to express my gratitude for their co-operation. We have also formally consulted the associations and the Social Security Advisory Committee. The comments that we received were helpful and constructive, and a large number of them have been incorporated in the regulations before the House.

Most of the provisions in the regulations dealing with the unemployed flow from the powers taken in the Social Security Act 1989. The matter is slightly complicated by the need for two sets of regulations, one for unemployment benefit and the other for income support. I should first point out to hon. Members that there was a printed error in the published version of the Income Support (General) Amendment No. 2 Regulations 1989. This was corrected in the version laid before the House, but Members' copies will be wrong. In new regulation 10A(3) of the general regulations the word "recorded" should have read "regarded". I am very sorry that this error occurred and I hope that it has not caused too much confusion.

I hope that the hon. Member for Derby, South will agree that we had a demanding but rewarding Committee stage which resulted in some important improvements to the Bill. I know that we ended up not being able to see eye to eye on the provisions that have led to these regulations, but during our debates in Committee we gave a number of undertakings as a result of those debates. I hope that those who examine the regulations with an open mind will regard them as evidence of our good faith and of our being prepared to listen to the representations put to us.

The two areas that gave rise to the most concern at earlier stages were the introduction of the new, actively seeking work condition and the new permitted period, which limits the time when an individual may, without a risk to his benefit, decline employment outside his usual occupation. We have repeatedly said that employment service staff will interpret these new provisions in a fair and sensitive way. I am sure that we can be confident of their ability to do that. Employment service staff are already faced daily with individuals from all walks of life, with differing needs, capabilities and expectations. They are constantly called on to use their judgment to ensure that the needs of the individual are accommodated, while the conditions for benefit, as laid down by Parliament, are complied with.

Of course, that presents a challenge. Our new provisions will sometimes increase the demands on these staff, but they give them the tools to do the job properly. I am confident that, in their usual way, and with the additional training that is to be provided for undertaking this important work, the staff will rise fully to that challenge.

During earlier debates we heard much criticism of the proposal that unemployed claimants should have to seek work actively in return for benefit. Some Opposition Members doubted whether the legislation was necessary to enforce that principle. However, the Bill became the Act, and the appropriate wording is now in place.

The regulations say that an unemployed person must, in any week, take those steps that are reasonable in his case and which offer him his best prospects of employment. That is not unreasonable. However, to ensure that the test is applied in a sensitive and fair way, we have laid down certain things that we think form a vital part of the picture. First, we have given examples of particular matters to which the adjudication officer should have regard in deciding what was reasonable in an individual claimant's case. Some of these are obvious: for example, the claimant's skills, qualifications, abilities, or physical or mental limitations; similarly, how long he has been unemployed, his work experience, what jobs are available and where they are, and what he had done already to seek work. Others may be less obvious, but are none the less important.

One example that came out of our discussions in Committee—a number of Members who served on it are present today—is the effect on job search if a claimant is homeless. Any limitations that that may place on him will be taken into account. The Committee discussions also led us to specify that regard should be had to time spent on particularly worthwhile activities—for example, service as part-time firemen, lifeboatmen or emergency workers, or attendance at outward bound or guide dog training courses. Another group for whom concern was expressed in Committee consisted of those spending time on vocational training or study, on voluntary work or in an employment or training programme. None of these activities will absolve the individual claimant totally from the need to seek work. We believe that that would be wrong. None the less, all these factors can be weighed in considering either the amount of time which is spent in looking for work or the actual steps which the individual claimant could be expected to undertake.

The regulations also give examples of the types of step that a person may take. As we explained at an earlier stage, the list of examples is not exhaustive or exclusive; it is up to the individual claimant to decide how best to go about securing employment in his chosen field. The list suggests the most common ways of seeking work, but any other equally or more meritorious steps will be taken into account.

As I have already said, a claimant will be expected to seek work every week. Currently, most claimants attend the benefit office fortnightly, and that will not change. The way the job search week will work will be, for example, that a person who attends the office on alternate Wednesdays will be expected to satisfy the test for each Thursday to Wednesday period. In this way, we think that claimants will readily understand that the period that they are being asked about is the two weeks ending on the day on which they are being asked to confirm that they are seeking work.

The last point that I want to mention on actively seeking work is an important one. There will be a number of circumstances in which an individual claimant may be

*[Mr. Scott]*

deemed to be actively seeking work for a given week. These include the first and last weeks of unemployment, when it may be unreasonable to expect a person to meet the condition. Similarly, an individual claimant who is away from home may be excused job search for up to two weeks in a year. Of course, he will still have to be available for work, as now, but I think that this is an important concession. It covers an area we discussed in Committee; short periods of absence, perhaps due to family emergency, can be catered for within the normal arrangements. Provided the claimant is available for work, he should have time during the week to undertake some job search to satisfy the condition.

**Mr. Peter L. Pike** (Burnley): Will the Minister say something about the level of remuneration that people seeking work may be expected to accept? Last year, one of my constituents who had said that he wanted £80 a week was told that under the then rules he was pricing himself out of the market and would therefore lose benefit. He appealed against that and won, but in this day and age it is ridiculous to expect a married person with a family to go for a job at less than £80 a week.

**Mr. Scott:** The employment service will not offer jobs at derisory wages. We discussed this in Committee, and the hon. Gentleman may well have read our proceedings. We do not believe that it is the Government's job to lay down what wages should be paid in particular industries or occupations. We believe that the market is the right force to determine that.

Only if someone turns down a job offered him by the employment service will he be at risk of losing benefit for not having had good cause for turning it down.

**Mr. Frank Field** (Birkenhead): Will the Minister confirm—he was unable to do so in Committee—that it would be reasonable for people to turn down jobs if the amount the job pays, plus the family credit that they gain, will be less than their benefit received while unemployed?

**Mr. Scott:** Given the in-work benefits that are available, it would be almost impossible for someone to be worse off in employment than on benefit. Nevertheless, I cannot give the hon. Gentleman an undertaking that there might not be an occasional case when that happens.

**Mr. Field:** If the Government are so confident about getting it right, why cannot the Minister give a clear assurance that people will not be sent for jobs that will pay them less than what they received in benefit?

**Mr. Scott:** It is not right for the Government to intervene in that way. There may very well be circumstances in which it would be manifestly for the long-term benefit of an individual to take employment that might offer him less than he was receiving in benefit as it would get him back into employment and enable him in due course substantially to increase those earnings for the benefit of himself and his family. Therefore, it would be wrong for us to introduce the provisions that the hon. Gentleman suggests.

Anyone who attends an outward bound course may be deemed to satisfy the condition for up to three weeks. A blind person attending a training course for the use of guide dogs may be deemed to satisfy it for up to four weeks. We have also arranged to deem as actively seeking work individual claimants who spend no less than three days a week participating in some worthwhile activity. That would include firemen, lifeboatmen, emergency workers and those undertaking employment or training programmes.

Although unemployment benefit is primarily intended for those seeking to return to employed earners' employment, we have agreed an important concession for those hoping to become self-employed. They may be deemed to be actively seeking work for up to eight weeks if they are actively pursuing self-employment via the enterprise allowance scheme. The eight weeks will run between the time when the person attends the awareness day under the scheme and makes the application and the start of his self-employment under the scheme. I hope that those arrangements will provide sensible help to claimants who wish not to go into employment but to pursue self-employment.

In Committee there was a great deal of debate about replacing "refusal of suitable employment" with the concept of "refusing employment without good cause". The Act has removed the concept of the employment service having to prove that employment refused by a claimant was in fact "suitable"; the onus will now be on the claimant to show that he had good cause for turning down employment. We think that this is a much-needed change, but, as it is a change, we also feel that it is right for Parliament to lay down guidelines for deciding good cause so that claimants have an understanding of what to expect.

The concept of good cause is not a new one. Current legislation allows a person to escape disqualification for unemployment benefit for turning down or failing to follow up an opportunity of employment if the adjudication officer decides that he had good cause. The adjudication authorities have built up a considerable body of case law, but currently there is no guidance in regulations on the meaning of "good cause".

The regulations specifically require the adjudication authorities to consider, in relation to a failure to follow up any job opportunity, whether the particular employment would be likely to cause serious harm to the claimant's health or whether it would subject him to excessive physical or mental stress. Other matters that they will be required to consider will include any sincerely held religious or conscientious objections that the claimant may have to undertaking particular work, and certain domestic circumstances that might make it unreasonable for him to accept a particular vacancy.

The regulations provide that a person will not generally be able to show good cause unless his journey to work or training would take at least an hour, but there are exceptions of course for those with health problems and caring responsibilities.

Returning to a point I touched on in response to an earlier intervention, a person who turns down a job on pay grounds will not be able to show good cause outside what the legislation calls the "permitted period" at the start of his claim if the job opportunity has been notified to him by the employment service. Only vacancies handled by the employment service will attract that sanction. That will be an important safeguard.

**Mr. Frank Field:** Will the Minister meet the House on another point? If the security is that the job has been offered by the employment service, will he guarantee that the employment service will not advertise or send people to jobs covered by wages councils, if the employer is trying to pay below the legal minimum?

**Mr. Scott:** I cannot give the hon. Gentleman that undertaking. As he knows, the Government do not consider it their role to interfere in the way that he suggests. The employment service will not offer jobs at derisory wages. I cannot accept that it is right or sensible to move into the detailed control of what wages are offered, as the hon. Gentleman suggests. It is highly unlikely that the employment service would do that, but I certainly cannot give a guarantee that it will never do it.

**Mr. Frank Field:** I am not asking the Government to put their sticky fingers into the private affairs of all employers. The Government still have a statutory responsibility to lay down some minimum wages. I am asking that one part of the Government tallies with another part of the Government, and that people will not be sent for jobs paying below the legal minimum. Will the Minister give that guarantee, as people may lose benefit if they do not turn up for those jobs?

**Mr. Scott:** I cannot give the hon. Gentleman that undertaking now, but I shall write to him on the point that he has raised.

The final point on this part of the regulations is about "trial periods". That is a new concept which has been widely welcomed. It recognises the concerns that affect people who have been out of work for some time. The regulations define the claimants who will have a right to benefit from that provision. The provision enables a person to escape a benefit sanction if he gives up a job from the sixth week up to the 12th week of a trial period. It will apply to claimants who have neither worked nor been in full-time education throughout the 26 weeks before the day on which the new job starts. That is an important step in the right direction, encouraging people who have been unemployed for some time to try out a job, knowing that if they fail, or the job proves unsuitable, they will not have put their benefit at risk.

I shall not detain the House for an undue length of time. Other points may be raised in the debate to which I may or may not wish to respond, but the three sets of regulations represent a number of changes to the provision of benefit. On the unemployment issues, I hope that Opposition Members will recognise that we have reflected in the regulations, without resiling from the principle we incorporated in the Bill, many of the concerns that they and some of my hon. Friends voiced in Committee. I assure the House that the Committee discussions had considerable influence on the detailed provisions in the regulations. I know that the hon. Member for Derby, South will feel that we have not gone far enough, but we have considered in great detail all the issues that were raised. I hope that she will feel that we have shown that the discussions in Committee were worth while, although we have not allowed them to undermine our policy intention.

**Mrs. Audrey Wise** (Preston): Can the Minister tell the House whether refusal of work on the grounds of the hours of work being excessive, or bad conditions relating to carrying out the job, are covered by what he said?

**Mr. Scott:** I am confident that those who offer jobs to claimants through the employment service or adjudicate on these matters will do it in a fair and sensitive way. They will take into account a range of factors and I cannot say whether those factors will include the circumstances that the hon. Lady has mentioned.

5.58 pm

**Mrs. Margaret Beckett** (Derby, South): I join the Minister of State in welcoming the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard), to our ranks. I am not sure whether to commiserate with the Minister of State on remaining where he is, as the alternative might have been even less desirable. The Opposition welcome back the new Secretary of State, if only because in the autumn we shall have the opportunity to hold him to his own words about child benefit, instead of seeking to hold a successor to his predecessor's words.

I begin by drawing attention to the absurdity of the debate in which we are engaged today. In a fairly brief time we are debating long and complex regulations, most of which were laid before the House only last Friday. The measures relating to the Social Security Act 1989 will become law before the House returns from the recess, and the timetable does not lend itself to hon. Members having time to consider the implications of the various proposals before us. That is particularly important, as we cannot amend those proposals.

It is also important to consider the regulations because each set of regulations is complex, although they have three things in common. First, they all attack members of the community who need support. Secondly, they all reflect and highlight the objectionable nature of legislation to the purpose of which they give effect. Thirdly, such minor concessions as the regulations contain fail utterly either to disguise or to rectify the harm that they will do.

In common with the Minister, I wish to begin by discussing the community charge regulations. The House has debated the poll tax at length, and as recently as yesterday, so I propose to comment on a few aspects only of the regulations which, as the Minister said, in the main mirror the law on rate rebates. The decision to force all citizens to pay at least 20 per cent. of their rates was unjust and damaging. Its reflection in the poll tax, which by its nature is a worse tax, is a more harmful imposition. Those who face that extra bill are being cheated by the Government in poll tax as they were cheated in rates because they are not being compensated, as the Government claim, for the extra that they must pay. Accounting sleight of hand has clawed back the so-called compensation.

The figures used in yesterday's debate show how those on extremely low incomes will, despite all the Government's weasel words, be liable to pay not just a large part, but the full poll tax. It is clear, for example, that working under-25-year-olds with net incomes as low as £50 or £60 per week are likely to pay the full amount. Single pensioners without earnings on incomes of about £60 or £70 per week will lose all help. Couples on way below average earnings and with children will also be liable to pay the full poll tax.

Having studied the figures, we are somewhat dubious about the Government's claim that it does not matter if the poll tax is onerous and unjust, because one in four will get help to pay it. The Minister repeated that claim today. I am prepared to be generous and assume that, for once, the

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Government are telling the simple truth and that, when the poll tax first comes into effect, one in four will benefit to some extent from the poll tax rebates. I predict with absolute confidence, however, that if one in four people turns out to get some rebate, it will not be long before voices are heard in the Government or on the Conservative Back Benches arguing that the system must be too generous and that benefits should be cut.

That is what always happens under the present Government. First, they change the system in a way that happens to increase the burden on those on low incomes. Then they claim that that does not matter because those on low incomes will be helped through social security. Subsequently, however, they say that too many people are being helped, so the system must be too generous. The social security is then cut by a process described as "better targeting". The Government have done that over and over again.

We believe that the demand for at least a 20 per cent. payment from everyone is wrong and that the rate of withdrawal of rebate as income rises remains too harsh. The Social Security Advisory Committee, in its comments on the regulations, drew attention to the fact that the combination of Government policies means that low earners still lose 80p or 90p for every pound by which their income rises. In common with the Labour party, the SSAC rightly contrasts that with the way in which those on higher incomes lose only half that amount from their marginal tax rates.

Apart from the overall picture, one or two detailed issues should be drawn to the attention of the House and placed on record. First, serious problems have arisen in Scotland over the backdating of claims. We believe that the Government should re-examine that issue—especially if, as I believe the new Secretary of State for the Environment said yesterday, they want to improve the take-up of rebates. Secondly, there are bound to be occasions when overpayment of rebate occurs. Currently there are limits to the action that an authority can take to recover such overpayments, but under the regulations overpayment will be regarded as arrears, although they are not the fault of the claimant.

The authority can recover those overpayments by all the means allowed under poll tax legislation for the recovery of arrears—by deduction from earnings or benefits, by seizure of goods and by the ultimate sanction to hang over the head of the individual, imprisonment. The authority does not have to take any account of ability to repay a debt which, by definition, may not be the claimant's fault. Again, it is some of those detailed difficulties which foster our conclusion that such problems, whether of backdating or of overpayment, are likely to occur.

It is outrageous that someone in hospital for more than six weeks, whose benefit then drops to £8 or £9 per week, should remain liable for at least 20 per cent. of their poll tax. They may also be treated more harshly with respect to earnings disregard than under the current law—and all at a time when the person may have graver things to worry about. The Minister is fond of using the phrase "a perverse incentive". To give a person seriously ill in hospital for a long time a "perverse incentive" to depart this world is perverse indeed. Similarly, it seems ridiculous that someone with a disability—already liable to a personal poll tax charge because he lives in the community—who goes to spend a couple of weeks in a hostel not only becomes liable to pay a daily collective poll tax as well, but even has to make a separate claim to get the rebate to which the law entitles him on that second poll tax charge. That is the kind of absurdity and nonsense that will cause great anxiety and concern and, which in practice will help to discredit this discreditable tax.

It is important to consider the separate issues raised by the other regulations before us which give effect to the Social Security Act 1989. The purpose of that Act is simply to drive people off the unemployment register at almost any cost—especially to them—and, if need be, into low-paid or even temporary employment.

The Minister referred to the way in which the regulations reflect some of the anxieties expressed in Committee about the dangers for the homeless, about the pressure on those who do voluntary work and about the absurdity of expecting someone on holiday to show what he has done actively to seek work, and so on. We welcome anything that improves the way in which the regulations might operate, but by their explicitness the regulations expose and bring into focus the full horror of what the Government are proposing in the 1989 Act. The Government have claimed throughout that a "tiny minority" of people—their term—might be abusing the system by not looking for work as energetically or effectively as they could. Because of that tiny minority, all those unfortunate enough to be unemployed will be exposed to weekly humiliation and shame as their failures are dragged into the light of day time and time again, week after week.

Ministers have argued—the right hon. Gentleman did so again today—that it does not matter that the majority will suffer because a tiny minority might be at fault, because that suffering will be avoided since, whatever the law might say, the employment service will implement the regulations with compassion and understanding. That is not and cannot be true. The employment service cannot implement the regulations with compassion or understanding. One need only look at the regulations for it to become crystal clear, beyond any question or doubt, that if the employment service is to show compassion and understanding it will have to ignore the regulations and fail to put them into effect. It is not possible for anyone to demand a report of the steps that are called for in the regulations and to be compassionate to someone for whom that recital exposes a weekly catalogue of failure.

The regulations require the employment service to ascertain what steps have been taken each and every week to look for work. They explicitly state that one step will usually be insufficient and that more suitable and appropriate steps must be taken. The Minister has identified a framework of possible explanation, justification or, in some cases, exemption, but the point of all our objections to the Act and to the regulations, which the Minister has refused to accept although I am sure he grasps it, is that the sheer process of questioning and eliciting that information, week in and week out, will harass and humiliate the unemployed. This is particularly true of two groups—first, those who have been ruled to be "fit for light work", a ruling that many people unsuccessfully dispute and, secondly, those who are not actually receiving benefit but are forced to sign on to continue to get pension credits, who often know that they have no realistic prospect of finding work and will deeply resent being put through this catalogue to establish their entitlement only to credits.

I should be grateful if the Minister can clarify, either today or in writing later, the steps that people have to take if they are not to risk losing benefit and if he will say whether membership of a job club or acceptance, however reluctantly, of an employment training place will of itself satisfy the provisions. I am sorry to say that, whatever else may be clear, that is not. The main point that concerns us is that those who fall foul of this aspect of the law run the risk of losing all right to benefit. If they lose benefit, they may well receive no income for a month, as the Minister made plain in his remarks and as we elicited in Committee.

At the end of a two-week period, a person will be judged as to whether he or she has been actively seeking work during that period. Such people would normally then get their payment of benefit for those two weeks in arrears. If they are judged not to have been actively seeking work, they automatically lose that money, but they cannot resatisfy that provision for some time. When they do resatisfy it, the benefit will again be paid in arrears. It seemed to us in Committee, and it seems to me now, that the minimum period for which one could lose one's right to benefit would be a month.

I know that a person can apply for a payment on the grounds of hardship—that would be a payment of income support; hence our parallel regulations—but, of course, that person has no right to such a payment. He or she can plead for it only if hardship can be shown. If it is awarded, it is liable to be paid only at a reduced rate of 60 per cent. of normal benefit rates. We are especially disturbed that this may happen where a doubt has arisen about a person's active search for work but no decision has yet been made. Once already, following the suicide of Rachel Caine, the Government have drawn back from withdrawing benefit rights while a formal decision is considered. We particularly regret the fact that in these regulations, and with regard to the provision about actively seeking work, the Government have reneged on that decision.

I am also alarmed that in these regulations the Government take power to withdraw benefit for a whole week if a person is thought to have restricted his or her availability for work on just one day. Apart from anything else, it is hard to see—again, despite the Minister's observations about the variety of circumstances that will be taken into account—how or whether that or other provisions will in practice allow unemployed people to study under the 21-hour rule, which has allowed some people to try to improve their circumstances while remaining unemployed and without losing benefit.

That brings me to the aspects of the regulations which are supposed, by encouraging people to undertake a wider variety of training or jobs, to "ease the rigidities"—the phrase used by the Minister in Committee—of the labour market. This is DSS-speak for removing the protection which our law has offered for 60 years and which prevents a person from being forced into low-paid, temporary or unsuitable work. The Minister said, with commendable frankness, that in these regulations the onus of showing whether work is suitable is removed from the employment service and placed on the claimant. My hon. Friends the Members for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) and for Preston (Mrs. Wise) pressed the Minister on that point.

It is clear from the regulations, and even clearer from the Minister's reply, that there is no pay so low and no working conditions so harsh that someone might not be pressed to take a job or training place in such circumstances. The regulations state that the possible danger to health must be "severe". We have had experience—my hon. Friend the Member for Preston will recall discussions in a previous Committee—of how restrictively that definition can be interpreted. If we talk about a person having a degree of protection only if there is a "severe" danger to his or her health, that again fills us with alarm.

Even though we have persuaded the Government at least to consider some of the practicalities of the issue—we are grateful for small mercies—such as travel time and what the work expenses are likely to be before people can be disqualified from right to benefit or credits, we still believe that they will not be enough. It is clear that people may be pressed to take a job or a training place which, as my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead explained, pays less than they can draw on benefit, with possible serious implications for their well-being and that of their families.

In the past, when we have made this point, occasionally Conservative Members have said, "Why should that not be so? After all, people should be in work and not drawing benefit, if there is any work available, even if the pay is less than benefit." We all know that there are people whose devotion to the work ethic is so strong that they are prepared to take work even when they might receive more to support their families if they drew benefit. There are people prepared to make that sacrifice on their own and their families' behalf. The fact that there are some individuals who hold the work ethic so strongly that they are prepared to take that step is one thing, but for the Government to attempt to force people to do so, whatever harm may be caused to their families, is another matter and may cause considerable family problems and hardship.

We are particularly worried about this point—again, it is explicit in the law—because the jobs and places that people are forced to take may be temporary, yet their acceptance may cause the loss of transitional additions to benefit. The House will recall that these transitional additions are paid only to those whose benefit entitlement under the new, improved social security system post-1988 is less than their benefit entitlement under the old unimproved system. These are likely to be people with minor disabilities, who previously received extra weekly payments but who may have lost them under the new provisions. That is exactly the kind of group who may have been ruled to be "fit for light work", but if those people are forced to take such work temporarily they will lose their transitional additions.

There are other detailed anomalies or problems with the regulations, such as the reference to "qualifying former employment", which I presume is meant to deal with those who take maternity leave and whose child care needs may preclude them from returning, or make them wish not to return, to their previous jobs. There are also aspects of the new phraseology for dealing with payments which the Department will decide are payments in lieu of notice, thereby perhaps deriving people of benefit.

These complex regulations raise such a variety of issues that it is impossible to deal with them in the time available to the House. In any event, because we cannot amend the regulations but must accept or reject them whole and entire, we should concentrate on their overall purpose and

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effect. The overall purpose of these unemployment benefit regulations stems from policies which have produced a vicious Act of Parliament, against the detailed implementation of which we have the strongest objections. I advise my right hon. and hon. Friends to vote against the regulations.

6.18 pm

**Mr. Timothy Kirkhope** (Leeds, North-West): This debate is being held in an atmosphere of rapidly falling unemployment throughout the country. Of course, it has been falling for a considerable period. Although the Government must always remain conscious of the needs of unemployed people, they must be well aware also of the need to fill all the jobs using the labour and skills available as we move towards the 1990s. This is an enormous problem not only in this country but throughout the western world. In that context, the statement by my right hon. Friend the Minister is all the more important in showing the Government's caring attitude towards those who are still unemployed and may be unemployed in the future.

I remember well our discussions in Committee on the matters we are discussing this evening relating to the need for those who receive benefit to be actively seeking work. I also remember some of the remarks made by the Opposition which seemed quite remarkable at the time, and the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) has said nothing to alter my view this evening.

The state always has the responsibility to do what it can to help those who are unemployed to find work. However, although that is the responsibility of the state, those who are unemployed and those who advocate the cause of the unemployed also have a responsibility. In exchange for the Government doing everything they can to provide a climate in which jobs are available, social security and financial help in the short term for the unemployed, and extra training and places in employment, it is only right that we should be able to expect that those who are unemployed and who claim to wish to be employed should be asked to demonstrate that in a tangible way. That is not a monstrous or unreasonable suggestion; it is highly reasonable, and is the purpose of our proposals. It was the purpose of our proposals in Committee and the regulations flesh out those proposals, so the Minister is now carrying out his pledges in Committee.

The regulations and the criteria they contain show the compassion that the Government expect to be shown to the unemployed who go for assessment. It is important not to have the impression that we are trying to tighten up the system. We are not; that is why the hon. Member for Derby, South is so wrong. We are trying to be as flexible as possible and to give as much benefit of the doubt to as many as we can, taking into account the points my right hon. Friend the Minister made about the skills each individual may have, his work experience, the particular circumstances of his home life and any other difficulties he may have—which, as a compassionate Government, we would want to see put on the back of the legislation.

As a Government, we have done much to provide new jobs. We have done everything any Government could reasonably be expected to do, and far more than previous Governments have managed to do. It is important, therefore, that those who are offered all this help should try to take advantage of what we are giving them to help themselves. In a moral sense, the most important aim is to provide people with the opportunity to help themselves and their families. That must be the moral high ground, and that is the position the Government have taken.

I was amazed to hear the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short)—who I regret is not here this evening—speak several times in Committee about the jobs she considered to be unacceptable to present to people who were asked to show that they were looking for work. The worst job she could think of was working for a fast food outlet called McDonald's, and she went on about it repeatedly. I wondered about her motives and whether she had had a difficult experience consuming one of its products. However, she picked the wrong organisation. Organisations such as McDonald's have a proper management structure, and encourage people who show that they are prepared to work to get on.

The hon. Member for Derby, South said this evening that people might be offered work that was somehow unacceptable to them. We should be able to support work in itself. We should value the work ethic because work is good, not bad, as has been suggested. The vast majority of people, as Opposition Members say, agree with that.

**Mr. Ian McCartney** (Makerfield): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Kirkhope:** No.

**Mr. McCartney:** Come on: give way.

**Mr. Kirkhope:** I will not give way.

We came to the conclusion in Committee that the Opposition thought that there was something wrong about work and that work itself was not an especially good thing. They seemed to believe that, if the work was not eminently suitable for all the requirements of an individual, he should not work at all. That seems an odd attitude; if they want to be sensible, they should realise the need for us to be able to fill jobs as we go into the 1990s.

The regulations are not only eminently sensible and in line with the commitment that my right hon. Friend gave in Committee that he would puruse the matter further: they show yet again how we care and how we shall try as hard as we can to ensure that the regulations are applied in a humane and compassionate, but nevertheless a determined manner.

6.25 pm

**Mrs. Audrey Wise** (Preston): The whole purpose of the regulations, despite the Minister's protestations, is to intervene in the market, and to drive down wages and worsen conditions for those who are already low paid and already in difficulties as a result of lack of skills or other problems. They are the people who will suffer because of the Government's actions.

The Minister talked much about not intervening in the market. We know that the labour market exists and that it is a market in which people buy and sell labour, but we also know that the buyers and sellers of labour do not meet on equal terms. A person trying to sell his or her labour does so under the constraint that, if he or she fails to obtain an adequate price or proper conditions, he or she cannot withdraw from the transaction except at the risk of being unable to have the means of life. Those are not equal terms. The buyer of labour—the employer—does not face such a constraint; that is why workers have had to try to combine to protect themselves and to have some chance of achieving fair wages—a fair price for their labour.

**Mr. McCartney:** I can give my hon. Friend an example of the Government intervening in the marketplace to drive down wages. The Department of Health has circulated rules to district health authorities about the privatisation of internal activities such as laundry. One of my local health authorities recently awarded a contract to a company outside the direct labour organisation. The employees were sacked. Some were offered their jobs back at two thirds of their previously low wages. As they had already received the letter, refusal to accept the offer meant that they would not be awarded benefit. Some still refused to accept the offer and now do not receive benefit as a result of the Government's direct intervention in the marketplace.

**Mrs. Wise:** I thank my hon. Friend for that example. We have been treated this evening to a clear demonstration of the lengths to which the Government are prepared to go. In response to pressure from my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), the Minister categorically refused to give an undertaking that Government agencies would not offer work at illegally low wages.

We are discussing not undesirable wages, but illegal wages. The Government hint and threaten that they intend to abolish wages councils. They would dearly like to do that because they do not want any wage floor—they do not want any wage to be regarded as too low. They have not yet abolished wages councils, however, and there are still wages that are illegal. The Minister has refused to say that the Government employment service would not offer jobs at those illegal wages. The Government are thus prepared to connive at employers breaking the law. Yet the Minister talks about not intervening.

I inquired whether refusal of work on the grounds that the hours were excessive or unsuitable would be regarded as within a person's rights. The Minister refused to give any such undertaking. In parallel with the Social Security Bill, an Employment Bill has been going through the House whose effect will be to remove a great many rights previously attaching to young people and women. There are jobs which at this moment it would still be illegal for women to take, but if, after the Employment Bill becomes an Act, women are unwilling to take such jobs, they may well be refused benefit. The stress that is being placed on workers to take jobs, regardless of the conditions and hours, and no matter how sweated the work may be, is unprecedented since early this century.

Let me give the House an example of the kind of thing that is happening to women's work at the moment. A well-known supermarket is trying to impose on its checkout operators a target of handling 25 items per minute. Does the Minister regard that as likely to do serious harm to a person's health? I can assure him that it does.

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett** (Pembroke): Is the hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) talking about the new system EFTPOS, whereby the checkout operator passes an item carrying a bar code over a light? If so, 25 items a minute does not seem that arduous.

**Mrs. Wise:** Oh, so it is not arduous. The hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) does not seem to understand that supermarket checkout operators have to lift the produce. Has the hon. Gentleman ever tried to lift—*[Interruption.]* Yes, it has to be lifted. I have the impression that the hon. Gentleman never goes shopping.

**Hon. Members:** He does it all the time.

**Mr. McCartney:** He sends his butler.

**Mrs. Wise:** That is more likely.

My union has calculated that such workers may be handling a ton of goods every few hours—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Pembroke thinks that it is nothing, does he? The hon. Gentleman does not know what a Europacket of detergent looks or feels like. Members of my union who work on supermarket checkouts know what it feels like to lift endless products on to and off a conveyor belt.

**Mr. Bennett:** Will the hon. Lady give way?

**Mrs. Wise:** No, I will not give way. I recommend to the hon. Gentleman that he volunteers to go to work in the supermarket to which I have referred—not for five minutes but for a week at least. I shall make very sure that his words and attitudes are made well known to the women in the retail trade whom he derides.

**Mr. Pike:** Is it not also a fact that, when checkout operators pass items across the machine that reads the bar code, the machine often does not read the code on the first time? When I have been standing in checkout queues, the operators have often had to repeat the process two or three times before the light has caught the bar code in the right way to register the transaction on the till.

**Mrs. Wise:** My hon. Friend is perfectly right.

I might tell the hon. Member for Pembroke that another well-known supermarket chain has a target of 20 items per minute, or three items per second——

**Mr. Bennett:** Three items per second?

**Mrs. Wise:** I am sorry—I mean an item every three seconds. That is already causing considerable harm to the workers in that supermarket chain. Conservative Members and their wives and daughters will never work as supermarket checkout operators.

**Mr. Bennett** *rose*——

**Mrs. Wise:** If there is anything that I can say with confidence, it is that they have never done such work and will never do it——

**Mr. Bennett:** Will the hon. Lady give way?

**Mrs. Wise:** No. [HON. MEMBERS: Give way.] No, I will not give way to the hon. Gentleman, and I shall tell him why. Yesterday evening I waited three hours hoping to speak on health. The debate was hijacked by Conservative Members who took an inordinate amount of time so that only two Labour Members were able to speak although the debate was on an Opposition day. I have let him intervene once. He has talked rubbish once and I shall refrain from allowing him to reveal his superior attitude and his arrogance again.

I have described the developments that are taking place in the retail trade. Employers are being aided and abetted

*[Mrs. Wise]*

in their attacks on employees by their Government—because this is the employers' Government. Workers who try to resist conditions which are totally unsuitable will be deprived of the means of life. That is what this debate is about, and it is a serious matter.

Let me give the House some further examples of the Government's hypocrisy. The hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope), who has not managed to stay to listen even to the speech following his own, talked about the high moral ground, and the Government claim that high moral ground. But the regulations that already exist —which will be worsened by those under debate—include requirements that people should be available for work at 24 hours' notice. That requirement applies to people who care for children or elderly people, who want and need to go into the labour market and who could accept work were they given a reasonable opportunity to make care arrangements.

The Government allow them 24 hours. That can have one of two effects: either the person refuses the job and loses the benefit, or the child or old or sick person has to be left in unsuitable care, or even with no care. The requirement for availability at 24 hours' notice gives people very little opportunity to arrange care. If the Government wanted to be reasonable, they would allow at least a fortnight, so that the person seeking work could make arrangements.

It is impossible for people to make arrangements for child care before they know whether they have a job, where the job is or what wages will be offered. It is only possible to arrange child care once those things are known. However, people are allowed only 24 hours to arrange care. If the Government really wanted to make it easier for people to enter the labour market, they would have changed the regulations, and had they done so, we would have supported them tonight.

To some extent, travelling costs are taken into account when judging whether it is reasonable for someone to refuse a job. However, child care costs are not considered. Under pressure from my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead, the Minister refused to give an undertaking that someone would not be required to accept a job which left him or her worse off in an absolute sense. The need to pay child care costs can exacerbate the problem and lead to people being worse off. However, so far removed from reality are Conservative Members that they have ignored those genuine problems.

Conservative Members prefer to pretend that they stand on the high moral ground, and they accuse other people of wilfully refusing work. I believe that people do not wilfully refuse work. The vast majority of people dislike being unemployed. They dislike its stigma and lack of income and the fact that it causes many people to feel that their lives are without purpose.

The unemployed want work. It is the final straw for those people when the Government tell them that they are to blame for their own problems. It is the final insult for the Government to claim that the unemployed are wilfully refusing work and to tell them that, for their own good, they will be forced to accept work, regardless of the wages, the hours and whether it is night work or totally unsuitable shifts for women workers—which will now become legal —and even regardless of whether the wages are actually illegal. Those people will be forced to accept work so that Conservative Members can believe that the work ethic is being pursued in this country. It would be more tolerable if Conservative Members abandoned their hypocritical claim to the moral high ground and simply said that they were against the workers. That is the truth.

6.42 pm

**Mr. Simon Burns** (Chelmsford): I agree with the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) that it is a great pleasure to welcome my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard) to the Government Front Bench as the new Under-Secretary of State for Social Security. Without wanting to sound in any way patronising, it is particularly welcome to see joining the Government for the first time one of my Back-Bench colleagues who has a great deal of experience in the subject for which she now holds a brief.

When my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West lived in the real world, many miles from this place, she was associated with health and social security matters in Norfolk. The Department of Social Security, the Government and the House will benefit from her knowledge and expertise and from the sympathetic way in which she deals with these matters, as I witnessed before her elevation, when I had the privilege, over the past two years, of sharing two Standing Committees with her—the Committee stages of the Social Security Acts 1988 and 1989. I want to wish her every success.

It will come as no surprise to the hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) to learn that I could not agree with almost anything that she said. Fortunately, I have never fallen into the trap of regarding everyone on the unemployment register as a scrounger, a ne'er-do-well or someone who does not want to look for work. However, I have not made the gross mistake of claiming that everyone on the unemployment register desperately wants to find work and is looking for it day in, day out. Sadly, that is not the case. I do not believe that there are many scroungers on the unemployment register or people who are not prepared to look for work. In many instances, the numbers are grossly exaggerated. However, we must be realists.

I want tonight to consider the regulations which bring out the fine detail of the broad sweep of the Social Security Act 1989, which introduces the requirement for people actively to seek work before they can qualify for and claim unemployment benefit. I see nothing wrong with that requirement. As I have said before, I cannot see any justification for fully able-bodied people to claim unemployment benefit if they have no intention of trying to find a job or taking a job if one is shown to them.

The 1987 labour survey showed that there were 700,000 vacant jobs and that 350,000 unemployed people could have found jobs because the vacancies did not necessarily require specialist training or those jobs included an offer of training. We are extremely fortunate in my constituency at the moment. There are 1,711 unemployed people, representing 2·9 per cent. of the population. However, companies in Chelmsford are crying out for staff to fill vacancies. It is not surprising that business men and retailers ask me in amazement, "Where is the unemployment? I am looking for someone to work for me and I am prepared to train them if they are not trained, but

I can't get anyone and haven't been able to get anyone for weeks. Nevertheless, I understand that there are more than 1,700 people unemployed in the area."

There is a great deal of confusion about this. I believe that this requirement is long overdue and it is right for the Government to introduce the regulations, which lay down the ground rules.

**Mrs. Beckett:** As the hon. Gentleman has attended more than one of our debates on social security matters, I am sure that he can enlighten his constituents' confusion. He will have heard several of my hon. Friends who are experts in this subject remind the House that levels of unemployment and of vacancies form a shifting pattern. It is not a simple matter of saying that there are X people here and X vacancies there and the two can simply be put together. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman could have explained that to his constituents.

**Mr. Burns:** The hon. Lady has not made a new point. It is obvious that there are constant changes. However, there are far too many vacancies going begging while the unemployed people do not take the jobs. That is the crux of the problem.

It is churlish of Opposition Members not to give credit where is it due to my right hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security. As my right hon. Friend said, the regulations which deal with actively seeking work take into account the numerous debates that we had in Committee on the Social Security Act 1989, and they meet a number of the points that were raised by Opposition Members. The regulations have been improved by my right hon. Friend listening to the arguments and taking on board those arguments that were justified.

**Mr. John Battle** (Leeds, West): Which ones?

**Mr. Burns:** If the hon. Gentleman will wait, he will discover some of the improvements that were made.

The regulations will place the onus on the individual to go out and find a job. There is welcome flexibility in the fact that the Government have accepted that there are times during the year when people must be away and cannot actively seek work—perhaps, for example, because of a death in the family or because of other personal problems. There are two weeks in which people can, for want of a better word, be exempt from actively seeking work.

Hon. Members should warmly welcome the fact that the Government have recognised the need to encourage self-employment. Allowances are made for people to become self-employed under the enterprise allowance scheme. Part-time firemen, emergency workers and other people who undertake employment or training programmes for no more than three days a week will also be helped by the regulations. The regulations will ensure that people who are out of work will register with employment agencies, contact employers and apply for jobs so that they can demonstrate that they can actively seek work. The improvement is that there will be no cop-out for those who genuinely do not want to work, but claim money.

**Mr. McCartney:** The previous Minister of State, Department of Employment sent his resignation to the Prime Minister on the grounds that he could not survive on £35,000 a year. In her reply, the Prime Minister said that she understood his problem. A Minister for Employment could not be persuaded to do his job for £35,000, yet that man wanted to take benefit off some kid who cannot work for £64 a week or less.

**Mr. Burns:** I understand what a mistake I made by giving way to the hon. Gentleman. He expected a cheap titter of laughter for that intervention, and I am sure that he was disappointed. It was a disgraceful and totally unwarranted intervention, which brought down the level of the debate. I shall continue, after being rudely and unnecessarily interrupted.

The actively seeking work test will apply to people who have no intention of seeking work. The Government have prevented a coach and horses being driven through the regulations by shifting the onus so that a claimant must prove that he is actively seeking work, rather than the other way round. In the past, it was too easy for people who did not want to work to go reluctantly to a job interview and to fall at the first fence. It is very easy for people who do not want a job to be singularly unimpressive in a job interview, so that no employer will employ them.

**Mr. Battle:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Burns:** No, I am sorry, but I will not give way. Several other hon. Members want to speak in the debate, and I want to keep my remarks relatively short.

A claimant will have to justify his actions over the set period. A glaring loophole will be avoided before the regulations come into force.

I welcome the regulations. The Opposition should be grateful for them. Only the most churlish Opposition Member would not recognise that the arguments in Committee were listened to and adopted. The country will accept that, if people are to take unemployment benefit because they are genuinely unemployed, as part of the contract the least that anybody can do is honour his side of the bargain and go out and seek a job. That will also ensure that unemployment is genuine.

6.54 pm

**Mr. Ronnie Fearn** (Southport): I welcome the Under-Secretary of State to her new position. I always examine Cabinet reshuffles to find out whether any hon. Member with compassion will join the Government. The Under-Secretary has compassion, and I hope that she brings it to social security debates.

There is deep concern about the regulations. They will result in severe hardship for claimants, compel the unemployed to take up temporary training and employment schemes—whether or not they are suitable—and close the option to study on a part-time basis. The introduction of restart interviews resulted in a marked increase in the number of unemployed claimants having their availability for work challenged, often wrongly. Claimants lost benefit for prolonged periods while their appeals were heard and their cases were decided. Many lived on the arts and cultural side of life. I have known young writers and artists to be caught in prolonged periods of non-payment, and I hope that their cases will be sympathetically examined.

In response, the Government introduced a special regulation which meant that an existing claimant did not lose benefit until his case was decided by an adjudication officer. What happens to a new claimant? How long must he wait for his case to be adjudicated, and how long will

*[Mr. Ronnie Fearn]*

it be before a decision is made? In such cases, there appears to be a safeguard—long-winded though it may be. However, there is no such safeguard for claimants who fall foul of the actively seeking employment regulations.

A circular to employment service managers states that claimants will not be deemed to be actively seeking work pending adjudication, as presently happens with availability testing.

A claimant will be ineligible for unemployment benefit or income support until an adjudicating officer makes a decision, a process which can take weeks. A sample of 5 per cent. of availability decisions between July and September 1987 revealed that only approximately 85 per cent. were made within four weeks. Only when an adjudicating officer has made a decision can a claimant appeal and take advantage of the opportunity to receive income support at a reduced rate if hardship can be proved.

Although participation in employment schemes will be formally voluntary, a claimant can demonstrate his active job search by joining a scheme. The regulations specify that the actively seeking work condition is satisfied by application for or acceptance on a course or programme that the Secretary of State has specified and considers will improve the prospects of that person obtaining employment or becoming self-employed. It is vital to know what specifying a course or programme means, which ones are to be specified, who gives the information, and who decides what is to be specified.

In practice, joining a job club, entering employment training or attending a restart course are likely to be steps that the Secretary of State considers will improve a claimant's prospects. Perhaps the Minister will clarify that point. The job club in Southport is certainly successful, but I am far from certain about how job clubs are faring nationally. Perhaps the Minister will clarify that point also. I believe that job clubs are not successful throughout the regions. Joining a job club is one way of satisfying the actively seeking employment condition. Job club leaders will have to ensure that all members are genuine and realistic in their search for jobs. How are they to do that? Job refusals may raise doubts about actively seeking employment or the availability of employment.

Finally, the draft regulations outline a range of active steps, including job applications and registering with employment agencies. They say nothing about claimants taking up part-time education as a way of improving their skills and employability. Given the existing pressure on 21-hour rule claimants to give up their studies, many motivated claimants will find themselves forced to take up less appropriate vocational rather than educational options. Perhaps the Minister will clarify that point on further education.

I appear to have asked seven or eight questions in my short speech. I hope that the Minister will answer all or most of them. I have studied the documents carefully and I find that in many ways the Government's stance lacks compassion. Because of that, we shall vote against the motion.

7 pm

**Mr. Mike Watson** (Glasgow, Central): I shall direct my remarks to the regulations on unemployment benefit, particularly paragraph 12 onwards.

I find it astonishing that in this day and age Conservative Members still make the sort of remarks that we heard from the hon. Members for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope) and for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns). The hon. Member for Leeds, North-East had the audacity to talk about the Government's caring attitude. I find that unbelievable. Having done his duty for this evening by delivering his speech prepared by Conservative Central Office, he has gone off, no doubt to dinner somewhere. I hope that he enjoys it. He also talked of the high moral ground of the Government. The word "high" applies to the Government only in terms of their high and mighty attitude to people less well-off than them.

The hon. Member for Chelmsford told us that we should be grateful for the Government's policies and the new regulations. I find it difficult to accept the Oliver Twist mentality thrust down our throats by Conservative Members. It is utterly unacceptable because it is hypocritical.

The regulations in no way represent a caring attitude. They are absurd, as my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) said. There should be no need to prove that one is actively seeking employment. I believe that only a small number of people are prepared to be unemployed for any length of time. Everyone I know who is or has been unemployed has found it insufferable. In my constituency, the official unemployment rate is 21 per cent. In real terms, if we leave aside the massaged statistics, it is much closer to 30 per cent.

Every day I come into contact with people who have been unemployed for periods, in many cases, in excess of two or three years. They do not need to be told that they will not receive unemployment benefit unless they can demonstrate that they are actively seeking employment. They are desperate for employment. They are crying out for it. Sometimes they take jobs with ludicrous rates of pay, part-time jobs or demeaning jobs which they never dreamed that they would have to take. That is the reality of Britain in 1989—a reality which the Government utterly refuse to take on board, as the new regulations show.

I refer the House to regulations 12B, D and E. Paragraph 1 of 12B states that an individual must take

"the steps which are reasonable in his case as offer him his best prospects of receiving offers of employment."

The regulations do not specify how the individual is to know what steps are likely to offer the best prospects of employment, yet, when it comes to the bit, the adjudication officer will be required to decide that there may have been other steps that the individual should have taken which may have improved his prospects. How will the adjudication officer, or, indeed, the individual, make such decisions?

Paragraph 2 lists the factors to be taken into account in deciding whether a person has taken reasonable steps. It is notable that he is not required to take the steps which are reasonable but only those likely to

"offer him his best prospects of receiving offers of employment."

Imagine being desperate for work and having to plough through regulations, crossing one hurdle after another while all the time it is assumed that one is trying to defraud the system, does not want to work and would rather sit at home with one's feet up receiving unemployment benefit. That is the assumption inherent in the regulations. The Government are wrong to assume that people do not want to work.

**Mr. Scott:** The hon. Gentleman is putting up Aunt Sallies and knocking them down. They are not in the least valid. When people first claim benefit they will be interviewed by a new claimant adviser. Their personal circumstances and past record will be analysed and advice will be given about the appropriate steps to take. Subsequently, if it is felt that they are not taking the most appropriate steps, they will be given further advice. Only when someone declines to accept the advice will he be in danger of falling into the trap that the hon. Gentleman outlined. The object of the employment service is to help people back into employment, not to deny them benefit.

**Mr. Watson:** I am glad to hear the Minister say that, but I wish that it was specified in the regulations. As in so many other cases where it is not specified, all power rests with the adjudication officer. I should be delighted if a provision could be inserted in the regulations to say that it is incumbent on DSS officers to give that advice to individuals. The regulations seem to be characterised by confusion, or at least potential confusion. Complete discretion for the adjudication officer is unsatisfactory.

Paragraph 4 of regulation 12B lists some of the steps that a person may be required to take to show that he is actively seeking employment. Presumably, the word "include" means that the list is not exhaustive. It seems odd to exclude the use of a jobcentre. I should have thought that that was the obvious place to which an individual would be expected to go to show that he is actively seeking employment. I hope that the Minister will inform us whether that has been excluded deliberately or whether it was a mistake.

In paragraph 12D, we see the Government at their most patronising. It deals with cases where individuals are deemed actively to be seeking employment even when it is clear that they are not. Apparently—I say apparently because it is not clear—they will not be required to seek work for two weeks a year. I presume that that is a form of holiday, which is generous, but it must be specified.

Paragraph 4 deals with enabling people to establish themselves as self-employed. The Government continually inform us that during the years that they have been in power, the number of self-employed has increased dramatically. Not surprisingly, Conservative Members welcome that. It is inconceivable that someone could set up a business and achieve self-employed status in eight weeks, given all the obstacles of obtaining grants, taxation, raising capital and finding premises. Apparently, if people do not have the business up and running within eight weeks, they can be denied benefit. That is extraordinary.

Paragraph 12E lists the matters to be taken into account in deciding whether a person has good cause for refusing or failing to apply for employment or training. My hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) eloquently outlined the difficulties into which that could pitch people. It seems strange that we are qualifying those conditions.

Paragraph 12E(2)(a) refers to employment or training that

"would be likely to . . . cause serious harm to his health."

The implication is that people will be disqualified from benefit for refusing work that would harm their health unless they can prove that it will cause serious harm. What is the difference between harm and serious harm? Where is it defined how an individual will know the difference? Surely, to a significant extent, it should be for an individual and his or her doctor to decide.

Paragraph 2 refers to responsibility for the care of another member of the household. What happens if a member of an individual's close family, such as one's mother, father, grandmother or grandfather, is in need of attention and does not live in the household but lives instead in accommodation nearby and yet requires care? Apparently such a situation is excluded from the regulations.

I do not intend to talk about those regulations at any greater length, because they have already been dealt with, but it is fair to say that they form part of a pattern. As I said earlier, the assumption is that people are dishonest and do not want to work. The pattern appears designed to punish people who are unable to find work but who, in many cases in my experience, have tried hard, indeed desperately, to find work, but who have been hit from several directions. The pattern involves other attacks on people's living standards, such as housing benefit cuts and the abolition of single payments with the introduction of the social fund. All those things were basically designed to save public expenditure.

If I may be allowed to digress slightly, appalling figures about the social fund were produced at the beginning of this month showing massive under-claiming of the grants available in its annual budget. It was precisely the Government's intention to cut such expenditure when they introduced the social fund, and it has worked.

I have already arranged to meet the staff at my local DSS office to find out why there has been a 54 per cent. underspend in the Lauriston area of Glasgow. Of the £379,000 allocated budget, £205,000 remains unclaimed. In an area of multiple deprivation, with high unemployment and appalling housing, it is not credible that that figure is accurate unless people are being deliberately dissuaded from claiming. Indeed, that is the trend that the Government are encouraging. They are trying to make the people who make a claim on the state feel that they are a burden, that they are doing wrong, and that they should therefore stop claiming. That is especially harsh on the unemployed.

My final point relates to young people. Another part of the pattern relates to 16 and 17-year-olds who, with effect from September last year, have been denied income support if they are not either in work or on a youth training scheme. Again, I refer to what has happened in my own constituency where there is a shortfall—there are 1,300 more people wanting YTS places than there are places available. Unless those young people can demonstrate severe hardship, they are denied income support. That is appalling, but it is again part of the pattern to which I have referred.

The Government can do what they like in terms of regulations, in trying to suppress the unemployment figures or to dissuade people from claiming benefit by making it as difficult as possible, but they will not fool the people of this country in the long term. They will not fool the unemployed people of this country who will bear the brunt of these hurtful, spiteful and completely unnecessary regulations on the actively seeking work condition.

7.13 pm

**Mr. John Battle** (Leeds, West): After 10 years' experience of a Conservative Government, and of the present Government in particular, perhaps we should not be surprised by the amount of time that the Government are taking to push through a tightening and reduction of benefits. It does not seem to take any time to get those things on the agenda. The machinery of government moves with remarkable speed when they want to reduce benefits or to tighten the social security structure. I say that because the Social Security Act 1989, to which these regulations refer, passed back to the House only last week and was given Royal Assent last Friday. Within hours, the regulations were before the House, and they will be law before we return from the recess.

We should be absolutely clear that the regulations on the community charge mean a benefit reduction. The Government have said that the new system will mirror the existing rebate system. However, the new system distorts the reflection because under the poll tax proposals people will get less than they get under the present rebate system.

Conservative Members have been in real difficulty with the poll tax. The Government sold it on the premise that every person had to pay, but some hon. Members asked, "What about those who are unable to pay and those who receive rebates?" The Government then decided that they would have to relax the provisions but said that everybody would have to pay at least 20 per cent. However, there is a difficulty in the provisions in the regulations. Because there is a finite and fixed figure in the income support regulations, this means in practice that, because of the average figure that has been assumed for the poll tax, some people will have to pay more than 20 per cent. That means that they will face a real reduction in their living standards because they will have to pay more than they do now under the current rebate system.

The Government seem to be carrying out a giant tax con trick. They constantly tell us that their Budgets cut personal taxation, but they are actually increasing taxation as a whole, not least by increasing indirect taxation, and now by effectively increasing local taxation. They are insisting that, if we want any residue of local government to be left in this country, everyone must pay the price because the Government are not prepared to make the contribution that they should make from the centre, from the Treasury at national level. In other words, to use the language of insurance—we may look back on the social security system wistfully as a system which did, indeed, provide national insurance—when we get to the small print, we find that the national sales pitch really means that full cover will no longer be provided because the total cover for the 20 per cent. payments will not be matched by the demands of the poll tax.

Conservative Members have woken up rather late in the day to the implications of the poll tax. Indeed, it is only in the last two weeks that they have come to the House and insisted that Ministers look again—after those same Members spent months voting for every clause in the legislation. As soon as they realised that the poll tax would hit their constituents, they were on their feet practically asking the Secretary of State to withdraw it. I am tempted to argue that if we had a re-vote and a free vote on the poll tax legislation now, there would be no poll tax and thereafter no need for these regulations.

I hope that Conservative Members will work out the figures relating to these regulations during the recess. It is not enough for them simply to protest about the poll tax, and it is certainly not enough for them to pretend that the provisions will protect the poor against its implications. If they look at the detail in relation to their constituency cases, they will find that the provisions will not do what is claimed. I am sure that Conservative Members will be back—not this autumn, but the following autumn—asking why particular cases are not getting the support that they thought had been promised when the poll tax legislation was before the House.

Perhaps the most significant of all the regulations are those relating to the new Social Security Act and especially, as my hon. Friends have said, those relating to the actively seeking work test. The hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope) surprised me because he speaks as though he does not come from the same city as myself. He obviously does not look at the various briefs that are sent out to all Members of Parliament representing our region. He may be surprised to know that unemployment in Yorkshire and Humberside is not falling as fast as elsewhere and that the chamber of commerce in our region has suggested that it is likely that unemployment will rise again. It is concerned that the so-called "hard landing" of the economy will mean that firms will go into bankruptcy and that as a result there will be redundancies in our region. I speak on behalf of a constituency in which we have seen and continue to see redundancies in textiles and engineering.

When we talk about unemployment falling, it is interesting that even under the adjusted figures—the 26 reductions and the massaging of the figures—we still have unemployment at 1·9 million. It is higher than it ever was under any Labour Government, yet the Red Book—the basis for this year's Budget—says that unemployment is not expected to continue falling as rapidly. In other words, the Government's Budget presumptions are that unemployment will rise again and not go down as it has in the past.

**Mr. Burns** *indicated dissent.*

**Mr. Battle:** The hon. Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) shakes his head. He should read paragraph 4 of the Red Book, where the presumption is that unemployment will not continue falling at the rates at which it has, if indeed it falls at all.

**Mr. Burns:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Battle:** I will not give way, because the hon. Gentleman would not do me the courtesy of giving way. In future he may like to do his homework before he tries to rebut an argument. I shall come to the points that he made in his contribution.

The hon. Gentleman appeared to create the impression that the regulations before the House will introduce a whole new system to coerce the unemployed into taking jobs. Does he really believe that nobody has been denied unemployment benefit under the current system? People have to be available for work now and they lose benefit if they are not available for work. The hon. Gentleman created the impression that there were no existing regulations making people go for jobs, because the key change in the Bill is the insistence that a person must accept a job regardless of the pay offered. The

Government are going down the road of pricing people into low-paid work. The regulations cannot be read other than as tightening even further, in a most unhelpful manner, the social security coercion for people to work, especially in areas of high unemployment.

Those who fall foul of the new actively seeking work rule will lose not only unemployment benefit, but the income support safety net. I suggest to hon. Members that there are already problems, because people who breach the £5 rule, for example, or who are doing voluntary work for more than a particular number of hours, are already being cut out of the benefit system. Those people have no income while they wait for their cases on appeal.

I ask the Minister to look at paragraph 2 of regulation 6, which lists the factors to be taken into account in deciding whether a person has taken steps which are reasonable. I accept that we pressed in Committee for such things as the amount of time spent on voluntary work or on seeking accommodation to be taken into consideration, but if they are to be taken into consideration, the onus is all on the adjudication officer. The adjudication officer will have the daunting task of investigating all the points in that list before he can make a decision.

To choose one item from the list at random, how would the adjudication officer ascertain the claimant's "mental limitations" in assessing whether he is accepting the right job? Will the Minister spell out what the phrase "mental limitations" would mean in particular circumstances? The paragraph in the regulation offers no real protection, because, when the list of factors is taken into account, the adjudication officer will still have complete discretion to decide whether the person has taken steps which are reasonable. In practice, that means that although the Minister is saying that he has confidence in the ability of his Department's staff, he is shuffling off the responsibilities in the regulations into the ambit of the adjudication officers and the appeals tribunals. That will make it bad law, because we shall be back to the position of going through case studies as we contest the regulations, rather than having the matter made clear in primary law and in regulations.

In Committee we debated whether a person would have to accept any job on offer, no matter how little pay was offered. If people are offered wages that they cannot live on and they refuse them, they will be disqualified. It seems that the Government calculate pay solely on the basis of the average wage, which at present is running at £258 per week. Few of my constituents are on £258 per week. This week in the job centre in Bramley town centre, the wages offered for most jobs are just above wages council levels. I remind the Minister that the wages council level for the textile industry is £1·90 per hour, and jobs in catering and in shops are offered at wages below wages council levels.

In other words, if jobs are on offer at much less than £80 a week and a person turns down such a job, the Government are saying that in some circumstances, if the family loses its access to unemployment benefit, it could be worse off. The Government are now prepared to accept that situation to price people into work and to save the benefit system money. That is from a Government who, only in March, told the House that they had saved £14 billion in public expenditure, which they did not dare spend because it might have had an inflationary effect.

I submit that this is not just a tightening up regulation, but it is at the core of the Social Security Act 1989, as it will become known. What the Government are doing is unbelievable. They are knowingly pricing people into work. Like the poll tax, it may be that people, especially Conservative Members, will only realise what is happening when it is too late—when they have voted and their constituents go to their surgeries to ask them what the Government are doing. The Minister may reply then that it is just a few individual hard cases. The chance to tackle hard cases is now. It is not a matter of hard cases. The Minister and the Government are deliberately changing the social security structure.

Under the regulations, that social security structure is clearly stacked against unemployed people. To price people into work will have the impact of compounding a two-tier economy, in which some of us may have reasonably well-paid jobs with some future prospects and security, but the rest of the nation will be forced into low-paid, temporary and part-time work. The Government are deliberately going down that road.

We saw the speed with which the Minister was prepared to move on the issue of the mobility allowance. When we pressed for people to have access to that allowance, the Minister said that he needed time to do more research to see what the implications were for Government policy, for the Budget and for claimants. I suggest to the Minister that he might like to carry out some detailed work on wage rates in Britain, and especially in the Yorkshire region. He might like to do some detailed work on the implications and interworking of the family credit and income support systems.

He should tell us that he is prepared to reconsider the matter and that he will withdraw the regulations. If he does not, the Government will be left with regulations containing punitive and blunt instruments which will force the number of unemployed down by pricing them into the low-paid temporary sector. When the Government try to offer us the language of choice, they are really offering people the coercion for which the Government, despite their Cabinet reshuffle, are now becoming well known, and which the people of Britain are clearly rejecting.

7.28 pm

**Mr. Quentin Davies** (Stamford and Spalding): I had not intended to speak, but I have been provoked into doing so by the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle).

I listened to the hon. Gentleman's speech with great interest. At the beginning, he set out a range of suggestions and detailed objections to the criteria for evaluating whether a claimant is genuinely and actively seeking work. When I listened to that part of his speech, I wondered whether the hon. Member had accepted the basic principle that lies behind these regulations and was trying to be helpful. I thought that by suggesting adjustments to the criteria, so that a decision can more fairly and precisely be made about whether an individual claimant is sincerely looking for work, the hon. Gentleman might be making a useful contribution to the workability of the regulations and to the justice with which they will be enforced—or was the hon. Member contesting the basic principle behind these regulations?

Later in the hon. Gentleman's speech, it became evident that he objects to the whole principle, so we should consider some of his detailed suggestions and criticisms in that light. We are entitled to ask whether some of those suggestions, put very reasonably and with great ingenuity

*[Mr. Quentin Davies]*

—qualities that we associate with the hon. Member—were not wrecking suggestions, designed to undermine the basic principle of the legislation.

What is that basic principle Mr. Deputy—Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg your pardon. It is that it cannot be in the interests of an individual, or of society, to give a man or woman a financial inducement to do nothing when he or she has the ability to do an honest day's work. That seems to me to be a fundamental moral and economic principle. I will give way to any Opposition Member who wants to dispute the basis of that principle.

We must ask ourselves whether we should take seriously some of the hon. Member's objections. If we do not take them seriously, I believe that we should support the Government in producing a sophisticated set of criteria to ensure that that basic principle is delivered into our social security legislation.

7.32 pm

**Mr. Ian McCartney** (Makerfield): In Wigan, we recently elected a lady mayor and she has introduced a system of fines for people who call her Mr. Mayor. The fines go to charities. I think that we should introduce a similar system in the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, for each occasion that you are called Mr. Deputy Speaker. By the end of the Session, we would be able to put quite a lot of money towards certain charities.

**Mr. Paul Flynn** (Newport, West): Perhaps for sacked Cabinet Ministers—a very good cause.

**Mr. McCartney:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his suggestion.

Regarding incentives and disincentives, Conservative Members' arguments have been based on a crude analysis of job vacancies. They have asked why there are so many vacancies, and why so many people are unable or unwilling to seek employment. We have also heard, again on the basis of crude analyses, that, throughout the country, there is a huge army of unemployed people who are unwilling to take jobs at any cost.

I take that as a grave insult to tens of thousands of working men and women throughout the United Kingdom but especially to people in many Opposition Members' constituencies. We represent people who, because of Government policies, find themselves and their families thrown on the industrial scrap heap. Since the miners' strike, three collieries have been closed in my constituency. Since the end of that strike, some miners have transferred to three separate collieries because they wanted to continue in employment but they have been put on the dole this summer because there are no more pits for them to go to. There are no more jobs for them. They are in the humiliating situation of being placed on the dole. That is a direct result of Government intervention, in privatising electricity and driving down the price of coal.

Many single-parent families in my constituency, mainly women, have a great disincentive to find work, because of the Government's legislation. If they find work they cannot take it up. I shall give evidence of that later in my speech.

If the Government cared less about the Civil List and more about the problems of the poorest in our society, this House might do the nation a proper service. The Government are hounding the unemployed and people on poor wages. They have been preparing the market, and distorting it, to ensure that we have a large pool of unskilled people that can be tapped any time the market chooses. In the intervening period, they ensure that the level of benefit is reduced, or is at such a level that people cannot remove themselves from the poverty trap.

Many people in my constituency have been brutalised by poverty. Some have been driven to crime by poverty. A prime example is a constituent who was taken to the magistrates court for breaking into his electricity meter. Everyone says, "What a terrible thing to do." He was acquitted on the grounds that he broke into the meter after he had an offer of a job in Aberdeen—he had been unemployed for over 18 months—and, because of changes brought in by the Government, the social security office would not give him a ticket to travel to Aberdeen to take the job. He became a criminal, in an effort to buy a train ticket to take that job. Thank God the magistrates on the bench had sympathy for that man's case.

That is how far many young working people are prepared to go. They are trapped in the benefit system and a life of poverty. They have little real opportunity for jobs that will enable them and their families to get out of the poverty trap.

The hon. Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) mentioned job vacancies in Chelmsford, where employers are unable to find people to take jobs. That is a growing problem throughout Britain. People are unable to move to take jobs because of Government policies.

The changes in social security policy cannot be seen in isolation. The Government have driven up mortgage interest rates to the point where people cannot afford to move house. They have introduced the Local Government Housing Act 1989, to double rents in the private sector. They have introduced legislation to close many hostels for young people, who move from one part of the country to another to find work. They have driven up travelling costs to and from work.

In the autumn, the Select Committee on Social Services, of which I am a member, will examine Government social security policies. We have already sought evidence on Government policy and incentives and disincentives from local authorities and bodies such as citizens advice bureaux, the Child Poverty Action Group and Government Departments.

In the light of all these political disincentives, the arguments of the hon. Member for Chelmsford must be challenged. He and many of his hon. Friends must come up with an answer to that challenge. We have received evidence from citizens advice bureaux throughout the country. I will tell him why there are job vacancies in places such as Chelmsford. It is not that unemployed people are not prepared to take those jobs, but that current social security arrangements operate to ensure that they cannot take them.

I shall cite just one example from the CAB's evidence. A middle-aged man in Sheffield could not take a job offer in London because he was refused a loan for rent on the ground that, as he already had an overdraft, he could not repay a social fund loan. Claimants who need to move house to take up work receive little help from the social fund. Removal expenses incurred if a claimant has to move house to take up work are excluded as specifically work-related. Under the previous supplementary benefit rules, a single payment could have been made for removal expenses, thus improving the claimant's chance of finding work and taking up a job offer. The Government have created a disincentive for people to take up employment opportunities, yet the hon. Member for Chelmsford and his hon. Friends berate them for not being more mobile in trying to get back into the labour market.

**Mr. Burns:** The hon. Gentleman said that he would answer my constituents' question about why there was both a labour and a skills shortage in Chelmsford. Unfortunately, he has not done so—*[Interruption.]* I hope that Opposition Members will let me finish my question. The hon. Gentleman cited the example of a man who would not move from Sheffield to London. I accept that he had a serious problem, but it does not answer the question asked by 1,700 of my constituents who are unemployed at a time when there is a serious shortage of people to work in the local companies of Chelmsford.

**Mr. McCartney:** The hon. Gentleman raises two points, with which I shall deal in a moment.

There is a serious distortion in the labour market, not just in the availability of jobs but in the types of job, the availability of training and the opportunity for people's skills to be matched to job vacancies. Like the hon. Member for Chelmsford, I could go to my local jobcentre —not a mile and a half from two collieries that have recently closed—and ask about opportunities for the 700 miners who have lost their jobs. I could guarantee that, other than a small number of those miners, they all want to find jobs commensurate with their skills and abilities.

For the past 10 years, the Government have failed to provide proper arrangements for skills training for the country's work force. Indeed, there has been a de-skilling exercise, the like of which has not been seen in the remainder of the western world. That de-skilling policy has resulted in a shortfall of people able to contribute to the economy. That is as true in Chelmsford as it is in Wigan. Nevertheless, the hon. Member for Chelmsford is only too ready to vote for those policies.

The regulations will not improve employment opportunities for the unemployed and those in low-paid jobs. The Government are good at targeting people, and they regularly amend the benefit regulations—not to improve opportunities, but to reduce the number of people able to claim benefit. The Minister has stood at the Dispatch Box seven or eight times specifically to amend housing benefit regulations. On each occasion he turned the screw so that a few thousand more pensioners or unemployed or low-paid workers could not claim housing benefit.

A large number of women want to return to work, not just for family reasons but for their personal satisfaction. They form a large, untapped pool of skills and mental capacity. They are prevented from entering the labour market because of the Government's social security policy, especially on child-care facilities. My hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) rightly raised the problem of the regulations acting as a clear disincentive for women to accept opportunities in the job market.

A constituent of mine was prepared to take any job, provided that she was given 24 hours' notice so that she could arrange to put her two children into a nursery. The social worker gave a guarantee to the benefit office that he would do everything in his power to arrange child-care facilities, even if only temporary at first, so that the woman could begin work. That would have provided some breathing space to arrange long-term child care. That woman was offered a job. She said that she could not start that morning but would ask her mother to look after the children so that she could start in the afternoon. She was prepared to take the job. That woman's benefit has been stopped.

Tory Members take the high moral ground. They say that they are not in the business of hounding ordinary people. They find their excuses in legislation. All that woman asked for was a few more hours to arrange child care. That is what she told the adjudication officer, and Tory Members should think about what happened to her. I sometimes wonder just where some of the adjudication officers come from. When they go home at night, do they think about some of the decisions that they have made? Are they aware that they have sometimes wrecked people's lives? They create anxiety and stress in families already overstretched by poverty.

The Minister says, "Don't worry about it; everything is rosy in the garden. Those people have a great deal of latitude under the regulations." The truth is that there is no latitude. Many of those operating the social security system have a great deal of compassion and they are under stress because they must carry out their duties in a way that affects ordinary working people. Indeed, many of those officers live in the same community as those who are in desperate need of help.

The CAB submitted evidence about child-care costs to the Select Committee. It said:

> "A single parent in Birmingham with one child aged 4 had a part-time job of 20 hours per week, for which she earned £40 a week. She had to pay £1·50 per hour for her child to be taken care of, making a total cost of £30 per week. As a single parent, £15 of her earnings are disregarded, but she was still £15 per week worse off by working—so she gave up her job. She had hoped to extend her hours once her child started school—but she has now lost that opportunity."

That woman was working for 50p an hour. Can anyone come nearer to saying, "My God, I want to work. I want to do my part for the nation"? Would the hon. Member for Stamford and Spalding (Mr. Davies)—the merchant banker—work for 50p an hour? Come on, would you work for 50p an hour? *[Interruption.]* I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker. I was referring to the hon. Member for Stamford and Spalding. He would not work for 50p an hour.

That woman is but one of tens—perhaps hundreds—of thousands of women who are suffering not because they do not want to work or because they are indifferent to society, but because of the Government's social security regulations. It is a national scandal. Indeed, even the Government are embarrassed by some of their legislation. They try to introduce it in short debates late into the night at the end of the summer term in the hope of hiding what they are doing. They do not want the public to know what is happening.

The Government are at war with many of our citizens —those who cannot defend themselves, such as single-parent families and unemployed youngsters. People in the north-west, the north, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are unemployed because of the Government's policy of disinvestment in industry. They take a hands-off attitude. They are the victims of Government policy, and when the Government have made

*[Mr. McCartney]*

them victims, they attack them for their inability to seek employment and say that they are trying to earn from the state a living to which they are not entitled.

I am not angry just at the fact that the Government are prepared to allow that to continue. What makes me more angry is that Conservative Back Benchers who had well-heeled jobs, who were born with silver spoons in their mouths and who never had to worry about the school or the job of their choice, where they could work, at what rate of pay and about when they could change jobs, do not know about reality. They have no experience of living in a community racked by poverty. As a Member of Parliament, I have had experience of living in such a community. Conservative callousness is born not just of ignorance but out of total indifference to the plight of Britain's poor, the 6 million-plus who live in a twilight world.

The final condemnation of the Government must be the youngsters who sleep not a mile from this place in cardboard city. They get up in the morning, walk to the jobcentre in Victoria street and wait for the doors to open to get a day's work in a London hotel. They work for a few pennies and when they have finished work, sometimes at midnight and sometimes at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning, they go back under their cardboard blankets. That exercise is repeated day in and day out; that is the reality of the Government's policy towards the poor and towards poverty.

There is no denying that reality, and the Government cannot get away from it. We can all go down the road to Victoria street. If the Minister thinks that I am exaggerating, he should come with me and my hon. Friends to Victoria street jobcentre to see the displaced, the unemployed and the poor who are standing there. I invite him to come with us to cardboard city and to other cities in the country where people are living in the streets, forced out by the Government's system. Perhaps when the Minister sees what the Government have done and meets the people, he will ask the victims what they think about the Government's system. He should meet those people face to face and not hide behind statistics presented at the Dispatch Box. He should ask them if they enjoy living under a cardboard box. He could also ask them if they enjoy begging from a porter at the back door of a hotel for a few hours work washing plates just to survive.

When the Minister has had that experience, perhaps the next time he comes to the Dispatch Box he will not have the same frame of mind and steely attitude towards the poor. Perhaps after that the Government will come up with a system to replace the dirty rotten system that is operating now. Perhaps they will give all our kids a real opportunity in life and all our women a genuine opportunity for a job at a wage that they can afford to take. If that happens, we can really talk about opportunity for everybody in Britain.

Until the Government do that, opportunities will not exist for hundreds of thousands of ordinary working people. Unless the Government change their attitude, we in the Opposition will continue our campaign of harassment until we get rid of them and replace them with a system and a group of people who are prepared to put in front of those who want to work an opportunity and a system that will allow them to do so.

7.53 pm

**Mr. Scott:** We shall have to endure with as much fortitude as we can muster the continued harassment of the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) and his hon. Friends. The caricature that he paints of this country is totally removed from reality. Every section of the population has seen rises in living standards as a result of the successful economic policies that we have pursued for the past 10 years. We expect that to continue.

Much of the debate was taken up by hon. Members going over the principles behind the Social Security Act 1989 rather than dealing with the details of the regulations which implement those principles. I am grateful for the robust support that we have had from my hon. Friends. I shall sum up briefly and deal with just two or three matters raised in the debate. As hon. Members know, there is no opportunity to amend delegated legislation of this sort and we have to take the regulations as they stand.

The hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) spoke a great deal about over-payments and criticised the present system. She seemed to object to the fact that over-paid benefit may be recovered as if it were community charge arrears. The only amounts that can be recovered are those which are deemed to be recoverable. Any over-payments that arise through mistakes by the Department would not be recoverable in any case. The ability to recover over-payments and to do it by a small addition to the monthly instalments would be an easy way to repay the debt.

The hon. Lady spoke about the fear of imprisonment, but the only circumstances in which imprisonment could possibly be imposed on anybody are those in which a person had the means to pay the community charge but wilfully refused to do so. The hon. Lady also spoke about people who are fit for light work and those who sign on for credits only. There is no question of such people being challenged week in and week out about actively seeking work. She knows, because we went over it all in Committee in great detail, about the arrangements for initial advice and the subsequent updating of that advice if necessary. There is no question of our setting out in any circumstances to submit people to weekly tests. The hon. Lady well knows that the signing cycle is fortnightly and not weekly.

**Mrs. Beckett:** As the Minister says, we discussed these matters in Committee. He will know that in Committee we repeated over and over again that what he says is how he thinks the regulations will be interpreted and how the employment service will use them. What the Minister says is not what the law and the regulations say.

**Mr. Scott:** As I have said in the House more than once, we can look to the employment service to interpret the regulations in a sensible, fair and flexible manner.

As I say, the hon. Lady spoke about light work. The regulations explicitly recognise physical limitations and the type of work to which people can be guided must take account of such limitations. As the hon. Lady knows, credits-only signers attend the office only quarterly after they have been accepted for signing on, and there is no question of them being asked to discuss these matters weekly or more regularly.

I was delighted to hear the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) recognise the valuable contribution of job clubs. I am delighted that they are a success. Inevitably, in such an initiative, the pattern is uneven across the country. However, I think that the hon. Gentleman's experience is typical of the experience of job clubs elsewhere.

The hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Derby, South asked whether participation in a job club would be taken as evidence of someone actively seeking work. In essence, of itself it might not, but I think that it would be a very important piece of evidence to be considered about the attitude of mind of the person concerned. If the person was also taking other steps, it would certainly add up to that. I can think of few better things than an unemployed person wanting to get back into employment could do than to join a job club and avail himself of its facilities.

Some other matters were raised during the debate, but I do not want to weary the House by responding to all of them, because I think that the House is anxious to vote on the regulations. They implement the admirable principles which underline important sections of the Social Security Act. In a year or two, when Opposition Members look back at the speeches that they have made today, they will realise just how wrong they were.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the draft Community Charge Benefits (General) Regulations 1989, which were laid before this House on 21st July, be approved.

*Resolved,*

That the draft Income Support (General) Amendment No. 2 Regulations 1989, which were laid before this House on 21st July, be approved.—*[Mr. Scott.]*

*Motion made and Question put:—*

That the draft Social Security (Unemployment, Sickness and Invalidity Benefit) Amendment No. 2 Regulations 1989, which were laid before this House on 21st July, be approved.—*[Mr. Scott.]*

*The House divided:* Ayes 193, Noes 139.

**Division No. 323]** **[7.59 pm**

AYES

**Alexander, Richard**
**Alison, Rt Hon Michael**
**Allason, Rupert**
**Amess, David**
**Amos, Alan**
**Arbuthnot, James**
**Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)***
**Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)***
**Ashby, David**
**Atkins, Robert**
**Atkinson, David**
**Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)***
**Baldry, Tony**
**Batiste, Spencer**
**Beaumont-Dark, Anthony**
**Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)***
**Benyon, W.**
**Bevan, David Gilroy**
**Blackburn, Dr John G.**
**Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)***
**Bowis, John**
**Brandon-Bravo, Martin**
**Brazier, Julian**
**Bright, Graham**
**Brooke, Rt Hon Peter**
**Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)***
**Buck, Sir Antony**
**Budgen, Nicholas**
**Burns, Simon**
**Butler, Chris**
**Butterfill, John**
**Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)***
**Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)***
**Carrington, Matthew**
**Carttiss, Michael**
**Cash, William**
**Chapman, Sydney**
**Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)***
**Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)***
**Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)***
**Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)***
**Couchman, James**
**Cran, James**
**Currie, Mrs Edwina**
**Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)***
**Davis, David *(Boothferry)***
**Day, Stephen**
**Dorrell, Stephen**
**Dover, Den**
**Durant, Tony**
**Dykes, Hugh**
**Eggar, Tim**
**Emery, Sir Peter**
**Fallon, Michael**
**Farr, Sir John**
**Fenner, Dame Peggy**
**Fookes, Dame Janet**
**Forman, Nigel**
**Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)***
**Forth, Eric**
**Franks, Cecil**
**Freeman, Roger**
**French, Douglas**
**Garel-Jones, Tristan**
**Gill, Christopher**
**Glyn, Dr Alan**
**Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles**
**Gorman, Mrs Teresa**
**Gow, Ian**
**Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)***
**Greenway, John *(Ryedale)***
**Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')***
**Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)***
**Ground, Patrick**
**Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn**
**Hague, William**
**Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)***
**Hampson, Dr Keith**
**Hanley, Jeremy**
**Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')***
**Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)***
**Harris, David**
**Hayes, Jerry**
**Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney**
**Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael**
**Hill, James**
**Hind, Kenneth**
**Hordern, Sir Peter**
**Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)***
**Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey**
**Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)***
**Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)***
**Hunt, David *(Wirral W)***
**Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)***
**Hunter, Andrew**
**Irvine, Michael**
**Jack, Michael**
**Janman, Tim**
**Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey**
**Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)***
**Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)***
**Jopling, Rt Hon Michael**
**King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)***
**Kirkhope, Timothy**
**Knight, Greg *(Derby North)***
**Knowles, Michael**
**Knox, David**
**Latham, Michael**
**Lightbown, David**
**Lilley, Peter**
**Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)***
**McCrindle, Robert**
**Maclean, David**
**McLoughlin, Patrick**
**Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)***
**Miller, Sir Hal**
**Mills, Iain**
**Moate, Roger**
**Morris, M *(N'hampton S)***
**Morrison, Sir Charles**
**Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)***
**Moss, Malcolm**
**Neubert, Michael**
**Newton, Rt Hon Tony**
**Nicholls, Patrick**
**Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)***
**Oppenheim, Phillip**
**Page, Richard**
**Paice, James**
**Patnick, Irvine**
**Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)***
**Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey**
**Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth**
**Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)***
**Porter, David *(Waveney)***
**Powell, William *(Corby)***
**Price, Sir David**
**Raffan, Keith**
**Raison, Rt Hon Timothy**
**Rathbone, Tim**
**Redwood, John**
**Rhodes James, Robert**
**Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas**
**Ridsdale, Sir Julian**
**Rossi, Sir Hugh**
**Rowe, Andrew**
**Sackville, Hon Tom**
**Sayeed, Jonathan**
**Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas**
**Shaw, David *(Dover)***
**Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')***
**Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)***
**Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)***
**Skeet, Sir Trevor**
**Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)***
**Speller, Tony**
**Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)***
**Stanbrook, Ivor**
**Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John**
**Steen, Anthony**
**Stern, Michael**
**Stevens, Lewis**
**Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)***
**Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)***
**Stradling Thomas, Sir John**
**Summerson, Hugo**
**Taylor, Ian *(Esher)***
**Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)***
**Temple-Morris, Peter**
**Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)***
**Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)***
**Thurnham, Peter**
**Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)***
**Tredinnick, David**
**Trippier, David**
**Twinn, Dr Ian**
**Viggers, Peter**
**Waddington, Rt Hon David**
**Walden, George**
**Walker, Bill *(T'side North)***
**Waller, Gary**
**Warren, Kenneth**
**Wells, Bowen**
**Whitney, Ray**
**Widdecombe, Ann**
**Wiggin, Jerry**
**Wilkinson, John**
**Winterton, Mrs Ann**
**Winterton, Nicholas**
**Wolfson, Mark**
**Wood, Timothy**
**Woodcock, Dr. Mike**
**Yeo, Tim**

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory.

NOES

**Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)***
**Alton, David**
**Anderson, Donald**
**Archer, Rt Hon Peter**
**Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy**
**Ashton, Joe**
**Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)***
**Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)***
**Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)***
**Battle, John**
**Beckett, Margaret**
**Bell, Stuart**
**Benn, Rt Hon Tony**
**Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)***
**Bermingham, Gerald**
**Bidwell, Sydney**
**Blunkett, David**
**Bray, Dr Jeremy**
**Buckley, George J.**
**Caborn, Richard**
**Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)***
**Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)***
**Campbell-Savours, D. N.**
**Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)***
**Clelland, David**
**Clwyd, Mrs Ann**
**Coleman, Donald**
**Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)***

Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Galloway, George
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Ingram, Adam
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McGrady, Eddie
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Maginnis, Ken
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Salmond, Alex
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Allen McKay.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

# Orders of the Day

## Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Bill

*Lords amendment considered.*

### Clause 3

THE PRESIDENT

*Lords amendment:* No. 1, in page 2, line 18, leave out from "be" to "by" in line 20 and insert—

> "(a) a President of the Industrial Tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal (in this Part of this Act referred to as "the President"),
>
> (b) a Vice-President of the Industrial Tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal (in this Part of this Act referred to as "the Vice-President"), and
>
> (c) a panel of chairmen of the Fair Employment Tribunal,
>
> who shall each be appointed by the Lord Chancellor and shall exercise the functions respectively conferred on them"

8.13 pm

**The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King):** I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd):** With this it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 17, 20 to 22, 75 to 77 and 81.

**Mr. King:** These are technical amendments which carry out understandings conveyed in another place.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 17 agreed to.*

### Clause 10

SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, ETC., PATTERNS

*Lords amendment:* No. 18, in page 7, line 28, at end insert—

> "(2) It shall also be the duty of the Commission to keep itself informed about proceedings on complaints under Part III of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976."

**Mr. Tom King:** I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendment No. 19.

**Mr. King:** These amendments are designed to cover a situation in which an individual case of discrimination is heard before the tribunal and, irrespective of the outcome, there are indications in the evidence or in the decision that the respondent may be failing properly to afford equality of opportunity. Lords amendment No. 18 makes it a positive duty on the commission to keep itself informed about such matters; and Lords amendment No. 19 enables the commission, when it has formed an opinion that equality of opportunity is not being afforded, to inform the person concerned of its opinion and to allow that person to give a written undertaking to take appropriate action.

**Mr. Kevin McNamara** (Kingston upon Hull, North): We disagree. It might be for the benefit of the House if I spelt out in a simple example exactly what the Lords amendment is designed to tackle.

An employer could decide to exercise a preference in favour of people who were not residents of west Belfast, or in favour of those who were, thus offering less favourable treatment to Catholics, or to Protestants. As long as that preference was not an absolute ban on the employment of people from west Belfast, or absolutely in favour of them, it would be legal, and that clearly undermines the intention of the legislation.

The reason for this strange situation is that a complainant can prove a case of indirect discrimination only if he can show that the barrier that has prevented him from securing the post in question is a requirement or a condition—something which is absolute; and the courts have interpreted requirement or condition narrowly.

There are two well-known cases in this regard—Meer and Pereira—which have been dealt with in the Court of Appeal. In both, a narrow interpretation was applied under which, in order to show indirect discrimination, the complainant must show that the behaviour of the employer constitutes an absolute bar to his employment—anything less is not direct discrimination. I am sorry to have taken so long with this introduction, but it is the context in which the amendments must be considered.

The Government have recognised that the original version of the Bill would condone many of the practices that they claimed it would eradicate, but we are not satisfied that the Government have done enough to deal with the problem which they accept exists. The easiest and most satisfactory method would have been to amend the definition so that preferences such as the one that I have cited would be outlawed. The Government refuse to do that, presumably because they are worried that such a strengthening of the Bill would lead to demands for reform of the race and sex discrimination legislation in the rest of the United Kingdom.

We think that this is a weak case because we should like both the cases I have cited to be upset under sex and race legislation for the United Kingdom. We understood the Government's difficulties, although we do not accept them, so we have been much concerned to arrive at an agreement with them on this matter. We proposed a compromise measure, an amendment which would allow the fair employment tribunal in cases in which such discriminatory preference were visible to recommend that the respondent take action to provide equality of opportunity. In other words, an employer would not be obliged to pay compensation, but he would have to put a stop to such practices. That would solve the Government's worry about the read-over to the United Kingdom, it would undermine the principle in the cases that I have mentioned and it would ensure that the matter was properly dealt with.

The Government decided to reject our moderate approach and have instead tabled these defective amendments, in which they have placed a duty on the Fair Employment Commission to follow the proceedings of the tribunal and to issue an opinion that the employer should take action to provide equality of opportunity on the basis of the evidence heard by the tribunal. Quite apart from the administrative difficulties, that is not an effective solution, for a number of reasons.

The tribunal will be obliged to give a clean bill of health to an employer who is obviously discriminating. That decision will be reported in the media and will convince employers that indirect discriminatory behaviour is perfectly lawful. "Decision not to employ Shankill man upheld" would be the headline, and the article would not go into the finer points of preference and absolute conditions.

At the same time, the Government's solution opens a virtual certainty of a clash between the jurisprudence of the tribunal and the enforcement and encouragement role of the Fair Employment Commission. The tribunal will be obliged to condone as legal the practices that the commission will be trying to end and which it will be spelling out in its code for employers as undesirable employment practices. There will be unacceptable confusion about where employers stand. That confusion will discourage employers from taking action to provide equality of opportunity.

The powers of the commission to require an employer to take remedial action on the basis of the evidence presented to the tribunal will be severely limited. As the Secretary of State said, the commission may, on the basis of the evidence, ask an employer to give a voluntary undertaking. If the employer refuses, the commission can take action only if it launches a full-scale investigation. That is an extremely cumbersome method of dealing with a case in which the facts have already been established.

I do not believe that the Government have grasped the importance of the issue. That became apparent in another place on 11 July when the former Minister, Lord Lyell, cited as one of the major reasons for the refusal to change the definition the fact that the Bill was concerned primarily with eradicating bad employment practices, not with technicalities, but unfortunately the technicalities add up.

I shall make two points about that. First, the prohibition of indirect discrimination places a legal barrier on bad employment practices. The lower the barrier, the easier it will be for bad and discriminatory employment practices to continue. Secondly, the Minister in the other place appeared to believe that the definition of indirect discrimination is a simple matter of importance for the individual complainant, but that is not the case. It is of the utmost importance and relevance for the collective aspects of the Bill as the practices that will be lawful depend on that definition and will be cumulative.

For those reasons, the Opposition believe that we must register our protest against the Government's unwillingness to take the problem of indirect discrimination as seriously as they should.

*Question put,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 195, Noes 105.

**Division No. 224]** **[8.22 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'Ts)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*

Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kilfedder, James
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knox, David
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. Tom Sackville.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Boateng, Paul
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Galloway, George
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Ingram, Adam
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Richardson, Jo
Rogers, Allan
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 19 to 37 agreed to.*

## Clause 31

### ENQUIRIES BY THE COMMISSION

*Lords Amendment:* No. 38, in page 24, line 7, at beginning insert

"The Commission may from time to time require the employer to give the Commission such information held by the employer, being information to which section 29(1)(a) or (b) of this Act applies, as the Commission may specify; but an employer who has been required on any date to give any information under this subsection shall not be required to do so again before the expiry of the period of six months beginning with that date.

(1A)"

**Mr. Tom King:** I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 39 to 44.

**Mr. King:** The amendments extend the powers of the commission to require the disclosure of information by the employer. The existing power hinged on the employer's having submitted a monitoring return, and extended only to information supplementing that given in the return. We have released the commission from both those constraints.

Accordingly, the amendment provides that the commission can obtain from the employer any of the information which he might use for monitoring. Thus, where an employer who is not required to monitor applicants holds information on job applicants, the commission will be able to gain access to that information.

The second effect of the amendment is that the commission can exercise its powers whether or not a monitoring return has been submitted. This is to avoid an employer who has neglected to submit a return attempting to get out of disclosing information to the commission on the point that under the Bill as drafted its powers came into play only following submission of a monitoring return.

There are certain restrictions on the commission's total powers of inquiry. We have restricted it to six-monthly intervals. Although the commission has extensive powers of inquiry of employers, a balance must be struck. It is wrong that employers should be continually subjected to repeat inquiries. Therefore, we have set the six-monthly intervals.

The hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) has argued that the commission's powers should not be so restricted. I know that he will be concerned to achieve credibility for the commission and the voluntary co-operation of employers. There must be some recognition of the fair interests of employers. The commission has no restraint. If it behaved in an unreasonable way, a climate would be created in which people would justifiably feel unwilling to co-operate in reasonable inquiries. We do not believe that the commission would abuse its powers, but we think that, in giving it wide powers, there should be some restriction and protection in these respects for the employer. That is why I do not encourage the House to support the amendment tabled by the hon Member for South Down. I ask the House to agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Ms. Marjorie Mowlam** (Redcar): The Opposition disagree with the Minister's interpretation of this group of amendments, especially No. 38. We argue that the practical implications of the amendment will restrict the ability of the Fair Employment Commission to require employers to supply information. We see it as another example of a Government attempt to restrict the commission's role and we find it unacceptable.

At present, the commission may, after the monitoring return has been received, require an employer to produce further information, as the Minister has outlined. The Commission could, for instance, request a breakdown of the composition of the work force by grade and could then require further details, perhaps to verify that information. We argue that amendment No. 38 will prevent the commission, once the initial request is made, from asking for supplementary information for a further six months. That would be a serious hindrance for the commission in verifying the monitoring returns. It is an incentive to less enlightened employers to prevaricate and obstruct the commission's work. We certainly accept that it is a balancing between the two forces, but we think that, in practical terms, the amendment will work in exactly the opposite way to the Minister's proposal. We therefore oppose amendment No. 38.

The Minister has claimed that the amendment extends the commission's powers in some senses, as it can request information beyond that laid down in the monitoring returns and will be able to ask for information even when a monitoring return has not been submitted. However, we believe that the practical effect of the six-monthly interval will be to constrain the commission's ability to pursue its inquiries unless it resorts to a full-scale investigation. We understand that a full-scale investigation can take place only in limited circumstances and is, by necessity, a cumbersome process. It would not provide an adequate method of dealing with obstructive employers.

We are concerned about amendment No. 39 because it prevents the commission from requiring employers to produce supplementary information about the composition of the work force other than the information relating to the way in which the monitoring returns were compiled. That is an unacceptable limitation on the commission's information-gathering role. Therefore, we will oppose amendment No. 38.

**Mr. Eddie McGrady** (South Down): In presenting Lords amendment No. 38 the Minister made generous reference to my starred amendment which appears on the Amendment Paper but has not been selected. I agree that it would be improper to impose on employers unjust obligations and unnecessary trouble in making these returns to the Fair Employment Commission.

Lords amendment No. 38 provides that an employer who has been asked for information in the previous six months cannot be asked for "any" information within the ensuing six months. That means that if information is received from an employer that is not explicit or adequate and does not address the point that it should address, the commission may not ask for supplementary information to provide elucidation. That is why I object to the word "any". I have tried to provide a more practical arrangement by substituting the word "that". That would ensure that the commission would not repeat itself in asking for the same information, but it would have the ability to ask for additional information to process the information received in the first volley.

This is an inhibiting administrative defect in the commission's power to pursue for six months the information for which it legally and legitimately asks under the Bill. It would have a stultifying effect on the processing of cases. For that reason, and because of the broader points of principle lucidly stated by the hon. Member for Redcar (Mr. Mowam), I oppose amendment No. 38 in its present form.

8.45 pm

**Rev. Ian Paisley** (Antrim, North): Evidently, information will be stored somewhere from which it can be made available when requested, but that was not the promise made to employees in Northern Ireland. They were told that after they gave the required information about their religion, schools and so on and after the quota was made

*[Rev. Ian Paisley]*

up, all the information would be destroyed. Now we are told that this information will be stored and will be available to the commission if requested. I should like to know who else will get his hands on that information.

As we know, there is a serious security situation in Northern Ireland. Information like this leads to people being fingered and murdered. The Government have a duty to tell us who has that information. Is it destroyed? Is the undertaking given to employees not really an undertaking but a falsehood? Will this information always be available so that it can then be made available to the commission when it requires it?

**Dr. John G. Blackburn** (Dudley, West): I had the opportunity, like many hon. Members, of serving on the Standing Committee on the Bill. I think that, on quiet reflection, Members who served will say that matters were debated in a way that brought particular distinction to the House of Commons.

There was general acceptance in Committee that the most important part of the Bill concerned the commission's complete impartiality and its important role. In my judgment, Lords amendment No. 38 is the cornerstone of the Bill. There must be faith and trust in the workings of the commission. If there is not, the Bill will fall into disrepute, as the hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) has outlined. It is important that there are some qualifications to it. Having had the opportunity of serving on the Standing Committee, I believe that we should accept the amendment because it shows the weight and force of argument that are placed on the workings of the commission.

I am particularly attracted to the comments of the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) on safeguards for this information. I stress that there will be a great cry throughout the Province and in the House to ensure that the commission's reports and findings are confidential.

I should like to pay a warm and generous tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers), who served with particular distinction as the Minister on the Bill. In addition, this is almost certainly the valediction of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, my right hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King), as he takes up his new appointment. I wish him success.

**Mr. William Ross** (Londonderry, East): When I listened to the comments of hon. Members on the Opposition Front Bench, I had the impression that they, and to a lesser extent the Government, were behaving and talking as if there were a vast army of employers in Northern Ireland who spent all their time dreaming up ways to get past laws against discrimination and who were continually and assiduously practising discrimination at every level of employment and in every way they could. In revealing that attitude of mind, they betray the vast gulf between their views and the reality of society in Northern Ireland.

I want to follow up the point made by the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) when he talked about information lying around and being liable to be consulted by other people, some of whom might be of evil intent. Will the departing Secretary of State, before he becomes the departed Secretary of State, tell us whether the Data Protection Act 1984 has any bearing on this information? Will this information be stored in hard form on paper, or is it to be stored on computer? The House and employers want to know that. Will the existing laws governing such information and its storage be transgressed in any way?

Some will say that the Bill is not sufficient. However, having passed the first group of amendments, it will lie permanently in the hands of the House to correct any deficiencies that become apparent. I am sure that the Secretary of State will remember that the hon. Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers) turned down the point we accepted at the beginning of this debate. As shown in columns 65 to 66 of *Hansard* for Standing Committee B, in refusing to accept the amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Antrim, East (Mr. Beggs), he said that the reason he could not accept it was that it could be a devolved matter. Since the House and the Government have accepted the point this evening, it is clear that the Government accept that there will never be a devolved Administration in Northern Ireland, at least into the far future. As a result, it will always lie in the hands of Ministers of whichever party, for the political lifetime of all here, to make any changes they wish.

**Mr. Tom King:** With all courtesy, I disagree with the hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam). We discussed the matter a great deal in Committee and she fairly referred today to the point about balance. I have in my previous incarnations debated with Opposition Members the question of balance. The endless pursuit of perfection in legislation has often been the Opposition's objective and they have often not given sufficient consideration to whether such legislation will work. We can pass amazing legislation and Bills of huge complexity, but if they are ineffective or too complicated and do not achieve their objectives, it is a pointless exercise. It is a question of judgment, and we have reached the judgment that our proposals are a sensible way to proceed. I know that the hon. Lady will agree with me—this picks up a point made by the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) —that our proposals will work better if employers come to regard them as a reasonable and sensible requirement.

I could recognise one or two employers in the Province of Northern Ireland who may not rush to carry forward to the ultimate the general principles of the Bill, but there will be many others who are willing to see what they can do, as long as the legislation is reasonable and not hopelessly over-bureaucratic. We have to strike a balance because we do not want to lose their support.

Although the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) dressed it up in rather more lurid colours, he made an important point about confidentiality. He will know that confidentiality of information has been a clear concern of the Government in the preparation of this legislation. He knows that clause 19 is directed specifically to that important point. Clause 19 makes it an offence to disclose information from which a person's religious beliefs could be deduced.

The hon. Member for Londonderry, East also asked me about the Data Protection Act 1984. I can confirm that the Act applies if such information is stored on computers.

**Mr. William Ross:** Will that point be made clear to all employers?

**Mr. King:** We shall take steps to try to ensure that employers are aware of all the provisions of the Bill. Perhaps the word "we" is a rather broad description of those who will seek to carry the proposals through. However, I know that we have been anxious—and I am sure that others will be equally anxious—to ensure that information and helpful advice is given to ensure the successful implementation of this legislation. Against that background, I urge the House to agree with the Lords in the said amendments.

*Question put,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 179, Noes 89.

**Division No. 325]** **[8.55 pm**

### AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cartiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kilfedder, James
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patnick, Irvine
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory.

### NOES

Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Boateng, Paul
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alexander
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Galloway, George
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Ingram, Adam
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leighton, Ron
Lewis, Terry
Loyden, Eddie
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morley, Elliot
Mowlam, Marjorie
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Richardson, Jo
Rogers, Allan
Salmond, Alex
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

*Question agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 39 to 44 agreed to.*

*Lords amendment:* No. 45, in page 25, line 30, after "and" insert

"in a case where it was reasonably practicable for him to comply with it after that time, to show"

**Mr. Tom King:** I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 47 and 61.

**Mr. Tom King:** I shall address my remarks to the first amendment, as it is an example of the others. It is designed to cover the possibility that an employer who was required to supply information to the commission under clause 31 fails to do so within the specified time, and for genuine reasons is unable to meet the requirements thereafter.

The clause as it left this House provided a "reasonable excuse" defence for an employer who could not meet the requirement for information within the specified time. What it did not do, however, was provide a defence for an employer who could not provide the information even after the specified time—by reason, for example, of his personnel records being accidentally destroyed. This amendment allows the commission to recognise those circumstances, and to make appropriate allowances. It does not, however—I stress this—provide an employer with an excuse for not providing information on time: it therefore does not weaken the enforcement provisions made by the Bill. Similar amendments are made to clause 35 and 44.

**Mr. Jim Marshall** (Leicester, South): The House will recall that in replying to the previous debate, the Secretary of State said that he thought that the Opposition were seeking perfection and that if perfection were enshrined in the legislation, it would be extremely difficult to make the legislation work in practice. Perhaps *Hansard* will make it clear whether that was a distortion or a paraphrase. However, the right hon. Gentleman certainly said that Opposition Members are trying to make the Bill more complicated than it needs to be to do the job that the Government and the Opposition wish it to do.

Throughout the lengthy proceedings on the Bill, although we accept the Government's good intent in fair employment and other key issues, Opposition Members have said that the Government have not gone far enough to ensure that the legislation will be strong enough to provide for fair employment within the Province. Time and again the Secretary of State has exhibited a tendency to rely on the word "reasonable"—what is reasonable and what is unreasonable. In moving amendment No. 45 he used the reasonableness argument again. To underline his reasonableness, he said that the amendment will not aid employers who wish to thwart the implementation of the fair employment legislation.

The Opposition disagree with the Secretary of State on that. That is why we shall vote against amendment No. 45. The amendment further weakens the legislation and will provide some employers—we do not suggest that there will be many—who do not want to be reasonable, who are not the reasonable men to whom the Secretary of State refers, and who wish to thwart the spirit of the legislation with another line of defence if they fail to comply with the wishes or orders of the tribunal.

As the Secretary of State correctly said, as the Bill stands, an employer who fails to provide information upon request from the commission is liable to conviction, but he has two defences open to him. First, he can show that he has a reasonable excuse—namely, unreasonable cost or inconvenience. Secondly, he can show that it was not practicable for him to comply or try to comply with the requirements before proceedings began. Amendment No. 45 adds the further defence that an employer feels that it is not reasonably practicable to supply information. Amendment No. 45 will place a further restraint on the commission's ability to obtain necessary evidence to identify persistent discriminators.

The Government argue that the amendments are necessary to protect employers from reasonable circumstances—namely, the destruction of records by fire, an act of terrorism, or an act of God. However, the Secretary of State is sufficiently long in the tooth to know that, if that defence is available to employers, every employer who fails to comply with a request will run off to his solicitor or barrister to erect a defence that he can put forward as reasonable. The Secretary of State does not want to give such an opening to recalcitrant or persistent discriminators in the Province. He knows that some people are prepared to spend large amounts of money to be defended in the courts. Solicitors and barristers in the Province will have a field day trying to erect defences which comply with the reasonableness aspect of the amendment.

I do not know whether the Secretary of State has followed through the consequences of the amendment. There are now three defences. The third defence, provided by the Lords amendment, is on the question of reasonableness. It is our view that more employers will be able to get round the requirements of the fair employment legislation. I know that the Secretary of State is busy contemplating pastures new, but I wonder whether it has crossed his mind in the past few days that the consequence of the amendment will be further to water down the contract compliance provisions in the Bill.

9.15 pm

The Secretary of State will know that the Bill contains a complex procedure for an employer ultimately to be deemed an unqualified person under the terms of the Act. Only after that exceedingly complex procedure has been undertaken can the contract and grant provisions come into operation. This group of amendments makes it even harder to visualise the contract compliance provisions ever being used. If the threat is no longer real, the provisions will be further undermined.

Even at this late stage we urge the Government to think again so that the Secretary of State's last act is not to make fair employment legislation inoperable in practice.

**Mr. Tom King:** We make no apology for seeking to establish a reasonable basis for the Bill. We come back to the question of judgment. The matter depends partly on one's judgment and partly on whether one understands the law.

There is an error in what the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall) said. It is not sufficient for an employer simply to have a reasonable excuse. He must also comply as soon as reasonably practicable, or prove that the proceedings were brought too soon. There is greater protection than the hon. Gentleman appreciates. Our reasonable basis is even more reasonable than he may realise.

*Question put,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 183, Noes 77.

**Division No. 326]** **[9.17 pm**

### AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knox, David
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patnick, Irvine
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. Tom Sackville.

### NOES

Anderson, Donald
Armstrong, Hilary
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Boateng, Paul
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alexander
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Galloway, George
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Lewis, Terry
Loyden, Eddie
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morley, Elliot
Mowlam, Marjorie
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Richardson, Jo
Rogers, Allan
Salmond, Alex
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Steinberg, Gerry
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ray Powell.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 46 to 69 agreed to.*

## Clause 52

### PROVISION OF TRAINING

*Lords amendment:* No. 70, in page 44, line 26, leave out from beginning to end of line 11 on page 45 and insert—

37A.—(1) This section applies where, in pursuance of affirmative action, persons are afforded access to facilities for training which would help to fit them for employment, for employment in a particular capacity or for a particular employment or occupation, but—

(a) the facilities are provided only at a particular place in Northern Ireland or the training is confined to

**persons of a particular class, not being a class framed by reference to religious belief or political opinion, and**

**(b) by providing the facilities only there or by so confining the training, access to the facilities by persons of a particular religious belief or political opinion is excluded or restricted.**

**(2) For the purpose of determining whether any act done in, or in connection with, affording those facilities is by virtue of section 16(2) unlawful under any provision of Parts III and IV, the fact that, by providing the facilities only there or by so confining the training, their access to the facilities is thereby excluded or restricted is to be disregarded.'"**

9.30 pm

**Mr. Tom King:** I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Mr. Speaker:** With this, we shall consider amendment (a), in page 44, line 26, leave out from beginning to end of line 11 on page 45 and insert—

'Nothing in Parts III and IV shall render unlawful any act done by—

(a) an employer,
(b) an employment agency
(c) a vocational organisation, or
(d) a person providing services mentioned in section 22(1)

in or in connection with affording only persons of a particular community, facilities for training which would help to fit them for employment, for employment in a particular capacity, or for a particular employment or occupation.

(2) For the purposes of this section "community" has the same meaning as in Part II of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989.'.

**Mr. King:** I know that we have had considerable discussion about this matter. I have already commented on the balance that can be struck, but it is not so much a question of balance as a point of policy. It is no secret that, as the Bill has proceeded, under the expert guidance of my hon. Friend the Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers), religious-exclusive training has been the issue. While we want to protect people from direct or indirect discrimination and measures to help particular groups, we are not prepared to agree to exclusion from training on religious grounds.

The hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) appreciates that some of the amendments that have been proposed would protect Harland and Wolff from this legislation if it wanted to run a Protestant-only training scheme. I am not sure whether that was the hon. Gentleman's intention.

We believe that it is right to encourage people and to tackle disadvantage in the most effective way. It would not be helpful, in the present climate in Northern Ireland, for people with particular religious beliefs to be forbidden from taking part in training courses. This subject has been debated extensively by hon. Members and in the other place.

The divide comes because this is not a matter of balance or interpretation, but a policy issue. We have not stood resolutely on the ground we previously held—we have tried to take account of serious points that were made during debates in Committee, and we gave a clear understanding that we would tackle them in another place. We are debating the form that those amendments took. The Opposition are saying in amendment (a) that the Lords amendment does not go as far as they would like.

As a matter of policy, we are not prepared to take that final step. We think that it would be unwise, and bring this legislation into disrepute, and be extremely dangerous to community relations. That is why we want to improve the Bill, as we have done, without going a bridge too far, which is what the Opposition seek to do. The difference between us centres on the Opposition's intention to benefit a particular religious group, which would discriminate against certain religious groups.

Lords amendment No. 70 provides for targeting of a particular location, such as west Belfast, and of the criteria used. One can do that without going a bridge too far. One can use the legislation to target training, effectively and legally, on specific areas and under-represented groups of people. That is what the legislation is intended to do, and it is perfectly defensible. Accordingly, religious under-representation can be taken into account when targeting training without there being any risk of direct discrimination.

The Lords amendment has been carefully and expressly framed so that an employer who intends to benefit an under-represented group is protected from allegations of either direct or indirect discrimination, provided that members of the majority group are not expressly excluded. There have been lengthy debates about this issue, and I hope that the House will think that we have made a wise judgment.

**Mr. McNamara:** It was remiss of me not to congratulate the Secretary of State and the Minister on their new posts. I beg forgiveness for not doing so, if only because the new Secretary of State represents the constituency of my standard charge.

The Secretary of State was right to say that this matter is the kernel of the Bill. It was the subject of much debate in Committee, in another place and at various meetings. I, too, pay tribute to the hon. Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers) for his readiness to meet, to discuss and to disagree. Throughout all our debates, there has always been a major difference between us. The right hon. Gentleman referred to our amendment as a bridge too far. Although he has built many important bridges in the Bill, we believe that having got halfway across the river—I am about to mix my metaphors—he now finds himself without sufficient planks to get to the other side. The reason for that is that he has not dealt properly with the question of affirmative action.

If this part of the Bill is not right, it will not be effective in reducing inequality in Northern Ireland. The Bill will create an expensive apparatus that will clearly identify the problems but will not allow them to be tackled. We do not doubt the Government's intentions—that has never been an issue—but we doubt the quality of the advice that they have received and of the policy decisions that they have made.

Two key issues are at stake. First, there is a need to protect affirmative action programmes from challenges under the provisions dealing with discrimination. Secondly, there is a need to eliminate the conflict between the Bill and the sex discrimination legislation. The purpose of the amendment is to ensure that employers can organise training schemes for the purposes of affirmative action—that is, schemes calculated to help members of an under-represented community obtain employment in a place of work.

The employer must be protected from those who would claim that affirmative action constitutes a violation of the prohibition on discrimination. That is usually done by means of a specific exemption which excludes affirmative action from the prohibition on discrimination. That is the case with the legislation dealing with racial and sex discrimination, and it was the basis of our original amendment before we introduced new amendments in an attempt to accommodate some of the Government's fears.

More interestingly, that point is also recognised by the Government, who have introduced amendments to protect employers who advertise posts in such a way as to appeal exclusively to the under-represented community. The Secretary of State will remember the argument about the illegality of the Fair Employment Northern Ireland Act advert, which said that it would welcome applications from Protestants. During the passage of the Bill we had to point out that that was illegal. The Minister said that it was not, but then introduced an amendment to make it legal. I say that not in a disparaging way to the Minister, but in order to highlight the quality of advice to the Government. The Government were prepared to recognise our case in advertising and in everything else except training. If the argument is that it would be going too far to include training, why is the same principle not applied to advertising? The Bill also contains exemptions protecting an employer engaged in affirmative action training schemes from allegations of indirect discrimination. An employer is all right on indirect discrimination but not on direct discrimination.

Obviously, there is a major difference between the Government and Opposition and we regard it as fundamental to the Bill and the cause of much of our concern. The Government have not accepted that there is a need to provide an exemption against direct discrimination on religious grounds. They have two objections to such an amendment. First, they believe that they have done enough to protect employers. As the Secretary of State said, the Government believe that, if an employer provides a training scheme that would be indirectly discriminatory in the absence of an exemption provided for in clause 51, the scheme cannot at the same time be directly discriminatory. Unfortunately, that is not correct. The fallacy of that argument is revealed in the Bill because clause 48 clearly envisages situations in which a practice may be both directly and indirectly discriminatory. In other words, there is an overlap between the two forms of discrimination. That is why an exemption of some form must be included for discrimination as well as indirect discrimination.

Secondly, the Government also believe that an affirmative action scheme which does not totally exclude members of one or other community cannot be considered directly discriminatory. However, there is no requirement totally to exclude one or other community in order to demonstrate direct discrimination. The definition of direct discrimination contained in clause 48 refers to less favourable treatment and not to exclusion. That is the distinction.

Earlier in the debate the Secretary of State showed his confusion about the difference between religion-exclusive and religion-specific training schemes. In the former case, a scheme may be restricted to members of one group, hence the term exclusive. In the latter, the scheme is designed to enable members of an under-represented group to compete more successfully for employment, but it does not exclude all members of the over-represented group. The distinction and the argument has always been between religion-exclusive and religion-specific schemes.

The Government have set their face openly against permitting training schemes that are religiously exclusive. We heard that again today. The preference of the Opposition was simply to base the relevant sections of the legislation on the race and sex discrimination legislation and permit religion-exclusive training. This had the support of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, but it is a nettle which throughout the debate the Government have refused to grasp. Nevertheless, the Opposition supported by my hon. Friend the Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady), again in a bid to secure agreement, attempted to accommodate the Government by tabling a variety of amendments at various stages of the passage of the Bill which allowed for religion-specific training, but not religion-exclusive training.

Unfortunately, it has become painfully obvious that the Government have not provided legal protection for religion-specific training. I am convinced that the Government hope that in practice religion-specific training will take place. They believe that this will happen through a variety of proxy criteria rather than through the use of religion itself. The problem is that the law is not what the Government intend it to be but what appears in the statute book. The nod and wink approach to an employer is not a proper way to legislate.

An examination of the Government amendment clearly shows that it has not satisfied the conditions that we laid down for our support of the Bill on Third Reading. We assumed, rightly or wrongly, that the Government would introduce an amendment that made religion-specific affirmative action lawful. We understood, although we did not accept it, that they would look at religion exclusive, but we wanted religion specific. Instead, we have an amendment that prevents religion-specific training, because it specifically prevents the employer from taking religion into account. The amendment would render unlawful the affirmative action programmes that the Bill is designed to promote.

9.45 pm

This strange consequence of the Government amendment is something that they find hard to take on board and one questions the nature of the advice that they are receiving. The surrealistic consequences can be imagined easily. Imagine an employer who launches an affirmative action programme and finds himself before the fair employment tribunal, asked to justify his position. The cross-examination would go something like this: "Why did you organise this affirmation action scheme?" Answer: "Because I wanted to increase the numbers of an unrepresented group." "Who are they?" "They are Catholics"—or, as the case might be, Protestants. "That is to use religion as a criterion for selection?" "Yes." "You are out of order under the Government's amendment."

Affirmative action programmes designed to rectify religious imbalances in the work force must inevitably contain an element of direct discrimination on religious grounds, but this is a factor that employers are not allowed to take into account when pursuing affirmative action. The Government amendment, to say the least, is, in the phrase beloved by the Department of Economic Development, technically deficient.

Faced with the Government's inability to provide sufficient protection for affirmative action, we believed that we could make our point most clearly by returning to our original position, with an amendment that extends the

*[Mr. McNamara]*

same protection to affirmative action under this legislation as already exists under the sex and race discrimination laws. Our amendment is clear and unambiguous on this point. The Government have failed to grasp that people abroad will not understand why the law on religious discrimination is not as strong, clear and precise in Northern Ireland as it is on the island of Great Britain.

Simplicity is a virtue in this respect. The more complex the legislation, the less affirmative action will take place. There is a need to clear up the Bill in order that employers have a clear understanding of what is permissible and what is not. This House cannot allow an excessive element of ambiguity to creep in. That would discourage employers from taking action to rectify religious imbalances in the work force.

The Lords amendment also contains another problem, one which the Opposition amendment has the further merit of resolving. This is the conflict between the Government amendment and the Sex Discrimination Order (Northern Ireland) 1988 and the EC's equal treatment directive of 1976. Although the Lords amendment avoids placing indirectly discriminatory criteria on the statute book, unlike the Bill as it stands without the Lords amendment, it encourages employers to use such roundabout methods, because they are prevented from engaging in religion specific training. The criteria in the existing clause, such as age, length of service and unemployment, would all be likely to discriminate against women, and therefore be liable to legal challenge.

Faced with that, the Government have taken out a particular provision. However, any of the criteria suggested are likely to have that effect, whether or not they appear on the face of the Bill. The value of our amendment is that the virtue of simplicity would encourage employers to pursue affirmative action programmes without having to run the risk that any criteria that they use could be challenged in the courts and taken as far as the European Community.

Finally, I shall place on record the Opposition's disappointment that the Government were unable to meet this point and hence to provide a Bill that would be workable and would have a serious effect on the problem of inequality of opportunity in employment in Northern Ireland. We made it clear that we believed that the changes in the Bill were necessary if it was to make an effective contribution to the establishment of fair employment in Northern Ireland.

We were prepared to give the Bill the benefit of the doubt in many parts that we feel are defective, such as contract compliance, if proper amendments were made in other parts.

Affirmative action was one of these concerns; others were indirect discrimination and the introduction of an independent element into the section 42 national security certification procedure, and the improved areas—the remedies available to victims of discrimination, monitoring and timetables. There has been some movement on these latter issues. However, the first two have not been satisfactorily resolved, much to my regret. As a result, it would be dishonest of me to say that I believe the Bill will be as effective an instrument as the Secretary of State believes it will be.

The situation is not beyond redemption. Although the Bill may not be the solution that it should have been, there are many ways in which the Government can reaffirm their commitment to fair employment and make some progress. They can still have an impact on fair employment and on affirmative action programmes and, at the same time, realistically attempt to attract inward investment to the Province, which is what it needs. Large parts of the Bill contain enabling measures, so it should be the priority of the Government to draw up the most effective code of practice and regulations possible within the limitations of the Bill—particularly for affirmative action programmes.

Due attention must be paid to the fair employment aspects of all Government policy—such as the location of public sector jobs and the location of industry. It is essential that all efforts be made to maximise the number of jobs. The Labour party wants fair employment and more employment, and it would be wrong of me not to congratulate the Secretary of State and his former Under-Secretary on the number of jobs that they have sought to bring to the Province. They have attempted to do a great deal in that respect.

It would be a mistake to think that the passage of this legislation is the end of the road: it is only the beginning. I am sorry that we have started out so hesitantly, but I still believe that we shall be able to make progress.

**Mr. McGrady:** I should like to remedy my earlier omission by congratulating the Minister on his new employment. I want to record my and my colleagues' thanks for his forthright and honest approach to the affairs of Northern Ireland. We often disagreed, but at least we did so in a gentlemanly fashion, and we welcome his successor to his new position. I also record my appreciation of the hon. Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers), who had charge of the Committee and whom I found most receptive and understanding. I wish him well in his future endeavours.

Lords amendment No. 70 concerns an area in which the Government have shown a persistent reluctance to call a spade a spade. The Bill deals with religious discrimination, yet the Government seem preoccupied with avoiding that term. Clause 52 deals with outreach programmes—affirmative action programmes reaching out to sectors of the community which are under-represented in certain employers' work forces.

One of the most obvious outreach programmes is the provision of training facilities which we are now debating. The original Bill used every form of terminology except religion: areas of high unemployment, length of unemployment and even age. Then we added length of service. Suddenly we find that these were all totally inadequate and are wiped out by the Lords amendment.

The Government have come along and tried another definition of the problem, using the word "class". It is the only categorisation to be found in the Lords amendment:

> "the training is confined to persons of a particular class, not being a class framed by reference to religious belief or political opinion".

I defy the Minister to define class in a way that would satisfy the circumstances of Northern Ireland and provide the classification required to remedy the problems that the Bill has attempted to deal with. But the worst definition was in the original clause 52. Part II of the Bill defined communities as the Protestant community and the Roman

Catholic community, yet in every other part of the Bill, the Government have been over-sensitive about putting down in black and white what its terminology means.

I would not argue for extra sympathy on religious grounds, but if we are to redress the imbalances, be they against the Protestant community or the Roman Catholic community, in the work force of a particular employer in a particular area, it is essential that the Bill permits training and outreach programmes to be directed at the under-represented community. I see no legal or moral objection to outreach programmes and training programmes welcoming applications for training from a particular section of the community which is under-represented, without excluding members of the other community, as the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) pointed out.

The Government's dreadful reticence and over-sensitivity is displayed by their abandonment of previous attempts under the original clause 52, which are replaced by the terminology of class. The Government should accept the amendment to the Lords amendment proposed by Labour Members and myself, to put clearly on the record the intent, the purpose and, hopefully, the practicality of the Bill.

**Mr. William Ross:** Anyone who listened carefully to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) must have shuddered when he drew attention to the fact that the Fair Employment Agency, which is supposed to monitor religious discrimination in Northern Ireland, placed an illegal advertisement in a newspaper to correct the imbalance in its work force. It did so believing that its efforts to correct that imbalance were sufficient to make what was illegal legal, and then found out that the illegality remained. That should have made plain to everyone the sheer complexity of the subject and the immense difficulties in trying to frame legislation to deal with it, rather than let the market deal with it, as Conservative Members are fond of proclaiming when it suits them and desert so rapidly when it does not.

The Bill has been improved by the other place, in so far as it is possible to improve such a weird and wonderful structure. We are grateful for that and we join the Government in resisting those who would destroy the improvements that have been made.

When my right hon. and hon. Friends examined the amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North and other assorted parties on this side of the House, we were surprised as it seemed to us to be a purely sectarian amendment and that that was the only way in which it could be described. The Secretary of State said that the Bill expressly excluded training schemes from which people could be excluded because of religious denomination. However, religious denomination does not really enter into it because one has to be a Protestant if one happens to be born in a Protestant community and educated at a state school, and one has to be a Roman Catholic if one happens to be born in what is perceived to be a Roman Catholic community and educated in a Roman Catholic school.

The Secretary of State then went on to tell us why we could not have training schemes that were expressly for Roman Catholics or for Protestants, but that the Goverment could possibly deal with that through the location of the training schemes. Anyone who knows the situation in Northern Ireland knows what happens in some training centres. There are some training centres with practically no Protestants and others where the number of Roman Catholics is extremely small.

*It being Ten o'clock, further consideration of the Bill stood adjourned.*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

***Ordered,***

**That, at this day's sitting, the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Bill, the Extradition Bill *[Lords]*, the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill *[Lords]*, and the Continental Shelf Bill *[Lords]* may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory.]***

## Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Bill

*Question again proposed,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Mr. Ross:** I did not notice that we had approached the witching hour of 10 o'clock, but now that we are past it we can keep on going until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Anyone who knows what goes on in practice in Northern Ireland knows perfectly well what the Secretary of State was getting at. He was saying that some training centres would cater for the Roman Catholic population and others would cater largely for the Protestant population. That is his way of getting around the difficulties that the proponents of the Bill have identified. I largely believe in the market economy, but I believe that the Bill is nonsense. As we trundle towards the end of its passage through this place, the nonsense and humbug become more and more exposed.

I neglected to say a fond farewell to our departing Secretary of State. I say farewell, but without fondness, because he came to Northern Ireland and was handed the poisoned chalice of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which was created by his predecessor. From what the departing Secretary of State said on television the other evening, I thought that he was preparing the policy to be followed by his successor. That is a strange attitude for the Government to adopt, but no doubt the House and the country will get used to departing Secretaries of State always stating the policy to be followed by their successors. Let us hope that the right hon. Gentleman's successor enjoys rather more success. I am sorry that his successor will be trying to implement a policy that Members on this Bench will never accept.

**Mr. Tom King:** This is well-trodden ground. I appreciate the tribute that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. MacNamara) paid to my hon. Friend the Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggars), but I do not appreciate the less than generous tributes that he is inclined to pay to officials. That is wrong.

I take responsibility for the policies put forward, but the hon. Gentleman chooses to seek to divide. He thinks that, if he pays tributes to me for what he thinks I am genuinely trying to do about employment, he can then try to suggest that officials are somehow trying to undermine me. That is grossly unfair to officials who have worked extremely hard on this Bill, which deals with extremely difficult matters. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that those matters are not the most popular to pursue in certain quarters of Northern Ireland. Those officials worked on them extremely conscientiously and they have

*[Mr. Tom King]*

my great admiration and gratitude for the work that they have done—that is one of the closing statements I would like to make as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

The hon. Gentleman is a member of a party that has some aspirations to become the Government. If the hon. Gentleman shortly hopes to achieve that objective, I do not recommend the policy of vilifying the officials who could conceivably, forbid the day, work for him. I say that in all candour. I do and will take any criticism, often sometimes more than I enjoy, for policies that come from the Departments that I have the honour to represent in this House. I will not sit and listen to criticisms of officials and pretend that they are running a private war of their own or are not to be trusted in any way, especially when their work has been outstanding and most conscientious. If the hon. Gentleman becomes the instrument of lawyers who seek to argue with other lawyers and suggest that there is something unworthy about the opinions of other lawyers, that does not do him justice, either. I do not commend that course to him.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North raised a point of contrast between different advertisements. and asked how there could be an advertisement that appeared to favour one group. The hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) answered him: it is one thing to advertise and encourage representation from a minority under-represented group, but in no way does that exclude people from another part of the community from applying. The hon. Member for South Down was right. At the point of selection for the job, the merit principle will apply.

I have not taken part in the detailed examination of the Bill. I am glad that I have not had to listen to the explanations by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North about the difference between religion-exclusive and religion-specific. It sounds like a distinction without a difference. The idea that we go around Northern Ireland explaining to a lot of employers the subtle difference between the two is not an attractive course. I am afraid that it falls into the trap for which I have already chastised the hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam)—losing that valuable quality of balance that is so important in this matter.

The hon. Member for South Down was worried about the protection for outreach training. I should like to confirm what I have already said. Amendment No. 70 has been carefully and expressly framed so that an employer who intends to benefit an under-represented group is protected from allegations of both direct and indirect discrimination, so long as members of the majority group are not expressly excluded. That is an attempt to strike a balance of protection for outreach training without the prohibition or exclusivity to which I take exception and which I believe, as would anyone who reflects on the situation, would be profoundly unwise.

**Mr. William Ross:** The Minister has just said that the majority group is not excluded. By that, does he mean the Protestant community, or the majority group in the much smaller area in which the training system exists?

**Mr. King:** I meant the latter.

**Mr. McNamara:** By leave of the House, I should like to make a few points.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** Does the hon. Member have the leave of the House to speak again? *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. McNamara:** The Minister made a number of statements about me. Therefore, I think that I am entitled to reply to them with the leave of the House. After all, I have tabled an amendment.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I assumed that leave had been given. I did not hear a dissentient voice.

**Mr. McNamara:** The Minister said that I had sullied my tributes to him. In that case, if he is responsible, I withdraw what I said about him. All I would say is that frequently his Ministers came to the Standing Committee and contradicted what they had said earlier.

I am sorry that the Minister cannot grasp the distinction between religion-exclusive and religion-specific. He said that he had not paid great attention to the detail of the Bill. Perhaps if he had done so, we would have had a better Bill.

*Question put,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 183, Noes 71.

**Division No. 327]** **[10.8 pm**

**AYES**

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James

Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby

Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patnick, Irvine
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Stephen Dorrell and
Mr. John M. Taylor.

## NOES

Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Clelland, David
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alexander
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Galloway, George
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Haynes, Frank
Hinchliffe, David
Home Robertson, John
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Lewis, Terry
Loyden, Eddie
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McGrady, Eddie
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Richardson, Jo
Rogers, Allan
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Steinberg, Gerry
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Nigel Griffiths and
Mr. Allen McKay.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendment:* No. 71 after clause 52, insert the following new Clause—

### REDUNDANCY

"After section 37A of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976 there is inserted—

"*Redundancy.*

37AA.—(1) This section applies where—

(a) a practice relating to the selection of employees who may be dismissed as redundant is followed by an employer in pursuance of affirmative action and in accordance with an agreed procedure, and

(b) the practice does not involve the application of any condition or requirement framed by reference to religious belief or political opinion, but has or may have the effect that the proportion of employees of a particular religious belief or political opinion who are selected is smaller than the proportion of employees not of that religious belief or, as the case may be, not of that political opinion who are selected.

(2) The dismissal of an employee in pursuance of the practice is not by virtue of section 16(2) unlawful under any provision of Parts III and IV."

**Mr. Tom King:** I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** With this we shall also discuss the following: consequential amendment (a) in lieu of the Lords amendment, in page 24, line 5, leave out 'or promotion' and insert 'promotion or redundancy'.

Lords amendment No. 72.

**Mr. King:** This amendment deals with the interaction of anti-discrimination legislation on redundancy programmes. If an affirmative action programme operated and redundancies occurred, it could lead to extremely difficult complications and, in certain circumstances, could interfere severely with normal industrial relations agreements.

We are not prepared to allow selection for redundancy to be on the basis of religion. That selection would be discriminatory, illegal and contrary to the basic principles of fairness and equity which we have sought to maintain throughout the legislation. That is the background against which amendment No. 71 is constructed.

I hope that the House will recognise the difficult issues involved. We believe that it is right to construct the amendment after earlier discussions in Committee and in another place on this matter. I hope that our approach strikes the fair balance that we seek, and I commend the amendment to the House.

**Mr. Jim Marshall:** The Secretary of State introduced the amendment in his customary manner. He addressed it in his usual reasonable way and suggested that the Government have the balance about right on this occasion. I venture to suggest to the Secretary of State that, if he fully understood the consequences of the amendment, he would be a little more reticent in urging the House to accept it.

We believe that the amendment does not address the problem that the Secretary of State would like it to address. It is not without significance that when the Bill was originally published, it contained no reference to redundancies. Only as a consequence of prodding by the Opposition, and in particular by my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) did the Government recognise that the problem could exist and agreed, after the probing and private discussions, to seek to bring forward later an amendment that would address the redundancy problem. Amendment No. 71 is a consequence of that further thought and discussion.

There is now general agreement between the Government and the Opposition that redundancy policy, like promotion policy and recruitment policy to a company, can affect the structure of a company's work force. It does not take a genius to see that if an employer pursues an affirmative action programme to rectify imbalances within his work force and some time later is forced to make redundancies on a first-in, last-out basis, the likelihood is that redundancies will cause further inequalities in the balance of the work force and will negate the equality of opportunity that the employer has been trying to achieve.

As the Secretary of State knows, the Opposition were concerned about that matter from the outset. We were concerned also to ensure that the redundancy policy should form an integral part of the periodic review that is required under clause 30. At the outset, Opposition Members presumed that the omission of redundancy was an oversight. When we pointed that out to the Government, they readily agreed to consider the issues. Amendment No. 71 does not deal with the problem that we identified—the absence of a duty on employers to consider redundancy procedures in the review. For that reason, if for no other, we oppose the amendment.

Amendment No. 71 is seriously flawed in two respects. First, it appears that redundancy schemes are protected only when they are part of affirmative action. However, there is no reason why a redundancy policy should be part of an affirmative action programme. It is nonsense that an employer who discovers that existing practices are discriminatory cannot remedy them without engaging in an overall affirmative action programme. That does not take account of a situation in which an employer might already pursue an affirmative action programme and then discover that a redundancy policy is discriminatory.

Secondly, hon. Members who have read the amendment will note that it refers to an agreed procedure. An agreed procedure is not defined in the Bill. Contrary to Government statements in the other place, there is no existing legal concept of agreed procedures. The amendment refers to a situation for which there is no legal basis. Does it involve an agreement with trade unions? I address that question to the Secretary of State. He will know that trade unions do not want that. If the amendment is accepted, it will be the basis of chaos.

If we get an opportunity, Opposition Members will not only vote against amendment No. 71 but press amendment (a), which reverts to our original demand that employers include redundancy procedures in the periodic review required under clause 30.

*Question put,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 172, Noes 68.

**Division No. 328]** **[10.28 pm**

### AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blackburn, Dr John G.

Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Maginnis, Ken
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patnick, Irvine
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr David Heathcoat-Amery
and Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

### NOES

Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Boateng, Paul
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Clelland, David
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alexander
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hinchliffe, David
Home Robertson, John
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Lewis, Terry
Loyden, Eddie
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Richardson, Jo
Rogers, Allan
Salmond, Alex
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Steinberg, Gerry
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Noes :
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Nigel Griffiths.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 72 to 77 agreed to.*

## Schedule 2

### MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

*Lords amendment:* No. 78, in page 52, line 6, at end insert—

"*The Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (S.I. 1976/1042 (N.I.15))*

27A. At the end of Article 49 of the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 there is added—

> "(4) Any act which by virtue of this Article or Article 48 could not be unlawful under Parts III to V (or, in the case of an act falling within paragraph (3), under Article 15) is not by virtue of section 16(2)(b) of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976 (indirect discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion) unlawful under any provision of Parts III and IV of that Act."

27B. At the end of Article 63 of that Order there is added—

> "(3) Where a complaint is presented to an industrial tribunal under paragraph (1) and it appears to the tribunal that the act to

> which the complaint relates is one in respect of which (as being unlawful discrimination within the meaning of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976)—
>
> (a) a complaint could be made to the Fair Employment Tribunal for Northern Ireland under Part III of that Act; or
>
> (b) such a complaint has been made, but the proceedings under that Act have not been disposed of,
>
> the tribunal shall not proceed further under this Order in relation to the complaint unless all proceedings which can be taken under that Act in respect of the act have been disposed of.""

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Tom King.]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** With this, it will be convenient to discuss the following: amendment (a) to the Lords amendment, in line 8, leave out from 'not' to 'unlawful' in line 11.

Amendment (b), in line 11, leave out 'that Act' and insert

'the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976'.

Amendment (c), in line 26, at end add—

'(4) Paragraph (3) does not apply unless the President or Vice-President has directed that the complaint under this Order shall be heard and determined by the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989.'.

**Ms. Mowlam:** We fear that the relationship between the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976 will be jeopardised by Lords amendment No. 79. Indeed, it could bring the Sex Discrimination Order into disrepute and make it less effective in Northern Ireland. That causes great anxiety among women's groups in Northern Ireland, and the Equal Opportunities Commission in Northern Ireland, so we want the Government to consider the impact that Lords amendment No. 79 would have.

The Secretary of State has argued tonight that he wants a balanced Bill, with a procedure that will work. On the basis of his own criteria, we want him to reconsider Lords amendment No. 79. New section 27A protects affirmative action programmes under the Sex Discrimination Order from challenge, on the grounds that they are indirectly discriminatory, under the Fair Employment Act. Without such provision, a single-sex training course in which the participants are predominantly from one side of the divide could be found to be discriminatory under the Fair Employment Act. We pushed for, and support, the first part of new section 27A. The see of Northern Ireland also pushed for it. We are still convinced, however, that it does not go far enough. Although it protects against indirect discrimination, it does not protect against direct discrimination, and that worries us.

A problem with direct discrimination arises when a direct action scheme for women is undertaken to remedy a religious imbalance. This is the type of affirmative action which the Fair Employment Agency has recommended, most noticeably with respect to the clearing banks.

If higher grades in a place of employment, or on a training programme, are filled predominantly by male Protestants and the lower grades are filled predominantly by female Catholics, an affirmative action scheme which is designed to improve the proportion of women who secure promotion would also lead to a rise in the number of Catholics. If left unamended, Lords amendment No. 79 would enable that to be challenged as discriminatory.

The Lords amendment does not deal with the problem of direct discrimination, so it is ineffective and unacceptable. Indeed, it would be worse than that, as it would render unlawful the Fair Employment Commission's ability to pursue policies that were formerly pursued by the Fair Employment Agency. The legal uncertainty, especially in this part of the Bill, worries women in Northern Ireland. If employers are liable to challenges in the courts, progressive employers would be discouraged from taking action while those who are opposed to equality of opportunity for women will at best be able to use this as an excuse, possibly to turn back the clock. New section 27A is good as far as it goes, but we would like it to go much further in relation to direct discrimination. That is why we have tabled amendments (a) to (c). We think that they would deal with the problem much better than Lords amendment No. 79.

The Minister has told us on previous occasions that these amendments are unnecessary because, under clause 52, employers will be able to use gender as a reference, provided it conforms to articles 48 and 49 of the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976. That argument has been used against it in the past. That is the only argument that the Government have made either in Committee or in the Lords, and if it is the only argument they advance now, it is incumbent on the Minister to answer two questions. First, if that argument holds, why is it necessary to put down an amendment to schedule 2 to deal with indirect discrimination? If the Government argument is valid, it can apply equally to indirect and direct discrimination.

Secondly, we understand that clause 52 as amended by the Government would not afford schemes such as those that I have mentioned protection by the Fair Employment Commission. The Government have failed to provide an answer to those two matters in relation to new section 27A. The Minister has told us that new section 27B is very important and that he wants to see the process working practically. New section 27B deals with the procedural relationship between sex discrimination and religious discrimination cases. The difficulty with amendment No. 79 as it stands is that a complainant may bring a case under sex discrimination legislation to the industrial tribunal. That same complainant may also bring a case of alleged religious discrimination to the fair employment tribunal which rests with the same evidence. That means that two channels are open.

Clause 6(2) of the Bill allows the president or vice-president of the tribunal discretion—that is the important word—to transfer the sex discrimination case to the fair employment tribunal where it may be heard concurrently with the fair employment case. The Government amendment to the schedule creates a problem in that, if the president or vice-president does not exercise the discretion provided, the sex discrimination case must be adjourned until all the proceedings under the fair employment legislation are completed. That worries us. Under the Sex Discrimination Order, that could happen immediately.

Under the procedures that the amendment would introduce, sex discrimination cases must be adjourned. As a result, the amendment enshrines in the Bill structural discrimination against women, which could obviously lead to a case under the EC equal treatment directive of 1976. The Minister may say that that is not so, but he is well aware that the Equal Opportunities Commission has informed the Government of its intention to take exactly this issue to the European Commission if the Government amendment is not withdrawn.

I shall outline some defects in the procedure that I have described. First, since the fair employment case would already have been decided, the sex discrimination case would, by default, be prejudiced. Secondly, it is obvious that, in such cases, overlapping facts will have to be established when the first case is held. However, the applicant would be at a disadvantage because she would not be able to secure the assistance of the Equal Opportunities Commission for the fair employment hearing, and that would put her at a disadvantage at the sex discrimination hearing.

Thirdly, if the applicant wins the fair employment case, the decision will still be subject to appeal. As the Minister is well aware, taking a case to appeal in Northern Ireland can take anything up to two years, during which the sex discrimination case would continue to be pending. The applicant would then have the burden and the additional costs of a separate case, which would be based largely on the same set of facts.

Fourthly, witnesses would be required to give evidence twice, with an interval of anything up to two years between the cases. For those reasons, we have tabled amendments (a) to (c), which would overcome the difficulties in relation to the fair employment tribunal.

**Mr. Tom King:** I am grateful to the hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam), who sought valiantly to make quite complicated matters seem simple and clear. She was discussing in particular the complicated matter of the interaction between religious discrimination at work, which the Bill is aimed at preventing, and sex discrimination. Some extremely complex scenarios can be constructed. Fortunately, the hon. Lady helped me through this and kindly gave us seven out of 10 for effort on new section 27A. This reflects what I chastised the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) for not recognising—that we have tried to respond to what we thought were genuine concerns, as they have arisen.

The history of the Bill is not one of the Government producing legislation, laying it down, defeating every effort to criticise it and not being willing to consider a review. The hon. Lady fairly recognised that the first part of Lords amendment No. 79 directly addresses the points that have been raised. We think that all of it does so. The hon. Lady is at least prepared to accept that new section 27A is a good start in the right direction. She then pinched my best line by saying that I would probably say that once again this is a question of balance and practicality. Her shrewdness anticipated my reply, because that it what it is. As she knows, it is the hallmark of the Bill.

Against that background, I shall deal with the first interaction, which is the difficult one of how these cases will be dealt with. The hon. Lady drew attention to the problems which could arise, and immediately assumed that this would once again mean disadvantage for women faced with sex discrimination cases, which would be put back so that there were always delays and problems with cases going to appeal with a religious case as well. She spoke of the difficulties that this would impose.

It may be helpful if I tell the House what the normal practice will be. A religious case will go to the fair employment tribunal, and a joint sex and religious case will also go, under the provisions of clause 6, to the president, who has the discretion to direct that the fair employment tribunal hear both cases together. A sex case in which a religious issue arises cannot reasonably proceed before the industrial tribunal because that tribunal has no jurisdiction to hear the religious disputes. The way forward is for the individual concerned to lodge a case of religious discrimination with a fair employment tribunal, which can then hear and adjudicate on both cases. That is how we see it proceeding and we hope that that will be helpful. I accept, as the hon. Lady did in a most engaging way, that if one has these two elements interacting in this way, there can be complications, and the case will not be dealt with as expeditiously as it would if there were just one issue at stake. I hope that she feels that this is a genuine attempt to redress the matter.

The hon. Lady then got into the complicated matter of protection from indirect but not direct discrimination. The Bill makes indirect religious discrimination illegal for the first time. The Government were pleased to accede to the Opposition's request to protect gender-specific training under articles 48 and 49 of the Sex Discrimination Act (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 from allegations of indirect religious discrimination. The territory into which the hon. Lady led us is extremely complex, and some hon. Members may not have found it easy to follow, despite her clarity.

Indirect discrimination is complex, involving the application of a requirement or condition which is applied equally but is such that it has an adverse impact on a person, it cannot be shown by the respondent to be justifiable irrespective of religious belief and it is to the detriment of a person because he or she cannot comply with it. It is difficult to envisage circumstances in which an employer operating a gender-specific training course could not deploy the justifiable defence of the second condition that I have mentioned, on the grounds that a training course was justifiable to remedy a gender imbalance in a work force. The Government acceded to the commission's request in recognition of the complexity of indirect discrimination and to ensure that those operating gender-specific training would be protected from these complexities.

We have sought to strike the balance to which the hon. Lady referred and to ensure protection for anti-discrimination measures. The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) recognised that the legislation has some merits, and I am anxious to see it brought into effect as soon as possible.

I hope that the hon. Lady will not press her amendment to a Division, and I commend the Lords amendment to the House.

*Amendment (a) proposed in lieu of the Lords amendment:* line 8, leave out from 'not' to 'unlawful' in line 11.

*Question put,* That the amendment be made:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 68, Noes 167.

*[Mr. Tom King]*

**Division No. 329]** **[10.57 pm**

AYES

Armstrong, Hilary
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Boateng, Paul
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Clelland, David
Cohen, Harry
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alexander
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hinchliffe, David
Home Robertson, John
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Loyden, Eddie
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Richardson, Jo
Rogers, Allan
Salmond, Alex
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Steinberg, Gerry
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
Maginnis, Ken
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patnick, Irvine
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory
and Mr. Tom Sackville.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

*Lords amendments Nos. 79 to 81 agreed to.*

## Extradition Bill *[Lords]*

*Order for Second Reading read.*

11.8 pm

**The Solicitor-General (Sir Nicholas Lyell):** I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

This is a consolidation measure. The first general legislative recognition of extradition came in the Extradition Act 1870. The Fugitive Offenders Act 1967 is currently the main legislation governing extradition to the independent members of the Commonwealth and to the remaining colonies. Part I of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 set out a new system of extradition to foreign states. The Bill consolidates this new legislation about extradition as between the United Kingdom and foreign states with the 1967 legislation about Commonwealth extradition.

In preparing the consolidation, the Law Commission and the Scottish Law Commission issued a report in which they made a number of recommendations for minor technical amendments in order that a satisfactory consolidation might be achieved.

The Bill has been passed in another place where, in the usual way, it was referred to the Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills. The Committee reported that the recommendations of the Law Commissions were necessary for the purpose of producing a satisfactory consolidation of the law, and that the Bill gives effect to those recommendations. The Committee adopted certain amendments to improve the form of the Bill. It concluded that, apart from giving effect to the Law Commissions' recommendations, the Bill was pure consolidation of the existing law.

As always, our thanks are due to the Law Commissions and to the draftsmen for continuing their important consolidation work and also to the Joint Committee for its careful scrutiny of the Bill on our behalf.

11.10 pm

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): I wondered whether this consolidation measure on extradition would take care of people who have committed large-scale fraud in the City of London and have the money and ability to fly the coop, unlike many of the people who are committed for crimes in Britain. I am thinking particularly of Peter Cameron-Webb and Peter Dixon in the famous PCW fraud case, who managed to get away with about £40 million——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** Order. I remind the hon. Member that when we debate a consolidation measure we consider not the merits of the law but merely whether the law as enacted should be consolidated. We cannot discuss the merits of cases arising out of the law.

**Mr. Skinner:** But there is a difficulty. Not too long ago —I do not know whether you were present, Mr. Deputy Speaker—during Question Time I asked the Attorney-General about this matter. He gave the impression that there might be opportunities to extradite these two gentlemen, who are living in the lap of luxury, from the United States under the extension of——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. That matter cannot conceivably arise under this measure.

**Mr. Skinner:** This is a rather strange place, is it not? If it had been some old lady who had been caught stealing a tin of sardines in Marks and Spencer, I have no doubt that any consolidation measure would have allowed for that matter to be discussed, especially if she were thrown in gaol. But when it is the establishment——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. Member has been here a long time. He knows that whatever may have happened in other circumstances with respect to old ladies in Marks and Spencer, he cannot discuss these matters on the measure that is before the House. It is a consolidation of the law that has been approved by Parliament. The hon. Member cannot discuss changes arising under that law.

**Mr. Skinner:** I am not altogether happy about the consolidation, for the good reason that I do not think that the Acts, consolidated or otherwise, have been doing the job correctly in terms of those City crooks——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Be that as it may, and the hon. Member may well be entitled to his opinions about the wisdom or otherwise of what has happened in the past, but Parliament has enacted that law and we cannot reopen those matters now. The hon. Member must address himself to the merits of consolidation. The only issue before the House is whether these measures should be consolidated.

**Mr. Skinner:** As a matter of fact, I am a little concerned about the fact that this consolidation is taking place. I may have to vote against this consolidation measure. I assume that I am still able to vote against consolidation measures.

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** (Tatton): For the time being.

**Mr. Skinner:** "For the time being," says the Fascist opposite, head of the goose-stepping tendency.

I wonder whether the Solicitor-General can reply to my point about these crooks in the City of London who have got away with blue murder—£40 million, as a matter of fact. Will the Solicitor-General give us updated information about whether that five-year extradition period has been extended? Will it be possible under this consolidation measure—which we cannot discuss in principle, but which we can mention in passing—for these people to be apprehended? Can they be brought over here at a later date?

We have had a Cabinet reshuffle, so I suppose that we could say that it has been consolidated, or otherwise. Shall we have another statement from the Attorney-General under the consolidation measure? Is that possible or am I asking too much in requesting the Solicitor-General to explain why these people have got away with it? As this Government are supposed to believe in law and order with equality for everyone—which we know is not true, but let us assume that it is—will the Solicitor-General tell the people that those crooks in the City of London, such as those at Blue Arrow, Phillips and Drew, County NatWest and NatWest itself, could come under this consolidation measure?

I am throwing those cases in as an example in discussing the merits of consolidation generally, of course. I am not into discussing the merits of a particular measure, but whether, when we pass consolidation measures, it is a good idea to throw in a few anecdotes and examples to give the issue some colour and flavour so that we understand what it is about.

*[Mr. Skinner]*

Is the Solicitor-General likely to say that the Serious Fraud Office will deal with the crooks at County NatWest, and ensure that they do not fly the coop under this consolidation measure and that they are treated equally with ordinary citizens? Those are questions that hon. Members should ask on behalf of their constituents late at night in this quaint little place. Will the Solicitor-General respond to them? Of course he will not.

11.16 pm

**Mr. Bob Cryer** (Bradford, South): I want to raise a couple of points about consolidation. The measure involves a number of orders and they seem to be affirmative orders in every case. That is, no doubt, a reflection of a consolidation. Affirmative orders were produced in previous consolidated legislation so, naturally, we expect that precedent to be followed. However, it is the practice of the House for affirmative as well as negative procedure orders to go to the Select Committee on Statutory Instruments. The Committee then reports to the House on the deficiencies, including, as the Solicitor-General knows, the question of the vires of the order. As some important issues are covered by the Bill, it is relevant that if the Committee reports that an order is ultra vires or defective in drafting, or that a Minister is making unusual use of powers, those reports should be taken into account.

When the Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills examined the fact of consolidation and the incorporation of these affirmative procedures into the legislation, did it consider making it a requirement—which is not a requirement under Standing Orders of the House—that before the affirmative orders could be debated in the Chamber, the Solicitor-General and the House should have the opportunity to study the report from the Joint Committee?

The examination and scrutiny of delegated legislation in this House is abysmal. Only last week, we dealt with 15 orders—admittedly not by the affirmative procedure, because they were negative instruments which were being prayed against—in three hours. There was a report from the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments for which the evidence was not available so the House could not consider it, although it should have done so. As the members of the Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills are Members of the House and as they are getting measures together in one central document, they should have given some consideration to such reports and they should have incorporated other matters into the legislation. I shall be pressing for this more widely on every consolidation measure so that members of the Committee know that they should not consider only previous legislation—and I have no quarrel with their considering that.

The Committee should also incorporate the way in which the House has dealt with previous legislation. Would it not be reasonable for the Minister to comment, first, on whether he thinks that the House should have the reports before the orders provided for in this measure are debated and, secondly, whether the Committee considered framing the legislation so that there was no question of a repeat of what has happened in the past?

On several occasions the Committee has undertaken work and taken evidence but because the Government Whips find the democratic process a bit of a nuisance and push to one side not only Labour Members of the Committee but Conservative Members——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. It is difficult to see how these matters can conceivably arise from the measure that is before the House.

**Mr. Cryer:** Let me explain, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that clause 6 refers to an Order in Council relating to the arrangements set out on the Bill. Clause 32 deals with

> "Orders in Council relating to colonies"

and clause 32(3) says:

> "Any Order in Council under this section shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament."

Clearly, we are talking about affirmative resolutions. What I am asking the Minister is whether, in deciding on the affirmative procedure, the Consolidation Committee considered ensuring that Ministers who are being given power under the Bill—*[Interruption.]* Effectively, the House throws such powers away; it does not care how Ministers exercise the powers. That happens in Standing Committee as a matter of course, so why cannot we ask whether members of the Consolidation Committee gave their minds to this process, instead of going through the routine in about half an hour and being glad to get out of the place—the usual path that the Consolidation Committee takes? In this instance, at least, we are legislating for people in difficult and controversial circumstances, and in my view, we do not examine the minutiae of some of the legislation that we pass as closely as we should.

In the light of the powers given in the Bill, my question to the Minister seems relevant. Did the Consolidation Committee say, "All right—we shall ensure that the Minister is subject to further scrutiny by making sure that the reports of the Committee appointed by the House to produce them are considered, instead of being thrown on to the legislative scrap heap so that the House cannot make a judgment on them"? I can see from your interested attitude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you think that the Minister could well comment on this matter.

11.22 pm

**Mr. Gary Waller** (Keighley): I want to make two quick points in response to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer). First, the Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills, of which I am a member, goes through these matters in considerable detail, and for very much longer than the hon. Gentleman suggested. Secondly, some half a dozen members of the Labour party are members of that Committee and I do not think that a single one of them has attended the Committee during this Parliament.

11.23 pm

**Mr. Frank Haynes** (Ashfield): I am a little surprised at what is going on here; I really am. We as Members of Parliament are entitled to know what is going on, but it would seem that there is a secret society about, and I am pleased that I have listened to my hon. Friends the Members for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) and for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner). The problem that they have outlined worries me. We are ordinary Members of this

Parliament, and we are entitled to know what is going on, yet it would seem that those who serve on the Committee are the only ones who know what is going on apart from the Minister, so I hope that the hon. and learned Gentleman will give us some answers tonight. I am pleased that I stayed to listen to my hon. Friends.

What drew me more than anything was the speech made by the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller), because he is trying to protect his Committee. He was afraid and upset as a result of the remarks made by my hon. Friends. Their comments drew the hon. Member for Keighley to his feet. I hope that, because of what my hon. Friends have said, we will get some answers tonight.

I know the Solicitor-General quite well. He seems to be a fair and honest chap. I speak to him privately outside the Chamber and we talk about all manner of things. I have got to know him and I hope that he will stand up tonight and answer some of the questions that have been put to him. He should ignore the contribution from the hon. Member for Keighley. The questions that count were raised by Opposition Members.

I hope that the Solicitor-General will respond to the questions from my hon. Friends. My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover suggested that the Solicitor-General was fastened to his seat and did not want to get out of it. As a result of what has been said this evening, I hope that we will get the answers. I do not like secret societies. We are entitled to know what is happening in this place.

I represent 66,000 electors back home out of a population of 103,000. When I return to my constituency, I want to be able to tell them that this is not a secret society. My hon. Friends the Members for Bolsover and for Bradford, South have opened this matter up when it could just have slipped through. I congratulate them on returning to the Chamber to open this matter up because they have given me the opportunity to express my feelings about it. Mr. Solicitor-General, come to the Dispatch box and tell us what is happening.

11.26 pm

**The Solicitor-General:** It is a very special pleasure to be able to fulfil the wishes of the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) who wants to know what is going on. I must disappoint him by disagreeing with his criticism of my hon. Friend the Member for Keighly (Mr. Waller) who obviously knows what is going on and who played a detailed part on the Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills.

I am glad to be able to tell the hon. Member for Ashfield that he is not living in a secret society. If his onerous duties as an Opposition Whip had given him time to pass through the Members Lobby, he might have swung away to his left—something that I know that he finds very difficult to do—and called at a window where he could have obtained a selection of documents including the minutes of proceedings and evidence of the Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) has an almost unrivalled knowledge of the procedure of the House, and that knowledge is greatly respected. It was therefore very unusual that he should not have stopped off at the Vote Office and equipped himself with the very detailed documents about the workings in this House and another place of the Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills, in which he would have found informative answers to the questions that he raised.

**Mr. Haynes:** The Solicitor-General is pursuing a line which might cause me to go off him. I do not think that he has worked in the Government Whips Office. Yes, I work in the Opposition Whips Office. However, the Solicitor-General has not been there and he does not know what kind of work is involved. I do not have the time to run to the Vote Office every five minutes to see what is going on in there. I have other duties to perform on behalf of east midlands Members. I am a very busy chap and I am here all the time.

I frequently pass through the Members Lobby unless I am telling at the Division Lobby door. The Solicitor-General must understand that we are not all like him—we are not lucky enough to have everything put in front of us, in our laps, with a clear explanation of what is going on. I have to seize opportunities like this to find out. My hon. Friends the Members for Bolsover and Bradford, South have opened all this up. Come off it, Mr. Solicitor-General, be fair about this.

**The Solicitor-General:** The Ashfield Advertiser is due for a special treat with the hon. Gentleman's weekly contribution.

**Mr. Haynes:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There is no such thing as the Ashfield Advertiser. I thought that I should correct the hon. and learned Gentleman on that point.

**The Solicitor-General:** I apologise to the hon. Gentleman for misnaming the newspaper in which he regularly writes. *[Interruption.]* The Mansfield CHAD, I am told, will have a particularly interesting article this week, drawn from the minutes of the proceedings of the Consolidation Committee. The hon. Gentleman has been kind to me, so I shall be kind to him and say that he has actually spoken to me occasionally on the Terrace, which was a special treat. I hope that he will do me another favour and send me a copy of his article drawn from the debate, and I shall read it and learn from it and know that our proceedings are understood far beyond the portals of this place, to the benefit of our fellow countrymen.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

*Considered in Committee.*

**The Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Harold Walker):** With the leave of the House, I will put together clauses 1 to 38.

**Mr. Cryer:** On a point of order, Mr. Walker. The Order Paper states that the remaining stages "may" be taken. It does not say that they will be taken. Therefore, I wonder whether any manuscript amendments are permitted, in view of the vague indication on the Order Paper and the unusual circumstances in which other stages may be taken. Naturally, with a lack of certainty, it is not easy for hon. Members to table amendments. Therefore, it seems to me that, as the point that I have raised could easily be altered in a tiny, modest amendment, perhaps a manuscript amendment could be moved so that we could progress more equitably and improve the Bill.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I have no responsibility for what appears on the Order Paper. The House has agreed that we should be in Committee. I have received no notice of any amendments. With the leave of the House I will put together clauses 1 to 38.

*Clauses 1 to 38 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Schedules 1 and 2 agreed to.*

*Bill reported, without amendment.*

*Order for Third Reading read.*

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That the Bill be now read the Third time.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

11.33 pm

**Mr. Cryer:** I much regret that the House was not afforded the opportunity to consider a manuscript amendment, as I like to see——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** Order. I have no responsibility for what happened in Committee.

**Mr. Cryer:** I understand your difficulty, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wonder whether, at some time, you could have a word with the person who chaired the Committee for which you are not responsible and draw to his attention the omission to which I have drawn your attention. That would be a help. On Second Reading, the Minister did not answer my point. He referred me to some documents that explained the details of the working of the Consolidation Committee. That Committee produced a report, and hon. Members are very grateful for it.

My guess is that the Consolidation Committee did not consider incorporating a requirement that the report of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments should be available to the House before the provisions in the Bill are debated. If it did so, I am sorry that it did not press ahead with it and incorporate it in the consolidated measure with which we are dealing. If it had done so, it would have been an unprecedented move which I would have welcomed wholeheartedly.

As a member of the Committee is in his place—the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller)—I wish to draw his attention to the desirability of such a procedure. It would ensure that the work of Conservative and Labour Members who serve on the Committee—unfortunately, the SLD member of the Committee has not turned up since the 1987 general election and has resigned his membership of the Committee as a consequence of my drawing attention to the matter, and I have no doubt that the minority parties are searching for a replacement—is not ignored. They work hard and diligently.

**Mr. Skinner:** The SLD member of the Committee is Second Hand Rose.

**Mr. Cryer:** Perhaps my hon. Friend's interjection is not germane to the issue.

It is important that reports of the Committee's work should be available to the House. There should be a Standing Order that the reports should be available and that the Committee should report to the House before a debate takes place in the Chamber. At present, the procedure amounts to a matter of luck. It seems reasonable that I should register my concern. I hope that some sort of pressure will result in time in the incorporation of a requirement in primary legislation that covers secondary legislation.

I remind the House that under the Government, secondary legislation and statutory instruments have not diminished. In 1979, the new Conservative Government were committed to taking legislation off our backs. Since then they have increased the number of statutory instruments that come before us. There are more and more delegated powers, and these are often highly complicated in their nature. Sometimes their text is four or five times the length of the Bill.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman will understand that we are a long way from the Third Reading of this consolidation measure.

**Mr. Cryer:** I am grateful for your indulgence, as ever, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am merely saying that there should be some sort of check. The Minister has not answered the points that I have raised. I wish only to register the importance of the procedure that I am advocating.

11.37 pm

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood): I have listened carefully to my hon. Friends the Members for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) and for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes). The House will recall that I spoke briefly to welcome the Bill.

The problem with British law is that it is far too complicated and found in far too many places. Schedule 2 tells us that the law on extradition, which is extremely important, is found in 27 different statutes. It was the idea of the leading Bevanite, Geoffrey Bing, that we should have a simple and speedy method of, to take the Bill as an example, getting rid of 27 statutes and replacing them with one statute. It was the view of Geoffrey Bing and his colleagues that the best way of achieving that would be to consolidate the law in a way which meant that there would be no substantial changes to it.

I do not disagree with what my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South says when he expresses his concern about statutory instruments, but I wish to make my position clear. If we introduce amendments when we deal with consolidation, the major objective of bringing complex law into one statute so that it can be understood by practitioners and laymen alike will be lost. For that reason I was somewhat brief at the beginning of our consideration of the Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill read the Third time, and passed, without amendment.*

# Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill Lords

*Not amended (in the Standing Commmittee), considered.*

[MR. HAROLD WALKER *in the Chair*]

## Clause 1

### DEEDS AND THEIR EXECUTION

11.39 pm

**Mr. James Wallace** (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to move amendment No. 1, in page 1, line 19, after '(3)' insert—

'Except as provided for in subsection 3(A) below'.

**The Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Harold Walker):** With this it will be convenient to take amendment No. 2, in line 27, add at end—

'3(A) The provisions in subsection (3)(a) above, insofar as they require the presence of and attestation by witnesses, should not apply to the execution of deeds of covenant made in favour of a charity'.

**Mr. Wallace:** The amendment would exempt from the provisions of the Bill, which substantially enacts the recommendations set out in report No. 163 of the Law Commission on deeds and escrows—I hope that I have pronounced that correctly—a provision which would exempt deeds of covenant executed in favour of a charity.

The reason for the amendment is relatively simple. As the Bill stands, it will be necessary for deeds of covenant to be attested by two witnesses or in the presence of a witness who attests the signature of the person who is executing the deed. Several charities have expressed the fear that, as the amounts given by many people are relatively small, if those people had to go through the additional procedural requirement of having the deed attested, they might be discouraged from executing such deeds, thus depriving many charities of sums on which they depend to keep their good works going.

Barnardo's in particular has made representations to my hon. Friends and myself that that could have a considerable impact on their receipts. It has been estimated that the average donation by covenant is £32·95, which the House will recognise is a modest sum, but when that amount is grossed up over many people, it amounts to the lifeblood of many charities.

There are several reasons why people might hesitate to execute such deeds if they had to require the presence of a witness. The witness may be a member of the family or a close friend, and the individual may feel embarrassment. Some people have a natural modesty about giving money to charity because it is the sort of thing that they like to do anonymously and they would not necessarily want their friends or relatives to know. People might be reluctant to make covenants that had to be witnessed, as they might feel that the person who was being asked to witness the deed would feel left out in any testamentary succession.

Whatever the motives, many charities feel fear and apprehension. We have consulted many bodies, including the Charities VAT and Tax Reform Group, which shares the concern that charities could lose a substantial amount of money. I am sure that that is not the Government's intention; I concede that, in a number of successive Budgets, they have made specific proposals to encourage charitable giving and have done some things to help the fiscal position of charities.

Having looked at the Law Commission's report, I must say that it is not evident that this position has been considered, and I do not believe that to date—perhaps the Solicitor-General will be able to inform the House on this point—that potential problem has been given adequate consideration.

As charities could be seriously affected by this measure, I hope that the Government will give serious consideration to the amendment which, albeit in small amounts, could mean cumulatively hundreds of thousands of pounds for charities. If the Government cannot accept the amendment, I hope that the Solicitor-General will be able to say something positive so that the many charities that genuinely fear the consequences of the measure will have some reassurance.

**The Solicitor-General (Sir Nicholas Lyell):** I am grateful to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) for moving this short amendment and for giving us the chance of a short debate to clarify the Government's position on this matter. There has been an opportunity to consider correspondence with the charities that he mentioned. I am grateful for what he said about the actions of this Government over several years in taking steps greatly to encourage charitable giving. The Bill's objective is to put nothing in the way of that.

If one concentrates for one moment on what the hon. Gentleman's amendment would seek to do and then on what is current practice and on what is sensible, one quickly finds the answer to the point that he has raised. Therefore, I hope that what I say will quickly set minds at rest.

The effect of the amendment is that deeds of covenant in favour of a charity would not need to be witnessed and attested, but they would still have to be signed and delivered, and it would still have to be clear on the face of the instrument that it was intended to be a deed. Even for this amendment, it would be recognised that there must be formalities, which are important because the giver is creating a document which has legal effect and also, through the Revenue, gives rise to tax relief.

What the Bill proposes, and what the Law Commission after much careful thought decided was sensible, was that, whereas in the past, a Bill had to be signed, sealed and delivered, but did not have to be witnessed—the question of sealing frequently gave rise to difficulties and to failure to receive tax relief—in future a deed should make it clear on its face that it was a deed and that it should be witnessed and delivered.

The practicality of witnessing, which the amendment seeks to remove, is well illustrated by the fact that every covenant that hon. Members on both sides of the House have signed already contains lines for witnesses' signatures. It has become almost standard practice for such deeds to be witnessed, although that is not a legal requirement. Therefore, the Law Commission recommended that we should bring the formalities of the Bill into line with contemporary standards—yes, keeping some formality and, yes, providing safeguards, but doing it in a way that people will very well understand.

**Mr. Wallace:** I accept that my principal training is in the law of Scotland and I am not over-acquainted with

*[Mr. Wallace]*

English provision. Therefore, will the Solicitor-General clarify the position for me, and perhaps for other hon. Members? If a deed—we are talking about deeds which very often involve relatively small amounts—is to be effective, does it need to be sealed, or can it be effective without attestation and sealing?

**The Solicitor-General:** A deed, to be effective, so that it could be enforced at law, requires to be signed, sealed and delivered. Although the sealing has now become very much a formality, and tends to have a little circle, or a little circle with the letters "LS" in the middle of it in place of the type of seal which applied in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, when people were less familiar with writing and wanted to have some other way of marking their formal approval to a document, it is, nevertheless, a requirement today. However, it has become an outdated formality and it will cease to be a requirement, so that difficulty will be removed.

It is a matter of balance and judgment, but I urge upon the House the argument that the Law Commission has thought about the matter carefully and that we have had the opportunity for further thought in correspondence with a number of charities that the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland has mentioned. I recommend to the House that the Bill has got it right and that the amendment should not be accepted.

**Mr. Wallace:** I have listened carefully to what the Solicitor-General has said, and I accept that some thought has been given to the matter. The amendment was tabled principally as a response to the concern of a number of charities. I hope that, if experience suggests that the system proposed in the Bill, which will no doubt shortly be enacted, will result in any diminution of the amounts being given to charities, the matter will be the subject of further consideration.

Having said that I am a Scotsman, I can tell the House that, in Scotland, if one writes a holograph and signs one's own name, that is quite effective. Perhaps that is something for our English colleagues to learn.

*Amendment negatived.*

*Order for Third Reading read.—[Queen's Consent, on behalf of the Crown, signified.]*

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That the Bill be now read the Third time.

11.48 pm

**Mr. Hugo Summerson** (Walthamstow): There is a small matter in the Bill on which I am not altogether clear. Clause 2, begins:

> "A contract for the sale or other disposition of an interest in land can only be made in writing and only by incorporating all the terms which the parties have expressly agreed in one document or, where contracts are exchanged, in each".

A little later, the clause says:

> "This section does not apply in relation to",

inter alia,

> "a contract made in the course of a public auction".

I am not a lawyer, but I am a chartered surveyor, and I have been to many public property auctions. If you went to such a public auction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would have a catalogue in which you would find general and special conditions of sale. We all know that, in an auction, at the fall of the hammer, the contract is made. There is then a memorandum that has to be signed. I believe that it forms part of the contract, in which are incorporated the general and special conditions of sale.

I think that I am right in saying that a contract can be void for uncertainty. It occasionally happens in property auctions that someone sticks his hand up, the property is knocked down to him, and he disappears. Here, we have a provision which seems to remove any confirmation of a sale. There seems to be a discrepancy. I do not understand it, and I should be most grateful for some clarification.

11.50 pm

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood): The Bill has gone through all its stages rapidly, but it is important—more important than was first made out.

The arrangements about sealing change the law from that which was mediaeval to that which is modern. I am not absolutely convinced that witnesses were necessary to sealing, but I understand that the reason is that the incidence of fraud is fairly high, and having a witness is likely to reduce it. We are glad that the other formalities have gone and that we are to follow what is in reality the practice.

The law has always been arcane in respect of the rule that contracts have to be evidenced in writing rather than to be in writing. People have found that they have made contracts by accident, and they have not always been helped by judges who have made decisions about these matters without knowledge of how the world works outside the court.

We also have the repeal of the rule in Bain *v.* Fothergill. I think that that redeems a Conservative party pledge. What I hope will flow from the passage of the Bill is a change in the nature of conveyancing. The vendor's solicitors will in future spend much longer preparing the contract package and examining their own title, and the purchaser will not have to find a catch in the contract.

I hope that the practice of vendors having to look at the title, which they do not have to do at the moment, will expand, so that when a purchaser receives a contract, it is as complete as it can possibly be. The result is that conveyancing will be simpler and cheaper. This is an important Bill, and I hope that it will not pass unnoticed.

11.52 pm

**The Solicitor-General:** I am grateful for what the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) has just said. This is an important Bill. It is short, but it modernises the law in extremely sensible and practical ways.

With regard to detailed law, I must refer my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) to his learned societies. It is not for me to give him advice. It must be very clear, as I am sure he will appreciate when he reads the Bill at his leisure, that, at an auction, the sale is completed at the fall of the hammer; the opportunity for writing and signature would not be appropriate, so there is that exclusion.

This is a very sensible little Bill. It has passed quickly, but not without careful thought, and I commend it to the House.

*Bill read the Third time, and passed, without amendment.*

### CONTINENTAL SHELF BILL *[LORDS]*

*Read a Second time.*

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

Bill immediately considered in Committee: reported, without amendment.

*Order for Third Reading read.—[Queen's consent, on behalf of the Crown, signified.]*

*Motion made, and Question,* That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 75 (Third Reading), and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed, without amendment.*

## Statutory Instruments, &c.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** To save the time of the House, I propose to put together the Questions on the four motions to approve the statutory instruments.

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).*

### URBAN DEVELOPMENT

That the Leeds Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (British Railways Board) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.

That the Leeds Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (General) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.

That the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Port of Tyne Authority and British Railways Board) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.

That the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (Vesting of Land) (Various Local Authorities) Order 1989, dated 7th June 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 14th June, be approved.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

*Question agreed to.*

### HOUSE OF COMMONS (SERVICES)

*Ordered,*

That Mr. Secretary Wakeham be discharged from the Select Committee on House of Commons (Services) and Sir Geoffrey Howe be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

## Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Melton Mowbray

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

11.55 pm

**Mr. Michael Latham** (Rutland and Melton): My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) who is a newly appointed Whip, has earned his money tonight.

I am glad to have this opportunity to debate the future of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Melton Mowbray. The debate is especially relevant now because, if certain ideas floating around the Ministry of Defence were to be accepted by Ministers, the RAVC, Melton Mowbray, would have no future at all. As I have told three successive Defence Ministers—I welcome my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces to the debate—the RAVC has long believed that some officials in the Ministry of Defence have for many years wanted to close the operation at Melton Mowbray, and have not hesitated to say who they are. I look to my hon. Friend to ensure that such fears are groundless.

I say to the Minister in the most unmistakable terms that the RAVC is an integral part of Melton Mowbray. It has been there with the horses as a remount centre since 1903 and has been continually used for horses since that time. The Army dog training school, which was already under RAVC command, has been in Melton Mowbray since 1946. The current facilities in Melton Mowbray are the Army veterinary hospital which deals with all horse and dog surgery in the Army. It has facilities for hospitalising 24 horses and seven ill dogs. It has custom-built equine and canine operating theatres, with all the necessary support facilities, as well as an equine and canine radiographic and medical treatment complex.

The average daily in-patient figures last summer were 10 horses and four dogs, and a further 10 horses and six dogs were treated daily as out-patients. That excludes routine inspections, vaccinations or radiography. The Army school of equitation trains equitation instructors, supervisors for mounted units and, of course, the horses. There are extensive stabling provisions, an indoor riding school and facilities for field and obstacle exercises, many of which have been extensively refurbished in the last five years. Training courses continue virtually all year.

The Army school of farriery was purpose-built in 1962, and is recognised as one of the best teaching facilities in Europe. It trains Army farriers and also shoes the Army's horses. The remounts depot at Melton Mowbray deals each year with 60 to 70 young, unbroken or partially broken horses which are purchased by the Army. They are put to grass in Melton Mowbray and vaccinated, and become accustomed to being handled before being passed to regiments such as the Household Cavalry or the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery. Sick or tired horses also receive rest and recuperation at grass at Melton.

Of course, there is also the dog school. It supports 1,219 Army-trained dogs worldwide, of which 20 per cent. require to be replaced each year. The school trains both dogs and their handlers. More than 550 student handlers and between 240 and 260 dogs are trained each year. However, the staffing establishment remains small. The military personnel at Melton Mowbray are currently 135,

*[Mr. Michael Latham]*

of whom 53 are members of the Women's Royal Army Corps. There are 33 civilians. Among the facilities available are free access for the Army to about 40,000 acres of commercial property and surrounding farmland, including many public and private premises in the town, which are made freely and willingly available by local people for specialised dog training.

Within the camp itself there is a purpose-built RYPE village on a 10-acre site, with a security fence, for training in arms and explosives searches. There are also 250 acres available for dog training within the estate. Quite deliberately, horses, cattle and sheep are kept grazing there, as that is an essential part of Army dog training. There is a former gun test range at Asfordby about a mile away, and 40 acres in size, which also provides important training facilities.

As there is such a formidable infrastructure of training and achievement, and such excellent results are being achieved, one might think that it would all be the subject of congratulations. Instead, there has been a relentless and restless determination by the Ministry of Defence to scrap it, or initially to merge the dog training with that of the Royal Air Force. The Ministry first studied the proposed merger, and rejected it, in 1966, but it dug up the roots again to inspect them in 1972, 1975 and 1977, and on each occasion confirmed the previous result.

In 1978, the Minister told the former Expenditure Committee that it would be a waste of time to re-examine the matter. However, its fingers remained itchy, and in March 1982, there was yet another review, which recommended a joint dog training school at RAF Newton and RAF Syerston, and that the horse activities at Melton should be contracted out, with the entire site being sold. Those drastic proposals fell apart in 1983, when a test trial of civilian dog handling proved a failure, and further studies found that moving the equine facilities was either impractical or more expensive, or both.

There were further studies on dogs alone in 1983, 1984 and 1985. In 1985, we actually got a decision, which was announced to Parliament by Lord Trefgarne and my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Lee), who was then the Minister. On 9 July 1985, my hon. Friend announced in answer to me that all service dogs would be trained at RAF Newton by 1989, but under the command of an RAVC officer. He added that the equine activities would remain unchanged at Melton and

> "There are no plans to transfer these functions to any other location in the foreseeable future."

He added that the Army was grateful to the people of Melton Mowbray for their support of the RAVC and the pride that they had shown by granting the corps the freedom of the borough in 1977—an occasion at which I was present. My hon. Friend the then Minister said:

> "We look forward to the continuance of this happy relationship."—[*Official Report*, 9 July 1985, Vol. 82, c. *404*.]

That was not good enough for me, and I reported the whole matter to the Comptroller and Auditor General, in my capacity as a member of the Public Accounts Committee.

There were then further Ministry studies, in 1986, 1987 and 1988, following ministerial recommendations or visits by Ministers to the RAVC. We have now had 12 separate investigations since 1966. As the former permanent secretary, Sir Clive Whitmore, admitted to me at the Public Accounts Committee hearing on 30 March 1987:

> "We must have spent a great deal of money in the past investigating the possibilities of rationalising dog training."

He can say that again.

We now have the latest proposal by Peat, Marwick, McLintock to close the RAVC altogether, and set up a service animal centre at RAF Syerston, but with administrative support at RAF Newton. I have not seen the report, so I do not know what expertise, if any, its authors had in equine or dog training. First, the RAF has no horses so all the input from the horses to the service animal centre would come from the Army, but for 20 from the Marines.

Secondly, the RAF has no vets, and neither have the Marines. RAF Newton uses a civilian vet who visits twice a week, and he was living 100 milies away at the time of the 1985 inquiry. Only the RAVC has full-time military personnel in uniform who are qualified vets. There is no equine and canine hospital at Syerston, but there is one at Melton.

There is no equitation or farriery school at Syerston, although there is at Melton. There is no built-up urban environmental training facility at Syerston, which is a remote rural location. There are no officers' married quarters there—only a few NCOs' and airmen's quarters. There are no shops or welfare facilities, and the nearest doctor is seven miles away. All these things are fully and immediately available in Melton Mowbray, a growing town of nearly 30,000 people.

As for Syerston, one needs to cross the busy A46 road to get to the adjoining land where any training would be done. Syerston will need to provide all these facilities, or place them at RAF Newton and then transport the animals eight miles—wastefully—by road every day, a practice condemned on operational grounds by the Director of Army Veterinary Services in 1985. Incidentally, his professional report was suppressed by the then director of personnel, who declined to attach it to the working party report in 1985. I have seen the documents confirming that that was so.

No notice has been taken of the separate report by an independent expert, Mr. Pagliero, who was originally commissioned by Mr. R. L. Facer, who is still advising Ministers on this whole affair. Mr. Pagliero concluded that the Army's dog training was better than that of the RAF and that the work would be better done at Melton. Needless to say, the RAF and the MOD rejected this advice from an independent consultant, because it did not produce the conclusions that they wanted to hear.

As far as I can see, there are no operational advantages in the proposed course of action. I see very little point in a joint service animal school, anyway. The Army and RAF dogs are trained in different ways for different purposes. The different training techniques will have to continue separately, so why mess around with the present arrangements?

As for the horses, it is quite absurd to contemplate—even Lord Trefgarne did not—moving the horse facilities somewhere else, when they are working very well at Melton and would need total rebuilding in another place. I hope that the MOD also realises that the 33 civilian staff would probably be made redundant, since they are highly unlikely to be able to move to Newton or Syerston. Yet they are highly trained and skilled, and used to dealing with animals.

Apart from all the new building infrastructure which will be needed, there will have to be new kennels, new paddocks and new fencing, and cattle and sheep will have to be available for training and for effective pasture management. The RAVC is also converting some of its buildings in order to move a laboratory to Melton Mowbray from Aldershot. What is to happen to it? Will my hon. Friend give a categorical assurance that he will give the highest priority to the expert veterinary advice which he receives on the project? That should be a paramount consideration.

The only possible reason for this upheaval seems to be the hope that the whole Melton site can be sold off for housing development. I have already explained to my hon. Friend why that is very unlikely; but I will not do the job of the consultant to the developers by explaining why here and now. If the Ministry wants to rationalise its estate, as the PAC has frequently urged it to do, let it start with all that wasteful property in London to which the National Audit Office drew attention in recently published reports. Perhaps the MOD could raise umpteen millions by selling the main building in Whitehall, which churned out a dozen reports on the RAVC in 20 years but produced no action.

I suggest that my hon. Friend contemplate what happened to the proposed move of the radar section at RAF North Luffenham to RAF Henlow; or the proposed move of the aviation medical centre at North Luffenham to RAF Mount Batten; or the proposed joint service music school. All these published plans fell apart under serious scrutiny by the NAO, the PAC and the Ministry itself. I strongly suspect that the same will happen with this cock-eyed scheme, and it might save a lot of staff time to drop it now.

I ask my hon. Friend to think of the effect on service morale of all this fiddling about. The RAVC has very important military duties to perform—against terrorism in Northern Ireland, and in Germany, Hong Kong and Cyprus. It does no good for the morale of the corps if it feels that its main unit at Melton is under threat. Many former members of the corps retire in the Melton Mowbray area, where they are popular and valuable members of the community. The RAVC unit makes a fine presence at the annual Remembrance day parade, and the commandant always takes the salute. In Melton, queen of the shires, where horses and dogs are a way of life for so many, the RAVC is an honoured and integral part. Only last April, the mayor of Melton and the leader of the council wrote in glowing terms to the Adjutant General of the Army about the RAVC.

My advice to my hon. Friend is to dump the plans. If he must proceed with an animal joint service centre, he should ask himself which unit has a veterinary hospital, a ripe village, 40,000 acres of free land, a farriery and equitation school and unrivalled expertise with dogs and horses. The answer, of course, is Melton Mowbray. We are proud of our vetcamp, as we call it. Let the new centre for all the armed services be based there, if there has to be one at all, but the best course of action would be the status quo, as was recommended to Ministers by Admiral Herbert, Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff in December 1984.

The present arrangements work well, so leave them alone. If it ain't broke, don't try to fix it—a good message for a Conservative Government.

12.10 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Michael Neubert):** The House will wish to join me in congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) on his persistence in drawing our attention to his constituents' views on any proposal to transfer the Royal Army Veterinary Corps away from Melton Mowbray. Not only has he raised the matter tonight, but he has closely monitored the progress of studies over many years by raising the matter in this House, by meeting me and my predecessors and by correspondence. Thanks to my hon. Friend I am in no doubt of the ties of mutual respect and affection which are the hallmarks of the relationship between the people of Melton Mowbray and the members of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps. I join my predecessors in acknowledging this and in expressing my thanks to the people of Melton Mowbray for the warm support which they have always given to the corps. The spirit which has developed between the borough council, the people of the town and the Army would be impossible to overlook or lightly to cast aside.

However, it is our duty and our policy to ensure value for money over all defence activities, particularly those which support our front-line commitments. I am sure my hon. Friend, as a distinguished member of the Public Accounts Committee, would wish to encourage the Ministry of Defence in this direction—he has already indicated that tonight—especially where rationalisation of similar activities between one service and another enables us to manage the defence estate more efficiently and to obtain receipts from the sale of valuable land.

The size of the defence estate depends on the needs of the services and the procurement executive, but we are determined that it should be no larger than is necessary for the services to carry out their tasks efficiently and effectively. We vigorously pursue opportunities to dispose of land and buildings no longer required for defence purposes. In 1987-88 we raised more than £75 million by such sales and last year we doubled that figure to £150 million. Those sums are in addition to more than £400 million achieved in sales of land since 1979.

Ministry of Defence landholdings of some 600,000 acres account for about 1 per cent. of the total area of the United Kingdom. Some four fifths of that MOD land, however, is accounted for by airfields and training areas, and our main opportunities for reduction and rationalisation are therefore likely to occur in the remaining area, occupied by facilities such as depots, workshops and barrack accommodation. We are always seeking to identify opportunities for rationalisation in those areas, and decisions on future deployments take account of the estate costs, although our main consideration must be and remain the operational needs of the armed forces.

It was against that background that we decided, as my predecessor Lord Trefgarne announced in another place, to rationalise Army and RAF dog training in one location. As we have heard, the Army trains dogs and handlers at Melton Mowbray. The RAF trains dogs and handlers at RAF Newton, some 17 miles from Melton Mowbray. The tasks for which the dogs are trained at these two centres

*[Mr. Michael Neubert]*

have many similarities. Both services train dogs in guarding and in deterring and detecting intruders. Both services develop the scenting ability of dogs in order to detect the presence of drugs or explosives, and both services train dogs and handlers to a very high standard. That is not to say that there have been no differences in the training, but they seemed to be outweighed by the similarities.

The case for rationalisation in one location was compelling, therefore, but there remained doubts as to which location was the most suitable. Because of doubts expressed about whether RAF Newton, together with the nearby RAF Syerston, was the most economical location, my hon. Friend the Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman), now the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, commissioned consultants to undertake a review.

The consultants' study has been very thorough. They visited not only Melton Mowbray and RAF Newton but a number of operational units where dogs are employed, including a unit in Northern Ireland. They did this so that they could understand clearly what was expected of the personnel and animals trained at the two centres. They then studied every activity which led to the provision of the trained animal and trainer. Those included the testing and health checks of dogs, arrangements for their collection, rejection rates during training, the training syllabuses, and feeding and veterinary care of the animals. They discussed capital requirements with the training authorities, the service quartering branches and the Property Services Agency. They sub-contracted the assessment of development potential of the sites and of the prospective values to a firm of valuers with particular expertise in those matters. Representatives of the firm visited the sites and discussed development potential with officers of the responsible planning authorities.

At the end of that very thorough study, the consultants confirmed the validity of the decision taken by my noble Friend the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces in 1985 that the sensible way to provide dog training in the future was to form a joint service school at RAF Syerston and RAF Newton. The consultants, however, have also taken account of the fact that dog and handler training is not the only activity undertaken at Melton Mowbray. The RAVC centre is also responsible for training horses and equitation instructors, as well as being the depot of the corps, responsible for the administration and management of officers, men and women serving in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps. The consultants have shown that considerably greater savings can be achieved by also providing equine and equitation training and the RAVC depot facilities at the joint school, thus forming a service animal centre.

The investment appraisal carried out by the consultants shows that, while substantial savings in operating costs can be achieved by creating a service animal centre, the scale of the savings in capital costs depends on the value placed on land disposals. The consultants advised that there are prospects for development of the land now occupied by the RAVC centre at Melton Mowbray. My announcement, in my reply to my hon. Friend, on 13 July, of the intention to form a service animal centre enables my Department to enter into consultations with the local planning authority.

However, as I also said in my reply of 13 July, a further factor which must be borne in mind is the study into the future of the whole RAF estate. That study has the objective, to which I have already referred, of ensuring that we manage our estate as efficiently as possible and dispose of that which is no longer needed. We shall need to consider the consultants' recommendations concerning dog training and the formation of a service animal centre in the light of the outcome of the study into the RAF estate, particularly, of course, in so far as it affects Syerston and Newton.

A further factor touching on the use of Syerston is the effect on present activities there. RAF Syerston is currently used for gliding, including the training of gliding instructors for the air cadet corps. The provision of flying experience, including gliding, is a highly effective way of fostering young people's interest in careers in the Royal Air Force. The consultants' recommendation to form a service animal centre at Syerston assumed that the area there needed for facilities for gliding would be reduced. We are considering this, bearing in mind the need to ensure that equine and canine-related training on the one hand, and gliding instruction on the other, can be safely and satisfactorily collocated.

Despite the further work involved in deciding how best to implement the consultants' main recommendation, we should not lose sight of the benefits already emerging from the studies. Recommendations were also made concerning the most economical means of procuring dogs and the possibility of further civilianisation of support staffs. These recommendations are being considered by the services. I am pleased to be able to tell the House that the implementation of certain other of the consultants' recommendations, concerning the common adoption of best practices, is expected to save at least £4 million in running costs over the next 10 years. This alone provides a remarkably good return on the effort we have invested in our studies on this subject. If we can now resolve the question of the location of the service animal centre, I am confident that we shall be able to provide training in the future that maintains existing high standards while savings to the defence budget accrue.

It would be wrong of me not to acknowledge, before concluding, that the uncertainty regarding the future arrangements for training dogs and handlers has given rise to some understandable concern among the people working at the RAVC depot Melton Mowbray and at RAF Newton. It is a great tribute to them all that they have nevertheless continued to maintain the highest standards. The results of some of the training provided at Melton Mowbray and at Newton will have been evident to the public in the very high standards of ceremonial drill and displays, for which the services are rightly renowned, but much of the work of dogs and their handlers is conducted in circumstances far less comfortable than display arenas, be it in the guarding of defence installations or in the search for drugs and explosives.

The operational effectiveness of dogs and handlers is of an equally high standard and I am glad to have the opportunity to pay tribute to the RAVC and the RAF provost branch alike on the excellent standards that they consistently maintain in training and handling service animals. I can assure them that I have very much in mind the need to resolve the present uncertainties as soon as possible.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the interest that he has shown, and I can assure him that I shall take full account of his views and advice when I make my decision.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty-two minutes past Twelve o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Thursday 27 July 1989*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

ISLE OF WIGHT BILL

INTERNATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK BILL *(By Order)*

ST. GEORGE'S HILL, WEYBRIDGE, ESTATE BILL *(By Order)*

HYTHE MARINA VILLAGE (SOUTHAMPTON) WAVESCREEN BILL *(By Order)*

NEW SOUTHGATE CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM LIMITED BILL *(By Order)*

*Orders read for consideration of Lords amendments.*

*To be considered on Thursday 19 October.*

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question —[23 May]*—That the Bill be now read the Third time.

*Debate to be resumed on Thursday 19 October.*

BRITISH RAILWAYS (PENALTY FARES) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

*Order for further consideration, as amended, read.*

*To be further considered on Thursday 19 October.*

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT (PENALTY FARES) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

BRITISH RAILWAYS BILL *(By Order)*

BROMLEY LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL (CRYSTAL PALACE) BILL *(By Order)*

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

*Orders for consideration, as amended, read.*

*To be considered on Thursday 19 October.*

HAYLE HARBOUR BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

QUEEN MARY AND WESTFIELD COLLEGE BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

*As amended, considered.*

*Ordered,*

That Standing Order 205 (Notice of third reading) be suspended and that the Bill be now read the third time.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

*Read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.*

CITY OF LONDON (VARIOUS POWERS) BILL *(By Order)*

*Order for consideration, as amended, read.*

*To be considered on Thursday 19 October.*

LONDON UNDERGROUND (VICTORIA) BILL *(By Order)*

*Read a Second time and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.*

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE SOUTHBANK BILL *(By Order)*

VALE OF GLAMORGAN (BARRY HARBOUR) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

CARDIFF BAY BARRAGE BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

*Orders for Second Reading read.*

*To be read a Second time on Thursday 19 October.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Pesticides

1. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps the Government are taking to ensure the safety of pesticides used in agriculture.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. David Maclean):** Under legislation introduced by this Government pesticides are banned for use unless approved on the basis of independent scientific advice. Once approved they may be used only as specified in their approval.

**Mr. Thurnham:** First, I welcome my hon. Friend to his new office. Will he begin his new responsibilities by ordering a review of the way in which pesticides are approved—both new and older products, some of which may be taken for granted—so that the public may have full confidence in the approval system, knowing that the best scientific evidence is used?

**Mr. Maclean:** My hon. Friend will be aware that it is only three years since we introduced the new statutory arrangements, which are among the best in the world for approving pesticides. We have a continual review system, and if there is any problem, the pesticides concerned are called in for review. The independent Advisory Committee on Pesticides is recognised as offering the best scientific advice in the world.

**Mr. Duffy:** Is the Minister aware that I have made several representations to the Ministry over the past year or so on behalf of people in Sheffield and in South Yorkshire generally, who are worried about a possible linkage between their water supplies—25 per cent. of which are drawn from the Derwent—and the use of pesticides, as well as nitrates, on the Vale of York? Their anxieties have heightened during the summer. Will the Minister comment?

**Mr. Maclean:** I shall certainly look into the hon. Gentleman's point. Responsibility for the quality of the water supply rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. However, I shall be delighted to consider the matter to establish whether there is any agricultural involvement—in which case I may be able to assist the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Is my hon. Friend aware that in Scotland, where raspberries are grown substantially to serve the needs of Europe, the Government have shown great understanding in their handling of the dinoseb problem? The costs involved have been phased over a year, and the Government are also giving grubbing-out assistance, so that fresh varieties other than Glen Clova can be planted. All that shows how sensibly the Government tackled the problems.

**Mr. Maclean:** My hon. Friend is absolutely correct. We are delighted to assist, where we can, by ensuring that the safest possible use is made of pesticides while at the same time not damaging or destroying the agricultural industry, which has the prime responsibility for ensuring that the nation has good, safe and wholesome food at a reasonable price.

**Dr. David Clark:** On behalf of the Opposition, I welcome and congratulate the new Ministers and I hope that they have a rewarding time at the Dispatch Box. We shall make sure that they work hard at making certain that the British public is protected.

Concern has been expressed by right hon. and hon. Members in all parts of the House about the review of old pesticides. Some pesticides are as much as 40 years old, yet it may be another 10 years before they are reviewed. Is the Minister aware that no new and, one would hope, safe pesticides have been approved under the new scheme because of a lack of resources? Will he examine the problem to ensure that public health and the environment are better protected than they are at present?

**Mr. Maclean:** I thank the hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) for their kind words.

I am, of course, aware of concern that pesticides are not being reviewed quickly enough, but I do not accept its validity. I have no evidence to suggest that the Department is being tardy in its attitude to the review. We are considering the matter of resources and recruiting scientists to continue the work of the review. If the hon. Gentleman is worried about any pesticides, and if he draws his concern to our attention, we shall pull the pesticides concerned forward for instant review. Pesticides are reviewed under an ongoing programme, and we are determined to ensure that there is no tardiness.

### Animals (Drugs)

2. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will take steps to ensure that purchasers of animal-based products are able to obtain information on the drugs given to the animals.

**Mr. Maclean:** Such a step is not practicable. The Government believe that the way to protect the consumer is to ensure that no residues are present in food at levels that are harmful to health.

**Mr. Stern:** I join my hon. Friends and the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) in welcoming my hon. Friend the Minister to his new post.

Does my hon. Friend agree that there is reason for concern among people in the Bristol area, for example, when they hear that a preparation of which they previously knew nothing, such as BST—bovine somatotropin—is being fed to cows on an experimental basis? It is not that they believe that an active attempt being made to do them harm but that they are not told that such experiments are taking place. How can my hon. Friend reassure my constituents and those of other right hon. and hon. Members?

**Mr. Maclean:** I thank my hon. Friend for his kind words.

There is no question of testing drugs in the manner that my hon. Friend suggests, and then giving the milk products of those cows to the public. Bovine somatotropin is not a drug but a naturally occurring hormone. I suggest that my hon. Friend tells his constituents that, since time began, every cow has had BST naturally occurring in its system. Synthetic BST is no different from the naturally occurring hormone, and it would be inappropriate to label milk products, because such labelling could be misleading. BST is a natural hormone.

**Mr. Livsey:** I, too, congratulate the agriculture team on its appointment. Will the Minister comment on the ban that has been imposed by the EC as a result of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Britain when the mainland continent of Europe cannot test for or identify the disease?

**Mr. Maclean:** The only comment that I would make is that that ban applies only to animals born before 18 July 1988. We continually keep the matter under review and we are happy to comply with EEC standards on all aspects of animal health and safety.

**Dr. David Clark:** Has the Minister had time to study the minutes of his veterinary products committee? If so, will he confirm that the April and May meetings of that committee received an application for a product licence for BST by Elanco which it has not granted on grounds of health doubts for humans and animals?

**Mr. Maclean:** No, I have not had a chance in the past 24 hours to study that minute among the other documents that I have been reading. However, I assure the hon. Gentleman that I shall study it and write to him with a detailed reply.

### Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

3. **Mr. Marland:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture Fisheries and Food when he last met the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and what matters were discussed.

**The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Gummer):** I have met the RSPB on a number of occasions in the past and I look forward with great pleasure to renewing my acquaintance.

**Mr. Marland:** I warmly welcome my right hon. Friend back to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food where we look forward to him carrying on the good work of his predecessor.

My right hon. Friend may be aware that, while studying alternative land uses, the Select Committee on Agriculture recently visited the flow countries, where we met representatives of the RSPB. Will my right hon. Friend assure me that at his next meeting with the RSPB he will encourage it to have a slightly broader vision than did its representatives whom we met in Caithness, who seemed to be 100 per cent. opposed to any further development of those vast tracts of land, whether for forestry or agriculture, because they felt that it would disturb a few rare species of birds?

**Mr. Gummer:** I thank my hon. Friend for his kind comments. I suppose that we would both agree that an organisation set up to protect birds would tend to go on about birds. However, I agree that we must take into account a range of matters when we make decisions. I much welcome the work done by the RSPB on behalf of birds, but in the end we have to achieve a balance between the perfectly proper demands that such conservation makes upon us and the demands for jobs and for preserving the countryside. There are often different tensions, even between conservation organisations. In the end, the Government must hold the ring and make the decisions, and I agree that they must be made impartially.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** Does the Secretary of State accept that when he next meets the RSPB one issue that it will be particularly worried about is the state of Britain's hedgerows? Does he accept that, if hedgerows are to be stockproof and to provide a good habitat for birds, they need, in agricultural terms, to have a good bottom and to be laid regularly? Does he accept that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food should be doing far more to encourage farmers to maintain their hedges in a stockproof state rather than relying on strands of barbed wire to join up trees in outgrown hedges?

**Mr. Gummer:** I have considerable sympathy with the tenor of the hon. Gentleman's question. I was a Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when we stopped paying people to grub up hedges. I was pleased when we started to pay people to lay and look after them properly and I shall keep that support under review. Hedgerows are of great importance and I agree that we need proper hedgerows, not ones with strips of barbed wire, wherever that can be avoided.

**Mr. Michael Brown:** First, may I very warmly congratulate my right hon. Friend on his elevation to the Cabinet. I ask him to pass on to his Parliamentary Secretaries, who will ably support him, my warmest congratulations. He has a superb team and I am sure that agriculture will benefit from this marvellous team. I also ask my right hon. Friend to remember that the RSPB has welcomed the farm woodlands scheme, which it says will be a lifeline for birds.

**Mr. Gummer:** It has certainly been extremely supportive of the farm woodlands scheme. I found the regular meetings that I initiated with the RSPB when I was Minister of State to be valuable and I hope that we shall continue those meetings.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** Has the RSPB raised with the Minister the Government's failure to protect British wildlife from deliberate and illegal killing? Will the Minister confirm that in the past eight years, there have been about 200 cases of deliberate killing of raptors by the illegal use of pesticides and that for those 200 incidents there were only four prosecutions? Is he aware that the position has been made considerably worse this year because in the grouse-rearing areas of England, all the nesting pairs of hen harriers, a bird that merits special protection under the EC birds directive, have been deliberately killed? Will the Minister forcefully condemn the actions of those responsible? Will he remind the landowners concerned of their legal responsibility and will he review the actions of his Ministry to ensure that the law is adequately and rigorously enforced?

**Mr. Gummer:** The RSPB has not so far drawn that to my attention, but I am happy to discuss the matter with it when we meet. I am also happy to condemn forcefully anyone who breaks the law, especially in the areas of sensitivity about which the hon. Gentleman spoke. I cannot, of course, necessarily support all that the hon. Gentleman said, but I suggest to him that the Government's actions on pesticides generally and some of the actions that I hope to announce later today will comfort him very much. I am also happy to examine again the problem to which he refers, and if further action is needed to toughen up the reactions of the Ministry, I shall be happy to take it.

## Conifers

4. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what has been the effect of his announcement after the 1988 Budget that approval for large-scale conifer planting in the uplands of England would not normally be given; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** It is too early to say. However, in the four years before the announcement, less than 650 hectares of land was planted with conifers in the whole of England. Some two thirds of that planting was in upland areas.

**Mr. Davis:** May I join in congratulating my right hon. Friend on his return to the Dispatch box at an appropriately elevated level. May I point out to him that the Council for the Protection of Rural England and I, as somebody who walks in the beautiful uplands of Britain, welcome the Government's decision? Will my right hon. Friend join me in welcoming the proposal of the Countryside Commission to plant large areas of forest in urban fringe areas? That will provide amenities and an environmentally sensitive mix of trees for those who live in towns and inner villages.

**Mr. Gummer:** I agree that the Countryside Commission's action is to be welcomed. It began to discuss this about a year ago. It has developed the proposal, and the first forest will begin to be planted soon. This is a major innovation which shows that Britain is leading the world in many areas of conservation. The scheme will bring back to parts of the country that have missed out on the countryside for a long time some of the amenities that many of us are lucky enough to experience near at hand where we live.

**Mr. Morley:** I welcome the new appointments to the Agriculture Front Bench, but I shall judge Ministers on their actions before I comment on their countryside policy. I hope that they will make changes. Will the Minister join me in congratulating the Forestry Commission on its new landscape design proposals, which are a response to criticism levelled at forestry in the uplands for some years? Does the Minister agree that an area such as the flow country is important not only because of the rare birds who live there—it contains some of the most important species in Europe—but because it is a habitat that is unique in western Europe? Planting trees on that land destroys the peat layer for ever. There is no going back once land has been ploughed up and planted on. Does the Minister agree that steps need to be taken to protect precious areas which are of international importance?

**Mr. Gummer:** I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would not want to tempt me into areas looked after by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. I am happy to support what he said about the Forestry Commission's decisions on landscape, although I do not think that they were a response to criticism, as the hon. Gentleman rather negatively suggested. Those decisions show how much the Forestry Commission has been doing to develop its plans, and we should welcome not only the new plans but the new chairman who will take over at the end of September.

## Eggs

6. **Mr. John Evans:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many consignments of imported eggs have been impounded by his Department over the last 12 months.

**Mr. Maclean:** In the 12 months to May 1989, 20,812 boxes of 360 eggs were inspected for compliance with egg marketing standards regulations. None was impounded.

**Mr. Evans:** Will the Minister confirm that egg imports into the United Kingdom trebled between January and April this year, largely because of housewives' continuing lack of confidence in the quality of British eggs? In view of the continuing problem of salmonella in eggs, what action do he and his Department intend to take to improve quality control of egg imports?

**Mr. Maclean:** I do not have the figures for egg imports with me, but I can tell the hon. Gentleman that egg exports have increased in the past few months because foreign countries have great confidence in the rigorous quality standards in Britain following the salmonella outbreaks. The standards that we impose for salmonella testing at the ports are among the most rigorous in the world and everyone in this country should have perfect confidence that we can detect any salmonella coming into the country through eggs. One consignment was detected and we took the matter up with our opposite numbers in the EEC.

**Mrs. Gorman:** While my hon. Friend is on the learning curve of his new post, will he ask his officials to confirm that an egg is an anaerobic capsule designed by nature to keep out germs and that unless the eggshell is cracked or the semi-permeable membrane disturbed an egg cannot contain enough of any kind of bacteria to make one ill? All this stuff and nonsense worrying people about eggs comes under the heading of "poppycockus hystericus" and the public should be told, after my hon. Friend's officials have confirmed it, that a freshly cooked egg is perfectly healthy, whether it is English or foreign.

**Mr. Maclean:** My hon. Friend makes her points in he own inimitable way. Although I have not had a briefing on this matter yet, I understand that eggs are porous and that it is not true to suggest that eggshells are completely impermeable to contamination. Part of the problem with the salmonella outbreak is that invasive salmonella involves transovarian transmission, whereby the disease is transmitted from the bird through the ovary into the egg.

**Mr. Alton:** At what levels do egg consumption and production now stand, following the complaints made by the hon. Gentleman's former ministerial colleague, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie), about the possibility of salmonella poisoning? Does he agree that what is needed is a Minister who is seen to protect the interests of consumers, who continue to lack confidence in the food available in our supermarkets?

**Mr. Maclean:** I understand that egg consumption is up to more than 80 per cent. of its former level. The hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) said that he would judge us by our actions, and I assure the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr Alton) that he will be happy to reach the conclusion that our actions will be in the best interests of consumers in this country.

## Channel Cod Quota

7. **Mr. Harris:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the Channel cod quota.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. David Curry):** We have pressed hard for an increase in the Channel cod total allowable catch for this year. The Commission's recent proposal, based on scientific advice, for a small increase from 23,900 tonnes to 24,600 tonnes has just been confirmed. We have also secured agreement that the Community's scientific and technical committee should carry out a further review of the total allowable catch.

**Mr. Harris:** I congratulate my hon. Friend and former colleague in the European Parliament on his new appointment. With regard to Channel cod, does my hon. Friend appreciate that although any increase in the quota is helpful, there is nevertheless deep disappointment among our fishermen that the increase is so small? Will he bring his skills and knowledge of Europe into play to continue the battle for a larger quota of Channel cod and has he any proposals for better management of the quota?

**Mr. Curry:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his kind words and reminiscences. I appreciate that fishermen are bound to be disappointed. In response to my hon. Friend's question about the management of the quota, I am considering dividing the quota for Channel cod between vessels of more than 10 m in length and those below 10 m. That would apply immediately if I take that decision. I am also aware of the pressure to extend licensing to vessels below 10 m and I am actively considering—my hon. Friend will be aware of the significance of the adverts—whether to extend licensing from vessels of 10 m registered length to vessels of 10 m overall length, which would bring the most blatant of the so-called rule beaters under control, and I am treating a decision on those questions as a matter of urgency.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** At Environment Question Time yesterday we had a discussion about the amount of raw sewage being dumped in the seas around our shores. As a lover of cod and chips, may I ask what the Prime Minister has done to ensure that cod are not landed as nothing more than reprocessed turds?

**Mr. Curry:** While the hon. Gentleman was discussing that yesterday, I was mugging up on fish. We are vigilant about the quality of the fish that is landed and we are determined to try to increase the cod quota so that British housewives can enjoy more cod and that all cod that is landed, either from British boats or from imports, should be subject to a levy which will help to promote that quite excellent fish.

**Mr. Hill:** May I add my congratulations to my hon. Friend on his promotion to his new position on the Government Front Bench. I am sure that he will do an extremely good job. My hon. Friend will realise that the theme that was jokingly introduced by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) is quite serious. My hon. Friend and the Ministry are responsible for licensing procedures in respect of the Channel areas where sewage or sewage sludge is dumped. Will he keep a close eye on the situation and monitor what is happening as the Southern Fisheries Association is extremely concerned about the almost unbridled issuing of licences to the Southern water authority?

**Mr. Curry:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his kind words. I understand that the licensing process is carefully controlled, but I give my hon. Friend a clear guarantee that we shall reinforce the controls and I shall be particularly vigilant.

### Sea Fish Industry Authority

10. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Sea Fish Industry Authority; and what subjects were discussed.

**Mr. Curry:** I am looking forward to meeting the chairman of the Sea Fish Industry Authority at an early and mutually convenient time.

**Mr. Cohen:** Given the authority's role in fish farming research, should it not be looking into pollution research? Will the Minister take steps to stop the misuse of chemicals and pesticides in fish farms and ban the use of Nuvan 500 EC?

**Mr. Curry:** I am certainly not prepared to guarantee that I will ban a product until I have had a chance to investigate the case.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): The Minister does not know what it is.

**Mr. Curry:** The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) says that I do not know what it is, and I confirm his impression. However, I will take steps to find out very quickly. If the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) would like to forward any particular evidence to me, I will examine it as soon as possible.

**Mr. Macdonald:** I add my personal welcome to the Minister with his new responsibilities and I hope that he will be a wee bit more sympathetic than his predecessor was to some of our concerns. When he next meets the chairman of the Sea Fish Industry Authority, will he discuss with him, and with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, the need closely to monitor nephrops stocks in the Minch fisheries off the north-west coast of Scotland, where there is increasing pressure due to east coast fishermen coming over as a result of the quota cuts that they have suffered? Will the Minister undertake to monitor prawn stocks off the west coast and introduce quotas if necessary?

**Mr. Curry:** I will certainly undertake that that should be on the agenda, and I will certainly discuss it with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

**Dr. Godman:** I, too, welcome the new Ministers to their posts. I only hope that we can maintain the civilised relationship that we experienced with their predecessors. In that regard, I offer my compliments in public to the hon. Member for Calder Valley (Mr. Thompson) for the many affable courtesies that he showed to me during his tenure of office.

When the Minister next meets the chairman of the Sea Fish Industry Authority, will he discuss with that gentleman the urgent need to introduce a sensible decommissioning scheme? Does he agree that many middle-aged fishermen around the British coastline would happily and willingly tie up their middle-aged or elderly vessels for the last time if such a scheme were in operation? Is it not the case that, with regard to European Community obligations vis-a-vis the multi-annual guidance programme, the United Kingdom fishing fleet has to shed some 600 to 800 fishing vessels? How will that be brought about in the absence of a sensible decommissioning scheme?

**Mr. Curry:** I echo the hon. Gentleman's remarks about my hon. Friend the Member for Calder Valley (Mr. Thompson), who I thought was an excellent Minister and responsible for many personal kindnesses to hon. Members.

Decommissioning is a somewhat less easy matter than the hon. Gentleman seems to suggest. It is one of the options that I am now reviewing. The hon. Gentleman is right that the multi-annual guidance programme sets Community targets to apply by 1991. He will be aware, however, that since that target was set two years ago there has been a significant expansion in the fishing fleet. That has been done with public money. I am therefore bound to pay careful attention to whether I wish to decommission with public money a fleet that was built up with public money. However, it is one of the matters that I shall certainly discuss with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and I am aware of the importance of the issue.

### Dioxin

12. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the maximum permitted concentration of dioxin in common foods; and what is the dioxin content of mother's milk.

**Mr. Maclean:** There are no maximum permitted levels set for the dioxin content of foods. Work carried out at my Ministry's food science laboratory shows the dioxin content of mothers' milk to be approximately 1 nanogram —that is, one thousand millionth of a gram—per kilogram.

**Mr. Williams:** Given that dioxin has been responsible for more than 4,000 children in the United States being born with severe congenital abnormalities due to Vietnam veterans having been exposed to agent orange, given the toxicity of dioxin, and given that dioxin enters the human body mainly through our food, what do the Government intend to do to tackle the problem of dioxin in food and in the environment?

**Mr. Maclean:** There can be no comparison between people sprayed with dioxin in Vietnam and dioxin levels in mothers' milk. We had a survey carried out in seven European countries and in three other countries which showed that dioxin levels were all comparable and very low. The reference level is 1 picogram, which is one millionth millionth of a gramme. The hon. Gentleman must be careful not to suggest that there is a serious problem. I accept entirely, and repeat, the advice of my right hon. and hon. Friends at the Department of Health that breast milk is still the safest and best means of feeding a baby. There is no problem with dioxin.

**Mr. Boswell:** I welcome my hon. Friend to the Front Bench and I welcome his last response. Will he confirm that instead of spreading scare stories the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams) should be paying tribute to the skill of the scientists in their ability to detect such minuscule quantities, to the strength of the regulatory system and to our readiness to publish this information which shows, contrary to the opinions of the Opposition, that there is no danger in breast milk either in Europe or in the Third world?

**Mr. Maclean:** I thank my hon. Friend for his kind words. He is right. We have some of the best scientists in the world. As I said to the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams), we have carried out studies in Europe. It is wrong to suggest that there is a serious problem with dioxin in breast milk when we are talking of levels of one thousand millionth or one million millionth of a gramme.

## Slaughter of Animals

15. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposals he has to introduce measures to ameliorate the suffering of animals during slaughter; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry:** On 20 June the Government issued, for public consultation, proposals for additional important welfare measures.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Why have only 18 of the 100 recommendations made by the Farm Animal Welfare Council been implemented, as they related to examples of extreme cruelty in Britain's slaughterhouses? Will FMC in Wiltshire be prosecuted as a journalist on *The Sunday Times* was a witness to cruelty in that slaughterhouse? What action is to be taken on the evidence of cruelty in many of Britain's slaughterhouses?

**Mr. Curry:** The hon. Gentleman asked why only a certain number of recommendations have been implemented. He will appreciate that certain measures can be implemented by means of existing primary legislation, but others require new primary legislation. We are about to conclude the consultation period—in fact, it ends on the first day of next month—on the recommendations relative to religious slaughter. The hon. Gentleman will be familiar with the Government's stance on that. Once the consultation period is over, we shall lay regulations quickly.

The hon. Gentleman will also be aware that the Department would like to introduce an animal welfare Bill. That, of course, depends on parliamentary time. If we were to win such time, we would be requiring local authorities to—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman asked a specific question and he is getting a specific answer. We shall require local authorities to appoint a person specifically responsible for animal welfare. We intend to make the rules of practice mandatory and not voluntary. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman must not object because I managed to guess his supplementary. We intend to extend protection to deer.

**Miss Emma Nicholson:** I add my congratulations to my hon. Friend the Minister and the new agriculture team, which I am sure will be extremely successful. May I ask my hon. Friend to remind the Opposition that when I put forward an animal welfare Bill embodying recommendations by the Farm Animal Welfare Council with regard to the slaughter of deer, the legislation was blocked by Opposition Members?

**Mr. Curry:** My hon. Friend confirms the problem. We need new primary legislation. If we achieve that, the measures that she sought to introduce will be included.

## Irradiated Food

17. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he intends to bring forward his proposals for the comprehensive labelling of foodstuffs treated with irradiation.

**Mr. MacLean:** The Government intend that labelling of irradiated foodstuffs is full and clear. I will shortly be putting out for public consultation appropriate amendments to the Food Labelling Regulations.

**Mr. Lloyd:** How useful is labelling in the absence of any proper diagnostic testing?

**Mr. Maclean:** Labelling is essential so that consumers can make a choice. If the hon. Gentleman is in the House later this afternoon, when our White Paper is published and a statement is made, he will find that we shall be taking tough powers in the new food Bill which will be introduced as soon as parliamentary time permits to deal with all aspects of food irradiation and to establish a rigorous and toughly controlled licensing system which will satisfy the public demand.

## Environmentally Sensitive Areas

18. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has any plans to revisit the Shropshire hills environmentally sensitive area.

**Mr. Maclean:** I attach a great deal of importance to getting out to the environmentally sensitive areas and seeing things for myself. I hope that the Shropshire hills will be one of the ESAs that I have the opportunity to visit.

**Mr. Gill:** I apologise for the fact that the wording of my question has been somewhat overtaken by events. Nevertheless, my hon. Friend will be most welcome in

England's second largest environmentally sensitive area, where he will see for himself how the interests of agriculture and the environment are well reconciled. He will be able to learn at first hand how welcome last month's announcement of the increase in the suckler cow premium is, and how well the more recent announcement of no upper limit on sheep headage payments is being received.

**Mr. Maclean:** Environmentally sensitive areas have been tremendously successful and have been one of the best initiatives in the countryside. I look forward to other areas experiencing the same success as Shropshire, for which 208 applications were received in respect of 14,800 hectares of land. I hope that my hon. Friend will be able to show me round and introduce me to those who have been successful there.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Engagements

Q1. **Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

**Miss Nicholson:** Has my right hon. Friend had time in her busy day to note the return to work of Tilbury's grain and container divisions and, yesterday, of 12,500 National Union of Railwaymen staff? Does my right hon. Friend agree that that is an immense ratification of our policy of non-intervention in industrial matters? Will she look most closely at the release of British Rail from public ownership?

**The Prime Minister:** I agree with my hon. Friend and welcome the return of so many railwaymen and dockers to work. They realise, clearly, that serving the customer is the best way of serving their industries and their self-interest. I also agree with my hon. Friend that if there are disputes they are a matter for negotiation between management and workers in the industry and not for visits and meetings at No. 10. It is for management to solve them within the framework of rules and regulations that they have been given. I agree with my hon. Friend that privatisation in general is far better than nationalisation. As she knows, I did not want the two mixed up in this dispute. We shall, of course, look at privatisation in the future.

**Mr. Hattersley** *rose—[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This takes up a lot of time.

**Mr. Hattersley:** Which quality does the Prime Minister think she displayed to most advantage during last week's Cabinet reshuffle—loyalty, honesty or sensitivity?

**The Prime Minister:** That combination of qualities succeeded in getting into an excellent Cabinet men of great experience in a wide range of Departments and a terrific team of younger Ministers—*[Interruption.]*—supported by a first-class team of younger Ministers at lower levels, whom we saw performing so excellently at the Dispatch Box earlier today.

**Mr. Hattersley:** If the Prime Minister feels so warmly about her senior colleagues, why have she and her press secretary spent three days intentionally humiliating the Leader of the House?

**The Prime Minister:** That is absolute nonsense. We have the most excellent Cabinet for the future. I understand why the right hon. Gentleman is rattled—he knows that it is a winning Cabinet.

**Mr. Hattersley:** As the months go by, the right hon. Lady will come to learn that if she sacrifices the trust even of her senior colleagues, she will certainly sacrifice the trust of the nation. Does she realise that the Government are palpably and obviously a shambles and that this week's Cabinet reshuffle, which was intended to set them back on their feet, has merely left them as they began—in total disarray?

**The Prime Minister:** I shall have to disappoint the right hon. Gentleman by telling him that we had an excellent Cabinet meeting this morning. I remind him that in 10 years this Government have transformed Britain from the shambles that he and his Government left.

Q2. **Mr. French:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. French:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that of the two people who led the campaign to prevent Gloucester council from transferring its housing to a housing association, to the benefit of all tenants, one went on to incite people to break the law by not paying the community charge and both have been rewarded for their efforts by being given well-paid jobs funded by the Labour city council? Will my right hon. Friend resolutely condemn such examples of cynical disrespect for ratepayers and misallocation of ratepayers' funds?

**The Prime Minister:** I understand my hon. Friend's concern. That also shows cynical disrespect for the rule of law passed by this House which, if democracy means anything, must be obeyed. The community charge—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I ask the House to listen to the Prime Minister. This is the last opportunity that we shall have for some time.

**The Prime Minister:** The community charge will increase the accountability of councils to their electors. We understand why the Labour party does not like it. It will show up the extravagance of Labour councils with their ratepayers' money, and the economy of Conservative councils which look after the money raised from community charge payers.

**Mr. Ashdown:** Did not President Mitterrand say in public today what the right hon. Lady's ex-Foreign Secretary had been telling her in private for some time —that Britain is in danger of being left out and left behind in Europe? Is it not the case that the right hon. and learned

Gentleman's pro-European views cost him his job but the right hon. Lady's anti-European views will cost Britain its future?

**The Prime Minister:** That is nonsense. I remind the right hon. Gentleman that we are ahead of France in implementing matters that have been agreed. We are ahead in having free capital movements. I look forward to France following our lead. We are ahead in having abolished foreign exchange controls. I look forward to France doing the same. We are ahead in having abolished many subsidies to industry. At the Madrid summit, France and not Britain was isolated. Nothing, least of all the right hon. Gentleman, will persuade me to surrender the sovereignty of this House to the European Parliament.

Q3. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Adley:** Did not yesterday's rail strike show that London and other cities are incapable of absorbing yet more road traffic, with the inexorable rise in pollution and congestion that it brings? During the recess will my right hon. Friend re-read the central London rail study produced by the Department of Transport, which calls urgently for the construction of new underground railway lines in London? Does my right hon. Friend recognise this urgent need and will she please discuss it with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Transport. Finally, does she recognise that the only way to build those lines is to increase public investment?

**The Prime Minister:** I know my hon. Friend's keen interest in these matters. During the recess I shall be reading a number of heavy books. I confess that the one to which he referred had not occurred to me, but I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport will be reading the central and east London rail studies. I accept the importance of those studies. Decisions on the findings will be taken this autumn in the context of the Government's consideration of the competing claims for all forms of public expenditure. I remind my hon. Friend that investment in London railways is already at record levels and is set to increase, quite apart from implementing the new lines proposed. Investment in London railways is running at about £650 million in the current year.

Q5. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** Does my right hon. Friend accept that many of us share her concern that at a time when inflation is higher than we would wish it to be, it is important that wage demands are curbed? Will she agree that those who are leading industries and are giving themselves often vulgar increases in salaries have a duty to lead from the front and to curb their own excesses so that they can give responsible leadership in relation to the claims of those lower down the scale?

**The Prime Minister:** I am sure that my hon. Friend and I agree that higher performance and higher productivity at all levels merit higher rewards. The point of having higher productivity is to enable one to achieve lower unit costs, which enables one to give higher wages because of higher effort. That is why we have profit-sharing schemes and performance-related pay. I agree with my hon. Friend that when the priority is to control costs and get down inflation, business leaders have a particular responsibility to lead by example, and I hope that in future they will continue to do so.

Q7. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Barron:** Has the Prime Minister instructed her new Secretary of State for the Environment to give further help to besieged Conservative Back Benchers with an increase in the poll tax cushion?

**The Prime Minister:** As the hon. Gentleman will be aware, we had looked at the safety net provisions under which resources go from one area to another, and my right hon. Friend who is now the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry had indeed varied them to ensure that some of the gainers got their gains while those who were losers under that area safety net system did not have to bear more than some £25 per payer. That has eased the position a great deal. My right hon. Friend also gave extra money to those who had low rateable values and to those in ILEA. That has eased the position, but I have not the slightest shadow of doubt that my right hon. Friend who is now the Secretary of State for the Environment will consider the matter again.

Q8. **Mr. Franks:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Franks:** When considering future legislation, will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the case of Barrow Borough Transport, which in the two years of its existence before going into liquidation lost £1½ million, which included a £½ million loan from Barrow council which was illegal and ultra vires? Will she consider introducing legislation to extend the powers of district auditors and speed up the process by which miscreants are brought to book?

**The Prime Minister:** I appreciate my hon. Friend's concern, but in the Local Government Act 1988 we have already significantly strengthened auditors' powers, enabling them to act pre-emptively in certain circumstances. We believe that when that is working sufficiently, it should be enough. At present we have no plans to strengthen auditors' powers further unless there are circumstances which clearly require further amendment.

Q9. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. McCartney:** Will the Prime Minister take action in relation to Westminster city council, and in particular Lady Porter, whose actions are bringing the whole of local government into disrepute, and the activities of the

Conservative party in using public funds to try to return a discredited council at next year's local government elections?

**The Prime Minister:** Westminster city council is responsible for its own affairs—*[Interruption.]* and I am sure that it will deal with them.

## Business of the House

3.30 pm

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): Will the deputy Prime Minister tell us the business for the first week after the summer recess?

**The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe)** *rose*——

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We have a busy day ahead of us. I call the Leader of the House.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** The business for the first week after the summer adjournment will be as follows:

TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER—There will be a debate on the Griffiths report and community care on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER/THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER—There will be a debate on a Government motion to approve the Defence Estimates 1989 (Cm 675)

FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER—There will be a debate on top-up loans for students on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

**Mr. Dobson:** May I thank the deputy Prime Minister for his statement and welcome him to his new job? I fear that it bears an uncanny resemblance to a Government training scheme, with him dogsbodying around for an ungrateful boss but with no—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is a day for Back Benchers. Let us get on with it.

**Mr. Dobson:** —with the right hon. and learned Gentleman dogsbodying around for an ungrateful boss, but with no guarantee of a proper job at the end of it.

May I thank him also for so promptly honouring the undertakings of his predecessor and for arranging debates in Government time on the Government's response to the Griffiths proposals on care in the community and for the debate on the proposals to replace student grants with student loans? We would, of course, have preferred both those debates to be on substantive motions, and we especially object to the student loans debate being held on a Friday.

May I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman during the recess—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I appeal to the House to settle down. I repeat that this is a day for Back Benchers, but these interruptions are taking up a lot of time and I am anxious to call as many hon. Members as possible in the next debate.

**Mr. Dobson:** May I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman to give some thought during the recess to establishing a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs? The people of Scotland and their elected representatives feel cheated at the failure to establish this, the only Select Committee that has not been established as required under the Standing Orders of the House. As there is now a new Back Bencher for Scotland, the Government may find it easier to find Tories to take their places on that Committee.

Finally, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman confirm that the much postponed debate on Members' pensions and on the possibility of severance payments for Ministers will be arranged during the spill-over period? I am sure that he will agree that the House should have an opportunity to vote on the severance pay proposals before the next reshuffle.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I acknowledge the benevolent part of the hon. Gentleman's opening remarks and I shall leave the rest on one side by expressing my gratitude for his observations about the debates that we have been able to arrange on the Griffiths report and on top-up loans. I note his point about the arrangements for debates. At present, they are designed for the general convenience of the House. If he wishes to have any alternatives considered, that can be done through the usual channels.

The hon. Gentleman also raised a topic that is not unfamiliar to the House—a Scottish Affairs Select Committee. One regrets the inability to form a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. I think that, in the light of whatever factors he cares to mention, if anyone has any new proposals to make on that, they too can be considered through the usual channels.

It has also proved difficult to arrange a debate on parliamentary pensions and severance payments. I hope to be able to find time for that shortly after the House returns in October.

**Mr. Cyril D. Townsend** (Bexleyheath): My right hon. and learned Friend is aware, from his highly distinguished service at the Foreign Office, that the House of Commons is remiss at debating foreign affairs. Will he give his attention to that matter, in view of the enormous changes that are taking place in the world and our inability to consider them?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I am clearly aware of the importance of the matter my hon. Friend has raised. It is important to acknowledge that my predecessor recently arranged for two debates on foreign affairs, so I cannot rush in, ambitiously, in the near future.

**Mr. James Wallace** (Orkney and Shetland): I welcome the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the distinguished office he has now assumed. Those of us who have been in the House on Thursdays for business questions have heard the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) quite properly ask for for debates on the Griffiths report and student top-up loans. I am pleased that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has managed to deliver them so quickly. If he repeats that performance over many Thursdays, he will be an especially popular Leader of the House.

In view of his legal background, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman arrange a debate on the White Paper on legal services, as the House has never had an opportunity to comment on the Government's proposals? In view of his experiences this week, will he arrange a debate on homelessness and those threatened with homelessness?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his opening remarks. I do not feel impelled by any experiences this week to consider his last suggestion. Obviously it can be looked at. I am grateful for his appreciation of the announcement about debates on the Griffiths report and top-up loans. Legal services are an important issue and I am prepared to consider what can be done about a debate on them.

**Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith** (Wealden): I welcome my right hon. and learned Friend in his new role in the House. Does he consider it appropriate to have a debate on the European monetary system and monetary relationships with the European Economic Community, in view of the recent comments of President Mitterrand of France?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I do not think that the House normally feels impelled to have a debate simply because of the observations of a Head of State of a friendly nation, which I have of course, noted with interest. My hon. Friend will recall that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer recently tabled a full paper on that subject for consideration by a Committee in the House. That is the best way to handle it.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** (Denton and Reddish): Will the deputy Prime Minister capitalise on the very warm reception he has just received from the House by trying to be a reforming Leader of the House? Will he start with the private Bill procedure, which has developed into a shambles in recent years? Will he notice the large number of Bills that are now being blocked? Will he take note of the excellent report of the special Procedure Select Committee on reforming private business, as that needs to be implemented as soon as possible, even if it involves having a "high noon" with the people who have just appointed him to his new post?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I know of the hon. Gentleman's close interest in the important but extremely complicated subject of private Bill procedure; I also know of the reports which have been considered recently, but which I have not yet had time to study fully. I shall certainly endeavour to do so during the recess, and to consider the matter in the light of the hon. Gentlemen's observations.

**Mr. David Howell** (Guildford): I know that my right hon. and learned Friend will be aware that it was hoped in some quarters that a Government statement might be made about Hong Kong and the so-called flexible package before the rising of the House. It is quite understandable that that has not proved possible, but will my right hon. and learned Friend convey to our right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary that, should he feel during the recess that circumstances in Hong Kong require him to introduce a new policy, he should not feel constrained from doing so, but will operate in accordance with Hong Kong's needs and interests rather than waiting until Parliament resumes?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** My right hon. Friend will gather from the new arrangements made for ministerial duties in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that my right hon. Friend the new Foreign Secretary manifestly attaches importance to the subject of Hong Kong. I shall certainly draw my right hon. Friend's proposal to his attention, however, so that he can keep it well in mind.

**Mr. Peter Hardy** (Wentworth): The Leader of the House will be aware that, for some of this week, 10 Downing street appears to have been operating as a rather less than efficient estate agency. In view of that inefficiency, can we expect the announcement, soon after the recess, of a debate on the privatisation of the various stately homes handled by the Prime Minister?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I think that the hon. Gentleman will find that most, if not all, of the stately homes in which he takes such a close interest are not in state ownership, but are owned by trusts established for the purposes for which they are being used.

**Mr. James Kilfedder** (North Down): May I congratulate the Leader of the House on his appointment to a position that will bring him into close touch with all Members of Parliament? May I also congratulate the Prime Minister, who has been the subject of some cheap and hurtful gibes, on the appointment of the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland? Would it be possible to debate the political situation in Northern Ireland immediately after the recess to see whether we can make new political progress?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his opening remarks. Of course I understand his continuing interest in the topic that he has raised; the House has had several recent opportunities to discuss Northern Irish affairs in some detail, but I shall certainly keep his suggestion in mind.

**Dr. David Owen** (Plymouth, Devonport): Will the Leader of the House ensure that next year's defence debates follow soon after the publication of the defence White Paper? For three years, there has been a pause of five to six months, to which I believe many hon. Members on both sides of the House object.

May I thank the right hon. and learned Gentleman for his unfailing courtesy and distinguished service as Foreign Secretary over the past six years?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for those last remarks. If what he has described has happened in each of the three preceding years there may well have been good reasons for it, but I shall certainly take account of what he has said.

**Mr. Keith Raffan** (Delyn): Let me join other hon. Members in welcoming my right hon. and learned Friend warmly to his new and important post. In view of the major outbreak of salmonella poisoning in my constituency and in other parts of the north-west, and the statement on food safety that we are about to hear, can my right hon. and learned Friend assure the House that an early debate on food safety and the Government's proposals will be possible after the summer recess?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I understand my hon. Friend's interest in that topic, particularly in the light of recent serious problems in his constituency. I shall look carefully at his suggestion after studying the consequences of his afternoon's statement.

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): In the short time for which he has occupied his new position, has the right hon. and learned Gentleman had an opportunity to read early-day motion 1245, concerning the sacking of Tilbury docks shop stewards?

*[That this House is outraged by the brutal attack upon the rights of free trade unionists by the arbitrary decision of the port employers at Tilbury Docks to summarily dismiss only the 16 shop stewards in a clear and provocative attempt to intimidate trade unionists acting in full compliance with the Government's onerous laws.]*

Does he not realise that there should have been a debate on the matter—even, perhaps, at this late hour—particularly as the redundancy payments scheme is being used in such a flagrantly anti-trade union and

*[Mr. Eric S. Heffer]*

anti-democratic manner? Is it not a disgrace that shop stewards should be sacked in this way and that other ordinary members of the dock unions should then have been placed in an almost impossible position because, if they had stayed out, the dockers who have been sacked would get no compensation whatever? It is the worst possible use of money in an anti-trade union way, and I hope that that will be taken on board by the Government.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** The hon. Gentleman was first elected to this House from Merseyside on the same day as I was, and I have known of his interest in the future of the dock industry since that time. However, I confess that I do not think that the advice that he has given his fellow workers in the industry has served them to the best advantage. The Government have been obliged to introduce legislation which was recently enacted in respect of the dock labour scheme. The shop stewards who were dismissed were among a larger group made redundant by their employers and, despite risking dismissal for breach of contract by going on strike, they have received special compensation of up to £35,000 in redundancy.

**Sir Peter Emery** (Honiton): In welcoming my right hon. and learned Friend to his new tasks, may I ask him whether, as deputy Prime Minister, he will look at all aspects and give proper guidance about Government policy, perhaps in a fuller way than he has been able to do in the past? If he will not move to adventurous experiment on procedure, may I urge him at least to work for a consolidated advance to modernise our procedure in the House? Lastly, the Procedure Committee consists of many senior men who spend many hours trying to bring forward concepts for modernisation. Could we have early debates on the Committee's reports and not have them deferred as has happened in the past?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I can tell my hon. Friend in response to his first observation that I shall of course endeavour to discharge the duties of my office to the best of my ability. My hon. Friend has a considerable and quite proper interest in the procedural reform of the House. I shall study all the reports that have so far been produced and look forward to those that will be produced in the years to come. I shall try to reach a balanced conclusion, which is what I think my hon. Friend is urging upon us.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Is the deputy Prime Minister aware that the reception that he received upon reading out the Government business for when we come back was probably the greatest accolade that any Tory Minister has received in the 19 years that I have been in the House? Is he also aware that the Prime Minister cut a very lonely and beleagured figure next to him? In view of that——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. What has this to do with next week's business?

**Mr. Skinner:** In view of that, will the Leader of the House be more magnanimous to the dockers and bear in mind that, like him, many of them have lost their jobs? However, unlike him, they did not get another job at the same rate of pay. Dockers have got the sack, and unlike the Leader of the House will have to scramble to get back to work and go on the dole. Will he re-examine his answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) and try to find some method to stop the employers in the docks treating dockers like cattle?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** The future of the docks industry and the dock workers in it has recently been very fully considered by the House. The arrangements now being administered were approved by the House a short time ago.

**Mr. Julian Critchley** (Aldershot): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that he enjoys the respect, affection and admiration of the whole House? He may have missed an item in the newspapers last week about what happened to the former Secretary of State for the Environment in a field in Hampshire last Saturday. He went up in smoke. I hasten to add that I was not responsible for his martyrdom, but I am sure that he is aware of the anxiety, indeed the anger and perhaps apprehension, felt by all my constituents about the prospect of Foxley Wood, a new town of 5,500 houses, being built in my constituency. Will he please try to find time for a debate as soon as we return on the whole business of planning and rebuilding within the south-east?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** It took my hon. Friend an uncharacteristically long time to disclose the nature of his inquiry. I am sure that the House will have followed him with interest. Now that he has arrived there, I can agree that the matter of planning in many places, not least in the south-east of England, raises a large number of complex conflicts of interest, in my constituency as well as his. Clearly, this will need to be debated and considered in the house on more than one occasion.

**Mr. Dick Douglas** (Dunfermline, West): I welcome the right hon. and learned Gentleman to his new position. However, can we have an assurance that the translation of the former Secretary of State for Defence to the Back Benches does not ensure that he pursues, perhaps rightfully, a business interest to the detriment of his parliamentary interest, because it would not look well in Scotland if Tory Back Benchers refused to serve on a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, and preferred to pursue interests outside the House? I know of the Leader of the House's interest in these matters, so could we have an assurance that he will make a statement on them when we return?

In view of the translation of the previous Leader of the House to the Department of Energy, can we know when the South of Scotland electricity board and British Coal will sign a contract to ensure the continued employment of miners in Fife and central Scotland?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I shall draw the last question of the two raised by the hon. Member to those who know more about it than I do. As to his first question, it would not be proper for me to comment on any personal implications of what he has said. The House has its own rules for considering such matters.

**Mr. Andrew Rowe** (Mid-Kent): My right hon. and learned Friend will be well aware that not long ago there was a debate on the Clergy (Ordination) Measure, which took place early in the morning, when there were virtually 100 hon. Members present. Should the measure be resubmitted, will he ensure that it is debated at a better time of the day?

In more general terms, will my right hon. and learned Friend consider giving the House the opportunity to debate the affairs of the Church of England? These tend to be debated in a curmudgeonly spirit despite the Church of England's successes—for example, in launching an urban fund—which show that it is a lively and central institution, and that it would be a good subject on which to have a debate.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I join my hon. Friend in his admiration for many of the works and activities of the established Church. I cannot join him in such close familiarity with the legislative procedures recently affecting it, but I shall look into the matter in the light of his question.

**Mr. Ray Powell** (Ogmore): Will the Leader of the House recap what has happened over the past four Thursdays, when Welsh Members pressed his predecessor to arrange a debate in the Welsh Grand Committee so that the Members can discuss the National Health Service in Wales? Having reflected on the replies that have been given, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman be more positive by ensuring that we have debates on Wales? In the first week that we are back after the recess, will the right hon. Gentleman allow the House to debate the Children Bill? Many people will be looking forward to the implementation of the Bill, and it is high time that grandparents, divorced people and others were protected by the Government through this Bill being enacted. Will he arrange an early debate on the Bill?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** At this stage, I cannot usefully add anything to what has been said by my right hon. Friend the previous Leader of the House on the hon. Gentleman's first point. I know that this is a matter that has caused a good deal of anxiety, and it will no doubt be considered again when the House returns. As to the Children Bill, that is manifestly important legislation that will need to be considered again before long.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** (Southend, West): My right and learned Friend has made a great start by announcing a week's business without one of these pointless, frustrating and silly debates after 10 o'clock on European directives. Could we have a day's debate on what our future policy on the EEC should be, bearing in mind that the Government seem rightly to be becoming more and more frustrated at the bureaucratic Socialist nonsense coming from Brussels, but on the other hand seem powerless to do anything about it, apart from complaining, because of the problems of the Single European Act? Is it not high time that, for the sake of democracy, we have a full day's debate on where we stand on the EEC?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I fear that I am unable to take the enthusiasm that I had for the beginning of my hon. Friend's question to its conclusion. The Single European Act has been discussed on many occasions and I am sure that the House will find further opportunities to consider the general matter which my hon. Friend has raised.

**Mrs. Alice Mahon** (Halifax): Does the Leader of the House agree that, whenever there is a major tragedy, everyone welcomes the efforts of the three emergency services? Will he make time for a debate so that we can ascertain why the members of the ambulance staff are singled out for different treatment from the staff of the other services when it comes to wages? Is he aware that officers of the ambulance staff union are balloting members on industrial action? Does he realise that the rest of the country believes that the Government are using patients in the most cynical way by deliberately treating the ambulance service differently from the police and the fire service?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** The hon. Lady knows that negotiations in respect of the ambulance service are matters for the ambulance Whitley council. The trade union side rejected the management side's improved offer when the negotiations adjourned on Tuesday. As she said, the officers of the trade union side declared their intention to ballot members on their willingness to take industrial action. The outcome of that will not be known until September. I hope that the trade unions will take up the management side's offer of a joint review of the operations of the salaried structure rather than threaten to put patients at risk.

**Mr. Patrick Cormack** (Staffordshire, South): Will my right hon. and learned Friend, who richly deserves both those prefixes and both the offices that he now holds, arrange an early debate on London's traffic, which is causing increasing concern?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I think that there will be an opportunity for discussing that topic during the debates that will take place tomorrow.

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to the first special report of the EC Legislation Committee, which was published this week, which incorporates correspondence between myself and the former Leader of the House on changes for scrutiny of EC legislation? The proposed changes are welcome, but is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that they do not go far enough? Does he recall that the important report from Mr. Delors on economic and monetary union, which was recommended for debate by two Select Committees, has yet to be debated? Will he arrange a debate early on our return, bearing in mind the fact that decisions have been made by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer that bear upon that issue? Does he think that that is a good advertisement for parliamentary democracy?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's close and practical interest in these matters. I am familiar with the special report to which he refers, but I confess that I have not yet re-examined it with the attention that I shall no doubt give it. He will know that the matters which interest him are currently being considered by the Procedure Committee. We shall look forward to its recommendations on the topic.

The decisions so far taken in the European Council in respect of the Delors report have not related to any specific legislative proposals. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has put a full explanatory memorandum before the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service and has given extensive evidence to that body on that topic. That is an important manifestation of the interest of the House in this subject.

**Mr. Nicholas Budgen** (Wolverhampton, South-West): In view of the discussion about the pay increases of senior

*[Mr. Nicholas Budgen]*

directors, will my right hon. and learned Friend, with all the authority of a very successful former Chancellor of the Exchequer, arrange for a debate in which he may be able to remind us all, as he did in the past, that such increases do not cause inflation but that Governments, and Governments alone, do so?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I have always appreciated the straightforward nature of my hon. Friend's views on the causation of inflation. It must be said that one other factor that plays a part in generating inflationary pressures is expectation. Expectations cannot be influenced in a sensible way that will enable unemployment to fall at the same time that inflation is tackled, if people in positions of senior management award themselves grossly over-inflated pay increases.

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Has the Leader of the House caught sight of statutory instrument No. 247 on credit unions in Northern Ireland, the object of which is to increase certain facilities to members of such organisations? While that concession is welcome, the House should surely debate at an early date the refusal of the Registrar General of Friendly Societies to extend the same concessions to credit unions in Scotland and elsewhere in mainland Britain. Should not the registrar general be reprimanded for his insensitive and foolishly inconsistent behaviour?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I confess that I have not yet devoted a great deal of my time to studying the particular topic that the hon. Gentleman mentions. On that ill-informed basis, it would not be right for me to rebuke the official concerned. However, now that my attention has been drawn to the issue, I shall see whether it is a proper matter for debate.

**Mr. Richard Shepherd** (Aldridge-Brownhills): I add my good wishes to those that have been expressed to my right hon. and learned Friend.

Would it be possible to arrange as early as possible a debate on freedom of expression and speech in connection with the Salman Rushdie case, which raises important questions as to the nature of our public society and citizenship? The House has not yet given a clear lead as to the priorities of public society in this country and of British nationality.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I understand my hon. Friend's interest in the Salman Rushdie case, which caused me considerable concern in my previous office. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has made a number of important speeches on that topic, and it rates suficiently important to be worth considering as the subject of a future debate.

**Mr. Alan Meale** (Mansfield): The Leader of the House will be aware that the Committee stage of the Football Spectators Bill reached its conclusion today. Will he guarantee that its Report stage will not be debated on the Floor of this House at least until the outcome of Lord Justice Taylor's interim report has been announced?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** Although I must stop short of an undertaking in respect of a question of which I have only just had notice from the hon. Gentleman, I assure him that the Government appreciate the importance of Mr. Justice Taylor's prospective report.

**Sir Anthony Grant** (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Although my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has given evidence before the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, in view of industry's need to enjoy currency stability above all things, does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that it would be a good idea to debate the question of this country joining the exchange rate mechanism—particularly as many people both outside and inside the Government apparently believe that we should join it sooner rather than later?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I appreciate that that matter is one of optimum interest and of great importance. Clearly, it may be appropriate at some stage for the House to have an opportunity to debate it.

**Mr. Frank Cook** (Stockton, North): I congratulate the deputy Prime Minister on eluding the tricky knitting of the Madame Defarges of Downing street, and welcome the qualities that he brings to this House—which include great stability and sound experience.

I welcome also the right hon. and learned Gentleman's statement of intent to study before the first week of business after the recess the numerous reports of the Select Committee on Procedure. Will he consider also how he might best bring his good offices to bear in putting a stop to the Government's increasing practice of leaking information to the press before making statements in this House, and of treating the House with disdain and contempt? Will he ponder the fact that only by good examples being set at ministerial level—and by that I mean starting at prime ministerial level—may ordinary Back-Bench Members be expected to behave properly and to conduct themselves with decorum?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I shall not compete with the hon. Gentleman in drawing parallels from experiences of the French revolution, but I can assure him that the Government and all its members are conscious of the need to pay due respect to the House, and that leaking and the other disreputable habits to which he refers are not something for which the Government are properly to blame.

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** (Tatton): Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that it was traditionally the case that the request for a statement about the business for the following week came from the Leader of the Opposition, a practice which in recent years seems to have fallen into disuse? Like many doctors, the Leader of the Opposition is availing himself of a deputising service. As the Leader of the Opposition is such an important plank in our strategy for re-election at the next general election, and as Parliament will, in all probability, shortly be televised, is it not necessary to have him here as often as possible?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I shall not join my hon. Friend in offering advice to the Leader of the Opposition, although he may well need a great deal of it. I am sure that the House will want to consider a number of the implications of the early prospect of televising our proceedings.

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): Will the Leader of the House arrange for a debate on low pay, particularly in the National Health Service and British

Rail? Is he aware that I have two pay slips from British Rail workers in Workington, one of whom supports a wife and three children and the other a wife and two children, and both show a take-home pay of £88 a week? How can people live on such money? What am I to tell British Rail workers when they come to the Labour club in Workington on Saturday to discuss their pay levels with me?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** As the hon. Gentleman knows, there are a number of arrangements within the structure of our social services, of which family credit is one, that may relate to such problems. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to have a more general and far-reaching debate, it is open to the Opposition to suggest that.

**Mr. Jeremy Hanley** (Richmond and Barnes): Will my right hon. and learned Friend please try, through the usual channels, to secure the appointment of a shadow Leader of the House worthy of facing him in the months ahead as the disparity of talent is matched only by that between the Leader of the Opposition and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** Neither my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister nor I need be preoccupied with that problem.

**Mr. Max Madden** (Bradford, West): Will the Leader of the House arrange for an early debate on local authorities' provision of permanent sites for gipsies and travellers? Is he aware of the latest daft decision of Conservative-controlled Bradford council to spend £1,260 a week of ratepayers' money for private security guards to watch a field and to report if gipsies and travellers return to camp on it? If that same protection were provided for the other 27 sites in the district, it would cost ratepayers £1·8 million a year. Will the Leader of the House urge the Secretary of State for the Environment to refuse to designate the existing two sites in Bradford until a third permanent site is provided, proper provision is made by local neighbouring authorities and the House has had an opportunity to debate the issue?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** The details that the hon. Gentleman gives of the particular problem with which he is so familiar underline my impression that that area of legislation and practice is one of extreme difficulty and complexity, which many of us will have come across in our constituencies. All that I can say at this stage is that he should encourage his right hon. and hon. Friends to press for the matter to be debated more widely.

**Mr. James Hill** (Southampton, Test): My right hon. and learned Friend has dealt in an exemplary way with the institutions of Europe—I am particularly thinking of the Council of Europe, the Western European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance—when he has so often been Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and the co-operation that we have all had from him should not be forgotten.

In asking for a debate when we resume, I would go to the most important debate that the Conservative party is facing—the pollution of our environment. We must have a strong policy—certainly in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—on the dumping of sewage and sludge in the waters around our coast. I am sure that such a debate would be well attended.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his opening remarks. No hon. Member doubts the enormous and fast-increasing importance of the environmental problems arising from an expanding population, growing economic activity and shrinking space. It is one of the consequences of the high rate of growth and prosperity in the past 10 years. Nobody is more conscious of the importance of these matters than my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Alun Michael** (Cardiff, South and Penarth): Will the Leader of the House take cognisance of the many representations, as reflected by my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell), for a proper debate on the Health Service in Wales? Will he note that there is disappointment that there was no statement on the Health Service in Wales today and that we are still waiting for the documents promised by the Secretary of State for Wales at the Dispatch Box on 1 March? Can he add his weight to that of his predecessor in calling for those matters to be put right? Can he persuade the Secretary of State for Wales that he has not been reshuffled to a Department of empty packaging? Will he make plenty of time in the next Session for a debate on all the matters on which content is outstanding in Wales, including those in early-day motion 879,

*[That this House calls on the Government to accept the verdict of the electors of the Vale of Glamorgan who rejected the Government's plans to undermine the National Health Service; calls on the Government to accept that most people want more money to be spent on the Health Service and now realise that Britain is spending a smaller proportion of national income on health than most other advanced countries; notes the widespread anger that has been caused by the introduction of eyesight and dental test charges and the proposition that doctors should be turned into accountants; and consequently calls on the Government to withdraw the Health Service White Paper and the nine consultative documents published for England.]*

early-day motion 1183,

*[That this House calls on the Secretary of State for Wales to make public his plans for the future of the Health Service in Wales in the light of the Health Service Review; renews its plea to him to publish the documents promised to the House on 1st March and to honour his promise to the House that, before the White Paper on Health is implemented there will be plenty of time for dialogue and suggestions; regrets that documents for Wales were not published at the same time as those published for England; expresses the fear that, despite careful attempts to appear more reasonable than the Secretary of State for Health the Secretary of State for Wales intends to promote policies which will be equally damaging to the Health Service in Wales as those being pursued for England; reminds him that the Prime Minister's approach to the Health Service has been decisively rejected by the voters of South Glamorgan and North Wales and by the people of Wales as a whole; stresses that cups of tea and soft words are no substitute for clear proposals and open debate on the future of the best-loved public service in Wales; and calls on the Secretary of State to come clean on his intentions.]*

early-day motion 1001,

*[That this House notes that on 1st March, the Secretary of State for Wales told the House that before the White Paper on Health was implemented there would be plenty of time for dialogue and suggestions and expressed the specific*

*[Mr. Alun Michael]*

*hope that the White Paper would be debated in the Welsh Grand Committee when he would be interested to hear the views of honourable Members; notes that he has taken specific steps to avoid any such debate when the Welsh Grand Committee meets on 28th June; and, while welcoming the opportunity to contrast the very real needs of Valleys communities with the failure of the so-called Valleys Initiative, nevertheless deplores the unwillingness of the Secretary of State to either explain or debate his intentions regarding the future of the health service in Wales.]*

and early-day motion 1182,

*[That this House notes the decision of the Secretary of State for Wales, after 10 months deliberation, to give heavily-qualified approval to the strategic plan put forward by the South Glamorgan Health Authority; emphasises the implied rejection of the proposal to close Sully Hospital; remarks that authoritative local sources had already predicted that Sully Hospital would be reprieved; now calls on the Health Authority to issue an immediate statement guaranteeing the long-term future of Sully Hospital on the basis of its present services plus an expanded service of therapeutic and remedial work as well as providing the site for the neighbourhood hospital to serve the eastern part of the Vale of Glamorgan; and notes that Sully Hospital is ideally suited to fill these roles and that such a decision will win applause from specialists, doctors, nurses and all other employees as well as from patients and the public who have campaigned for the future of Sully Hospital as well as fitting in with the Secretary of State's findings and providing the best way forward for the Health Service in South Glamorgan.]*

which are on health; on those that are on local services in Wales, which are early-day motion 1246,

*[That this House notes that the July statement on Welsh local government finance failed to provide local authorities in South Glamorgan with adequate information about the intentions of the Secretary of State for Wales or to offer adequate guidance to local authorities to assist in their financial planning; notes that the introduction of a unified business rate, far from bringing benefits, will involve a sharp increase in costs to businesses in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan; notes that the Government intends to pretend that this is now a part of national taxation; notes that while more money will be raised through a unified business rate in South Glamorgan, less money will be returned to the local authorities on the Government's present policy; further notes that the introduction of poll tax at the same time provides a regressive tax which hurts most those who earn least as well as introducing great uncertainty; doubts whether the Government's safety-netted figure of £195 for Cardiff is an adequate calculation, as it ignores the costs of inflation, evasion and poll tax administration; and calls on the Government to provide more information and more money for the local authorities, residents and businesses of South Glamorgan, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.]*

early-day motion 1244,

*[That this House notes that the purpose of the July Statement on Welsh local government finance each year is to give information about the intentions of the Secretary of State for Wales, to offer some guidance to local authorities to assist in their financial planning, and to allow informed debate to take place; believes that the 1989 statement needs to be particularly clear and informative as it comes at a time of upheaval; notes with alarm that this year's statement proved anecdotal and uninformative; calls on the Secretary of State for Wales to recognise that his selection of £175 as the standard assessment figure for Wales is meaningless because the figure ignores the costs of inflation, evasion and poll tax administration and as the figure is based on his own calculations and assumptions, the basis of which he has not published; further calls on him to recognise that he depends on a Welsh Office view of savings to be made by local authorities without indicating how these savings are to be achieved; points out that his expenditure assumption fails to take into account true increases in inflation during the year; points out that local authorities need a proper basis on which to plan their finances; and appeals to the Secretary of State to celebrate his relief at surviving in office by issuing a genuine statement on local government finances which will give full and clear information to honourable Members, local authorities and the general public.]*

and early-day motion 1232,

*[That this House deplores the Government's plans to introduce the poll tax in Wales, despite its overwhelming rejection by the Welsh people; condemns the wholly inadequate rebate system; notes that the poorest communities in Wales will suffer, and regrets that the opportunity to give detailed information on the effects of the tax on Wales, to honourable Members on the floor of the House was not taken by the Government.]*

and on those on the many other Government failures in Wales, which are early-day motion 1033,

*[That this House notes the distinction drawn by the Secretary of State for Wales and his predecessor between the Valleys Initiative which was launched by one of them and the Valleys Programme which was launched by the other; is saddened to see the public conflict between two former Cabinet colleagues about who was responsible for what; regrets the refusal of the Secretary of State for Wales to answer simple questions asking for a list of projects and costs funded, respectively, under the Initiative and the Programme; finds the excuse of cost unconvincing when the Prime Minister was willing to fill 34 columns of Hansard and waste £4,600 of taxpayers' money to answer a question seeking a list of her so-called achievements since 1979 and when her Government has done so much damage to Valleys communities during the same period; and is forced to conclude that the Secretary of State has no real answers and to concur with the judgement of Lord Crickhowell that the Valleys Programme contains nothing new.]*

early-day motion 1034,

*[That this House notes with alarm and regret the refusal of the Secretary of State for the Environment to accept his share of responsibility for the plight of elderly people who face the effects of cold in winter; calls on him and the Secretary of State for Wales to offer adequate funds for home insulation work to make up for the decimation of numbers employed on insulation work as a result of changes in Government training schemes and thus restore hope that such suffering will be ended.]*

early-day motion 1057,

*[That this House notes the proposals for a management buy-out of the West Wales Region of the Welsh Development Agency and the subsequent denial by the Welsh Development Agency in Cardiff; notes that the suspended officers at the Welsh Development Agency's Carmarthen office first approached senior officers at the Welsh Development Agency last year and undertook six months of numerous meetings and discussions on the*

*proposal and asks the Welsh Development Agency whether it acquiesced or encouraged the proposals and further asks if similar proposals are being considered or being developed in other regional offices of the Agency; notes the Secretary of State for Wales's denial, both in the Welsh Affairs Select Committee and in reply to a written Question from the honourable Member for Carmarthen, of plans to privatise the Welsh Development Agency in whole or in part; regrets that the Secretary of State allowed the discussions on the management buy-out to reach such an advanced stage; asks the Prime Minister to set up an external inquiry into the origin of the proposal, including the involvement of the Welsh Development Agency centrally and the Secretary of State in discussions; and reaffirms the total commitment of this House to a publicly accountable Welsh Development Agency playing a vital role in economic development in Wales.]*

early-day motion 1091,

*[That this House is appalled and concerned by the substantial and widening gap between the rich and the poor in England and Wales confirmed in the recently published Office of Population Censuses and Surveys studies; notes that the highest death rates are in Wales and the North; and believes that the Government should urgently take action to alleviate unemployment, poverty and poor housing all of which are established as major contributors to mortality rates in these areas.]*

early-day motion 1224,

*[That this House deplores the failure of the Secretary of State for Transport to make a statement about the inspector's report following the inquiry held at Bristol in February and March 1989 to consider objections to the Government's proposal to double toll charges on the Severn Bridge despite the fact that he has been sitting on the report for a number of weeks; and believes that the Government proposal to implement the increases in September 1989 should not take effect and that there should be a full debate on the matter in the House of Commons.]*

and others?

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): That is half the rain forest gone.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I am afraid that the immense talents of my Parliamentary Private Secretary were not quite able to match the speed reading technique adopted by the hon. Gentleman. I appreciate the continuing interest in the prospect of a discussion on the particular aspects of the Health Service in Wales. I have seen the previous exchanges about it and I shall discuss the matter with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales. Nothing that the hon. Gentleman has said diminishes the importance of the fact that the Government are spending record amounts on the National Health Service, which is treating more patients than ever before. That will be taken into account in Wales, as in the rest of the kingdom.

**Mr. John Bowis** (Battersea): If my right hon. and learned Friend had come with me this morning to Battersea dogs' home, he would have heard a better class of barking than we have heard from the Opposition. More importantly, he would also have been able to witness the launch of a voluntary dog registration scheme which involves the painless implanting of a chip to enable dogs and their owners to be restored to each other. Can that subject be debated at an early date so that we can consider how Parliament might build on that voluntary experiment?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I share my hon. Friend's interest in this topic. In my constituency, there is also a home for animals abandoned by their owners, which is run by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. However, I have not yet been driven to the conclusion that my hon. Friend's suggestion is an urgent topic for consideration on the Floor of the House.

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): In a non-controversial way, may I ask the new Leader of the House whether arrangements can be made for an early debate on the power and patronage of the Prime Minister? Will he bear in mind that when Conservative activists were being interviewed on a radio broadcast this morning, some of them said that the Prime Minister was acting more like a dictator than anyone else they knew who had occupied that office? I hope that such a debate can be held and in it, will it be possible for the Home Secretary to participate, as well as the Leader of the House, and for them to give us their views?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** As the hon. Gentleman, unusually, finds it possible to raise such interesting topics in what he calls a spirit of non-controversiality, perhaps he can invite the leaders of his party to consider initiating a debate on that matter in Opposition time.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): In view of the priority that the Prime Minister earlier today quite rightly attaches to the sovereignty of this House in European issues, could my right hon. and learned Friend ensure that we have these debates in more prime time than we had on Tuesday night, when important issues were being debated at 1 am? It is one thing to be rolled over by the Commission in policy areas where it was never dreamt that it had any competence; it is another thing for these things to be finessed through in the early hours of the morning when there are hardly any hon. Members here and there is no press here and the great British public are quite unlikely to know what is being done on their behalf in a totally undemocratic way.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** My hon. Friend has raised a point that has been raised many times on both sides of the House. The matter is now being considered by the Procedure Committee under the distinguished chairmanship of my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery), and I have no doubt that my hon. Friend's question will be properly considered.

**Mr. Eddie Loyden** (Liverpool, Garston): May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 935 dealing with the level of pensions?

*[That this House condemns the statement made by the Secretary of State for Social Security that the elderly population as a rule is now healthier and more independent than ever before; believes that such statements are designed to disguise the reality that many pensioners are living below the poverty line as a direct result of Government policy to abolish the earnings link under the Social Security Act 1980 and that the Government has further eroded the value of pensions by making pensioners responsible for 20 per cent. of their rates; and calls on the Secretary of State to take*

*[Mr. Eddie Loyden]*

*immediate action to uprate the state retirement pension to the level it would have been had the earnings link not been abolished.]*

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman arrange for an early debate on the matter before we go through our annual weeping and wailing about the plight of pensioners during the winter? The right hon. and learned Gentleman will be aware of the great hardship that is being suffered by thousands of pensioners in Britain. Does he agree that the House would be justified in having an early debate on the matter?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** The hon. Gentleman refers to a topic that the House has discussed on many occasions and to which it will no doubt return. It is worth impressing on the hon. Gentleman, however, that during the seven years from 1979 to 1986, pensioners' total average net income increased in real terms by 23 per cent. That is a very important achievement which should be taken into account.

**Dr. Alan Glyn** (Windsor and Maidenhead): In view of the Home Secretary's recent statement on the Hetherington report on war crimes, will the Leader of the House use his influence to get the matter cleared up as rapidly as possible in the interest of justice?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I understand that one of the matters referred to in the report is the need for the question to be considered expeditiously, and I shall bear that in mind in considering how soon the House should have a debate.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** From the warm reception that the Leader of the House received from Conservative Members this afternoon, it is clear that he has not passed his political sell-by date. I hope that the Prime Minister noted that reception, because if anyone should be feeling embarrassed, isolated and awkward this afternoon, it is her.

Although business questions are not quite as good as foreign jollies, I think that the right hon. and learned Gentleman will enjoy the occasion. We ask fairly futile questions; he gives us responses which are no doubt even more futile; and the world goes on much the same.

May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 1248 dealing with congratulations to President Arup Moi, who I am sure the right hon. and learned Gentleman knows?

*[That this house extends its warmest congratulations to President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya for the significant and courageous decision to destroy 2,400 elephant tusks confiscated from poachers; calls upon Her Majesty's Government to compensate the Kenyan Government for the $3 million forgone through the destruction of the ivory; commends the Kenyan example to other countries and in particular Hong Kong; and recommends that the EEC establishes a fund sufficient to compensate all those African countries willing to destroy ivory stocks.]*

The early-day motion congratulates Kenya on incinerating $3 million-worth of ivory taken from ivory poachers.

May we please have an early debate on animal conservation—in particular on elephants, whales and sharks?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** One of the lessons that I am quickly learning in this job is that I ought to concentrate my reply on the main part of the question put to me. I have studied the early-day motion to which the hon. Gentleman referred, and I share his respect for the actions taken by President Moi. The whole House feels a deep sense of concern for the future of wildlife—particularly elephants, but also the other species that the hon. Gentleman mentioned. I am sure that the House will find opportunities of considering the matter further.

**Mr. Peter Thurnham** (Bolton, North-East): So that the taxpayer can get value for his money, will my right hon. and learned Friend arrange a debate on the Short money and the way in which the Opposition parties are funded? Is he aware that the Labour party has produced a report condemning Labour MPs for junketing abroad while the House is sitting? Should he not arrange for a copy of that report to be given to the Leader of the Opposition?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** The report to which my hon. Friend referred sounds like a document of extreme interest and I shall ensure that it is studied as widely as possible.

**Mr. Harry Cohen** (Leyton): May we have a debate on the reshuffle? Most people think that it is minor, not Major, and that we have the same old pack of awful policies. They cannot see Howe it does any credit to the Tories and with all the traffic congestion, it is still a case of no Parkin', son. As the Prime Minister has double-crossed and over-Hurd, is not the best policy for the electorate to place a single cross on a ballot paper for their Labour candidate.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** The hon. Gentleman makes a case that he may seek to sell to the electorate. However, there is no need to force a debate on the House.

**Mr. Tony Baldry** (Banbury): Will my right hon. and learned Friend consider offering to the Opposition a half-day debate if they undertake to use it to explain to the House their policies for the reform of domestic rates? Is he aware that the debate they initiated earlier in the week was a total farce as they were unable to explain to the House how they intend to reform the domestic rating system? They said—to use their words—that their policy still needs "sophisticating". We hope that they will use the summer recess to "sophisticate" their policy for reform of the domestic rates. Until they manage to do so, it does not lie in their mouth to criticise our proposals for the community charge.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** My hon. Friend's point is of the utmost importance. I doubt the Opposition's ability to achieve any sophistication, in that respect or any other. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will take every opportunity of driving home to the electorate through the recess the massively higher burden that would be involved in any of the Opposition's alternatives.

**Mr. Harry Barnes** (Derbyshire, North-East): During the recess, will the Leader of the House study the state of the franchise? In 75 constituencies over the past year, it has declined by over 1,000. The Prime Minister puts that down, possibly, to the postal strike of 1988. But there was no postal strike in Scotland between the 1987 and 1988 register. Some hon. Members think that there should be a debate on the impact of the poll tax on the electoral register. It seems to be fiddling the franchise in Finchley and a number of other constituencies.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** One of the factors that the hon. Gentleman should bear in mind is that, in the context of his question, there is no sense in referring to the community charge under the misleading title of poll tax.

**Mr. Bill Walker** (Tayside, North): I welcome my right hon. and learned Friend to his new position. May we have an early debate on the duties and responsibilities of hon. Members, including Select Committees? If so, could we not look forward to the opportunity of explaining that Conservative Members welcome the opportunity to work for the Prime Minister in whatever job we do, whether as Back Benchers or Ministers? We do not expect former Secretaries of State for Defence, whether they are from Leeds or Ayr, to serve on Select Committees if they do not wish to.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** My hon. Friend makes two important points which deserve to be supported by acclamation.

**Mr. Michael Jack** (Fylde): My right hon. and learned Friend will be aware that hon. Members can see television programmes from the existing land-based channels. During the recess, will he give thought to providing the terrestrial facility because satellite television may bring to us programmes which will expose the inadequacies of the Opposition and their policies, and I would not like to miss the opportunity of seeing them?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I shall try to take advantage of my longer sojourns in this country to follow my hon. Friend's example.

**Mr. Graham Riddick** (Colne Valley): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware of early-day motion 1237 entitled "The Parliamentary Labour Party and the NUR"?

*[That this House notes that no Labour honourable Member including his Deputy and the entire Shadow Cabinet and Parliamentary Labour Party have publicly supported the Leader of the Opposition in his common-sense remark to the leadership of the National Union of Railwaymen.]*

Does he think that we should have a debate on the motion, which reminds the House that not a single Labour Member—including the shadow Secretary of State for Transport and the deputy leader of the party—has publicly supported the Leader of the Opposition's common-sense remark to the leadership of the NUR? Does he think that it would be a good wheeze suddenly to arrange a debate for either today or tomorrow so that the Leader of the Opposition has to return from wherever he has gone for his early holiday?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I do not think that we need a debate to follow through the implications of what my hon. Friend has said. We all welcome the observations attributed to the Leader of the Opposition in urging a sense of reality upon the NUR. We must all hope that Opposition Members will take an early opportunity universally and unanimously to follow their leader's example and urge the NUR to follow the advice of many in its own leadership and bring the strikes to a halt as soon as possible.

**Mrs. Teresa Gorman** (Billericay): How nice it will be for those of us who have long admired my right hon. and learned Friend's achievements—not least his greatest achievement in removing exchange controls—to have him back in the House at a time when we will be discussing the fiscal relationship between our country and Europe. Will he find time early in the new Session to debate alternative monetary structures so that we can consider the free market alternatives to EMS, the ecu and central banking? Those alternatives include the liberalisation of legal tender so that European currencies can be exchanged freely within European countries and the denationalisation of central banks so that we can develop a free market in currencies as an alternative to EMS, the ecu and so on.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** My hon. Friend wishes a pretty comprehensive agenda on the House. I do not think that I can follow her quite as far down the road that she has taken us this afternoon. However, my hon. Friend was right to draw attention to the fact that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and I achieved a very fair conclusion at the Madrid summit to the effect that the suggestions made in the Delors report are by no means the only way of approaching the matter.

**Mr. Roger Knapman** (Stroud): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that Government Back Benchers achieved a rare but nevertheless welcome victory in the vote following the ten-minute Bill procedure yesterday? Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that those engaged in providing essential public services should not strike either on a full-time or a part-time basis while tribunals or arbitration procedures are available to them? Is it not time that we had a debate on that issue and time that we protected the public during industrial disputes?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** My hon. Friend is entirely right to draw attention to the importance of being ready continually to examine and re-examine the best way of trying to protect the public from the undoubtedly massive inconvenience of strikes and industrial disruptions to essential services.

# Food Safety

4.26 pm

**The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Gummer):** The Government have today published a White Paper "Food Safety—Protecting the Consumer". Copies have been placed in the Vote Office and in the Libraries of both Houses.

Consumers expect that the food they buy should be safe —and they are perfectly right to do so. All those who provide food—whether it be the farmer, the manufacturer, the caterer or the retailer—have a clear interest in the consumer's confidence. There is therefore no conflict between responsible producers of food and the Government's determination to set high—indeed, the highest practicable—standards of consumer protection. Those standards must be comprehensive, independent, up to date, and properly explained.

Already there exist wide-ranging laws which apply at every stage in the food chain. These are based, and action is taken, on the best available expertise and advice. The White Paper shows how comprehensive is the network of advisory committees on which the Government rely for independent, objective advice. Those committees, as well as advising Government, publish their reports and their findings.

There continue to be rapid developments and changes in food technology, in the range of products marketed, and also in consumer preferences. Great benefits are gained from this progress in terms of choice, convenience and value for money, but it means that our food legislation must keep pace so that consumers continue to be safeguarded. Therefore, after consultation with all interests, such as manufacturers and retailers, including enforcement and consumer bodies, the Government now intend to introduce legislative changes at the earliest possible opportunity.

The White Paper sets out the main changes proposed. These will include tighter controls on unfit food and food which is not of the nature, substance or quality demanded. These controls will apply to food before it is put on sale and allow suspect food to be withheld while investigations take place. The legislation will provide powers to adapt the law to cover new technical developments such as food irradiation, to ensure that the process is properly controlled. Powers will be strengthened to control contaminants and residues, including those which might arise from bad practices on farms or in manufacture. Ministers will have powers to make emergency control orders to deal with potentially serious problems, such as accidental contamination. Ministers will also be able to set training requirements for those who handle food commercially, building on existing good practice and thereby increasing the numbers of people trained by the food industry, local authorities and others.

To be effective, the rules and standards laid down must be applied. Most enforcement is carried out by local authorities. In a previous job, I found their work in that respect to be of particular importance. They have long experience and have developed considerable expertise in food safety, and the Government intend that that expertise should continue to be used in full. The registration of all food premises, for which the proposed new legislation will provide, will help local authorities to identify premises. Also, new enforcement measures will strengthen the existing system so that, for example, local authorities will be able to take action to have whole batches of unfit food condemned. At the moment, a local authority has power only to condemn the particular part of the food that has been found to be dangerous.

No matter how comprehensive and rigorous are the controls on food production and marketing, consumers themselves have a part to play. They have the responsibility for good kitchen hygiene, proper cooking, and reading and following instructions on the care, storage and cooking of food.

The proposals in the White Paper demonstrate the Government's commitment to food safety. We are always ready to consider adaptation when needed. We believe that our proposed legislation will provide the right framework for protecting consumers now and in the future.

**Dr. David Clark** (South Shields): I had hoped that the advent of a new Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food would signal a new and safer approach to food in Britain. Sadly, having heard the Minister's statement and, more importantly, read his White Paper, my hopes have been dashed. The Minister's statement and his White Paper contain a mere seven proposals—no more—and they reek of complacency. The White Paper, which was heralded in advance by multitudinous press briefings as a new approach to food hygiene, has turned out to be little more than media hype. Very little in the Minister's proposals would have helped to prevent recent food poisoning incidents.

Opposition Members welcome the proposals for training staff in handling food, but will the requirements be statutory? That question is absolutely vital. Similarly, we welcome the proposal for the registration of commercial food premises, but those powers are useless unless local authorities have the resources with which to carry out that function. Plainly, at the moment they do not have the resources, either financially or in terms of personnel.

In the statement today and in the White Paper, the Minister says nothing about meat products. It has been suggested that the proposed legislation will follow the line of the American legislation and will not cover meat and meat products. Will the Minister enlighten us about the position?

Apart from those measures, little in the Bill will help to combat the contamination of our food. There is clearly a commitment to force irradiation of food on to the people of Britain, but that will do little to tackle the real problem. There is no need for irradiation if food is good and wholesome. We need irradiation only when food is not good and wholesome.

The Minister's statement and the White Paper are the result of five years' consultation. I doubt whether in the history of government such a long consultation has produced so little. The very first line in the first chapter of the White Paper states:

> "The variety and quality of our food have never been better."

[HON. MEMBERS: "Quite right."] Despite the shouts of Conservative Members, that statement is not only grossly irresponsible but highly inaccurate. It is also an insult to the many thousands of people who have suffered from food poisoning. Where have Conservative Members been for the past few years? Do they not know that food poisoning incidents have trebled in the seven years up to

1988? Have they forgotten the salmonella and eggs saga last autumn? Have they forgotten the listeria in cheese——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I apologise to the hon. Member on the Front bench for interrupting him but he must address his question to the Minister and not to Back Benchers. He is seeking answers to a ministerial statement.

**Dr. Clark:** By "they", I meant the Government collectively. I was not intending to address Back Benchers. I will, however, now address my remarks to the Minister. As the White Paper is under the name of the previous Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and various right hon. Members on the Front Bench today, I felt that it was right to refer to them as "they" and not to address the Minister who made the statement on the White Paper, as he was not a signatory to it. You may understand now, Mr. Speaker, why I did so.

Are the Government and the Minister not aware that in the past few months we have had the worst outbreak of anthrax for years? Do they not know that the current salmonella outbreak in north Wales and the north-west has tragically resulted in three deaths? If the Government had acted more quickly and more responsibly, the severity of the outbreak could have been avoided.

I take issue with the Minister's concluding words when he said:

> "The proposals in the White Paper demonstrate the Goverment's commitment to food safety."

I am afraid that they do, and I am afraid that they will be found to be inadequate.

**Mr. Gummer:** I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman fell below his usual standards in addressing the House. Having made a number of untrue and general allegations, he produced not one example of what he would like to have added to the White Paper. The hon. Gentleman has a long record of stirring up anxiety and worry and refusing to give credit for the major changes that the Government have brought. The public will judge him on this as they judged him on the issue of the Chernobyl lamb, when he was seen to be wrong almost every time he spoke in the House.

The hon. Gentleman did not mention, for example, the major change in the legal onus upon those who provide food. No longer will they be able to rely upon the fact that they have a warranty from someone else. They will have to have due diligence in finding out whether the food that they offer for sale is of a standard suitable for the public. He did not mention, for example, that the new system will enable batches of food to be condemned not only when placed on sale to the public, but when in warehouses or landed in the docks. The hon. Gentleman did not mention, for example, that the registration of premises will mean that local environmental health officers and trading standards officers will know precisely which premises they should be inspecting and where they have to ensure that the standards are upheld.

The hon. Gentleman tried to suggest that the document did not cover meat products. I believe that he picked that up from his hon. Friend the shadow Health Secretary, who did not just try to suggest it, but said that he thought that it did not cover meat products. Nothing in the document suggests that it does not cover meat products. It does cover meat products and no one reading it could possibly imagine otherwise. What it has to do with the United States I do not know.

The hon. Gentleman clearly does not understand irradiation, because he says that we need irradiation only when food is not good or wholesome. If food is not good or is unwholesome, irradiation will not cover up its badness, its taste or its smell, and it would be the last thing to use on unwholesome food.

The hon. Gentleman did not say that we are taking on board some of the toughest possible systems for protecting the public, first, by allowing irradiation, which in some circumstances improves on present safety techniques. I do not know how the hon. Gentleman deals with his own cooking arrangements, but if he uses herbs of any kind he must know that the mechanisms now used to ensure that certain imported herbs and spices are without contamination are methods which we do not want to see used, but they are the only methods unless we have irradiation. Irradiation will be centrally controlled, the premises upon which it can be carried out will have to be licensed, and everything that is irradiated will have to carry a clear statement that it has been irradiated.

The hon. Gentleman would do better if he were willing to support the Government's considerable changes and help by distinguishing between when, perfectly properly, true dangers, difficulties and anxieties should be expressed, about which people should be warned, and when people are trying to make money by stirring up anxieties unnecessarily.

**Mr. Michael Jopling** (Westmorland and Lonsdale): Is my right hon. Friend aware that he is perfectly right to draw our attention to the negative irresponsibility of the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark)? His proposals will be welcomed by most consumers, but will he work hard on a difficulty which emerges from the proposals? There is a loophole, because imported food does not meet the standards for food produced in this country. Will he do all that he can in Europe to ensure that standards in other European countries are as good as ours?

**Mr. Gummer:** My right hon. Friend rightly says that if we are to ask producers and retailers to uphold the highest standards they must not be undermined by products from other countries which do not meet the same standards. The Government intend to ensure that in all circumstances imported food meets the same standards. If it does not, it will be removed from sale.

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): I welcome the White Paper and the fact that legislation will be forthcoming, but may I push the Minister a little further? Will he ban bovine somatotropin and also insubstantial additives such as colour? Will he further ensure that pesticides which have been widely outlawed elsewhere, such as Alar, are proscribed? Above all—the Minister will be aware of this from his previous responsibility—will he ensure, as the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) asked, that if there is enforcement control in the legislation the enforcement agencies are given more resources than they have at present to make a reality of what will otherwise be only words?

**Mr. Gummer:** Between now and our having the parliamentary opportunity to introduce a Bill I shall be carefully considering resources and mechanisms, especially those for enforcement.

I have much sympathy with the hon. Gentleman's views about additives. My small son is very much affected by additives. I am prepared to lend my son for a day to the people who say that additives do not have an effect on children, so long as they give him a glass of a particular brand of soft drink. Once he has had that, they will not want him for the rest of the day. We all recognise the problems of additives and their effect on people. The only way to deal with such problems is to be honourable and to use the scientific evidence available to ensure that people are aware of what products contain and are able to make their own choices.

I do not want to ban things—I want people to choose what they want. Although my child is affected by tartrazine, it is up to me to provide products that do not contain it. If tartrazine is not dangerous and people want it, they should be able to have it. One is on a slippery slope once one starts banning things because one does not like them. We ban only products that are dangerous, and in the two days that I have been in this job I have taken action to do exactly that. We do not have the power to ban something that I consider to be dangerous, but it will have to carry a warning that will make it clear even to the least responsible consumer exactly what it contains.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned Alar. One cannot ban everything that anybody in the world, of any standing, thinks is damaging. Each product must be tested extremely carefully, and one must accept the advice of independent testers and the best advisers on the subject. I am prepared to ban things only according to the very best advice. If there is significant doubt, I prefer to follow a safe route. When we are given clear advice in the opposite direction, we must base our actions on that. The British legal system could make it extremely difficult to prove the reason, rationale and sense of taking a decision to ban something.

BST is a synthetic version of a naturally occurring hormone; it is not a drug. Every cow that has produced milk has had it within its body. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will agree that we must be tough on products that do damage, but we must be tougher on people who try to spread alarm about safe products.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Minister has given comprehensive answers to a number of questions. I hope that the House will concentrate on the detail of the statement because I should like to call as many hon. Members as possible.

**Mr. Keith Raffan** (Delyn): I welcome the White Paper and I warmly welcome my right hon. Friend's commitment to early legislation. Given the serious outbreak of salmonella poisoning in my constituency in north Wales, and in the north-west, will my right hon. Friend consider issuing early guidelines to butchers and delicatessens about the danger of letting cooked meat stand near raw meat and of using the same equipment for slicing cooked and raw meat? Does he agree—this is important for the Bill—that in the event of an outbreak, to ensure the fullest and most effective co-operation between local authorities as public health authorities and health authorities, there must be a full exchange of information between them?

Concern is being expressed in north Wales about the delay in announcing the source of the outbreak because the company suspected is so far implicated on the basis of circumstantial evidence and not scientific evidence. I hope that my right hon. Friend will agree that the Welsh Office was right to name the company believed to be the source earlier today, even though its identity was not 100 per cent. certain. People should be warned as early as possible.

**Mr. Gummer:** I am sure that all hon. Members will want to express their sadness at events in north Wales and Chester. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales took exactly the right decision by insisting that the statement was made so that people were aware of the dangers and could therefore guard against the products.

My hon. Friend mentioned a problem that we have had in the past. In certain circumstances, but not in this one, we are prevented by the nature of the law from taking action. Under the forthcoming legislation, we shall be able to take such action. I will consider the possibility of further guidelines. However, the points that my hon. Friend raised have been made in almost every document year in and year out. He mentioned the need for training in food handling, which we shall be able to provide for in the legislation.

**Mr. Peter Hardy** (Wentworth): The Minister will have noticed that his "comprehensive strategy" in chapter 7, entitled "Conclusion", appears to occupy less space than the ministerial signature under the foreword. It offers little more than vague and rather banal comment. Does the Minister recognise that the Government's reduction in research on food health makes it more important to ensure that there are sufficient environmental health officers? What is the current shortage of environmental health officers? Is it not several hundred at least? What urgent steps will the Minister take to remedy that deficiency? Until he does that his document will not be worth the paper it is written on.

**Mr. Gummer:** I am surprised at the hon. Gentleman's comments. The comprehensive strategy paragraph is merely a summation. All the details of what is being done are in the previous chapters. If the hon. Gentleman had looked at that carefully he would have seen a great deal there to support. He is wrong to say that the Government have cut back on food research. We have undoubtedly had an increasing commitment to food safety research. We are building and shall open a new laboratory in Norwich which will provide even better facilities for work being done in Reading and Norwich. The work that was done in Bristol will largely be concentrated there.

EHOs deal not only with food safety but with a range of other matters. The proportion of time that they spend on different matters varies between local authorities. We have already sent out a questionnaire to enable us to assess the resources and people necessary, the differences between local authorities and the best way to ensure that resources are available. The Government and the Opposition are not far apart in their determination to ensure food safety.

**Sir David Price** (Eastleigh): I welcome the statement. First, will my right hon. Friend confirm that the legislation will insist that food is safe and wholesome when it enters the food chain? That follows from the question raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Jopling). Secondly, am I right in thinking that my right hon. Friend will put more personal responsibility on the people who handle food throughout the food chain? My third question follows from that of the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy). Will my right hon. Friend extend the authority of EHOs to car boot sales in football grounds and other places, which are currently outside their scope?

**Mr. Gummer:** My hon. Friend is right to point to another major change that will take place, which will ensure that we can take account of residues found in animals that are still alive. Until now, one of the problems was that we could not say that particular animals must remain on the farm and not go to slaughter until any residues above the maximum permitted level were removed from the body. That is an important new change and an earnest of our intent to ensure that at every stage in the food chain, not least the beginning, we stop microbiological growths or other contaminants.

My hon. Friend is right that we shall put more onus on the responsibility of food handlers, who will have to rely on their diligence rather than on warranties given by others. The legislation will apply to all premises where food is sold. We shall look carefully at the point about car boot sales, which was not in the forefront of my briefings in the past two days.

**Rev. Martin Smyth** (Belfast, South): I welcome the statement and I am glad that it includes Northern Ireland. Will EHOs have greater powers to take action earlier, or will there continue to be a prolonged delay before people are warned? May I commend the Minister for including not only producers but the end handlers—the customers? We are living in an age in which we have grown careless. Is there any reason why, 17 years after the House suspended Stormont, we are still governing Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom by Orders in Council? Northern Ireland Ministers are signatories to the White Paper and at least one adviser is a Northern Ireland Member. Why should there be a further delay before the legislation comes into effect in Northern Ireland?

**Mr. Gummer:** I hope that the hon. Gentleman will excuse me if I do not discuss the position in Northern Ireland during this statement on food policy. I can assure him that if the Bill is enacted, it will be applied to Northern Ireland in the usual way. He is right to point to the need for greater powers to enable EHOs to act more quickly. If there is a serious outbreak, they will be able to obtain ministerial permission to act, without the long business of going through the courts and the rest, which may increase the dangers. They will be able to deal with products before they come on sale. That will solve a real difficulty. Previously people could say, "We are not going to put them on sale," but we shall now be able to stop them. The information is already good but, as my hon. Friend the Member for Delyn (Mr. Raffan) suggested, we must seek ways to eradicate problems caused by different agencies failing to act together quickly.

**Mr. Tim Boswell** (Daventry): Does my right hon. Friend accept that as food is a biological product, there is no prospect of offering the consumer the impossible dream of absolute and permanent food safety? Does he agree that it is much better to concentrate, as he has done in the White Paper, on matters on which it is appropriate for the Government to take action by means of regulations, research and information? Does he further agree that it is incumbent on all parts of the food chain, from farmer through manufacturer and distributor to consumers, to bear in mind their responsibilities and work with the Government to make food as safe as possible?

**Mr. Gummer:** I am sure that that is the right attitude. It is important to remember that the situation changes all the time. It is only just a year since the World Health Organisation said that listeria could be passed on in food and only more recently that we have been able to detect it by modern methods. People say that we must get rid of listeria in everything, but they do not realise that it occurs in everything. At what level can we accept a substance that is universally found?

It is not helpful for people such as the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) to talk about salmonella as though we were not now dealing with different strains. One strain can be transmitted through the ovaries, others are transmitted in ways that they could not be before. Others have a virulence and continuance that we have not seen before. To blame the Government is like blaming the 1914-18 Government for Spanish 'flu after the first world war.

**Mrs. Ann Clwyd** (Cynon Valley): The Minister must be aware that I have continually raised the question of airline food over the past few months. Nothing in the report will deal specifically with that problem. A report by the three EHOs responsible for food safety at Heathrow said that a quarter of all airline food tested contained excessive levels of potentially dangerous bacteria, including salmonella and E coli, which is associated with faecal contamination. When I took the three EHOs to the Department of Health for a discussion with the Minister on that subject, there was a vast discrepancy between what they considered their powers to be and what the Department's advisers considered them to be.

**Mr. Speaker:** Briefly, please.

**Mrs. Clwyd:** A written reply from the Minister of Health said that the Government did not intend to take any action to improve the codes of practice until spring 1990. Is that not an incredibly long delay, given the potentially dangerous food poisoning time bomb that the EHOs and the Government are sitting on?

**Mr. Gummer:** I shall look into the details that the hon. Lady put to me. The legislation will ensure that food handling, whether in airports, the smallest village shops or anywhere else, is covered by the regulations. I am sure that she will be happy about that. It was not necessary to refer specifically to airline food. Most of us would hope to be as safe when eating food on a aeroplane as in a restaurant.

**Sir Peter Emery** (Honiton): Does my righ hon. Friend accept that the report will be welcomed not only by consumers but by the farming community, which is anxious to ensure purity of food and the highest standard of hygiene on the farm, whether in the production of cheese, poultry or anything else. It will welcome the Government's steps towards that end. I know that my

*[Sir Peter Emery]*

right hon. Friend is interested in additives. Will he ensure that considerably greater details on additives are given on labels than at present? That would be a help.

**Mr. Gummer:** My hon. Friend will be aware that I have an interest in the second point to which he referred, and I shall look into it further. I support what he said about the farmers and producers of food in this country. They are wholly behind any measures that are designed to ensure that the public have full confidence in their products. It cannot be to the advantage of producers for customers to feel that there may be some doubts about what they buy. Hence I regret a comment made by the shadow spokesman on health which suggested that somehow the Department was so tied to farmers that it would not be concerned with the health of consumers. The interests of both are absolutely identical.

**Mrs. Audrey Wise** (Preston): Why does the White Paper claim that the Government gave a warning to pregnant women about listeria as soon as there was a scientific basis for doing do? They know perfectly well that their warning was issued as recently as February this year although a hazard warning was sent to environmental health officers as long ago as November 1987. Why were pregnant women not alerted then so that they could take steps to safeguard themselves and their infants? Why do the Government say that they will set limits on freezer cabinet temperatures when the problem lies with chill cabinets? And why do they not mention cook-chill in connection with retailing, although that occupies acres of space and millions of pounds' worth of investment? Will the right hon. Gentleman accept the Select Committee recommendations on listeria and listeriosis?

**Mr. Gummer:** The hon. Lady will see from the response to the Select Committee—which will soon come to her and other hon. Members—exactly how the Government stand on that, and I will not try to prejudge it. The White Paper says what it says because it is true. We were the first Government in the world to give that warning, and I believe that we were the only Government so to do. The hon. Lady does herself less than justice by making such comments because in this case, as in many others, Britain has led the world in food safety.

**Mr. Paul Marland** (Gloucestershire, West): I give the White Paper a warm welcome, as will all responsible operators, be they producers or distributors of food. It demonstrates my right hon. Friend's willingness to address himself to contemporary problems. There is no doubt that the packaging, distribution and cooking of food has changed greatly in the last few years.

I took exception to the remarks of the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) which suggested that all food would now be irradiated. Nothing could be further from the truth. Food safety is a shared responsibility. May we be assured that more information, and perhaps training, will be given not only to housewives but to cooks in how to handle frozen and chilled food when it reaches their kitchens?

**Mr. Gummer:** I am sure that that is an important part of what we have to do.

**Mr. Alan W. Williams** (Carmarthen): I wish to express severe disappointment with the Minister's statement and with the White Paper, which strikes me as superficial and not tackling the root of the problem. There is little in the Minister's comments about the producer, nothing about farms, factory farming and animal feeding, and little about food processing. Why do the Government continually blame the retailer, the housewife and the consumer for poor hygiene, when in truth the problem lies with production?

**Mr. Gummer:** The hon. Gentleman cannot possibly have read the White Paper and then asked that question. The reason why the statements in the areas about which he spoke do not appear in the document in extenso is that most of them are fully covered by our present legislation. The hon. Gentleman should compare our legislation now with that of other countries. In general, we have the most comprehensive, up-to-date and efficient legislation. He may have noticed that in the first comments that I made as Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food I emphasised that I saw it as a consumer Ministry.

**Mr. Simon Coombs** (Swindon): My right hon. Friend's proposals will be widely welcomed by all who are not motivated by ignorance or political malice. Does he propose to seek consultative responses to his proposals and, if so, over what period will they be sought? Does he propose to deal with banning mineral hydrocarbons in food under the legislation that he outlined for a future Session of Parliament? Will the matters in annex 3 to the White Paper on diet and nutrition form part of legislative proposals in the Bill? If so, may we be told what they might be? Does he propose to introduce mandatory labelling of sugar, fat, salt and fibre in all food products?

**Mr. Gummer:** A number of the measures to which my hon. Friend refers are possible under our present legislation, and more will be possible under the extensions that will take place. We shall not be going in for further consultation. This is the result of four years of consultation and we must proceed to legislate as rapidly as parliamentary time can be found.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): This all seems to my hon. Friends and me to be an expensive PR exercise in dealing with the real problems of food handling, hygiene and safety. Where has the Minister been? People in south London are having to boil their drinking water, if they are lucky enough to have any. People in other parts of London are finding that there is so much pollution in the water they can chew it. Half the country seems to have the runs; people cannot go swimming in the water—they can only go through the motions because so much raw sewage is being dumped in the sea.

All that is going on while the Minister presents this sort of document to us. There is nothing in it to say when a new Bill, or the various pieces of legislation to which reference has been made, will be brought before Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman talks about things happening when parliamentary time can be found. Will the Queen's Speech detail action to implement the proposals in the White Paper? What resources will be made available to hard-pressed local authorities in inner-city areas, particularly in London, including Newham, to enforce the new regulations? Unless we have new resources, this will remain a lot of airy-fairy pie in the sky, which is probably polluted as well.

**Mr. Gummer:** The hon. Gentleman wonders where I have been. His description of Britain leads me to wonder where he has been.

**Mr. Nicholas Baker** (Dorset, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the White Paper will be as welcome as has been his action, in the past and for the future, to deal with salmonella? In the course of the review to which he referred, will he review the arrangements for poultry flock inspections so that they will be more in the nature of a rapier than a bludgeon? In particular, will he ensure that under the emergency orders, analyses of samples are carried out quickly? Will he ensure that, for the sake of small producers, the costs of poultry inspection orders are kept as low as possible? Will he also see that the same, and certainly no lower, standards are applied to imported eggs as are applied to eggs produced in Britain to make sure that they are free from salmonella?

**Mr. Gummer:** I shall certainly see that there is equality of standards. I shall also make sure that, so far as is possible, the cost of enforcement is as low as is acceptable in line with the highest standards of safety, which must come first. I shall be looking again at the way in which we deal with the poultry sector because I am concerned that public confidence in poultry should continue, and that can happen only if we make sure that our inspections are properly conducted.

**Sir Dudley Smith** (Warwick and Leamington): While I welcome my right hon. Friend's positive approach, which will do much to reassure the public after recent alarmist publicity, may I ask him whether, after all the exchanges that we have heard today, there is actually any more food poisoning now than there was 20 years ago?

**Mr. Gummer:** My hon. Friend must accept that there has been an increase in the incidence of food poisoning in some areas. Partly it has been a real increase, partly it has been because of new methods of detecting various kinds of microbiological activity, and partly it has been because the standard of living of many more people now enables them to buy all sorts of products. A much bigger variety of food is available. More and more people can now buy a much wider range of food, coming from many places and presented in different ways. However, many people do not follow the instructions or cook the food as it should be cooked. They often keep it at home in unsuitable conditions well after they have bought it. Those are the problems that we hope to tackle. We cannot hide that side of the matter and pretend that everything has to be done by the Government. Government and local authorities can do a great deal, but in the end consumers have to do a good deal themselves to make sure that they keep food properly.

**Mr. Graham Riddick** (Colne Valley): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the food industry in Britain is one of the most imaginative, innovative and hygienic in the world? Does he agree that the way in which Opposition Members are for ever trying to run down British industry —be it the food industry or the water industry—is appalling? Obviously I welcome the White Paper, but will my right hon. Friend reassure me that when the food Bill comes before Parliament it will not burden the food industry with too much red tape or over-regulation?

**Mr. Gummer:** I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree that we have to have sufficient regulations to protect the interests of the consumer and of the food industry, because they have the same interest in people having confidence in the food that is produced and sold. However, my hon. Friend is right to remind the public outside that throughout this debate the Labour party has cast aspersions on British manufacturers, British workers, British firms and British farms, which are unworthy of them.

**Mr. Tony Baldry** (Banbury): Will my right hon. Friend take the opportunity to make it clear to the country that many of the protestations of the Labour party form part of its not-so-hidden agenda as exemplified in early-day motion 1151, which is signed by many Labour Members and calls in direct terms for

"effective state control of the food industry."

Does my right hon. Friend agree that the only reasonable inference that can be drawn from policy statements of that nature is that, if a Labour Government were ever returned, food companies in Banbury such as General Foods, Mattesons, Walls and Lesmay, and their work forces would come under state control?

**Mr. Gummer:** I would have much more confidence in the safety of firms, the future of which depends on the confidence of the public, in a free market than I would in the safety of food produced in bureaucratic kitchens.

## Dock Workers (Redundancy Pay)

5.12 pm

**Mr. Michael Meacher** (Oldham, West): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the revelation of the improper use of public funds for the payment of redundancies in the dock dispute."

It has just come to light that a serious abuse involving the misappropriation of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money is being committed under the compensation arrangements following the ending of the national dock labour scheme. Several examples have been brought to my attention which show either that the Secretary of State for Employment is presiding over the illegal disbursement of large sums of public money or that he has drawn up the terms of the compensation scheme so loosely as to be guilty of gross negligence.

This is a specific matter because paragraph 3 of the schedule to the Dock Work (Compensation Payment Scheme) Regulations 1989 states explicitly that an employee is

"dismissed by reason of redundancy",

and therefore entitled to compensation, only if either his employer becomes insolvent or moves his business to a new location or decides that he needs fewer employees.

I have several examples showing that millions of pounds of Government money has been paid when none of those conditions applies. One port employer, English China Clay, made 72 registered dock workers redundant in the ports of Par and Fowey in Cornwall, while guaranteeing jobs back to all those who wanted them under new agreements to do the same work. The taxpayer had to pay 50 per cent. of the cost of those so-called redundancies, amounting to £1·25 million.

In another case, John Sutcliffe (Stevedores) Ltd., which used to supply 45 registered dock workers on a weekly basis to a company called DFDS, went into liquidation and paid severance payments to all the dockers. However, DFDS then took back 21 of the old Sutcliffe dock workers as its own employees, although refusing to recognise the Transport and General Workers Union. The taxpayer had to pay 100 per cent. of the cost of that manoeuvre, amounting to about £1·5 million.

In addition, the manager of Sutcliffe Stevedores has set up his own dock-work business and is employing 40 ex-registered dock workers although they are claiming and entitled to severance pay. Similarly, the manager of Lindsey Dock Services, whose company was liquidated, has now set up in business and has taken back eight dock workers although they are in receipt of severance payments.

This is an important matter because large sums of taxpayers' money are being used, not to fund genuine redundancies, but to finance a continuation of the same work in another guise, designed to achieve the de-recognition of the union. The compensation arrangements are being perverted by the employers.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the revelation of improper use of public funds for the payment of redundancies in the docks dispute."

As the hon. Gentleman knows, under Standing Order No. 20 I have to consider the requirements of the Order and to announce my decision without giving reasons. I have listened with great care to what the hon. Gentleman has said. He knows that my duty in considering his application is to decide whether it should be given priority over the business set down for seven o'clock this evening. I regret that the matter that he has raised does not meet the requirements of the Order and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

## Points of Order

5.16 pm

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that you will agree with me when I say that the matter raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) should be referred immediately to the National Audit Office and to the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee because it raises matters of public interest.

I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, will have seen in the national press in the past few days a lot of tittle-tattle about grace and favour offers being made to the former Foreign Secretary to appease his anger. These are not matters on which you would wish to rule, Mr. Speaker, but there is a matter——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It is not a question on which I can rule, nor are they matters for me at all.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, they are not matters for you, but there is a matter for you. I understand that a grace and favour offer of the Speakership was offered to the former Foreign Secretary as part of an effort to keep him quiet. This is a matter——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I know that we are about to go on holiday, but that is taking it a bit too far.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** We have important business——

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** It is a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** It must be a matter on which I can rule.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** You will understand, Mr. Speaker, that the question of the Speakership is a House of Commons matter uniquely. The Speakership is decided upon by Members of Parliament and you were elected by Members of Parliament. Prime Ministers should not interfere. Would you not condemn the practice of any Prime Minister who made an offer of that nature to a former Minister?

**Mr. Speaker:** I know absolutely nothing about matters of that kind.

### BILL PRESENTED

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE (REGIONAL CONSEQUENCES)

Mr. Tony Lloyd presented a Bill to require the inclusion in the Financial Statement and the Public Expenditure White Paper of a breakdown of taxation and expenditure by region and a statement of the impact of the changes proposed on each region: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 202.]

## Sir Victor Le Fanu, KCVO

pm

**The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe):** I beg to move,

That this *House recognises the* loyal and devoted manner in which Sir Victor Le Fanu, KCVO has discharged the duties of the Office of Serjeant at Arms; expresses its profound appreciation for his 26 years of exemplary service to the House; and extends to him its best wishes for his retirement.

One of the happy features of life is the way in which, by coincidence, it is open to me to speak in support of the motion in tribute to Sir Victor Le Fanu for his services to the House since 1963.

The House well knows of Sir Victor's active military career in the Coldstream Guards, after which he joined the office of Serjeant at Arms as long as 26 years ago as Deputy Assistant Serjeant at Arms. He then successively held the posts of Assistant Serjeant at Arms and Deputy Serjeant at Arms before taking up his present position of Serjeant at Arms in 1982.

Today we all have an opportunity to pay tribute to Sir Victor for his work. He has won the respect of both sides of the House for the way in which he has carried out his duties. Hon. Members will recall the unfailing diplomacy and courtesy that they could expect from Sir Victor as he sought to meet the many calls on his Department, and to deal with our often conflicting expectations and requests.

During his time in the House, there have been enormous changes in the services required from the Serjeant at Arms Department, and in the size of the estate that it administers. He has handled those changes with characteristic patience and skill. Sir Victor has always managed to maintain a careful balance between responding to new demands and resisting change for its own sake. In that sense, he has upheld the finest traditions of his office.

One increasingly important, sadly, and difficult aspect of the Serjeant at Arms' job is to maintain the security of the House. Concern about security has greatly increased during Sir Victor's time here. While we all deeply regret that necessity, I know that we have all welcomed the fact that that security has been in such capable hands.

Like his predecessors, Sir Victor has been required to produce a great deal from the limited resources that the House has placed at his disposal. He has always risen to that challenge admirably. During his time as Serjeant at Arms, we have managed to make substantial progress with new buildings, which we hope will do much to ease the pressure on the hard-pressed facilities of the House. Sir Victor has been much involved in that work, and while it has not made his task any simpler, I am sure that he is delighted to have played a part in making life a little easier for his successor, Sir Alan Urwick, who is well known to me from his two previous ambassadorial roles in the important cities of Cairo and Ottawa. I am sure that hon. Members will join me in extending a warm welcome to him.

Sir Victor's advice and assistance has been valued by successive Leaders of the House. I regret that, in my present role, I will not have the opportunity to benefit from his experience, but I can at least speak on behalf of the whole House when I say that I am extremely glad of this chance to express our gratitude and our warm wishes to Sir Victor for his retirement.

5.22 pm

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): I am delighted, on behalf of the Opposition, to support the motion, which stands in the name of the leaders of all parties in the House. I have been asked by the leaders of the Social Democratic party, the Ulster Unionists, the Democratic Unionists, the Scottish nationalists and the Welsh nationalists to express their thanks and best wishes.

**Mr. James Kilfedder** (North Down): The hon. Gentleman has not mentioned the Ulster Popular Unionists.

**Mr. Dobson:** And the Popular Unionists, whose request has just been received.

It is appropriate that this motion should be in the names of the leaders of all parties because Sir Victor has always done his best to serve us all. His task was made more difficult, not by any shortcomings on his part, or that of his staff, but by our own continued failure to vote for the necessary resources for them to provide the services that we request. As a result, Sir Victor has spent much of his time being asked for the use of rooms that have not been built and for other services for which we were not prepared to vote the money. These unceasing demands that Sir Victor produce an unending quart from a pint pot, make all the more remarkable his unfailing courtesy when dealing with Members' demands and requests.

As the Leader of the House has said, in recent times Sir Victor and his staff have faced the difficult problem of trying to reconcile the need for the public to have freedom of access to their Members of Parliament with the conflicting need to secure the safety of this place as a symbol of democracy and the safety of hon. Members and staff. That has been a difficult balance to achieve, and it is only fair to attribute what has gone right to Sir Victor and his colleagues and any shortcomings to the decisions which we, as a House have made.

At the start of his adult life, Sir Victor was on active service with the Coldstream Guards in Italy, where he was wounded in action. His 20 years of service to this House have been rather less dangerous, but both phases of his career show his lifelong commitment to our country's democratic institutions, which was surely best demonstrated by his friendly demeanour and his willingness to listen to others and to respond to their needs—qualities that must lie in the hearts of those who sustain the democratic ideal. We all thank him for his service and we wish him a long, contented and well-deserved retirement.

**Mr. Kilfedder:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As the motion has not been signed by the leader of every political party in the House, may it be amended accordingly?

5.25 pm

**Mr. Paddy Ashdown** (Yeovil): It gives me great pleasure to associate myself with what has been said about Sir Victor Le Fanu. I am glad to have this opportunity to express, on behalf of my colleagues, our gratitude for the service Sir Victor has given to the House.

I do not wish to detain the House by repeating the many points that have already been made, but the post of Serjeant at Arms requires special qualities, which Sir Victor has shown in abundance. He has provided a tight rein, a tight ship and the administration that we need to be able to do our jobs effectively.

I shall pick out two special qualities of Sir Victor. The first is patience, which has certainly been required to put into practice the system of passes that provides the security that has already been mentioned. The second is courtesy, which we have all seen in abundance, and which is something for which I and my right hon. and hon. Friends are especially grateful.

Sir Victor has a wide range of interests, so it would be inappropriate to wish him a restful retirement in Bath, but we wish him a happy retirement and we assure him that we are grateful for his services to us.

5.27 pm

**Sir Bernard Braine** (Castle Point): I agree with what has been said in tribute to the retiring Serjeant at Arms. Without the firm authority that you, Mr. Speaker, exercise over our exchanges in this place, the wise counsel of the Clerks and the orderly arrangements of our high steward, the Serjeant at Arms—without, so to speak the wig, the pen and the sword—I doubt whether the rest of us would get very far. You jointly provide the framework without which we eager, disparate and sometimes argumentative legislators could not do our work, and for that, and the skill and dedication you show in our service, hon. Members on both sides of the House are truly grateful.

It is therefore fitting that, when one of these guardians of our rights, our convenience and working arrangements, retires, we should acknowledge the debt and pay our tribute. It is truly astonishing that we have had only seven Serjeants at Arms in the past 100 years, and perhaps it says something about my great age that I have known, personally, five out of the seven.

The Serjeant at Arms does not have an easy role. He has to carry out his duties as housekeeper with whatever means the House itself wills and provides. He directs a large staff, who serve us admirably. He is responsible for our security—and never has that been a more onerous task than in recent years. Above all, he must possess qualities of firmness and tact.

Victor Le Fanu learnt how to manage people in a very hard school. He served with courage and distinction in the Coldstream Guards, and was badly wounded in Italy in 1944. You will know, Mr. Speaker, that the regimental motto of the Coldstream Guards is "Nulli Secundus"—"second to none". Those of us who served in the Army know that that is a clarion call which evokes loyalty and devotion to one's regiment.

For over a quarter of a century, Victor Le Fanu has given that same loyalty and devotion to the House. He has done so in his own quiet, courteous and effective way. As the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) pointed out, he has always been a good listener, has always done his level best to help individual Members. He has shown no favour to either side, and I can honestly say that he has been a true friend to us all. His service to the House of Commons has been "Nulli Secundus", second to none. We salute him for a task faithfully discharged; we thank him for all that he has done in our service; we wish him and Lady Le Fanu a long and happy retirement.

5.31 pm

**Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody** (Crewe and Nantwich): Will you forgive a mere Back Bencher, Mr. Speaker, for taking two seconds of the House's time to pay a genuine tribute to a very special man?

The House of Commons is not a very gentle place—it is a cruel crucible that does not always forge friendships or appreciation—but many of us who have been privileged to work with Victor Le Fanu know that he is a special kind of man. Although I support other hon. Members' recognition of his formal abilities, they have not highlighted—as I wish to—his wit, warmth and real wisdom.

Those of us who have been in the House for many years know that to serve Members of Parliament is not the easiest task in the world: they are a difficult, individual and occasionally anti-social group. This man has achieved—with tremendous effort and great kindness—something truly unique. He has served us all and given of his best, but he has done more than that: he has proved to us that those who serve the House of Commons with the degree of intelligence and ability that he has shown throughout his career do us great honour, and we miss them deeply when they go.

5.32 pm

**Sir David Price** (Eastleigh): I intrude on these tributes to Sir Victor only for a moment. I believe that I knew him professionally before any other right hon. or hon. Member present today: we went through the Guards' depot as recruits on the same day, and no one can start lower in the British Army than as a recruit at Caterham.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) mentioned Sir Victor's military service. Our then squad sergeant went under the name of Lance-Sergeant Jelly, than which a more improbable name could hardly be imagined for a man who ended up as one of the Brigade of Guards' most distinguished regimental sergeant majors. We saw in Victor then the qualities that the House has seen since. He will always remain a sergeant in our minds, and anyone who has once been a guardsman is always a guardsman.

5.33 pm

**Sir Peter Emery** (Honiton): I wish to recount, very briefly, an incident that occurred when Sir Victor first came into the service of the Serjeant at Arms' Department 26 years ago. When he had been in the House for three or four weeks and I was still a fairly new Member of Parliament, he said to me, "I do not know whether I shall be able to put up with all these late nights."

I remind the House that in those days we had many more late-night sittings—on the Finance Bill, for instance—and the junior member of the Serjeant at Arms' Department had to be present until 2 am, 3 am or 4 am. Sir Victor was well able to overcome his worries, however, and went on to give the House distinguished service. The difficulties that the Serjeant at Arms' Department experienced in those days may be balanced by today's different problems, but the way in which Sir Victor coped with a life that was very different from what he had previously experienced pays tribute to his persistence. We should all be most grateful for all that he has given over the past 26 years.

5.35 pm

**Mr. Ray Powell** (Ogmore): As yet another Back Bencher, I wish to pay tribute to Sir Victor for the service that he has given and for the friendship that he has extended to me, as the person responsible for the allocation of accommodation for Opposition Members and also as Chairman of the New Building Committee. His interest in that has already been mentioned. He was most understanding when Members had no reasonable accommodation.

I well remember, when I was first elected, being taken to the Serjeant at Arms when a request had been made by the then James Callaghan. The Serjeant at Arms said, "We have no accommodation for you, but I can let you have the key to a locker." I thought that I would have somewhere to hang my coat, and was very disappointed when I found that I could not even fit my briefcase into the locker. We have progressed since then.

Let me also pay tribute to Sir Victor's staff: they, too, are deserving of credit for the understanding way in which they deal with Members, particularly new Members.

I well recall Sir Victor's understanding behaviour on a cold night in 1983. You, Mr. Speaker—then as Deputy Speaker—decided to ask for my removal from the Chamber, and he was far more understanding than you were.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

**That this House recognises the loyal and devoted manner in which Sir Victor Le Fanu, KCVO has discharged the duties of the Office of Serjeant at Arms; expresses its profound appreciation for his 26 years of examplary service to the House; and extends to him its best wishes for his retirement.**

## Summer Adjournment

*Motion made, and Question proposed,*

That this House, at its rising on Friday 28th July, do adjourn until Tuesday 17th October.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** May I say to hon. Members anxious to take part in the debate that, if they limit their speeches to about 10 minutes or a little less, it will be possible to call all who have so far signified their wish to participate?

5.38 pm

**Sir Dudley Smith** (Warwick and Leamington): As a Member of Parliament, I have always believed that Parliament's main duty—and the main duty of those of us who comprise it—is to safeguard the individual against excessive bureucracy and oppressiveness. That is why I am raising a subject that should, I think, be debated and considered by the House. I believe that an inquiry should be held into the way in which the Official Receiver's office is run, how many mistakes it makes and why, when its clients are in understandable distress, it takes such an icy, offhand attitude.

Recently a constituent of mine was declared bankrupt, which came as a terrible shock to him, for—I am glad to say—he was no more bankrupt than I, or any other hon. Member present. My constituent, Mr. Raymond Francis Wood of Warwick, who had been in poor health, received an official form out of the blue stating that the court had ordered that he be publicly examined for insolvency. It said that he was liable to imprisonment unless he complied. The form came from the office of the Official Receivers at Atlantic house, Holborn Viaduct, London.

My constituent was shocked and lodged a protest. He then received a summons which said that upon the application of the Official Receiver

> "the above-named bankrupt do attend the Court sitting in Bankruptcy at the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand".

Dire warnings were attached about what would happen to him if he did not attend.

Those communications were followed by a letter written by a Mr. E. S. Burns, assistant official receiver. The letter sets out my constituent's name and the High Court number of the hearing. It says:

> "You may have recently received an Order of the High Court of Justice requiring you to attend at the Court Premises for a Public Examination.
>
> The purpose of this was to enforce the attendance of a bankrupt who bears the same name as you 'Raymond Francis Wood'.
>
> Unfortunately a Land Registry Search for the name quoted was undertaken which appeared to indicate that the bankrupt had the same address as you.
>
> My further investigation has revealed that you are not the same person whom the Official Receiver is seeking to be publicly examined.
>
> In the circumstances I ask you to ignore the Order and return the same to the Official Receiver. The Court would be informed of the mistake made.
>
> I apologise sincerely for any inconveniences caused."

Not unnaturally, my constituent was upset by that letter and was not prepared to accept that kind of apology. He declined to accept it and wrote to Mr. Burns and to me. In his letter to Mr. Burns, he said:

> "After receiving my first High Court order I rang your Mr. Banwell and was told that your investigators had traced me to this address. I am not at all satisfied with this explanation as I have lived at this address for 22 years, since the house was built, and within 800 yards of it all my life. There is absolutely nothing to connect me with the person you require. I have never lived in London, never been in business for myself, and in fact I worked for the same Company for over 22 years.
>
> As Mr. Banwell told me he had issued five other Court Orders in this matter it would seem that you send them at random either from the Electoral Roll or Land Registry to anyone who happens to have the same name. If this is the case I feel very strongly that it is wrong and steps should be taken to stop this practice immediately, particularly as two days after my conversation with Mr. Banwell, in which he promised me an apology, I received yet another identical High Court Order, this time by recorded delivery. If I had been elderly or in ill health the consequences could have been extremely serious."

My constituent, Mr. Wood, suffers from some ill health. I am sure that hon. Members will agree with the tenor of that letter.

I immediately raised the matter with the then Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs and he went into the details, obviously having an official brief on the subject. His letter to me concluded:

> "Official Receivers have instructions that in circumstances such as existed in this case they should proceed with extreme circumspection and only after due enquiry. Clearly that did not happen here, for which I can only tender my and the Department's profound apologies. You will wish to know that officials have now reminded Official Receivers of those instructions and reinforced the necessity for them to be followed."

I hope that that is true. In my experience many bureaucrats shrug off such admonitions. They are well protected from the sack and carry on in their own bureaucratic, self-satisfied way.

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg** (Hampstead and Highgate): Does my hon. Friend know whether a note has been placed upon their employment files giving a clear warning under the terms of the relevant Acts about the way in which they have behaved?

**Sir Dudley Smith:** I do not know, but my hon. Friend raises an important point. When such things happen, people should not be allowed to escape, because they would not escape in private industry or services.

Plainly, the Official Receiver's office has been inefficient and often relies just on names. If a person is unlucky enough to have a reasonably common Christian name that is coupled with a reasonably common surname, he is vulnerable. As I said to my constituent when I went into this matter with him, I found the conduct of the Official Receiver's office quite disgraceful. In its warning notice to my constituent, the office described him as "the above-named bankrupt". I think that the office committed libel by calling my constituent a bankrupt, and it would have been most embarrassing if the document had fallen into other hands, because it would have branded him with other people.

It is Parliament's job to curb the excesses and the inexcusable bureaucratic mistakes that can harm people. I hope that, by raising the matter, I shall perhaps have done something to ensure that in future other people will not go through the trauma that Mr. Wood had to endure.

5.45 pm

**Sir Russell Johnston** (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Before we adjourn for the recess, we should pay attention to one important matter, even if we do so only briefly. It is unfortunate that, coinciding with a significant change at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, commentators are agreed that there is a change of attitude, especially towards the European Community. That has coincided with a series of what are perhaps the most forthright comments made by another Community Head of State about the British situation. I refer to the remarks by President Mitterrand about British policy towards European Community development, and specifically about how this development is seen by our Prime Minister and by the new Ministers who will have responsibility for EC matters.

During Prime Minister's Question Time, my right hon. Friend the Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) raised the matter with the Prime Minister, who simply suggested that, because we had liberalised capital movements and the French had not, we should not be criticised. During business questions, the matter was briefly raised with the new Leader of the House, who, in his calm, emollient way, said that we did not necessarily have to respond to comments made by other friendly Heads of State about our conditions and policies.

I am aware that we are under pressure of time and I shall not seek to generate a general debate on the topic. President Mitterrand puts the matter well, with his Gallic succinctness. In talking about Britain, he says:

> "This important country is caught between two contradictory desires: one to remain in Europe, and the other not to accept the trend set by the majority of the Community countries."

That is very true, and President Mitterrand puts his finger on the exact spot. Then he draws certain conclusions from that.

The President had earlier drawn certain conclusions from that. He talked about another intergovernmental conference having been agreed in Madrid heading towards economic and monetary union and the working out of Delors and said:

> "what cannot be agreed by 12 may be done among 11, 10 or nine. I do not want this. It would create a new political situation which at the moment I do not welcome. Each of the 12, including the United Kingdom, is attached to the Community."

Hon. Members will note that President Mitterrand puts the whole matter in a fair and balanced way and does not seek to be pejorative about it—a lesson that could perhaps be learned by others. He continued:

> "Let us play the card of agreement. But let us also accept that if this does not work, we should press on with those who want to.
>
> *So you do not rule out a new treaty agreed by all 12 members?*
>
> I do not exclude this."

That is a significant statement by a leading Head of State of a friendly European Community country. If such a person is moved to put things in such a blunt, although balanced, fashion, the Government have a responsibility to make some response and to say that the United Kingdom is not interested in a two-stage Europe. We shall fight our corner and argue our case, but we should be committed to the objectives that were set out clearly when we signed the Single European Act. We too want to participate in the influence and the considerable prosperity that will stem from economic and monetary union.

5.50 pm

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** (Altrincham and Sale): Before the House rises for the summer recess, I shall put again the case for Manchester international airport. This airport is important because it is far and away the largest single employer in my constituency. I am anxious about something that I have raised time and again—the need for more transcontinental flights into and out of Manchester airport. We are continually being told about the congestion in the airports of the south-east, and we can do something about that by giving more flights to the north. For far too long, the north of England has been treated as a poor relation. I cannot understand why it is so necessary for people from the north of England to have to take the shuttle to London, change planes and fly from there when they want to fly to the continent.

I am grateful for all that the Government have done for Manchester airport in the past 10 years. In that period, it has been the fastest expanding airport in the United Kingdom, if not in the whole of Europe. Recently, we had the approval of the rail link, which will bring about an enormous boost. We know that the Department of Transport regards the terminal 2 project that is under way as of key importance for the achievement of the Government's national airport policy objectives.

However, I am concerned that efforts should be made to ensure additional airport capacity, away from the congested south-east and into the north. That will not only remove some of the congestion in the south-east but will combat the serious competititive threat posed to United Kingdom aviation interests by air service and hub developments in northern Europe. That is why it is essential that we have a successful conclusion to the on-going negotiation with the United States Government about allowing additional United States airline services to serve the regional market via Manchester.

Recently, the Civil Aviation Authority published its interim advice to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, in which it stressed that it would wish to consider more fully the contribution that airports outside the south-east could make to resolving capacity problems before recommending solutions involving additional runway capacity within the London area. As Lord King, the chairman of British Airways, recently said, unless the capacity problems in the United Kingdom are solved soon, the impetus may be lost to alternative European gateways such as Frankfurt, Paris, Amsterdam and, dare I say it, Brussels, which we have recently read could be actively promoted by British Airways in conjunction with Sabena.

In the British regions, we believe that there is a strong and attractive alternative—the opportunity to release from the London system the 25 per cent. of air travellers who are unnecessarily forced to use either Heathrow or Gatwick when they would be better served by using local airports. There would be two benefits of such a move: it would allow London to continue to meet the air travel needs of the capital, and it would ensure that the economic benefits from air service growth accrue in the British regions, not the more prosperous parts of northern central Europe. It cannot be sensible, taking only congestion into account, for London to be served by 367 weekly return flights to the United States, whereas Manchester has only 16.

I was pleased and encouraged to learn that the CAA said in its recent report that there may now be a case for linking air service licensing policy to the achievement of airports policy objectives. I think that it will be agreed that these objectives should take full account of regional economic benefits.

The United States airline services are a vital part of any strategy both to relieve congestion at the London area airports and to combat the competitive threat posed by alternative European gateways. For a long time, the

*[Sir Fergus Montgomery]*

United Kingdom has served as the transatlantic gateway to Europe through London. Recognising the congestion there and the evident strong demand levels generated away from the south-east, the United States carriers have, for several years, been expressing increasingly strong interest in servicing northern and central Britain through Manchester.

Applications for five routes are already on the table, from American Airlines, NorthWest Airlines and PanAm with Delta Airlines expressing strong interest as well. In addition, the daily American airlines flight from Manchester to Chicago has operated since 1986, but only on a temporary permit. It should be remembered that United States airlines not only wish to serve the buoyant regional market but are also looking to service gateways into Europe. It follows that, if the United Kingdom is not willing to provide those gateways, the flights will, sadly, go instead to alternative European points. This could mean that the United Kingdom regions will increasingly find themselves served from European gateways such as Frankfurt and Paris, by airlines of other European countries, not directly or from London. If this happens, all the United Kingdom aviation industry will suffer. Surely this cannot be in the national interest.

To emphasise this point, I can tell the House that two American Airlines aircraft earmarked to fly this summer between Manchester and New York and to operate a second daily service to Chicago, are now flying instead to Brussels and Lyons. I understand that the French Government, about whom the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) has just been talking, actively encouraged the airline to fly to Lyons as an instrument in regional policy, whereas in the United Kingdom we have allowed procrastinated negotiations to stall access to Manchester since 1986.

It is generally acknowledged that air service development brings strong economic benefits. Recent studies have shown that the American Airlines service to Chicago has already created 1,200 jobs. Moreover, the additional route licences applied for to serve Manchester would generate an estimated income of £45 million a year, and 3,500 jobs. Furthermore, it is essential that Britain's accessibility is maintained if it is to be competitive in the single European market. The United Kingdom should not allow the emphasis to shift away by adopting policies that drive air service development to continental Europe. I know that it is not entirely in the interest of the United Kingdom to give away such rights to the United States; nobody could dispute that. However, there is a clear need for a balanced package that weighs the regional economic benefits and the strategic European dimension against pure airline economics.

I recently received a helpful letter from my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Transport on the subject of route licensing, which explains that the ball is in the hands of the United States Government. However, without wishing to weaken the British negotiating stance, I urge that we seek a reasonable price at the talks due to take place later this year.

It is essential that a speedy conclusion be reached in the negotiations, which have already been going on for four years. Prior to the White Paper on airport policy, the Department of Transport was looking to promote Manchester as an alternative gateway, and hence only moderate reciprocal rights were sought. However, strong airline interest was expressed subsequently in the United States, to which the British negotiators responded by forcing up the price. For example, United Kingdom demands have risen from six behind points in early 1988 to 90, at one stage, in the most recent negotiations earlier this year.

In the talks that take place in October, or, I hope, sooner, I trust that the Department of Transport will weigh fully the costs of delay within the wider European context and ensure that a deal is struck at a reasonable price that is acceptable to all. If the talks break down there is a real risk that the emphasis will shift so firmly to the European mainland that the Amricans may withdraw their interest in serving Manchester and concentrate on European gateways, with the attendant benefits being lost to the United Kingdom. That must not be allowed to happen.

Manchester international airport is of enormous importance to the economy of the north of England. At one stage, it was hailed as the jewel in the crown of the north of England. I hope that, to relieve congestion in the south-east and to ensure that the north gets a fair deal, my right hon. Friend will take note of what I have said. We should have a statement on this important issue before the House rises for the summer recess.

6.2 pm

**Mr. Eddie Loyden** (Liverpool, Garston: I am grateful for the opportunity to raise a matter that should be of concern to the entire House. I refer to the dock strike and the activities that have been taking place in dockland over the past few weeks.

The Government constantly claim that they are an Administration of non-intervention in industrial relations. In fact, it was the hand of the Government that removed the national dock labour scheme, which had served the industry well since 1947. It was said on Second Reading of the Dock Work Bill, and in Committee, that one of the reasons why the Government felt that the scheme was no longer relevant was that it was 42 years old. If that is the criterion on which we are to base the usefulness of institutions, this place should close down. The other place should certainly go. There are many other institutions that are 400, 500 or 600 years old, and some are even older than that. Should they all be scrapped? It is a weak argument to say that an institution or a scheme should be abolished merely because of its age. The scheme was introduced because of the consequences of the second world war and to eliminate the foul practices that obtained in the dock industry between the wars.

The Government have shown by their actions that they are not an Administration of non-intervention in industrial relations. They are creating a climate in which it is virtually impossible for a trade union to pursue its proper responsibilities in representing its members without finding itself before the courts. Injunctions will be served upon it, and it will find that its finances are threatened. The Government argue that they have a right to introduce legislation that has that effect, but have they reflected on the long-term effects of such legislation?

We have often heard Conservative Members express sympathy for the Polish workers, for the trade unions in the Soviet Union and for the deprivation of workers' rights in countries, where it could be argued that the unions are part of the state machine. Tears are being shed for the Polish workers and for other workers elsewhere, but it is far easier to have a strike in Turkey or in some Latin American countries—countries which have been referred to as tinpot dictatorships—than it is in Britain.

The Government should be aware that the trade union movement was established to combat the power of capital and to achieve some balance in the industrial world so that hyper-exploitation could be eliminated and men and women could work in decent conditions for decent wages. It is depressing that the balance has swung so heavily in favour of the employer and of capital. When the Dock Work Bill was being considered in Committee, employers were telling Ministers that they had no intention of taking advantage of the abolition of the scheme to introduce practices that had been eliminated as a result of the legislation of 1947. Hands were placed on hearts and employers said that they would be reasonable men. We were told that there was no need to fear the removal of the scheme, because employer's attitudes had changed and they were now men of reason. On the first day of the strike, the men of reason were sacking employees with 25 years' experience in the industry. Some of the men had been working in the industry for as long as 30 years.

I have seen many acts of victimisation in the docks over many years, but probably the most blatant was the sacking of 16 shop stewards at Tilbury while other ex-registered dock workers were allowed to return to work. That demonstrates the almost obsessional hatred that the Government have for the trade union movement. There have been examples of this in many industries. It appears that we, the Opposition, must consider seriously whether the events of the past few weeks constitute a challenge to the right to strike. The events at Tilbury suggest that, if a person or persons go on strike, they can be faced immediately with the choice of returning to work or losing their jobs. In many instances, if not all, men and women will be compelled to return to work. Should we condone the actions of employers that result in the removal of the right to strike?

When the Minister replies, I ask him to tell the House whether the Government, and the Prime Minister especially, still believe that there is a right to belong to a trade union, and, more importantly, a right for the individual to remove his labour if the conditions in which he is working are unacceptable. Those issues relate directly to the foundation on which the trade union movement was built. I am talking of the tradition which has been upheld by the movement, and which has served industry well over the years.

I do not doubt that, during the summer recess, there will be more trouble in the docks. In the past decade, or possibly the past two, there has been a better relationship in the docks between employers and dock workers, and the strike record will prove that that is so. There have been dramatic changes in the industry, which prove that dockers are not adhering to outdated and outmoded practices. How can it be argued that dock workers are following outmoded practices when they are working with machinery which is worth in excess of £500,000? Dock workers are now skilled technicians. All the old practices have long since left the industry.

The Government have acted with pique, spite and hatred towards the trade union movement. However, I believe that, at the end of the day, they will relent, because as long as that attitude prevails, industrial relations will remain in the state that they are today.

6.9 pm

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): Part of me is delighted that I have the opportunity to address my remarks to my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House, because, as he is a most distinguished and eminent legal figure, he will appreciate my remarks more than most.

The Government are about to commence, or are in the course of drafting, their legislative proposals on the work and organisation of the legal profession. As the House has not debated the Green Paper, still less the proposals in the White Paper announced only last week, I hope that right hon. and hon. Members will not mind if I take a moment or two to set out why I and many other lawyers opposed the Green Papers and are extremely apprehensive and rather unhappy about the White Paper, while conceding that it makes some improvements.

Contrary to popular mythology, the Bar's opposition to the Green Papers had nothing to do with keeping the earnings of the Bar high. The proposals would certainly drive many barristers into becoming solicitors, in which capacity they would earn a considerably higher income. That is made self-evident by two facts. The average income of a solicitor in a City of London firm is approximately double that of a barrister, in London chambers, of similar age and experience, as assessed by independent financial experts. Also, the Crown prosecution service in London pays £250 per day for a solicitor for precisely the same work that it pays a barrister £100 to do.

I had five main concerns about the Green Papers, which have not been dispelled by the White Paper.

First, as there has been no great surge of public criticism of the legal profession, why is it necessary to reject the advice of the Benson royal commission on legal services in 1979 that changes such as those now proposed are unnecessary? What has happened to make the Government eat their own words, given that they confirmed in 1981, 1983 and 1987 that they also did not consider any changes to be necessary?

Secondly, if the profession of solicitor has all the advantages of being a member of the Bar, plus its own very considerable attractions, why should graduates want to go to the Bar? If they do not, the independent Bar will dwindle and die. Nearly everyone concerned with the law agrees that the independent barrister, like the surgeon or specialist in medicine, is worth preserving. The Bar provides a high-quality, professional service of particular expertise which serves the consumer well.

Thirdly, the end of the independent Bar would be bound to mean higher legal costs. They would not be brought down, but driven up—as the figures I gave earlier show—for two reasons. The Bar enjoys lower overheads than many solicitors' practices, and the cab-rank principle provides a faster legal service, which means a cheaper legal service for the community.

Fourthly, the availability of lawyers in small towns and villages will diminish if solicitors, because of losing their conveyancing bread and butter, are forced to move to the bigger towns and cities to stay in practice. People living in small towns and villages would no longer find solicitors

*[Mr. Ivan Lawrence]*

easily available locally and would have to pay more to get to and to use the services of those in the bigger towns and cities.

Finally, the introduction of contingency fees, however gentle its proposal in the White Paper may be, would be likely to lead down the slippery slope of a doctrine of "win at all costs", which would considerably lower the integrity of the British legal system. Those who opposed the Green Papers took their stand on grounds of increased cost, the diminished availability of legal services and the lowering of quality.

The judges responded angrily and almost unanimously —though there was never any threat of strikes, as malicious voices in the media pretended. The judges were concerned that, according to the Green Papers, if rights of audience were extended to solicitors, the issuing of permits to practice advocacy in the higher courts would be by a state bureacracy, which would be wholly undesirable in principle, and possibly pernicious in practice.

In response to those strong criticisms, my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor said, "I am listening, and although I did not intend to give you a White Paper, I shall—so that you can consider my further thoughts. I will stick to my original intention to permit the right of audience in the higher courts to solicitors; to open up the restrictive practice of conveyancing by solicitors; and to introduce contingency fees because that change may give some people more access to lawyers and to justice." But my noble and learned Friend has in effect said, "I will leave the circumstances in which the solicitor will actually have a right of audience to the solicitors' professional organisation, to the predominantly lay advisory committee, and finally to the judges. I will also hedge about the conveyancing extension with certain protections for the lay client, who might otherwise receive no independent advice before buying a house."

The Bar's response was dynamic, statesmanlike and very constructive, and moved a long way to meeting the solicitors' profession without going so far as to concede the right of audience. The pace of reform undoubtedly quickened because of the Green Papers, and my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor is due considerable credit for that.

The Bar has proposed many reforms, and some of them are already in train. They are, for example, improving the vocational course at the Inns of Court school of law and of continuing legal education; overhauling the pupilage system, its payment, and the availability of tenancies in particular; the introduction of freedom for barristers to advertise; the establishment of an alternative to the chambers system, to provide cheaper, wider and better access by the public; easing the route by which a solicitor who wants to practise in the higher courts can easily become a barrister; and giving direct access to the Bar by professionals, so cutting out unnecessary activity by solicitors.

Apart from being the most far-reaching proposals ever set in motion in the legal profession, they do more to make legal services widely available at cheaper cost and without any reduction in quality than the Government's counter-productive proposals would ever achieve.

Now we have arrived at an impasse. The Government have placed responsibility for working out the rules for extended rights of audience in the hands of the professions, the advisory committee and the judges. In effect, they kicked the ball into touch. The questions are whether judges will want to see rights of audience extended very far, and whether solicitors, or the Crown prosecution service, having won a victory in principle, will want to push the judges into conceding far wider rights of audience.

If little changes in practice and the Bar does not dwindle away, I will not feel that the whole exercise has been too disruptive. But if much changes in practice, either great harm will be done to the system or there will be warfare between the judges and the Government of a kind that cannot possibly be conducive to the proper administration of justice.

What, then, is to be done? As the House rises for the summer recess, I make three suggestions. First, between now and the final drafting of the Bill, I hope that the Lord Chancellor's Department will have further consultations with the Bar Council and the Law Society to see whether blood on the carpet can be avoided and the Bill drafted in a way that will maximise co-operation and minimise confrontation, which is what the Bar and most of us want.

Secondly, the Government should take another look at the extent to which the Bar's response will make for cheaper, more available and higher-quality legal activity.

Finally, the Government should consider just what it is that ordinary people complain about when they complain about lawyers. I suggest that they complain that they are too costly, which the Government's proposals will not remedy. They complain that the lawyers are not available when they want them, which, again, the Government's proposals will not, on balance, remedy. Ordinary people who have no great access to funds want more available legal aid. I agree that limitless legal aid is not desirable, but if, as Professor Cyril Glasser of London university assures us, 10 million people have dropped out of eligibility for legal aid in the past 10 years, a Government bent on wider access of the law to the consumer must at least look at legal aid before they seek refuge in divisive and counter-productive legislation.

As I said at the beginning, I welcome my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House to his new position, although I am sad that he left his previous one. I know that my right hon. and learned Friend will bear in mind the points that I have made so that the best advantage can be secured from all the proposals for the future of our legal system.

6.21 pm

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): The hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) in some respects made an interesting speech. He is a Conservative Member who, on every possible occasion, attacks restrictive practices, over-manning, and the rest. He does not have a sympathetic word for the dockers or anyone else. But when it comes to his own profession, the hon. and learned Member is steadfast in his defence of the existing position. No one could be a firmer defender of the status quo in the legal profession than the hon. and learned Gentleman.

The hon. and learned Gentleman may ask, "Why not?" He is a barrister and he considers that certain practices must be defended. I hope that on future occasions, when some of my right hon. and hon. Friends try to describe the situation in industry and the viewpoint of the people who work in it, he will be a little more sympathetic.

**Mr. Lawrence** *rose*——

**Mr. Winnick:** I hope that the hon. and learned Gentleman will forgive me if I do not give way, because of the time limit. I understand the point that the hon. and learned Gentleman wishes to make.

I want to speak on a subject which directly concerned the Leader of the House in his previous position of Foreign Secretary. Before I do, I should say that the reshuffle will in no way change the deep-seated hostility that is felt in the country towards the Government's policies. High mortgage interest rates, the decline of the economy, the notorious poll tax—it is a poll tax; even the Government's literature refers to the "so-called" poll tax—water privatisation and the attack on the NHS all explain why there is such a deep-seated hostility to the Government. There is no doubt that, in the recent European elections, the Conservative party suffered badly.

The only other point that I want to make about the reshuffle is one on which many people have reflected and to which I referred during business questions. I am sure that many hon. Members will have heard a group of activists at a Conservative club on the radio this morning who were hostile to the Prime Minister. Some of them described her conduct as being like that of a dictator.

It is not for me, a mere Opposition Back Bencher, to defend the Home Secretary or the Leader of the House. If the Prime Minister wishes to treat her Cabinet colleagues in the way she has done, that is her business. If she has an irresistible desire to humiliate, as she undoubtedly has done, the Leader of the House and the Home Secretary, that is her right.

It is clear that the Home Secretary considered that his position was perfectly safe. We read in the press that he was eating his sandwiches on Monday, when, lo and behold, he heard various rumours that his job had been offered to the then Foreign Secretary despite his having been given all those private assurances by the Prime Minister.

I do not understand why Cabinet members are willing to put up with such conduct. The only possible explanation is that they believe that if they stood up to the Prime Minister they would lose their jobs more quickly than they otherwise would.

The views that I have just expressed are clearly the views of Conservative activists, and I imagine that, in the Corridors of this place, enough Conservative Members have been more or less saying in private what I have just said in public. It would be foolish to deny that.

The matter that I am about to raise is the one that I raised before the previous recess. I do not wish to be misunderstood in any way, and it is no reflection on my hon. Friends that at that time I was the only hon. Member to raise what was happening in China. I congratulated the people associated with the pro-democracy movement in China on their courage.

As I have said before, and I repeat now, it is all very well in a democracy to demonstrate. We know that sometimes the police can be rough, but there is all the difference between demonstrating in a democracy and trying to do so in a dictatorship. I have the greatest respect for those in dictatorship countries, in almost totalitarian conditions, who are willing to do what the students and workers did in China. Those people were not saying that they wanted all the civil rights and liberties that Britain has gained and which exist in most, if not all, of the countries of western Europe. They wanted only some basic rights which were being denied them, so they demonstrated, and what an impressive demonstration it was. For weeks on end, they demonstrated in the way that we all saw on television. I say again that I have the greatest respect for them.

The manner in which that demonstration was crushed, the massacre that took place, aroused a feeling of revulsion not only in Britain but throughout most countries, and certainly throughout all the democracies.

The Chinese authorities peddled the lie—like Dr. Goebbels they no doubt believe that if they repeat the lie often enough people will believe it—that there was no massacre and demonstrators were not shot. We know that to be a lie. We know of the bloodshed and the hundreds of people who were massacred in Tiananmen square, and what happened on that occasion is never likely to be forgotten in China.

The time will come when we see in China what has happened in countries in eastern Europe. In 1956, the Hungarian uprising was crushed and Imre Nagy was hanged. Yet only a few weeks ago, his remains were buried with great honour. What happened in Hungary a few weeks ago is likely to happen at some stage in China.

In view of the experience of the Leader of the House as Foreign Secretary, I want to ask him what will be the attitude of the United Kingdom and the EEC if terror continues in China. There was a report in *The Guardian* today, and there have been other reports, one issued by Amnesty International, on the subject of the repression and the way in which people considered to be in any way involved with the pro-democracy movement are arrested, tortured, certainly humiliated and often executed.

Like all dictators, the Chinese leaders say that they want business to carry on as usual. They see no reason why western countries should take economic action against them. If the state of terror continues, can Britain and the European Community turn a blind eye and say that it is all very unfortunate, but we should have business as usual? A warning should go out from the Governments of the European Community and other countries—I only wish that the Soviet Union would associate itself with that—that if the Chinese authorities continue their repression of their own people economic action is bound to be taken.

I hope that, in the negotiations that I understand will take place between the new Foreign Secretary and the Chinese leadership, the point will be made clearly that, after 1997, Chinese troops should not be stationed in Hong Kong. One development above all else would give some feeling of security to the people of Hong Kong, leaving aside matters such as the right of abode, and that is the view that the state of terror and repression in China had ended. That would produce in Hong Kong a feeling of more security than exists at present.

There is ambiguity, to say the least, in the agreement signed between Britain and China over the stationing of Chinese troops. I hope that the point will be made clearly in the negotiations with the Chinese leadership that it would be quite inappropriate—all the more so after the terrible events of the past few weeks—for Chinese troops to be stationed in Hong Kong after 1997. If a guarantee could be given by the Chinese that no troops would be stationed there, it would do a great deal

*[Mr. Winnick]*

of good in trying to reassure the people of Hong Kong that they have a future in that place once the agreement is implemented in 1997.

6.31 pm

**Mr. James Kilfedder** (North Down): I can predict, sadly, that before Parliament meets again after the summer recess, many innocent people in Northern Ireland will have been slaughtered in obscene acts of terrorism. I ask hon. Members, therefore, to think about my part of the United Kingdom, which is haunted by the spectre of the terrorist.

Next month is the anniversary of the arrival in Northern Ireland 20 years ago of extra soldiers of the regular Army to be used to act as a barrier between religious groupings in different parts of the Province. It was not long before the soldiers, who were originally greeted as peacekeepers, were spat on, reviled, shot at and killed. Twenty years on, the situation is worse, although to a greater extent the Royal Ulster Constabulary are in the front line in the maintenance of law and order.

I want to pay tribute, as most hon. Members would want to do, to all the police officers and soldiers, both in the Regular Army and the Ulster Defence Regiment, who serve and have served in Northern Ireland where so many of their comrades have gallantly given their lives to save others and to defeat terrorism. Civilians—men, women and children—have also been injured, mutilated or killed, sometimes in the most terrible atrocities, although the Provisional IRA has not hesitated to destroy human life here in mainland Britain and on the continent. Every death is a tragedy. Throughout the Province, mothers, wives, children, husbands and fathers mourn the loss of loved ones who have died in such frightening circumstances; sadly, relatives here in Britain also mourn those who have been murdered by the evil and vicious members of the Provisional IRA.

To the outside world, Northern Ireland appears to be a war zone, where hate triumphs and people are bitterly divided into two warring camps. Those who live in Northern Ireland and those who visit Northern Ireland know differently. Northern Ireland is, despite its media image, a beautiful place, with charming and generous people. The majority of the people of Ulster wish to live normally and harmoniously with their neighbours, regardless of politics or religion. The vast majority reject the gunmen who live like parasites on their communities, whether in Republican or Loyalist areas.

The vast majority of Ulster people yearn for peace and the prosperity that peace will bring to that battered part of the United Kingdom. I think especially of senior citizens in the community who fervently wish to see an end to strife before they die. I think above all about the young generation who are being denied the normal opportunities which peace can provide—many of whom, through frustration, seek employment here in England or elsewhere.

The people and politicians of Northern Ireland cannot defeat the terrorists, but they can make a significant contribution to the elimination of terrorism by giving their full, unqualified and unequivocal support to the forces of law and order. The politicians have a major role to play in the restoration of normality. They should make a contribution, but the people also have a contribution to make and they must endeavour at all times to ensure that, wherever a terrorist roams, the police are notified of his activities.

I call on all constitutional politicians in Northern Ireland to get together to see what political progress can be made in the next six months. I know that the Anglo-Irish Agreement is a symbol of the betrayal of Unionists by a Conservative Government, but politicians cannot for ever remain in their trenches. I appeal, therefore, in this House to politicians, to official Unionists, to Democratic Unionists, to the Social Democratic and Labour party, the Alliance party and all other constitutional politicians, to suspend their antagonism and to begin to talk.

The appointment of a new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland provides an ideal opportunity to end the four years of political stagnation which existed under his predecessor. That change of Ulster Secretary should be the cue for Ulster politicians to come together. I have already offered through the media in Northern Ireland to chair such discussions, as the former Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, and I shall shortly be writing to the leaders of the constitutional parties that were elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Of course it is easier not to talk. It is not difficult to find excuses to justify a refusal to get together. Talking with other constitutional politicians exposes one to criticism and perhaps even to charges of betrayal. However, in my judgment, politicians, in the interests of Ulster people young and old, must get together, must risk attacks, must endure insults and must attempt to devise a solution that would enable political progress to be made in Northern Ireland.

I am sure that there is tremendous good will in the Province. As I said earlier, I know that the people of Northern Ireland are marvellous, generous, charming, humorous and kind-hearted. It is extraordinary that some can hate each other out of their love of God. For the love of God, let us start building bridges, talking together, making peace and providing a future for the young people of Northern Ireland.

6.38 pm

**Mr. Ray Powell** (Ogmore): I share the sentiments expressed in the last part of the speech made by the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder). The message must go out not only to hon. Members but to politicians elsewhere and people everywhere that it is high time that a solution was found in Ireland.

The motion before us calls upon us to adjourn for the summer recess. I am always concerned that such debates do not allow us a vote. Some Conservative Members ask for time to debate major issues and then, a soon as they have finished their speech, they get through the door, pick up their cases and go to Heathrow for their flights to Bermuda. I am not one who would do that.

I call for special consideration to be given to the question that this House should not adjourn. I do so because I want time to be allowed for a debate that Welsh Members have been demanding for the past five or six weeks—a debate on the National Health Service in Wales. We have asked, we have begged and we have pleaded. I did not say this at business questions, when I asked the Leader of the House a question regarding his new appointment, but I welcome him to his position as Leader of the House because, as a Welshman, he might be more sympathetic to our demands in the future—especially our demands for health debates. The right hon. and learned Gentleman will be dealing with a Secretary of State for Wales who has not been elected to represent a Welsh seat and who is probably more interested in representing his own constituency, which is Worcester.

We have asked for a debate on the National Health Service in Wales not only because of the long waiting lists or the under-funding of hospital services in Wales but because we fear the Government's new proposals and their effect on our constituents. In 1988, when we debated hospital waiting lists in Wales, we were promised that various sums would be invested in new hospitals and in reducing waiting lists. I regret to report that waiting lists in Wales have not been reduced since that promise was made in 1988. As a matter of fact, they have substantially increased. That is one reason why I think that the House should not adjourn.

We should be considering the thousands of people who are waiting for hospital beds, for hospital treatment or for consultants to be available to perform major surgery which may save their lives. Many people who are now waiting for hospital treatment will no longer require it when the time comes, because they will have passed away, as has happened to a number of my constituents who were in that position.

The Welsh group of Labour Members of Parliament tabled an early-day motion, which said:

> "That this House notes that on March 1st, 1989, the Secretary of State for Wales told the House that he was about to issue papers, similar to those issued for England, setting out his proposals for the implementation of the Health Service White Paper in Wales, that thereafter he would issue papers of specific Welsh proposals, and that there would be plenty of time for discussion during which he would be anxious to hear the views of hon. Members in all parts of the House; further notes that comment from all levels of the health service and from the general public in Wales amounts to outright rejection of the White Paper proposals; and calls on the Secretary of State either to withdraw the White Paper proposals from having any application to Wales or to take immediate steps to honour his three-fold pledge of March 1st and allow full debate on his proposals within Wales."

Since then, we have received documents from the Royal College of Nursing documents about NHS funding and documents about the crisis in the acute hospital sector. We have had comments from a research team dealing with matters affecting elderly people and the review of March 1989.

Will the Leader of the House bring pressure to bear on the Secretary of State for Wales—whom he will be joining as yet another wet in the Cabinet, no doubt—to ensure that in future, when we request debates on major issues such as this, we are afforded the opportunity to have them, bearing in mind that, of 38 Welsh MPs, 25 are Labour Members? Surely that is sufficient to allow us a debate when we request one.

It is no good the Secretary of State for Wales hiding behind all sorts of excuses, as he has been doing for weeks now. I renew my request, which is supported by all my hon. Friends, that the documents should be published—as promised on 1 March—explaining how the Secretary of State for Wales intends to apply the White Paper in Wales and that we may have an early opportunity for a full debate. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Delyn (Mr. Raffan) need not get all excited. I have not finished yet. I was told 10 minutes, and I have only taken four so far.

**Mr. Keith Raffan** (Delyn): Eight.

**Mr. Powell:** All right; it is eight.

There are many Health Service matters that I could raise, and I am sure that I should receive a sympathetic hearing from the Leader of the House, given that he was born in Port Talbot.

Another major issue that the House should debate before we go into recess is the enforcement of the Shops Act 1950. The House had an opportunity for a full debate, action was taken and a proposal presented by the Government. We won that debate, although I am sorry to say that that is the only time in 10 years when the majority of Members have rejected major legislation that the Prime Minister and the Government wanted to introduce. Although we rejected any amendment to the 1950 Act, we constantly see traders, large and small, trading on Sundays and thus deliberately flouting the law. When I asked the Prime Minister a question some years ago, she replied that she would ensure that all the laws of the country were upheld. Why is not the law on Sunday trading given the same consideration by magistrates, courts, judges and chairmen of magistrates courts, to ensure that it is enforced?

Let me ask the Leader of the House three specific questions. First, what action does he think the Attorney-General is taking to ensure compliance with the law, concerning the admitted illegal Sunday opening by Heal's and Habitat, both shops in the Storehouse group? Secondly, will he ask the Attorney-General whether he will now consider prosecuting the chairman, chief executive and other members of the Storehouse group under the aiding and abetting provision of section 44 of the Magistrates Courts Act 1980, concerning the admitted flagrant breaches of the Shops Act 1950 by Heal's and Habitat shops? Thirdly, in the light of the ruling on 27 June 1989 by the Advocate General of the European Court of Justice, what guidance will the Attorney-General now consider giving to local authorities about their statutory duty to enforce the law on Sunday trading? I would like answers to those questions when the Leader of the House replies.

The House should not adjourn because we have not yet debated the major reform in legislation protecting children —the people in this country who have no rights or proper opportunities to advance their own cases. When can we have an early debate on the Children Bill? What will happen to the family courts which have been requested? I know that 10,000 grandparents have been pleading for their rights as grandparents to be legally represented at court to allow them to plead for their grandchildren. We should debate those matters; we should not adjourn until October while all those grandparents and children are not protected by the laws of this country. It is high time that action was taken to remedy that failure.

6.51 pm

**Mr. Jim Lester** (Broxtowe): My right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House is very welcome in his new position on the Government Front Bench because we know of his considerable sympathies for the individual. Like the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell), I want to propose that the House should not adjourn for the summer recess. However, if we get our way, I am sure that we would be the most unpopular Members of Parliament ever and would probably act as leads for the return of capital punishment.

*[Mr. Jim Lester]*

The House should not adjourn until there has been an environmental audit in my constituency. Although I have every confidence in the new Secretary of State for the Environment and his team, what is happening in my constituency is an extreme example of what might be happening elsewhere in the country. The events in my constituency will affect my constituents profoundly over the weeks, months and years ahead.

Many of my constituents who have made plans for the future, and other long-established communities, feel trapped by a steamroller of inevitability which crushes their views and faith in democracy and their ability to influence their own destinies. In these green days, people talk about the rape of the countryside. I want to draw the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House to the fact that there is a multiple rape in my constituency. Four environmental hazards in one constituency are excessive by any standards.

Unknown until the beginning of this month, a proposal has come to light to add a further option to the A453 access route to Nottingham. That new option is known as the green route. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health wrote to my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) in his former capacity as the Minister for Roads and Traffic, and said:

> "I am now horrified to discover that a quite unacceptable new proposal described as the Green Route running from Barton past Clifton Wood and over a new bridge to Beeston has been added to the alternative proposals. Everyone familiar with the debate over the years has always expected that the choice would lie between what is now called the Red Route through Clifton and the Yellow Route which would be a Clifton Bypass between Clifton and Ruddington. I did not know that your engineers were working up another proposition as an alternative to those two. I hope that the Green Route will not complicate the arguments for very long, because as shown on your plans, it would be an environmental disaster."

I can only agree with that completely. People in Beeston Rylands purchased their houses beside the river and the canal. Those are modest, not grand, houses and their owners value their valley and their environment enormously, as do all the other people who use the Trent valley as a recreational area.

There are three proposals to opencast the spine of the Erewash valley. If the proposals go forward, my constituents in relatively close communities can look forward to 20 years of development involving dust, dirt and the total destruction of their landscape in a completely unnecessary way. My hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley (Mr. Oppenheim) shares my views on that.

At a recent exhibition, the Coal Board called the first proposed site for opencasting the "Engine lane" site, which will involve the dereliction of the Moorgreen colliery which is famous in D. H. Lawrence's work because he based many of his stories there. British Coal does not reveal that the other four fifths of the area is known as Beauvale—obviously it has that name because it is very beautiful. Those who are familiar with Lawrence's work will be aware of his contrast between the industrialised east side of the area with its pit, and Hagg's farm and going to Miriam to escape the awful pressures of the industrial revolution. British Coal now wants to introduce a modern industrial revolution into an area which, even in Lawrence's day, was not touched. British Coal is talking about a five-year development in a tiny community. The development would involve 52 lorry movements a day on a B road, causing dust, dirt and the total destruction of the environment.

The next site for opencast development is called the Shilo north site, which affects the villages and small towns of Kimberley, Eastwood and Awsworth. The site is at the bottom of the valley. I agree with the comments in the Nottingham *Evening Post* which stated:

> "I applaud the campaign by the Shilo North Action Group to preserve their locality. A vast gaping hole torn in the earth, destroying the essence of the countryside, is too great a price to pay for coal we don't urgently need. I can imagine the outcry should Stratford or Constable country be threatened in this way."

The third site due for development is known as Robinettes. It will affect the villages of Cossoll and Awsworth. That area is close to Nottingham, but is green land offering great recreational opportunities. There are many farms in the area, and it has not been touched by the industrial revolution, but it is now being sized and drilled in another proposal to rip up the land and terrify the local community through a long process of destruction and potential dereliction.

All the local communities are firmly opposed to those environmental hazards. Broxtowe district council, Nottingham county council, the protest groups and I have joined together as we grind our way through the due processes of planning and public inquiries.

I want to give my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House a flavour of what this means to so many people who cannot sell their houses. I am not talking about the great and the good; I am talking about people in normal small terraced houses who face the long prospect of the real difficulties in their personal lives.

We all accept that, in a developing society, we cannot stand still. However, before we can accept the degree of environmental dereliction that I have described, we must be sure that the need for it is critical. No one is sure that the need for opencast coal is that critical. A balance is essential. There is a price which we must be very careful not to pay in terms of people's environmental privilege, for which no compensation can be paid.

I will end with a quotation from the Nottingham *Evening Post* "Comment" written by Suzanne Kirk:

> "We are rapidly approaching a crisis point. It seems more change has taken place over the last 20 to 30 years than during the rest of history.
>
> The undistinguished Erewash Valley, although not mentioned in any tourist guides, is very special to the people of West Nottinghamshire.
>
> The abundant wildlife, tranquil foot paths and panoramic views make it a place to escape to—but not one for much longer if British Coal's plans to outcrop the valley succeed."

6.59 pm

**Mr. Pat Wall** (Bradford, North): During business questions last week I referred to a Chinese dissident, Xu Hai Ning, who returned to China about 10 days ago. I received a brief answer from the Home Office, but I have had no opportunity further to pursue the matter. My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) has also referred to this issue. This subject is apposite, as the former Foreign Secretary will reply to the debate.

I am a frequent and, on occasions, vehement critic of the way in which the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office deal with numerous immigration cases in my constituency, but I have nothing but praise for the Home Office staff who have dealt with this case. I make no criticism about that person's return to China. When we phoned the Home Office we got very good support from the staff. Mr. Xu was interviewed at the airport on his way back to China. He was seen on his own, and attempts were made to allow him to ask for protection if he had any objection to going back. I mention this case because it raises one or two matters in which the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can be of assistance.

When I interviewed him in the House of Commons a fortnight ago, Mr. Xu was distraught and unsure of his status here. He had been granted leave to stay in Britain for 12 months. In the circumstances, that decision was reasonable. He was concerned about having no travel documents, about what would happen at the end of the 12 months, and about his ability to take up employment, become a student, and so on during his stay. Dissidents who come to this country are often highly emotional and could be helped by proper counselling.

I am somewhat disturbed about advertisements that were placed in a Chinese business newspaper published in Soho and about accusations that Chinese diplomatic staff in this country have been phoning people to find the addresses of safe houses, saying that they have messages from their family—in other words, putting pressure on them. I realise that it is difficult to deal with advertisements, phone calls and, possibly following people and searching out safe houses, but people need the maximum possible protection.

It is 148 years since Britain obtained part of the colony of Hong Kong through two treaties and a leasing deal that was made in 1886. Those treaties were unfairly imposed on China because China was dominated by Britain and other imperial powers at the time. Since then, the vast majority of Chinese people in Hong Kong have had no say in the running of the country, the distribution of its wealth or their own future. Much has been made of the so-called Hong Kong economic miracle. It is no miracle. Hong Kong is one of a small number of countries—for example, Singapore, Taiwan and, formerly, South Korea—that enjoy a privileged position in free trade. It has had a compliant, cheap labour force and the advantage of massive international capital investment, in particular in Hong Kong by America, Japan and Britain. Investors have had a free hand to exploit a tremendously hard-working and compliant population who, in turn, have been denied any real democratic or trade union rights.

It is true that the majority of people in Hong Kong enjoy a far higher standard of living than those in the rest of China. That is hardly surprising considering their trade advantages, the fact that China was ruled for centuries by emperors and warlords, was pillaged by a variety of imperialist powers, was devastated during the Japanese invasion and the civil war of 1945-49, and that the majority of the population were uneducated, extremely poor peasants. Hong Kong falls far short of being a so-called capitalist paradise.

Several hon. Members have lived in Hong Kong. Many others have visited it with parliamentary delegations. Others like myself have visited the colony during their previous employment. However, few hon. Members have had an opportunity to see the sweated labour conditions that exist in many factories and workplaces in Hong Kong. They see an entirely different side of Hong Kong—the good houses in Repulse bay and the better areas of Hong Kong. They see the private clubs that are enjoyed by British and European people and by some of the richer Chinese. They see the fabulous hotels, nightclubs and bars. Very few have spent a weekend with an ordinary Chinese family and travelled in a plywood-sided lift to the 15th floor of a 20-floor block, which is one of 20 or 30 similar skyscrapers in one housing development.

Few people have taken any interest in seeing the thousands of people who pour from the workplaces at lunchtime to eat their lunches in the shanty canteens that line the roads. Few appreciate the pollution and overcrowding in the streets or see the conditions of the boat people—not just Vietnamese boat people, but Chinese boat people—who eke out their lives in the typhoon basins of Hong Kong. That is the reality of life for most Chinese people in Hong Kong.

I accompanied an injured colleague to hospital at 3 o'clock one morning in Hong Kong. I will not describe what it was like going into the hospital and the interviews that one had to have with the police. However, we ended up in the ward. I had never seen anything like it in my life. It was a typical rectangular hospital ward. The four sides of the ward were lined with beds touching each other, and, in front of the beds, were camp beds, also touching each other. Seated in hospital chairs were people with drips in their arms and noses. All the lights were on at 5 o'clock in the morning. Two arguments were taking place. There may be private hospitals for the rich in Hong Kong, but that is the standard of treatment for many ordinary people.

The debate on the return of Hong Kong to China was a golden opportunity for the majority of Chinese people to have the right to a say for the first time in how the colony is run, how its wealth is distributed, and what its future should be. If universal sufferage had been granted to everybody over the age of 18, Chinese people could really say what their wishes are. Hon. Members have debated Chinese people's right of abode, but, to a large extent, it is a side issue. An old friend of mine who has carried on business in Hong Kong for 15 years has recently returned. He wrote:

> "Numerous people I have spoken to over the last few days, from taxi drivers to industrialists, have used almost the same words to me: 'They are shooting my people! Why did they have to do such a terrible thing?' I must say that I think there is now a considerable risk of civil unrest in Hong Kong, depending on events in China, British reaction to those events, and the short-term political evolution of the very broadly-based movement within Hong Kong."

My friend went on to talk about the right to abode. The right to abode has been wrongly tackled in the House. The 3·5 million people in the Irish Republic and 1·5 million people in Northern Ireland have the right of abode, given the possibility of an Armageddon or a Beirut-type situation developing in Northern Ireland. Also, 270 million people in the Common Market have the right of abode in this country. People in Hong Kong had that right of abode up to 1962. My view is that the granting of the right of abode to Hong Kong citizens would diffuse the situation and would concentrate the mind not on that issue, but on the much more important issues which concern relationships with China and the democratic rights in Hong Kong.

The Chinese claim that theirs is a Socialist Government, a Socialist society and that they are Communists. However, as a lifelong Socialist and an unashamed Marxist, I believe that a river of blood separates Stalinism from real Socialism. The events in

*[Mr. Pat Wall]*

China, the appalling events in Soviet labour camps, the massacre during the Hungarian revolution and the events in Czechoslovakia have nothing to do with my ideas of Socialism.

I can recall walking off a mountainside in Hong Kong with a Chinese friend, past a filthy, horrible, degrading and disgusting squatter camp, and seeing coming out of that camp two small children, aged about five years and two years. They were dressed in immaculate pyjamas. They were doing their ablutions brushing their teeth and washing themselves at a standpipe that the local authority had erected at the side of that squatters camp. That was a touching scene. However, what it brought home to me was not how nice and beautiful those little children were, but the resolve of their parents, living under that filth and horror, to keep those children decent and to strive to find a better way of life. That is the real side of humanity, which the Chinese rulers will realise when the Chinese people rise again, as they will, and end for ever the totalitarian system there, as I hope one day we will end the inequalities that exist in capitalist society throughout the world.

7.11 pm

**Mr. Keith Raffan** (Delyn): I begin by referring to the speech of the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell). I know that my right hon. and learned Friend will not be seduced by the legendary charm and the equally legendary scant respect for the facts of that hon. Gentleman. The hon. Member for Ogmore knows as well as I do that it was open to the Labour party to choose to debate earlier this year the subject of the National Health Service in Wales in the Welsh Grand Committee, but it did not choose to do so. It was equally open to the Labour party to debate that matter on one or part of one of its many Opposition supply days in the House, but it did not do so. It had those opportunities, but it did not take them. The hon. Gentleman, therefore, cannot complain about the lack of opportunity for a debate on the National Health Service in Wales during this current session. Indeed, so enthusiastic was the Welsh Labour party for the proceedings of the Welsh Grand Committee that at this stage of the Session we have had one fewer debate than usual.

I assure the hon. Member for Ogmore that, far from being reluctant to debate the subject of the National Health Service in Wales, Conservative Members are exceedingly keen to do so. How can we be otherwise, when there has been in real terms a 40 per cent. increase in expenditure on the National Health Service in Wales in the past 10 years? If the record of the Government on spending on the National Health Service in England and Wales has been good, in the Principality it has been remarkable.

I wish to raise an issue that I have already raised twice today in questions both to my right hon. and learned Friend during business questions and to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, during his statement on food safety—the serious salmonella poisoning outbreak in my constituency in north Wales and in other parts of the north-west. The severity of the situation can be measured by the fact that there are 53 suspected cases of salmonella poisoning in Clwyd; 29 of those have been confirmed bacteriologically, 13 people have been admitted to hospital and, tragically, one person has died.

I pay fulsome tribute to Delyn borough council and Clwyd health authority for the thorough way in which they have investigated the outbreak so that within a short period they were able to track down the source. The suspected food was withdrawn from sale, the production of cooked meat by the company implicated in the outbreak was halted, and distribution of the food was suspended. A list of outlets has also been supplied to all environmental health departments and visits are being undertaken as quickly as possible to those outlets. The health authority has also, of course, given advice to the public about ready-cooked and prepared meats.

I have no doubt that Delyn borough council, as the public health authority, has taken all the appropriate steps, on the basis of the circumstantial evidence available, to contain the outbreak. However, I want to draw to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend, which I know he will in turn bring to the attention of his colleagues, the problem the council faces. I raised this problem this afternoon with the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The council, as public health authority, finds itself in a dilemma in deciding whether to name the company suspected of being implicated in the outbreak, because it has at present only circumstantial evidence and must wait several days for that evidence to be backed up and confirmed by medical and scientific analyses. As soon as the investigation was initiated into the outbreak, faecal and food samples and swabs were taken from potential suspects and sent to the public health laboratory for analysis.

I welcomed the Welsh Office's decision today to issue a food hazard notice naming the company which is believed to be involved, in the interests of consumer safety, and also to list the various outlets for prepared and cooked meat originating from that company. In the event of an outbreak of this kind, it is important that we not only have full and effective co-operation between the relevant health and local authorities, but that there is also a clear chain of responsibility. I believe that ultimately the onus must be on the health authority to decide whether or not to name a company which it has good reason to believe is implicated —perhaps 60 or 75 per cent. certain—even though it has not received medical and scientific back-up. When there is such an outbreak, time is of the essence. It is very important that the name of the company is disclosed to the public so that those shops which sell food originating from the company can withdraw that food from sale and those who have bought suspected food can see their doctors as soon as possible.

I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will bring that matter to the attention of the Cabinet sub-committee on food safety which, because of its importance, is chaired by our right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. When we come to legislate on these matters in the autumn, it is important that we cover the "chain of command" in such an outbreak, the relationship between the Government, the health authorities and the local councils as public health authorities.

I understand from those whom I have spoken to in the past few days that the first suspected case was notified to Delyn borough council's environmental health department on Tuesday 20 July. Clwyd health authority informed me that the first it knew of the outbreak was when the first patient was hospitalised on Saturday 22 July. I do not criticise anyone at this juncture. The important thing is to help all those who are dealing with this difficult and serious situation and who are doing their utmost to contain it and get it under control. But it is important for the Welsh Office to ensure that all available information is provided to the Clwyd health authority and to the neighbouring health authorities as soon as possible. That is a must if the community physicians are to be able to do their job, to contact potential suspects and take samples from them.

Earlier, I asked my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to consider issuing guidelines to butchers and delicatessens on cooked and raw meat. As the Institution of Environmental Health Officers said in the press today, it is important that raw and cooked meats are not allowed to stand near each other and that the same machinery is not used to slice them.

When we had the serious salmonella outbreak connected with eggs at the end of last year, the Ministry was not slow to issue the necessary guidelines. The chief medical officer of health issued advice to consumers on salmonella in eggs and poultry. Codes of practice were issued to producers and National Health Service hospitals were rightly briefed on the cooking of foods involving eggs. The Ministry must now seriously consider issuing guidance to butchers, delicatessens and consumers.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food undertook quite a devastating survey of domestic kitchen hygiene. It showed that consumers have an important part to play in reducing the risk of food poisoning. It revealed that consumers do not normally read the storage instructions on chilled or frozen pre-packed foods; that 94 per cent. of respondents never checked the temperature of their refrigerator; that 66 per cent. never adjusted its temperature control; and that only 18 per cent. appreciated the hazard of keeping food at room temperature for prolonged periods.

It is equally important to embark on a renewed campaign of public awareness—following the one earlier this year. This is especially important given the extraordinary hot weather that we are currently experiencing—so that people are made aware of the importance of separating cooked and raw meats in their fridges and of ensuring that their refrigerators are at the necessary low temperature.

The Government have acted promptly, swiftly and efficiently on food safety, but it must worry all hon. Members that the number of cases of salmonella enteritidis phage type 4 increased from seven to 109 between 1964 and 1974 and increased sharply from 1,362 in 1984 to 12,522 in 1988. Those figures originate from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

I warmly welcome the White Paper and look forward to an early debate and early legislation on these matters in the new Session. I hope, in the meantime, that my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House will bring the points that I have made to the attention of not only the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food but the Secretary of State for Wales, who is responsible for agriculture and food in the Principality. I would also ask that the guidance to butchers and delicatessens I mentioned is issue as soon as possible.

I hope that the Cabinet sub-committee on food safety will give urgent attention to ensuring that in the event of an outbreak there is in future a clear chain of responsibility and command; that all the authorities involved co-operate fully and effectively; and that there is no delay in naming a company that is clearly implicated, on sufficient circumstantial evidence, in a serious outbreak.

7.23 pm

**Mr. Elliot Morley** (Glanford and Scunthorpe): I should like to raise a couple of issues before the House adjourns. The Government have not taken adequate steps to deal with environmental issues in the environmental Bill proposed for the autumn, or to deal with water quality control and the proposals for the Nature Conservancy Council.

Will the Leader of the House assure me that the Secretary of State for the Environment will respond to the challenge of my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) to publish the proposals that will be included in the environmental Bill before the autumn so that hon. Members can try to achieve consensus on them? Hon. Members who are genuinely concerned about improving the environment want to achieve consensus. My hon. Friend the Member for Copeland has made a generous offer, but consensus will not be achieved unless hon. Members are aware of the Bill's provisions and what is the Government's line of thinking.

I am concerned about how the Nature Conservancy Council is being run. The proposals for its restructuring have not been thought out, and the NCC was not consulted on them. The first that it heard about them was when it was announced in the press that the previous Secretary of State for the Environment intended to merge it with the Countryside Commission and break up its functions.

I must express my concern at how the NCC was directed by the previous Secretary of State, who appeared to be directly involved in altering its role and direction, especially on field and blood sports. He appointed a number of new members to the NCC in March, among whom were two landowning earls—one maintained a large grouse moor and the other was a master of foxhounds. Although I am sure that they are worthy individuals, they do not seem compatible with our premier organisation for nature conservation. One of the NCC's staff said:

> "I cannot imagine what some of these people, however worthy they are, are going to do for nature conservation, as opposed to the interests of landowners and grouse shooters."

Many people are concerned about the NCC being manipulated by people who are not sympathetic to the environment or to the nature conservation ideals that many share. An example was when the previous Secretary of State said that the NCC should take into account what he termed "traditional country sports" before it gave grants for the purchase of land.

The NCC signed an agreement with various shooting organisations on what it termed "areas of common interest", under which a grant was given to Kent wildfowlers to purchase an area to shoot wildfowl. I accept that wildfowling is a legitimate interest and pastime, but I am not sure that it is the role of the NCC to give public funds to wildfowling organisations for them to pursue their interests.

That should be contrasted with the way in which other organisations have been treated when applying for grants. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds applied for a 50 per cent. grant to extend its nature reserve in Nene washes, Cambridgeshire. The NCC told the RSPB that it

*[Mr. Elliot Morley]*

would not be given a grant unless it allowed shooting on its nature reserve. Shooting and a nature reserve are incompatible, so the society proceeded without a grant.

The NCC negotiated with landowners on the Solway firth to buy their shooting rights for £750,000. The EEC, because of the international importance of the Solway firth for wintering wildfowl, was prepared to pay 50 per cent. of that sum. I understand that the previous Secretary of State spent some time shooting in that area and that when he heard about this deal he intervened and instructed the NCC to scrap it. The 50 per cent. grant, which was not an inconsiderable amount, was lost to that major conservation area.

People who get their pleasure from chasing innocent animals to death or torturing them have no place in such organisations. They would be better off seeking psychiatric or medical help than being involved in conservation bodies as a way of pursuing their pastimes. The NCC should not be involved in that role.

I do not object, and most reasonable people would not object, to the NCC being broken up on a regional basis, with one council for Scotland and one for Wales. There is nothing wrong with that, but its national structure must be safeguarded. The NCC has funded long-term research projects, such as the common bird census, constant effort sites and the national ringing programme. The main agency is the British Trust for Ornithology which is negotiating a new five-year contract with the NCC. The work must be funded, controlled and monitored nationally.

Furthermore, the NCC must have real influence and control over its work. I am worried that attempts are being made to dilute it. I have already explained the effect of the previous Secretary of State's appointments. In Scotland, the NCC has come into conflict with local landowners and regional councils on several issues. In the flow country, the NCC has rightly held out against extensive planting of trees in an area of international importance which has never in its history been planted with conifers. The planting of conifers is alien to the habitat and landscape.

There is conflict about the development of the Cairngorms and the extension of the ski lift and skiing facilities into Lurchers gully. The regional council has tried to change its structure plan to allow that to happen even though that proposal was defeated in a public inquiry a few years ago. There is much conflict about grants for planting trees in Scotland where 90 per cent. of new planting is conifers.

If the NCC is broken up, will the Scottish NCC be dominated by Scottish landowners who are involved in tree-planting, grouse moors and shooting? What confidence can we have that the NCC in the hands of such people will fulfil its role? The position is serious when one considers that some parts of Scotland should have a certain breed of bird of prey—the hen harrier—but do not. Where they have tried to nest and establish themselves, local gamekeepers have illegally put down poisoned baits, or, in a recent case, shot the sitting bird on the nest and stabbed the young into the ground. Will such people be appointed to the NCC? Can we have confidence in them to protect our wildlife?

Wildlife is not just there for aesthetic purposes. It is a biological indicator. What happens to wildlife is a sign of what is happening to the health of our environment, as we saw in the 1960s with the effect of DDT on animal species in the food chain.

In my area there is great anxiety about the levels of pollution in the River Humber. The flora and fauna are particularly impoverished in the upper reaches. That is because of excessive pollution which the Government have made little attempt to control The position will be made worse by the proposals in the Water Bill, as sewerage works are given permission to carry on polluting the river at levels far higher than the EEC agreed maximums. Other industrial outflows will also exceed the maximums, yet sufficient action is not being taken to tackle the problem.

A document has been leaked to me. Unfortunately the identification marks have all been removed, so that I cannot tell where it came from. It is a scientific survey of the Humber. It draws attention to some of the main problems, which must be tackled as a matter of priority. It identifies that at certain times of river flow and high temperatures there is a complete lack of oxygen in the vicinity of the Trent falls. The document states that oxygen levels in the mid and lower Humber are of concern in summer resulting from a significant input of organic matter, sewage. That means that at certain periods of the year or indeed of the month, some stretches of the Humber are biologically dead. Life cannot exist there. It is a barrier to the migration of fish upriver. Pollution has reached such levels that there is no oxygen.

The document continues:

> "Compared with other estuaries the fauna . . . is extremely limited in terms of the number of species found.
>
> The Ouse system was originally a prolific salmon fishery, fish being taken regularly . . . along a considerable length of the system. Whilst very occasionally fish get through the estuary, commercial fishing is non-existent. The decline is attributable in the main to lack of oxygen.
>
> There is very little information of a reliable nature on the concentrations of heavy metals in the estuary. There is no systematically collected data available as to the concentrations of alien, man-made organic contaminants in the estuary. No baseline data on which to base predictions of true nature and impact of man's activities on the estuary."

Recently Greenpeace took samples in the Humber which showed alarmingly high levels of heavy metal contaminants from various sources. The document states:

> "Measurements of Arsenic have shown that the concentration of this element is significantly increased in the neighbourhood of Read's island emanating from Cappa Pass on the North Bank of the Humber.
>
> There are 216 potentially polluting discharges to the tidal waters of the Humber, 67 to the Ouse system, 70 to the Trent and 79 to Hull and Humber.
>
> Acid iron waste discharged from two titanium dioxide plants (Tioxide UK Ltd. and the SCM Corporation) affects an area of the Humber in excess of 17 km. Every other nation in Europe has taken steps to reduce emissions from this internationally recognised polluting industry."

It is true that we have recently debated EEC directives about controlling emissions from titanium dioxide, but little progress appears to have been made and the steps that have been taken have been far too late.

The document mentions that a disease called epidermal papilloma in dab is as high in the Dogger bank area just off Humberside as it is in the German bight. The document suggests that in November 1984, upon completion of a report on this matter, the Government were so alarmed that they immediately drew up plans to terminate the dumping of sewage and industrial waste. As far as I know, that has never been carried out. Industrial waste and sewage sludge are still being dumped in the North sea off the Humber, with the results that we have seen.

The Government have not tackled the problem of the environment or the issue of the NCC. To break it up would be a retrograde step. It needs the reassurance that I have outlined. Many organisations are watching the Government carefully on these issues and they want some action.

7.38 pm

**Mr. John Bowis** (Battersea): I am not sure what a Leader of the House does during the summer recess. I suspect that he puts his feet up. I am sure that a deputy Prime Minister does no such thing, but races round keeping his colleagues in order. That is what I should like my right hon. and learned Friend to do with two sets of his colleagues.

The first are his colleagues in the arts, the Department of the Environment and the Treasury on the matter dealt with by early-day motion 1179 on the English National Opera and the English National Ballet, formerly the London Festival Ballet. If we do not find a solution to their funding problem within the next month we shall have serious trouble keeping those two excellent national institutions in being. I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend will take that on board and ensure that we find a solution during the recess.

I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will also pursue his colleagues in the Department of Transport. An advantage of the type of life and hours that we in the House have is that we usually go home long after the traffic jams have ended. Last night, however, even after 11 o'clock, the traffic jams were by no means at an end in London, and the A3 was blocked solid.

I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend, perhaps no longer being burdened with international travel, will experience some of the domestic forms of travel—or perhaps I should say, the inability to travel—that Londoners have faced for many years. If he would care to visit south London, I will take him on a slow guided tour round the traffic jams and blocked bus lanes and then, if he has an hour or two to spare, I will accompany him down to a couple of stations on the Northern line, and then to an area where neither the Northern line nor the District line or any other Underground line runs. That might lead us to try some of the railway stations in my part of the world. Although trains run there, they do so with inadequate numbers of coaches, so that when they pull in at stations the passengers fall out rather than try to get in.

Having experienced some of the delights of travelling around south London and having sat in traffic jams, my right hon. and learned Friend will doubtless return to his colleagues at the Department of Transport and ask, "What are we to do about this problem?" The officials in that Department will tell him, "We are thinking of putting some more traffic into the area." That represents the real problem at which I hope my right hon. and learned Friend will look. The Government, having rightly listened to people such as I who call attention to transport problems in London, invited consultants to come up with some analyses of the problems and then to put forward some solutions.

The solutions that are being suggested would drive not coaches and horses through London—if only that were the case—but major roads through London, knocking down houses on the way, carving through common land and introducing yet more traffic into London. As those of us who understand a little of traffic engineering and mathematics and a lot about the burdens and desires of our constituents know, more roads result in more traffic. Even worse, bigger roads result in bigger volumes of traffic. Faster roads do not produce faster traffic but result in moving traffic faster into traffic jams. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will encourage his colleagues in the Department of Transport to drop those schemes.

The first scheme that might be dropped is a project known as weir, which should have a "d" at the end. The words which form the acronym weir include the word "improvement." It is known as the western environmental improvement route. It is difficult to appreciate what the project would achieve, for the road would be a great hazard to the people of Hammersmith, depositing traffic at a great rate of knots—about 11,000 additional vehicles a day—on to the river embankment, where it would have nowhere to go except on to the overcrowded roads of Wandsworth. We are told that it would produce an increase of 27 per cent. in traffic volume and that it would not be a motorway but only a small road that would use a railway line that is no longer needed.

We are told not to worry about what is proposed. We are bound to worry because it is destined to bring 85,000 vehicles a day along that stretch of road to the river. That number of vehicles is as much as the elevated section of the M4 can carry, and it is probably the heaviest used two-lane motorway in Britain. If it is not a motorway, I am not sure what it is. It has all the appearance of a motorway. There are no cyclists or pedestrians allowed on it and there are no junctions of the non-motorway type. It brings all the traffic to my part of the world. I hope that that road scheme will be the first to be thrown out, and thereafter the other schemes and option that have been put to the Department of Transport should also be thrown out.

Our road problems are due to the history of London, which was designed largely for the narrow gauge cart and its horse. The problems are increasing because of London's increased prosperity. There are other ways of achieving the solutions we need, and I hope that careful consideration will be given to the four-borough alternative that has been put forward by the boroughs of Richmond, Wandsworth, Hammersmith and Lambeth. That four-borough, three-party scheme looks to public transport as a solution to London's traffic problems.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) along with myself and others have brought forward the scheme of red routing, a plan that would enormously help the flow of traffic in London and would stop thoughtless and selfish parking or waiting on roads. My right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point, (Sir B. Braine), the Father of the House, referred earlier to the Serjeant at Arms and to this place having wig, pen and sword. I would use all three of those on motorists who park thoughtlessly on some through routes into London.

Aside from that and some minor improvements, such as widening or straightening roads, it is clear that providing more and bigger roads is not the answer. We must deter people from using roads to come into London, including stopping firms providing car parking spaces. The City of London follows that course to a certain extent and I should like to see the rest of London doing the same. Much would be achieved quickly by improving public transport.

*[Mr. John Bowis]*

If we had better rail and Underground services, looked carefully at the central London rail study and threw out the road options, we would achieve a great deal.

If we did that, my right hon. and learned Friend would have earned his rest in the second half of the summer recess and many Londoners would have rest granted to them as a result of the quick and merciful killing off of the road options that are being put to the Department of Transport.

7.46 pm

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): I, too, am concerned with the environmental conditions in which the people of London live. I agree with the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) that the assessment studies now under consideration are far from what Londoners want or need. They require a rapid, considerable improvement in public transport and a reduction in the number of cars coming into central London.

We live in a dirty, polluted and dangerous city and I get more and more angry as I cycle round London having my lungs blasted full of exhaust from cars. My constituents suffer because of the vast number of commuter cars that come through my area. They are only too well aware of the major road building proposals, and earlier this week I presented 24 petitions signed by 3,000 people who live in various parts of my constituency and who oppose the road assessment studies, and there will be plenty more from where those petitions came.

My constituents are not prepared to have their homes and communities torn apart to make way for motorways which will bring even more traffic through the inner London constituencies to clog up the rest of London, as has happened this week. We must have a different approach to transport in London from the schemes that are on offer.

The other main issue that I wish to raise is poverty in London. A sense of horrible complacency descends over the House at this time of year as hon. Members seem to have a mad desire to get away to Bermuda or the Caribbean or wherever else people spend their summer holidays, leaving behind all the problems.

Despite all the press publicity that has been given this week to the reshuffling in the Government, nothing has changed for many people in London. When, later tonight, hon. Members who stayed for the Consolidated Fund debates leave to go home, the same people will be sleeping in cardboard boxes outside the law courts and on the pavements outside Charing Cross and Waterloo stations as were sleeping in those places last night. If one went out now to the theatreland area of London, one would find the same people begging around the theatre queues. People are walking round London begging for food and sustenance. The fact that that is happening in one of the world's major capital cities, in one of the richest countries and in what we are told is one of the most successful economies in western Europe is not just a standing disgrace: it is a shame on everyone. People should not be reduced to sleeping on pavements and to begging, as is happening in this capital city.

When people come to my advice surgery, as they no doubt will tomorrow evening, and to the surgeries of my hon. Friends who represent inner-London constituencies, we will hear about the horror facing people who live in grossly overcrowded flats and the horror of young people who know that they have no chance of getting their own place in which to live. They must stay in the already overcrowded flats of their parents simply because local authorities have lost a net figure of 31,000 council properties in the past 10 years. Very few council properties are being built and many more are being sold off. There is no way in which those young people can get a place of their own because if one wants to buy anywhere in central London on a mortgage one needs an income of about £20,000 a year—unless one has considerable savings.

We are dealing with a crisis of immeasurable proportions that affects the lives not just of people already on the housing lists but of their children who suffer in school because they live in overcrowded accommodation. Earlier this week I spent several hours talking to primary school teachers in my constituency. Not only are schools increasingly short of teachers; they are increasingly becoming centres for the social problems caused by a combination of poverty and bad housing. Children are continually ill, and whenever one child gets an illness, it is immediately passed on to the rest of the family because of the overcrowded living conditions. Increasingly, children are under-achieving at school because they are unable to do any kind of homework at home. Often they cannot get enough sleep because they all sleep in the same room and somebody may want to have the radio or television on, or simply because of the comings or goings of the people in the room. It is an absolute disgrace that that is happening in the richest part of a rich country.

As my hon. Friends and I are well aware, those problems are compounded by the social security legislation that has been enacted in the past few years. I served on the previous three Standing Committees considering social security legislation. None of those pieces of legislation has achieved any improvement in people's living standards. The legislation has simply increased arbitrary control by officials of the Department of Social Security, who often do not want that control, over poor people who are suffering increased poverty, increased homelessness and increased misery in our inner-urban areas.

The people who have come to London and who have been reduced to begging on our streets should be able to look to a social security system that will not force them into that position. Nobody enjoys lowering himself to the level of begging on our streets and sleeping in cardboard boxes. It might be a bit of a laugh to sleep out for a couple of nights in the summer, but in six months' time, on cold winter evenings, sleeping in a cardboard box outside the law courts or within sight of the Savoy hotel is no joke. It shames us all.

In relation to a social security problem in my community, I quote from a copy of a letter sent to the chair of the social security advisory committee by the leader of Islington council, Margaret Hodge, because it emphasises my point:

> "Dear Peter Barclay,
>
> I enclose a report produced by this Council's welfare rights team which describes the inadequate, demeaning and counter-productive nature of the Social Fund as experienced by claimants and advice staff in this borough. The Council agreed to give local DSS offices the opportunity to comment on the report and to carry out any improvements that might be feasible. However, in the three months since the report was produced, there has been a substantial deterioration in the scheme. I take no comfort from the fact that this was forecast in the body of the report.

> What has happened is that expenditure on community care grants has hit 100 per cent. of the very limited local budget. In Islington, this budget was set at only one-fifth of single payments expenditure in the year prior to April 1988. In the case of Finsbury Park DSS, their expenditure hit 131 per cent. of the monthly budget target in May, supposedly a 'light' month, with the result that they will have to make up this overspend by cutting back on their expenditure this year. They, and other Islington offices, have developed more 'stringent' local guidelines to achieve this. Obviously, these 'stringent' guidelines will be even more Draconian than the Secretary of State's Directions which still provide the legal framework for the scheme.
>
> Reports are coming in from all over the borough that people who qualify under the Directions for a Community Care Grant are being offered loans. This is totally unacceptable."

I heartily agree with and endorse the contents of that letter. I have placed a copy of the Islington report on the operation of the social fund in the Library and have sent another copy to the Department of Social Security. We warned the Department about what was happening and said that cash-limiting the social fund locally was not only disastrous, but meant that a proportion of what was available to poor people two or three years ago was already overspent. Local DSS staff have been placed in the appalling position of having to say to deserving people, "You cannot have the grants that you could have had a year ago and which we believe you should have under the guidelines because the money is simply not there."

A letter from the manager of the Finsbury Park DSS office to his staff about social fund priorities and community care grants states:

> "I have detailed below the Community Care Grant expenditure for the period 1 April 1989 to 30 June 1989 which shows that, despite arrangements to restrict awards to essential items of furniture and household equipment and thereby remain on profile, expenditure has still exceeded the budget profile."

The manager then gives the figures, and says:

> "As you can see, payments for furniture and household equipment on their own, have exceeded the budget for the period in question. In order to ensure that future expenditure can be contained within profile, I have had to introduce the following measures from 3rd July 1989:—
>
> (1) All claims for items of low to medium priority—clothing, redecoration, leisure items, Hire Purchase and other debts are unlikely to be met in view of their priority status and;
>
> (2) Community Care Grant awards for furniture and household equipment will be limited to the amounts in Annex 4 of Social Fund Manual i.e. £500.00 for a single person, £750·00 for a couple with £220·00 additions per child. Additionally, it may be necessary to refuse claims for high priority items if expenditure continues to outstrip budget profile.
>
> So far as budgetary loans are concerned, expenditure remains within profile".

Loans in certain categories are available, but they are loans to people who are already poor. For those who are eligible and deserving of a community care grant, the money will simply not be available.

I hope that the Leader of the House will undertake to refer the serious and legitimate concerns that I have voiced to the Department of Social Security. I am horrified that throughout August, September and for most of October, there will be no opportunity for me to raise these matters in the House and that the people in my area will have to go without what should be theirs by right. The House must resolve the problem of the serious urban poverty in our capital city.

7.57 pm

**Sir Philip Goodhart** (Beckenham): Before I follow the hon. Members for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) and for Bradford, North (Mr. Wall) on a brief trip to the far east, I remind the House that exactly one week ago the water to a substantial part of my constituency was cut off. That caused distress and discomfort to many of my constituents and put several at real risk.

Yesterday I received a letter from one constituent which read:

> "I am writing to you on my mother's behalf. She is 95 years old, blind and housebound. Her supply of water was turned off on Friday without any warning or without any provision being made for her to obtain water. The Thames Water Authority over their 'answerphone' could only say there was a tap somewhere locally—no address given."

Although Thames Water had known for 48 hours before the taps had to be switched off that a crisis was imminent, during that time no warning was given to the people of south London and no appeals to save water were made to offset the drastic step that was taken. I believe that there should be an inquiry into why the water was cut off without warning, in view of the public health risk involved. In the weeks ahead, a firm statement should be made about the amount of compensation that will be paid to those people who were put at risk.

My primary concern this evening is the plight of the Vietnamese boat people. I often corresponded with my right hon. and learned Friend on this subject when he was at the Foreign Office. All hon. Members know that tens of thousands of boat people from Vietnam have crowded into Hong Kong in recent weeks. They live in dreadful conditions and, if authoritative newspaper reports are to be believed, men, women and children will be forcibly shipped back to Vietnam before the House reassembles in the autumn.

The argument used by the Hong Kong authorities, the Foreign Office and the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs in favour of such a scheme is that these people are not proper refugees, but economic migrants. It is rarely easy to draw a sensible line between economic oppression and political oppression. In Poland, the founders of Solidarity began by striking against dreadful economic conditions, but the economic strike soon became a political protest. In the Soviet Union in recent weeks, coal miners have been striking against economic failure, but the strikes also seem to have political overtones.

If a family risk their lives by fleeing from Vietnam in a leaking, overcrowded boat—scores of boat people have been drowned when trying to escape this year—will the authorities in Vietnam consider that an economic and not a political gesture if the family is forced to return? We cannot be sure.

We know that some of the officials of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Hong Kong are unhappy about the screening procedures for new arrivals from Vietnam. There is also the argument that it is all right to send them back because Vietnam has changed. Thanks to the Foreign Office, I had an opportunity recently to meet the Foreign Minister of Vietnam—a hardened Communist with some 15 years' experience in the upper echelons of one of the most rigidly orthodox Communist countries in the world—who has been converted to free enterprise. When I talked to him, he sounded as though he was standing for chairmanship of the Back-Bench Conservative finance committee. He was

*[Sir Philip Goodhart]*

sure that political freedom would follow economic freedom. He certainly sounded more pro-capitalist than many of the South Vietnamese Ministers to whom I talked in Saigon in 1965 and in 1973.

Vietnam is still a closed society, and I do not believe that it is safe to send families back until Vietnam as a whole is open to diplomats, journalists, relief workers and tourists.

Conditions in the boat people's camps in Hong Kong are exceptionally bad. About eight weeks ago I visited the Shamshuipo camp in Hong Kong, where about 4,500 people live in conditions so bad that if we kept dogs in similar conditions in this country, the RSPCA would lead an outcry. Since then, conditions in many camps have deteriorated quite sharply. We know that the Hong Kong Government are unwilling to make any more money available.

Ultimately, we have responsibility for the conditions in those camps. I know that, in the first six months of this year, the British taxpayer provided £12 million to help with the problems caused by the influx of another 35,000 boat people, but it will take at least another £20 million before the end of this year to maintain standards that were barely tolerable before the new flood of boat people arrived.

I hope that the new Minister for Overseas Development will make it plain that the money will be available. If we pay the piper, we should also call the tune. In this country, we have many people who are expert in dealing with displaced persons and refugees. We should immediately send a high-level delegation of experts to Hong Kong to inspect the camps and if they recommend it, the British Government should take over direct responsibility for running some or all of the camps for new arrivals.

Urgent action is needed. I hope that the new Foreign Secretary will treat this as a matter of urgency.

8.6 pm

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): There have been many interesting speeches in this Adjournment debate. I do not think that any hon. Member has advocated that we do not break for the summer recess, and that is advantageous, as it steers us clear of hypocrisy. This debate gives us an opportunity to raise issues which are of concern to individual hon. Members.

The most common theme tonight has been the environment. I shall leave it to the Leader of the House to respond to each individual speech, and I am sure that he will deploy the considerable skills that he acquired over many years in the courts to summarise the cases that have been made.

My hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) mentioned the environment, particularly the North sea. During this Session of Parliament, there has been a considerable increase in public concern about the environment. I think that that concern is likely to grow during the recess, as there seems to be evidence that people's concern for the environment grows when they are on holiday, and they go to places that they are not familiar with.

Many people visit the seaside on their holidays or cross the sea in boats or aircraft. Most people who fly across the North sea, or the Irish sea, cannot fail to be impressed by how small they are. Their small size makes them vulnerable. The problems of the North sea and the Irish sea are legion, and they are not being dealt with as well or as quickly as they should be.

One sad example is the death of the majority of the seal population around the United Kingdom. That shows how little we know about the ecology of our seas. Although scientists warned that there was some danger to the seal population, none predicted such a disaster. We must be increasingly cautious when we make assumptions about the environment. Perhaps "precautious" would be a better word to describe what our attitude to the sea should be.

Owing to the current fears of holiday disruption abroad, the United Kingdom's seaside resorts are experiencing something of a revival, and it would be preferable if people were to encounter rather less sewage on the beaches. The response of the previous Secretary of State for the Environment—the right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley)—to sewage dispersal into the sea was, I, understand, to favour longer discharge pipes; those, however, provide no solution in our small and landlocked seas. They are really horizontal marine equivalents of the tall chimneys that have been exporting acid rain for some years. It appears that the Government never learn.

A development which, over the past few years, has revealed the Government's attitude to the marine environment is the massive and continuing failure of sea-bird breeding in the Shetlands, caused by the overfishing of sand eels, which, in theory, is regulated by the Government. The massive sea-bird colonies of Northern Britain are a unique biological feature of major international significance. In that area—I take just one example—Arctic terns have failed to breed because the chicks starved to death in 1984, 1985, and 1986. On some major sites, no chicks at all were reared in 1987 and 1988, and this year's breeding has also failed. Other species, such as the puffin, have also suffered massive breeding failure.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland—DAFS for the sake of brevity—has repeatedly told my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) the Royal Society for Birds and other such bodies that that failure has nothing to do with the adjacent industrial sand eel fisheries. It now turns out that the Department's own experts had been warning it of the consequences of overfishing the sand eels since as long ago as 1983. The disastrous belated decision of DAFS to license the Shetland sand eel fishery is a typical example of its dilatoriness. We now need a similar ban on the sand eel fishery in the Minch, unless more birds are to die and to cease to breed.

The problem is that the fate of the sea-bird colonies seems to be irrelevant to DAFS, which sees its responsibility as regulating the fishery rather than upholding the Government's obligation to protect the birds. That is symptomatic of the Tory approach, which is to maximise economic exploitation of the environment, not to protect it.

The newly appointed Environment Secretary, the right hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Patten) comes to the job with a reputation of being more sensitive, but I think that this is a bit of a rerun. The hon. Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave)—now Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office—when in a more junior Environment post, also had the reputation of being "green", saying the right words and even appearing at ease for his numerous photo opportunities. When it comes to matters of substance, however, he did very little, and his presence in that Department has already been forgotten.

Next March, there will be a third ministerial conference on the protection of the North sea. It will be a crucial test for the Government, because so many of the pollution problems that we create have their ultimate impact on the narrow seas that surround us. The last conference, held in 1987, agreed some measures. It agreed to give the environment the benefit of the doubt when faced with uncertainty—what is described as the precautionary principle—and assented to 50 per cent. reductions in some of the most obviously risky substances being discharged into the North sea.

Pollutants continue to accumulate, however, especially in the vulnerable coastal areas and in the narrowest part, the southern North sea. To halve the rate of discharge is no solution; it only buys time for a more fundamental shift of policy. That must be a shift from a society that is dependent on creating waste and then disposing of it to one that gives proper attention to not creating the waste in the first place. There is an opportunity here and now to do something. Public support for cleaning up the environment has never been so strong, but what is new, and what offers to make hopes of improvement a reality, is the significant thinking that is going on—even in the industries that, up to now, have been creating the waste.

The spring 1989 issue of the magazine *Process Engineering* was devoted entirely to the environment. It produced some interesting conclusions: that engineers are worried about the state of the environment, that there is vast potential for clean, no-waste and low-waste technology and that that could be economically viable, often with a rapid payback on the investment. However, the framework within which such companies must work is not conducive to the development of clean technologies, because there is no incentive for them to take action while waste-dumping costs are so low and regulations so lax.

Governments must act to achieve prompt and effective change. They can provide the long-term framework and objectives, and make it absolutely clear that the only way forward is a fundamental switch from our present culture of waste creation and disposal to one geared to placing a primary emphasis on clean technology and avoiding the creation of waste. That means thinking about what is being produced, as well as about the waste created during its manufacture.

Because the North sea is the sink for so much of our waste, and because the North sea conference has the scale and political clout to mean something, the forthcoming third conference must do much more. It must shift from ad hoc pollution control measures to working out a long-term planned strategy to achieve the necessary shift to clean technologies. That will give industries the guidance, structure and time with which to achieve the changes that are now possible. If that is to happen, however, countries such as Britain must realise how urgent it is for the third North sea conference to shift what has in the past been an emphasis on short-term "fix-it" measures. If we do not move on, there will be nothing left to fix.

Apart from the environmental benefits, it will be to our economic advantage if we are a prime mover. If the problem is to be resolved by united action at an international level, the growing United Kingdom pollution control industry will be presented with a wider market. If we are in the vanguard of the change, we can profit from it, but if we tag along in the rear, whingeing and moaning, we shall end up having to import products and skills when the international community finally forces us to catch up with others.

Unfortunately, there is little sign of that happening. The new Environment Secretary is supposed to have been appointed to improve the presentation of Government policy, but he will have to do more. We cannot rely on improved presentation; we shall need policy changes. I can say now that one test that will distinguish presentation from substance will be whether the right hon. Gentleman —during the current preparations for the third North sea conference, and at the conference—calls for those structural changes necessary for a clean environment. If he does not, he will have failed, and no amount of presentation will cover up his failure.

The new Secretary of State is renowned as a communicator, the implication being that his predecessor was not one. I consider that unfair: the right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury was a very good communicator. He made it blindingly obvious that protecting the environment could not be reconciled with the Thatcherite policies of deregulation. No amount of presentation can change that. I hope that the new Secretary of State will be able to bring some pressure and influence to bear on his colleagues to try to ensure that, when the future of everyone in this country and indeed in northern Europe is affected, we make the necessary effort and the necessary change both here and abroad. At home, and in partnership with our neighbours in northern Europe, we must work to clean up the North sea and the Irish sea. If we do not, succeeding generations will never forgive us.

8.20 pm

**The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe):** I do not intend to try to follow the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) who gave us a somewhat discursive presentation of an important case involving environmental matters. I welcome his perceptive observation that there was not much of a sustained chorus of opposition to the motion for the summer adjournment. One or two hardy souls said that they would be glad to stay, as long as nobody made them do so. That is understandable.

The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras spoke about a wide range of environmental matters. The new Secretary of State for the Environment recently left my former Department to join my former parliamentary private secretary in the Department of the Environment. I assure the hon. Gentleman that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment will study the hon. Gentleman's remarks with care and enthusiasm.

My hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) made what seemed to be a serious set of allegations about what he described as inexcusable, bureaucratic mistakes in the operation of the insolvency service. That service deals with about 12,000 personal bankruptcies and company liquidations each year. That is a large number to deal with effectively. The service sets a high standard, but clearly the case that my hon. Friend cited did not measure up to that standard. I shall invite the authorities to investigate it if my hon. Friend will be kind enough to let me have the details of the case.

*[Sir Geoffrey Howe]*

The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) has been reading, as I have been, the interview with President Mitterrand and speculating about the long-term implications of the President's observations about the Government's attitude towards economic and monetary union. The hon. Gentleman cited with approval President Mitterrand's proposition that we should play the card of agreement. That is important, because President Mitterrand mentioned the desirability of proceeding with major decisions about the future of the Community in unanimous agreement. The Government share that view.

At the conclusion of the Madrid conference we made it quite clear that we would take part in any intergovernmental conference about economic and monetary union, although we emphasised that a great deal of preparatory work is necessary first. It should not take place along the exclusive lines traced out in the Delors report. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will take some encouragement from the fact that by tenacious negotiation we were able to reach agreement on the important stages of development whether at Fontainebleau, at Luxembourg in the Single European Act, at Frankfurt or, indeed, at Madrid. The hon. Gentleman should not be too despondent about the possibility of agreement not being achievable.

My hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) spoke comprehensively and effectively about his concern for the future of Manchester airport and the case for increasing the use of such regional airports. My hon. Friend gave a variety of reasons. One was because our other airports in the south-east are already overcrowded and the second was because we need to attract transatlantic traffic to this country rather than allowing it to go to continental airports. The third reason was for the sake of increasing prosperity in the northern airports.

I respond to my hon. Friend's case with some sympathy because my constituency is immediately adjacent to Gatwick and my constituents take great comfort from the fact that there is a prohibition on the construction of a second runway at that airport. I hope that that will enable my hon. Friend to develop his case with which the Government have always had great sympathy. At the same time we have to try to safeguard the interests of the country as a whole by ensuring that increased access for foreign airlines is traded for benefits for United Kingdom airlines. My hon. Friend said that we should use international air traffic agreements effectively to promote the right kind of airport policy. I am sure that that will continue to be the case.

The hon. Member for Liverpool, Garston (Mr. Loyden) made a rather robust attack on the policy of the Government in relation to the national dock labour scheme. When I reflect on the condition of the docks in Merseyside today compared with the condition of those docks when I was first elected there in 1954, I share his sense of sadness. One of the books that I had an opportunity to study in the last year or two was a magnificent specially printed book called "A Cruise in Scots Waters" which was printed in 1847. It described a cruise in which the navigators set out from the port of Liverpool in 1847.

The description of the teeming prosperity and the Venetian imperial dynamism of Liverpool in those days was a fantastic reminder of what has been lost. Sadly, a great deal of that has been lost in recent years because of the immobility of those leaders of the dock workers who have hung on to the dock work labour scheme long past its useful life. Today it is up to the employers and the employees to establish new employment arrangements that will enable the new opportunities to be seized. The hon. Member for Garston presented a rather curious case, arguing that the Government were undermining the rights of trade union members at a time when commuters and others in this city are oppressed by a proliferation of strikes rather than the reverse.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence), who is lurking in an unfamiliar place in the Chamber, was kind enough to acknowledge that my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor had made significant improvements—from his point of view —to the Government's proposals on the legal profession between the Green Paper and the White Paper. He also said that the proposals adopted by our profession at the Bar in consequence of the Green Paper were the most far reaching ever set in hand. If I may say so, it was high time for such things. I have long studied the 1846 Special Select Committee report which contained a number of reforms that have long since been neglected. My hon. and learned Friend was right to say that a great deal has been achieved, and it is right for us to approach the debates in the next session on that basis.

The hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), who has told me that he cannot be here for the conclusion of the debate, was one of two hon. Members who spoke about events in China. The hon. Member for Bradford, North (Mr. Wall) spoke about his impression of events in China and compared them in a rather curious fashion with his impression of the development of Hong Kong. I had some sympathy with the hon. Member for Bradford, North, who can describe himself as a faithful Socialist if any Opposition Member can use such a term, when he went on to describe what he called his idea of Socialism. He was obliged to disclaim as an example virtually every case of Socialism that has ever been put in place. He described with the utmost enthusiasm everything that he sees taking place in China. I wonder how Socialists view the world when they cannot find any working examples that they are not about to disclaim.

The hon. Member for Bradford, North went on to bemoan and criticise conditions in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's problems consist of trying to cope with an uncheckable torrent of refugees from Vietnam and daily and overwhelming applications from potential refugees from mainland China. The people of Hong Kong are proclaiming the freedom that they have enjoyed under British rule and seeking to be protected from the contrasts that exist in the Socialist state on the other side of the border.

The hon. Member for Walsall, North was certainly right to draw attention to the great importance as perceived by the people of Hong Kong of plans for the future location of the People's Liberation Army in Hong Kong. I have no doubt that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs will have that in mind as an important point to canvass in future discussions with the Government of China.

The hon. Member for Bradford, North referred to the case of Xu Hai Ning and paid tribute, which I welcome, to the way in which Home Office officials and others have responded to his complaint. I identified some of the other activities which gave him anxiety, which I shall draw to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

My hon. Friend the Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder) made a moving, important and characteristic contribution to our debate. I speak of him as my hon. Friend wih a particular recollection of the time when we walked down Fleet street and up Ludgate hill together to sit alongside each other for the memorial service for the death of Sir Winston Churchill. We have been Members of Parliament together. He has served with distinction in many capacities in Northern Ireland. His plea for the political leaders of Ulster to get together, to risk insults to achieve political progress for the people of Northern Ireland was, he will have noticed, heard by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

My hon. Friend may not know that we are publishing tomorrow a booklet in recognition of the 20 years presence of our forces in Northern Ireland, to whom he rightly paid tribute. The booklet is entitled, "The Day of the Men and Women of Peace Must Surely Come". As my right hon. Friend the previous Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said, the booklet tries to

> "demonstrate the positive and creative work of the real people of Northern Ireland and the achievements over the past 20 years."

My hon. Friend and I have not taken the same view of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, but I hope that he joins me in regarding the setting in which we now find ourselves as one in which people should respond to the moving plea that he made.

I listened to the several points made by the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) with interest, partly because he welcomed me as a fellow Welshman to these debates. I was mindful of the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Delyn (Mr. Raffan) not to be carried away by that emotional coincidence. I am not so carried away as to subscribe to the critical view of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales that was taken by the hon. Member for Ogmore. Conservative Members share the view that the people of Wales have an outstanding Secretary of State who has achieved a great deal. A momentary Welsh debate took place between the hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend the Member for Delyn about the prospects for a debate on the Health Service in Wales. My hon. Friend is right to say that there is a prospect of that coming about in the Welsh Grand Committee before too long.

On Sunday trading, the position of the European Court has not yet been finalised, and in those circumstances, many local authorities are not taking action until the position is clearer. As to the Children Bill, that will be the subject of debate when the House comes back after the recess.

My hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) spoke of another part of the country where mining is an important activity, as it is in the Ogmore valley, but he was speaking, understandably, of his constituency and the environmental impact of opencast mining in the Erewash valley. Even so, the Government believe that opencast mining is a valuable source of economic coal and wish to develop that source, but only if that can be done in an environmentally acceptable way. That is why we issued the new mineral planning guidelines in May of last year, and those are intended to give full weight to environmental issues.

My hon. Friend the Member for Delyn devoted the substance of his speech to the recent serious examples of salmonella food poisoning in his constituency and he made important points. First, he paid a tribute to the health authorities that have responded so effectively to this emergency. He stressed the need for notices to be issued naming the source of such problems, giving fair warning across borders between different authorities to consumers of the hazards arising in such ways. He may like to know that the chief medical officer of the Welsh Office, having issued details of the retail outlets that have been supplied with the offending cooked cold meats, has gone on to issue today a further notice with further information on some vacuum-packed cold cooked meats from the same source that may be hazardous. I shall draw his detailed points to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

The hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) gave us a long and by no means insignificant insight into some serious environmental problems with which he is rightly concerned. He spoke specifically about the Nature Conservancy Council. There is a case for conservation policy to be formulated on a Great Britain basis. We are fully aware of that, if only to enable us to comply with international obligations. However that should not be allowed to overshadow the real benefits for nature conservation that will flow from regional organisations as well. The balance is intended to be right, but I shall draw his points to the attention of my right hon. Friend the newly appointed Secretary of State for the Environment. He will have noticed yesterday during Question Time that my right hon. Friend responded to the approach made by the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) by saying that he would try to establish a common approach to environmental policy.

My hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) urged me to draw the attention of my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Treasury and the Office of Arts and Libraries to the needs of the English National Opera and the English National Ballet. I assure him that my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts is aware of the situation and is confident that a means will be found to allow both organisations to continue their excellent work.

My hon. Friend joined the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) in drawing attention to the concerns arising from the impact of possible changes in the inner London highway system. Rather ambitiously, he said that he would tackle this problem with wig, pen and sword. With the greatest respect to the learned Clerks, I cannot see what value a wig would have. He should take note of the fact that the studies in which he is concerned are about improving conditions for residents, cyclists, pedestrians, business and those travelling in these areas. They are looking at combinations of public transport, parking control and enforcement, and not simply the construction of new highways.

Finally, I acknowledge the speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart). I hope that he will forgive me if I do not reply in detail. I have done so before, and I should not like to trespass at this stage on the reply that he is likely to get in due course from my successor in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

I commend the motion to the House and wish hon. Members on both sides of the House a happy summer holiday.

*[Sir Geoffrey Howe]*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That this House, at its rising on Friday 28 July, do adjourn until Tuesday 17th October.

# Orders of the Day

## Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill

*Order for Second Reading read.*

*Question,* That the Bill be now read a Second time, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 54(1) (Consolidated Fund Bills), and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Question,* That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.*

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

## Eastern Europe

8.39 pm

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg** (Hampstead and Highgate): It has been an honour and a privilege for two years to have led the United Kingdom delegation to the parliamentary assemblies of the Council of Europe and the Western European Union. It is a pleasure because the delegation is mixed politically and works remarkably well. I pay tribute to the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy), who leads the Labour group, and to my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill), who acts as my Whip, and whose idea it was to ask for this debate. He asked whether I would support it in writing; I did so, and the ballot produced my name first. I hope that he will not mind if I say some of the things that he might have said.

I wanted particularly to talk about the Council of Europe because of what I can only call the distorted, inaccurate and outdated attack made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) on 14 July at columns 1269-71. It was his second speech in a two-day foreign affairs debate. I pause to wonder whether any other Privy Councillor has ever exercised the privilege of making speeches on two successive days, thus depriving colleagues of speaking time. I have never before attacked my right hon. Friend in public; I felt that it was not right to do so. On this occasion he will not be able to say that he has heard it all before. I cannot allow his words to remain unchallenged on the record.

My right hon. Friend said that the Council of Europe achieved useful work during its early years. He added that it was formed as a forum for discussion and nothing more, and that it had never been able to fulfil any other purpose.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** No, I shall not give way. I ask the hon. Gentleman to forgive me for not doing so. He will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate, and will understand that others wish to speak. That is why I would rather not give way on this occasion.

**Mr. Banks** *rose*——

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** Very well, I give way to the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Banks:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way. He normally gives way when hon. Members wish to intervene.

I know the hon. Gentleman to be an honourable man and I inquire whether he notified his former leader and Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), that he would make these comments.

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** I notified my right hon. Friend through his parliamentary private secretary. I suggest that among colleagues there is no purpose in making such a point.

In this, as in so many other ways, my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup is out of touch and out of date. For example, he may not have heard of the Colombo commission, which had many distinguished members, many of them as committed Europeans as himself. The members of the commission concluded that the Council of Europe was vital in achieving closer unity among Europeans. The 40th anniversary communiqué of the Council of Ministers of the 23, which include the 12, stated:

> "We are determined to exploit the Council of Europe's potential in full by giving a new impetus and political direction to the intergovernmental co-operation conducted within its framework. We are counting on the promotional and initiatory action of the Assembly, which as parliamentary organ of the Council of Europe composed of members of national Parliaments is in constant touch with the public's wishes and concerns and provides the essential link with national democratic institutions.

To strengthen the means of action it intends

> "to integrate the conferences of specialised Ministers more fully into the Council of Europe's institutional framework and decision-making process;
>
> *c.* to maintain the political dialogue within the Committee of Ministers with emphasis on the political aspects of European co-operation in general and. . . to ensure that public opinion is better informed of the Council of Europe's aims and achievements."

That is enough to show that the views of my right hon. Friend are not shared by the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, Italy or the United Kingdom, who signed that unanimous declaration. Nor are his views shared by many friends in all parties of the Council of Europe who come from France, Germany and Italy.

Another current issue is the social charter. The Council of Europe has a remarkably good social charter that works. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was criticised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup, but her views were endorsed unanimously at the European Council at Rhodes on 2 and 3 December 1988. The communiqué read:

> "As regards implementation of social rights, the European Council awaits such proposals as the Commission might consider useful to submit having drawn inspiration from the social charter of the Council of Europe."

Mr. Mitterrand does not share the view of my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup about the Council of Europe.

I shall leave what I call the past, but it was essential to set the record straight, or what the Ministers said in their communiqué about enlisting public opinion would not have had effect.

We have three European bodies to consider: the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the Western European Union. The European Parliament is directly elected and its members derive their support from direct elections. The members of the Council of Europe and the WEU are drawn from national Parliaments—from us. It is a more valuable method of approach to raise on the Floor of the House the issues that concern us at the Council of Europe or the Western European Union. That method is essential in more than one way. In the period immediately ahead we must try to work as good Europeans. That does not mean one European state, but achieving unity of purpose with a diversity of culture and nationhood. Each organisation has its own distinct task to perform.

Economic and trade matters are for the European Community and the European Parliament. Defence and security are for the Western European Union. Those powers are given to the WEU by treaty—the modified Brussels treaty of 1954—and are not weakened by the Single European Act. The WEU has been strengthened immensely by four recent events. The first was the accession of Portugal and Spain. The second was the out-of-area activities in the Gulf where, for the first time, every member of the WEU co-operated. Luxembourg, which does not have a Navy, contributed financially towards the cost of the operations, and that was much appreciated. The third was the broad measure of support and endorsement given to the WEU by the present and previous United States Administrations.

The fourth event was the distinguished chairmanship of the Council of Ministers of the WEU by the British Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State for Defence. The hon. Member for Wentworth, who outside this place I would call my friend, will agree that, remembering the other Chairmen of the Council, ours were outstanding. My right hon. and learned Friend the former Foreign Secretary and my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence did a first-class job and got things done, which was extremely important.

The Council of Europe is responsible for cultural, environmental, human rights and related matters that can provide the bridge between East and West. The building of that bridge is probably the most important task to which the Council has set its hand during the past few months. The time has come when there is an opening and an opportunity for the bridge to be constructed. Not only was Mr. Gorbachev's visit to Strasbourg significant for his choice of the Council of Europe to address, but the Council's parliamentary assembly—which now embraces all 23 nations of western Europe and Scandinavia, making it the largest European organisation extant—extended guest membership to the USSR, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Poland.

Those who attended the latter part of that session could not have been anything but moved by the speeches of the Poles and Hungarians in particular. It was emotionally moving to hear the Poles, a very gallant people, speaking again in a democratic institution after 40 years or more of silence. The speech of the Soviet representative was encouraging because it recognised that Soviet internal laws must be changed to bring into force some of the human rights provisions to which the Soviets have signed their name under the Helsinki agreement. It was the most interesting meeting that I have attended for many years.

**Sir Dudley Smith** (Warwick and Leamington): My hon. Friend's remarks totally give the lie to the allegations of my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). Does my hon. Friend agree that the Council of Europe is so enhanced that it is paving the way and, in a pioneering spirit, is recording achievements that were unthought of even five years ago?

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. It is significant that the Council of Ministers within the Council of Europe contains the identical Ministers who comprise the Council of Ministers in the European Community. Clearly they believe that the Council of Europe performs a function that cannot be fulfilled by the Community.

Even more, in the next few months we shall see the signing of certain Council of Europe conventions by its new guest members, which will also represent an enormous advance. Mr. Gorbachev's comment that we must all work together to achieve clean, safe nuclear power, and his offer to share ideas on how to achieve that, were among the most helpful contributions that I have heard for a long time. Much of that work can be done in the Council of Europe. The Council is not a mere talking shop, which was the criticism at the heart of the comments of my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup, but a parliamentary assembly for Europe which, if progress is made as we hope, will in time offer full membership to all of Europe—east, west and central. A Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals is surely what we all want, because that would herald a real era of peace.

I am proud to be a vice-president of the WEU and the Council of Europe, because that gives me an insight into what can be achieved. The Council, the WEU and the European Parliament each has a separate job to do, but they should work in harmony to avoid duplication or triplication. I warmly welcome my hon. Friend the Minister to his new post, and if he is to be our ministerial link with the Council of Europe, I shall be delighted. I ask him to put some pressure on the Council of Ministers of the European Community to intervene when it witnesses the European Parliament embarking on action in areas that are clearly not its concern. The European Parliament is attempting to become involved in defence, for example, which is totally outwith its competence. It would be helpful if the Ministers of the Twelve would say so. Although they cannot stop the European Parliament becoming involved, they could at least make it clear that that is not the European Parliament's task. It also wants to get in on the act in respect of the Council of Europe's activities on human rights. That is fine, and I am delighted that it is interested, but the European Parliament has other important work to do. If the Ministers, wearing their Twelve hats, would say so, it would be very welcome.

I have never shared the view often expressed that the work that right hon. and hon. Members do outside this Chamber is not important. Through our ability to represent, in European assemblies, different strands of opinion from this Chamber, we can offer Europe some of the ideas of democracy that have been ours for a long time. We can demonstrate that one can consider arguments made rationally in debate, rather than endure a series of set speeches. In that way the Council of Europe, which has just celebrated its 40th anniversary, can look forward to celebrating an equally successful 50th anniversary.

8.55 pm

**Mr. Denzil Davies** (Llanelli): I congratulate the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) on initiating this debate, even though one reason for it was to criticise his right hon. Friend for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). I shall not follow the hon. Gentleman in that domestic and internal dispute, but the debate is important because it is about not only the Council of Europe but the relationship between it and what is still called eastern Europe.

Momentous changes are occurring in Europe, and it is in everyone's interest to ensure that Europe's institutions play their part in ensuring that those changes occur in a peaceful and orderly manner. Yalta, the post-war settlement, cannot survive perestroika. Eastern Europe is rapidly becoming central Europe again. When we debate these matters again in five years' time, perhaps we shall not talk about eastern Europe but about central Europe.

The Soviet Union is, sadly perhaps, in some decline, and the corollary is that Germany is in the ascendancy. The countries of what we still call eastern Europe are moving towards democratic, pluralistic societies. Poland and Hungary are in the vanguard, and, despite Czechoslovakia's problems, and given its strong democratic, industrial and manufacturing traditions, it will not be very far behind. It is in the interest of us all, both on the Left and on the Right in Europe, to ensure that changes are made quietly and peaceably.

I do not want to introduce a partisan note, but there is a danger that certain people on the radical Right in Europe, or more so in the United States, and who may number among them emigrés or those who want to pay off old scores against eastern Europe and its Communist parties, may want to push change too fast and propel the countries of eastern Europe towards a kind of Hayekian, Right-wing capitalist society. I do not believe that those countries want that. I think that they want to move gradually back into the social democratic traditions of western Europe. I even believe—I have no evidence for this—that President Gorbachev would like to move the Soviet Union gradually back towards those social democratic traditions. We must be careful not to push change too quickly. We must also be careful not to push our ideology on those countries, but to let change develop gradually and peacefully.

The great unmentionable is Germany. As the Soviet Union declines, Germany will become more powerful. The German Democratic Republic cannot survive perestroika. In the end, it cannot survive the changes taking place in Hungary, in Poland and—I think and I hope—in Czechoslovakia. The GDR, like the Federal Republic of Germany, is a state, not a nation. Whereas Hungary and Poland can adapt to those changes, the GDR, being to some extent an artificial state, cannot maintain the reason for its existence, which has been the 40 years of a division of Europe.

We must face the fact—I do not say this in any fear or panic—that perestroika and the changes that we all want to see will lead, sooner rather than later, to what may be described as the reunification of Germany. I do not know whether that will be done through a federal concept. The policy of Labour and Conservative Governments has been that the wall should come down. If it does, we must think through the consequences for Germany and for Germany's position in that part of Europe.

When the reunification comes, Germany will be even stronger. The Soviet Union will have to reach an accommodation with Germany. Reaching an accommodation with Germany may well lead to the reunification of Germany because the Soviet Union will need the technological advice and the industrial assistance which only Germany can provide in that part of Europe.

Whether we like it or not, we shall gradually see German economic domination of the countries to the east of Germany which we now call eastern Europe. In Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary we shall see German economic hegemony. We shall also see that moving through the Ukraine into the Soviet Union.

Mr. Gorbachev calls for a common European house. Perhaps that will come about.

**Sir Dudley Smith:** Home.

**Mr. Davies:** There is some debate about that. If it is a common European home, that is all very well. But that home will be situated in what I would call a common deutschmark zone because the deutschmark and the power of Germany will dominate the common European home or house in that part of Europe. Just as the deutschmark is dominating the western part of Europe, it will also dominate the eastern part of Europe as perestroika proceeds.

The French panic about such matters. They have spotted that situation and have thought about it. Apparently M. Mitterrand and M. Jacques Delors think that the German juggernaut can be prevented from going east or west by creating some sort of common currency, whether it is called the ecu or anything else. The central bank in Brussels will apparently stop Germany's industrial and economic might. That will not work. A currency is only as strong as the industrial and economic power of the country behind it. But the French have come up with a wheeze and no doubt they will try to push it. Whatever happens to European economic and monetary union, it will not work.

We do not know what the British Government think. We welcome the Minister and congratulate him on his appointment. I do not expect him to deal with the matter tonight, but one of these days, we must debate the issue in a wider context than tonight's debate. As far as I am aware we have not yet debated it at all. It is the great unmentionable. We are told that the Prime Minister is a bit worried about German domination and does not know what to do about it. With our weak economy there is nothing that we can do about it. But at least we can start debating the matter. At least we can see that, as the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) said, the institutions of Europe can be used to ensure peaceful change. In the end, we must also debate what we think about the possible or probable reunification of Germany. Those matters are better debated. We have swept them under the carpet for too long.

9.3 pm

**Mr. James Hill** (Southampton, Test): I was extremely surprised when I read the report of the foreign affairs debate on Friday 14 July in which a person whom I have respected over many years, in a tirade, almost of denigration, suddenly turned against the work so ably carried out by the Council of Europe and the Western European Union. I was appointed to the European Parliament by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) in 1973. I was appointed the chairman of the first British committee of transport and regional planning about three months later and I served for 10 years in the Council of Europe.

As Whip of the delegation I know how hard most of our members work and how dedicated we are to bringing to a successful conclusion what seems to be a tremendous opportunity now, with Mr. Gorbachev pinpointing Strasbourg—not the Strasbourg of the Economic Community, but the Strasbourg of the Council of Europe —to make a major speech. Mr. Gorbachev has also put his seal of approval on the fact that we are now inviting as guests 18 representatives from the USSR, six from Hungary, seven from Poland and eight from Yugoslavia. He is determined to establish links with us, especially on some of our committees with scientific and technological knowledge—for example, the defence and armaments committee of the WEU, of which my hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) is chairman.

**Sir Dudley Smith:** My hon. Friend will also be well aware that the WEU has recently received a high-level visit from representatives of the Supreme Soviet, including a general and others, who came to the WEU headquarters in Paris for discussions. That was another tremendous advance in political representatives' thinking and understanding.

**Mr. Hill:** Quite so, and those of us who had not worked with Russians at the committee table before were surprised by the tremendous degree of glasnost which was evident in Paris only two or three weeks ago.

I am not surprised that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has emphasised the work done on the social charter in the past. It was quite obvious to me that my right hon. Friend saw no reason to accept Mr. Delors's version of the social charter because on 18 October 1961 we signed a European social charter along with 13 other nations. That process has continued to expand through the work of the various committees of the Council of Europe, and it is now fairly obvious to most of us who know Europe that the Commission is picking up most of its ideas on the subject from work done by the Council of Europe in the past.

One of the recent books that has been produced is the report on the activities of the Council of Europe in 1987. I recommend it to my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup because it may help to bring him up to date with the work of the Council of Europe. It is sad that 36 Members of this House and the other place should go to Europe and work on these matters only to find that a well-respected right hon. Friend suddenly seems to know little about the work that is done.

My right hon. Friend obviously knows about the work of the European Court of Human Rights, and he probably knows that more than 14,500 cases have been investigated by that court since 1950, but does he know a great deal about the European social charter introduced in 1965? Does he know that we have a convention on the eradication of torture, which was opened for signature in November 1987? Does he realise that we have explored terrorism to the extent of declaring that certain acts of terrorism can no longer be regarded as political crimes for the purposes of extradition and mutual assistance? Is not the Council well ahead with the problems of terrorism, in its 1977 convention on the suppression of terrorism? What about data protection, which is almost a new subject? We were discussing it in 1981 in the Council of Europe. What about wildlife, the new "in" thing with which everyone is so concerned? We had a convention on the conservation of wildlife and natural habitats in June 1982.

*[Mr. Hill]*

The list is long and sometimes I despair that we will ever break through, not to the 400 million Europeans but to the community of 600 here in the Palace of Westminster. After the Heysel stadium tragedy in 1985 we had a convention which laid down binding agreements to deal with hooliganism. We have a convention on transfrontier co-operation. That ensures co-operation on major roads and bridges and the free transport of goods and so on. We have also dealt with local self-government. Lately we have dealt with audio-visual issues. We have a European convention on transfrontier television. The Stockholm conference was a tremendous success. Everyone assumed that it was something to do with the Community, but it was to do with the work carried out by the Council of Europe.

There is a long list of other conventions. We have a convention on insider trading which has been one of the most serious issues in this country in the past couple of years. We have also dealt with international bankruptcy. We have to work on a complete European scale to obtain any control.

The problem is that very few people know about the work done on drug abuse by the Pompidou group. Very few people know about the youth activities in the Community or the work done by the Council of Europe, covering the European youth centre and the European Youth Foundation. Does anybody here know about that? What is wrong with our public relations? Are we not getting it through to our elder statesmen that Europe has moved on?

We are hoping to co-operate with Mr. Gorbachev on his idea of a pan-European process. Will we ever be able to have a cross-fertilisation of ideas with the iron curtain countries? Are we seeing the first break in the wall to which the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) referred? Has not Hungary destroyed its own fences and the land mines that separate it from Austria? As Winston Churchill said, we should have "talk-talk, not war-war"—I am sure that someone will correct me.

**Mr. Michael Lord** (Suffolk, Central): "Jaw-jaw."

**Mr. Hill:** I hope that *Hansard* got all that.

We do jaw a lot. I must apologise to my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup. However, at the end of the day we make sense. If the 23 Ministers in the Council of Ministers wish to pick up some of the wisdom that we documented it is perfectly right for them to do so. Those of us who are interested need to explain to those who do not know exactly what the work entails.

There are three sections in the title of the debate. I have already dealt with the Council of Europe. Many other hon. Members will deal with the Western European Union, which deals with defence, and the links with Europe which will pervade everything we do in Europe in the next decade. We will endeavour from time to time to bring fresh issues from Strasbourg to the House hoping that we can find further slots in which to discuss them.

9.14 pm

**Mr. Peter Hardy** (Wentworth): I am greatly obliged to the hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill) for providing the House with a great deal of detail about the achievement of the Council of Europe over the past decade. If I take issue with him at all, it would be over the fact that the Berne convention was slightly earlier than the date that he gave, because it responded to a report that I presented to the Assembly. I am obliged to him and he serves this debate, as he serves the delegation, extremely well.

About five years ago the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) said that he often disagreed with me, but "not today". I often disagree with the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate, but not today. In introducing this debate, his speech was a model of clarity and could well be copied by educational institutions which want a brief but accurate digest of the current structures of European activity.

I will follow the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate in criticising the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). In 1975, at the height of the leadership struggle in the Conservative party, I presented a Bill which became the Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Act 1975. In schedule 2, I included the "blue heath" in the hope that the right hon. Gentleman would survive. If I could remove the "blue heath" from that Act after the debate on 14 July, I would. The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup did a great disservice to the House by presenting a grossly inaccurate assessment of the current political position in Europe, and an unjust criticism of the Council of Europe.

On 14 July, the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup suggested that the Council of Europe was merely a political forum. I believe that Europe needs a political forum, as the Community is bogged down in the morass of detail which always seems to engage it nowadays. Someone had to provide the stage on which history could be made. Those of us who were present when Mr. Gorbachev visited the Council of Europe will long remember that historic moment, just as we have cause for satisfaction, if not pride, in the fact that we took part in the decision to establish guest status.

I would like to entertain a rather selfish hope. When the environment committee of the Council of Europe, which I still chair, visits Yorkshire in October, I hope that the guest members will attend that first meeting of the Council of Europe outside Strasbourg. It would be very fitting if those members came to this country. Although the media in Britain scarcely recognises the existence of the Council of Europe and its many activities, it is fair to say that over the years British parliamentarians from both sides of the House have made a disproportionate contribution to the activities of the Assembly.

I want to follow the comments made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies). We need to ensure that a political forum exists, because the pace of change, which is dramatic in 1989, presents Europe and the world with serious challenges. In the debate on 14 July, to which reference has already been made, my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) referred to some of the problems that face the world. He said that 22 countries have missile programmes and 17 countries already have missiles in place. We know from meetings of the Western European Union a few months ago that probably 26 countries now have a chemical weapon capacity, and that number may be much higher in a few months' time.

Given that kind of challenge and uncertainty, it is right that the Council of Europe should provide a platform and forum for discussion and provide Russia and the other eastern European countries with an avenue towards democracy. However, it should do that, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Llanelli said, with a degree of common sense which must recognise that the process must be gradual. It must have our encouragement and be assisted by material provision and the neighbourly political approach that the Strasbourg assembly can offer.

At this stage of history, the Council of Europe is in a more important position than ever. Therefore, next time he embarks on a foreign affairs debate, the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup would be wiser to look more widely. It is all very well for politicians to fix their eyes on the distant uplands of supranational sanity of world peace and international accord, but, if they flounder in the morass of the bureaucracy that they cannot perceive immediately in front of them, they do themselves, their country and their continent a disservice.

As the hon. Members for Hampstead and Highgate and for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden) know, the Members of my committee sought to work with members of the European Parliament environment committee last year. We actually took ourselves to Brussels to meet them. It is not an experience that we would wish to repeat. Their main interest was in trying to impress us by telling us how many hundreds upon hundreds of directives they had agreed and how many tonnes of paper they had approved, and they seemed to think that we should automatically go out of existence.

On 14 July the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup referred to Austria. Our friends in Austria and Switzerland today resent the bureaucratic approach that the Community adopts. The bureaucratic approach in Brussels is taken nearly to the point of arrogance. It seems to assume that Austria and Switzerland, being non-member states of the Community, must recognise transport priorities and allow international transport to thunder through their mountain passes. Our Austrian and Swiss colleagues have rightly used the Council of Europe to show that they are not prepared to tolerate that approach.

There is a place for the Council of Europe. The place is historic and the role is substantial. I hope that Her Majesty's Government will sustain that role and that Europe will recognise that it is of continuing importance.

9.22 pm

**Mr. John Wilkinson** (Ruislip, Northwood): As the shadows of this declining Session lengthen and as the busy world of Parliament is hushed, the small voice of European experience and reason is still heard in the calm reflective atmosphere. How welcome it is. I congratulate the leader of our delegation, my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg), on introducing the debate. How good, too, it was to hear the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) in this foreign affairs debate. We miss his intellect and incisive wit in defence debates. It was stimulating to hear him ponder on the future of Europe and on how perestroika will affect the Yalta settlement of our continent.

Other hon. Members, notably my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill) and the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy), have spoken mainly about the Council of Europe. Apart from a brief postcript to my remarks about the Council of Europe and its relations with eastern Europe, I shall deal with the Western European Union.

Since the Brussels treaty was modified by the Paris protocols in 1954, British interest in the WEU has been spasmodic and often lukewarm. There have been occasions when the Western Europan Union has been politically useful for the United Kingdom—above all as a point of contact with the six original member countries of the EC following President de Gaulle's veto on Britain's first application to join the European Community, until Britain decided to join the Community in the early 1970s.

However, from the date of Britain's accession in 1973 until the reactivation of the WEU in Rome in 1984, or even until the platform of European security interests was agreed in 1987, the United Kingdom appeared to show little interest in the potential of either the WEU Ministerial Council in London as a forum for concerting west European security policy, or in the potential of the WEU Assembly in Paris—the sole parliamentary institution empowered by treaty to debate defence issues and to make recommendations on security policy to the Councils of Defence and Foreign Ministers of the member countries.

Since, after 1954, NATO was entrusted with responsibility for the military aspects of the Brussels treaty's mutual security provisions, the United Kingdom has always felt ambivalent towards the WEU, lest the attempt to create a stronger western European defence identity within the Atlantic Alliance be seen by the United States as an attempt by seven west European nations, albeit collectively, to usurp the predominant role of the Americans within the NATO alliance.

In practice, as the economic strength of western Europe has grown relative to that of the United States, our American friends, driven by a desire to see the Europeans assume a fairer share of the common burden of Alliance defence, have been more and more supportive of efforts to reinvigorate the WEU, both institutionally and by enlargement through the accession of Portugal and Spain.

Not only are the mutual defence requirements of the Brussels treaty more binding than those of the north Atlantic treaty, but they are not geographically limited as are those of NATO. As the projection of Soviet military power has become increasingly global, the relevance of the out-of-area provisions of WEU's founding treaty have grown. That was emphasised during the Iran-Iraq war, when the WEU was the political instrument for securing joint action in the Gulf by the navies of Britain, Belgium, France, Holland and Italy, with financial assistance from Luxembourg and compensatory naval deployment to the Mediterranean provided by West Germany. That out-of-area naval co-operation much impressed the United States and the WEU was publicly praised for it by President Bush.

It is important not to lose the momentum generated towards reinvigorating and enlarging the WEU. First, the aim should be clearly stated of encouraging all the Euro-group nations to join. Secondly, collocation of the Ministerial Council, agency and Assembly in a single site should be achieved at the earliest possible date. I have said before that county hall, London would have been an ideal headquarters for all the WEU as it has ample office space, committee rooms and, of course, a fine hemicycle. Furthermore, the United Kingdom lacks a major

*[Mr. John Wilkinson]*

European institution and, as the most Atlantic of the WEU nations, collocation of all WEU's organs in London would have reassured the Americans.

As it is, the Government favour Brussels for the headquarters of the WEU, but that is fundamentally unacceptable to France and there is no point in antagonising further the WEU's strongest supporter.

If the British Government will still not press for London, Paris should be the chosen headquarters for the WEU. After all, Paris already houses the Assembly and agency, the proposed WEU defence institute is to be located there, France plays a key role in European defence, and other major international institutions, such as the European Space Agency and the OECD, are situated in Paris.

**Sir Dudley Smith:** I do not entirely agree with my hon. Friend about London, but I acknowledge the necessity of getting right the location of the headquarters of the WEU. I agree with my hon. Friend that the momentum must be carried on and that we must be vigilant, because I hear rumours that Mr. Delors has established an advisory team on defence. It appears that there may be a takeover in due course.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend who, as chairman of the committee on defence questions and armaments of the WEU knows much about these matters. He gives a further reason why we must place emphasis on the reinvigoration of the WEU and on making it active.

A revived, enlarged and renewed WEU would be invaluable in concerting a joint western European position on key strategic issues, East-West relations, arms control and out-of-area security problems. I do not think that, through the WEU or any other institution, the west European nations should try to achieve an arms control position different from that of the Americans. It is important that the Americans negotiate on our behalf. The west European nations should have a single position that they can share with their American allies. The European members of NATO could more easily speak with one voice to their American allies and harmonise a single west European position on matters such as Ostpolitik, inter-German relations, which were alluded to by the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies), technology, credit transfer to Warsaw pact countries, terrorism, low-intensity operations and out-of-area military threats.

Furthermore, the WEU should provide the motor to impel closer European arms co-operation. It should be the political driving force behind the independent European programme group and should help to set the priorities for a European defence research agency to manage common technology projects, funded by a common military research fund.

The WEU should become the forum for the formulation of a west European military space strategy, identifying the technologies required and concerting a military space programme complementary to that of the United States. As the European Space Agency is precluded by statute from military space activity, industry Ministers of WEU member countries who sit on the ESA military council should, ex officio, be co-opted on to the WEU Ministerial Council to assist their Defence Minister colleagues to agree a European military space strategy.

The WEU should be the vehicle for European defence rationalisation by encouraging joint training, exchange postings of personnel, the use of other countries' ranges, exercise areas and test and research facilities. Its aim must be to strengthen the west European contribution within NATO and to mobilise the backing of political, parliamentary and public opinion for that purpose. My hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate rightly made clear the advantage of the WEU and the Council of Europe. The members of those parliamentary assemblies are members of their national Parliaments. They can mobilise parliamentary and public opinion in their countries and vote the funds necessary to achieve the European objectives pursued through the WEU and the Council of Europe.

Ultimately, a European defence policy co-ordinated in the WEU, and agreed by the United States and Canada, should play a bigger role in guaranteeing western interests worldwide as well as the freedom of member states of the WEU. That European defence policy would draw on the specialist and traditional expertise of European nations within NATO, so that Britain's treaty commitment of 55,000 men and a tactical air force on the continent of Europe, laid down in the Paris protocols of 1954 to the Brussels treaty, could be accommodated and, if necessary, adapted by international agreement to the realities of the dynamic political reform affecting central and eastern Europe and to the changed nature of the East-West security system in Europe brought about by the arms control and disarmament process.

In short, the United Kingdom has a unique opportunity to take a major initiative in the security dimension of European construction. This is the key area of west European co-operation. It is still the responsibility of sovereign states working together for a common purpose outside the European Community framework, but in a manner in which all our peoples and electorates can take pride.

In conclusion, I must allude to the guest status which the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has granted to representatives from the legislative assemblies of Hungary, Poland, the USSR and Yugoslavia. I suggest to my hon. Friend the Minister of State, whom I welcome to his new functions at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, that this aspect of the work of the Council of Europe is worth monitoring closely.

I urge a certain amount of caution. When I listened to President Gorbachev's speech, I felt that it was an overt political attempt to put western Europe within the Soviet sphere of influence. His idea of the common European home is that he should be the landlord and that we should be the tenants. When we grant special status to the USSR, we must remember that the Baltic states, for example, have a right to nationhood that we recognise de jure by not accepting the forcible incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union in 1940. In addition, the Ukraine and Byelorussia have a distinct status in that they are individually recognised by the United Nations. To imagine that human rights in the USSR are rosy would be to delude ourselves. The lot of the refuseniks is a hard one and the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox churches are still banned.

We are proceeding cautiously and, I believe, wisely. I urge the Minister and the Government to keep a watching brief on these matters and to do their best to reinvigorate Britain's role within the WEU, because that organisation has considerable potential.

## Royal Assent

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the Queen has signified Her Royal Assent to the following Acts:

1. Appropriation 1989 Act
2. Finance Act 1989
3. Pesticides (Fees and Enforcement) Act 1989
4. Representation of the People Act 1989
5. Electricity Act 1989
6. Dangerous Dogs Act 1989
7. Human Organs Transplants Act 1989
8. Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989
9. Extradition Act 1989
10. Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989
11. Continental Shelf Act 1989
12. Associated British Ports (Hull) Act 1989
13. London Regional Transport (No. 2) Act 1989
14. Hayle Harbour Act 1989
15. Queen Mary and Westfield College Act 1989

## Eastern Europe

*Question again proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

9.40 pm

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): I wish at the outset to congratulate the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) on his distinguished leadership of our delegation to the Council of Europe, a sentiment which will be supported by my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) who spoke eloquently earlier. I was rather puzzled by the addition of the subject of the Western European Union, which is rather less relevant to eastern Europe, but the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) tried skilfully to keep within the terms of the debate. I also welcome the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Warwickshire, North (Mr. Maude) to his first foreign affairs appearance. He will be aware that press reports, malicious as ever, claim that he shares the Prime Minister's hostility to the European Community. I am sure that he will do his best to disprove any such suggestion.

The Council of Europe has a chequered history. According to its foundation article, it was

> "to achieve a greater unity between its Members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage, and facilitating their economic and social progress."

Ernest Bevin disliked it. He said that when that Pandora's box was opened, all sorts of Trojan horses would come out. It was established among the plethora of post-war international organisations as the best level of European co-operation attainable at the time. It continued, even though at times it gave the impression of having lasted longer than was justified by the role that the member countries were prepared to afford to it—in short, no one had the heart to end it.

I recall in 1959, when it was the 10th anniversary of the Council, the Council of Ministers' deputies and other delegates were suggesting a means of commemorating that anniversary. Some suggested a new palace in Strasbourg and others suggested a statue to Paul-Henri Spaak. The wise Irish delegate was alleged to have suggested meekly that there should be five minutes' silence.

Having once been the desk officer at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office responsible for the Council of Europe, I confess that it is fair to say that for at least part of its history it was searching for a role. From time to time Governments, for their own purposes, have tried to breathe new life and energy into it, just as in the early 1960s, for example, after the failure of the first Gaullist veto, the British Government tried to breathe new life into WEU. I am confident now, as hon. Members who know the Council of Europe better than I will agree, that it has discovered an enhanced and valuable role even greater than the technical conventions, which themselves are important, and the key work that it has done in human rights through the convention, the commission and the court.

What is the enhanced role that the Council can now play? Perhaps one should first clarify what it cannot do, and I was surprised at the tirades of freemasonry from members of the Council against the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). It was not the blue heath, as my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth suggested—the blasted heath might be a more appropriate simile.

One can appreciate why feathers were ruffled, as the right hon. Gentleman's views were clearly somewhat outdated when he suggested that the Council was no more than a talk shop and

> "a useful forum for discussion and nothing more."

I concede that he played down the positive contribution that the Council would make. In mitigation, however, he went on to say, as the second leg of his criticism, that the Prime Minister's new-found praise for the Council of Europe raised questions as to

> "whether the British Government want to weaken the Community rather than strengthen it."—*[Official Report,* 14 July 1989; Vol. 156, col 1269.]

In other words, there were grounds for suggesting that the signals given by the Government in their recent enthusiasm for the Council suggested a diversionary tactic for avoiding European Community obligations and giving a wrong signal, which could be added to others, in respect of our commitment to the Community. That is a serious point. There has traditionally been insensitivity towards the Community, as was illustrated by the recent changes in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and by yesterday's speech, showing a lack of patience, by President Mitterrand.

Of course the Council of Europe's social charter is important, but it is not obligatory on those who have signed it. It is essentially declaratory and is wholly different from the aims of the European Community social charter as promulgated by Mr. Delors and others. It is fair to say that President Gorbachev exaggerated what the Council could do when he spoke at the Palais de l'Europe on 6 July. He spoke about the pan-European community of the next century and about Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. Is that anything more than rhetorical nonsense? Is he seriously suggesting that the Soviet Union can be split into two, into its European and Asian halves? When President Gorbachev talks about the "common European home", is

*[Mr. Donald Anderson]*

he conveniently forgetting that a large wall with watchtowers on the greater part of it runs through the parlour of that home?

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** The hon. Gentleman has told us that he was a desk officer at the Foreign Office, so he surely recalls that Turkey is a member of the Council of Europe and that a substantial part of Turkey is in Asia. Perhaps a precedent has been set and the hon. Gentleman's comments about the Soviet Union may not be so accurate as he might wish.

**Mr. Anderson:** Yes, I shall say a few words about Turkey. I believe that Metternich said that Asia begins at the Landstrasse Hauptstrasse from Vienna, which might irritate some of our Hungarian friends and others, but perhaps I had better not open the vast volume that is Turkey at this stage.

Having said that, it is only fair to respond to the Gorbachev initiative and say that as yet there has been an inadequate western response to the vision that he put before the Council.

The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup was at least partly correct in the criticisms that he made during our recent foreign affairs debate. The Council of Europe is a vehicle for intergovernmental co-operation through Ministers and Ministers' deputies. Of course, the consultative assembly was initially just that—a consultative assembly—bringing together parliamentarians, but as the catalogue of achievements set out so well by the hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill) has shown, it has developed into something much more. It now has a new role at a time when the super-power hegemony in both eastern and western Europe is diminishing and when western European countries are growing closer together and, paradoxically, eastern European countries are moving further apart.

I stress to the Government that the Council is not and cannot be an alternative to the European Community, but it has special capacities which the European Community does not have, due to its membership and its role. Like a well-tried brand of beer, the Council can reach places which the European Community cannot. With the accession of Finland in May, all the countries of western Europe—all of democratic Europe—are part of the Council. The process is being completed. I welcome the opening to the East that is shown by guest status which, I understand, is analogous to the observer status that is possible under statute.

I welcome the enormous and impressive work that the Council has done in conventions. It is clear that there is a need for cross-frontier East-West co-operation in the areas to which my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth referred, such as the environment, drugs, terrorism, television and the other areas that have been mentioned. I welcome the initiatives that the Council has taken in bridge building in eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the middle east. It is an example to other institutions, and can be considered a core body. It is at the centre of a constellation of other relationships, and sets a precedent for Turkey's relationship with the core or inner group—the European Community.

Human rights and the commitment to them must be an essential prerequisite of any relationship with the Council of Europe, and that is consistent with the reasons for its establishment. I was therefore glad to see that adherence to the Helsinki process, and the conference on security and co-operation in Europe, was designated necessary to the new guest status and so has put a sine qua non on that relationship.

I am struck by the pace of change in eastern Europe. I lived in Hungary in the early 1960s, and I contrast that experience with an experience I had on 15 March this year, when I watched a procession of Hungarians of all ages and classes on their new national day, as opposed to the November national day. Last Sunday, I had a telephone call from a Hungarian friend—Rozsik Gabor—who said that he had just won a by-election against the official candidate. That is the first victory by an opposition candidate since 1947, and gives some indication of the pace of change in central Europe.

The Council of Europe embodies the wider European tradition, which is based on the Judaeo-Christian ethos. Human rights are fundamental to the ideals of individual liberty and common culture. Yes, the Council of Europe is limited, but it is valuable. It can help to re-establish those traditions, and it does not deal just with technical matters such as conventions—it is a valuable political tool. The Council becomes more necessary as the super-powers reduce their role in Europe. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) said, central Europe needs to be redefined. The future role of Germany, both politically and economically, within central Europe needs to be redefined. The German question is back on the agenda.

We should be true to those traditions. When we consider the valuable role that the Council can play, we should not be sidetracked from those principles of individual liberty and pluralism which were fundamental to the founding fathers of the Council in 1949.

9.52 pm

**The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Francis Maude):** I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) raised this important matter. It is appropriate that he should have raised issues relating to the Council of Europe in its 40th anniversary year—of which he is as proud as the rest of the House. Britain was one of the founding members of the Council of Europe and we remain committed to the principles on which it was founded.

My hon. Friend has given, and continues to give, magnificent service to the Council of Europe, and to the Western European Union. He has been a member of the assembly since 1983, and has been leader of the all-party delegation since 1987. I should like to take this opportunity to pay a warm and sincere tribute to his distinguished leadership of that delegation, and to his colleagues in the delegation, who work so hard in the service of the House and of the Council.

I should also like to thank all right hon. and hon. Members who have wished me well on my debut. It is not quite my debut in a foreign affairs debate, but it is as a Foreign Office Minister. I have, of course, participated in rather more debates about European Community directives at a late hour than I like to think about, and matters relating to the Community are by no means new to me. Nevertheless, I look forward keenly to an expanded role, and I am glad of the opportunity to respond to the debate at this especially auspicious time.

If the way in which the debate has been conducted is any indication of the way in which debates are conducted in the Council of Europe—and I am sure that it is—we have some idea of the Council's important role. Members from both sides of the House debate important matters in a serious, well-informed and measured way. That bodes very well for the future of both the Council and the Western European Union. I am a newcomer to these matters, and I shall look to my hon. Friend and his colleagues for help and guidance.

We are witnessing momentous changes in eastern Europe. A year ago, reform in Poland was stagnating. No one could then have foreseen that by now Poland would have had its freest elections since the Communists came to power after the war; nor could anyone have foreseen that the result would be an impressive victory for Solidarity, which the Communist party—to its great credit—accepted. We all hope that the local elections, due in 18 months, will be fully free.

Great changes are taking place in Hungary as well. The hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) referred to a member of an opposition party winning a by-election: a small sign, but one of considerable significance. The reburial of Imre Nagy in June was also a potent symbol of change, and the Hungarian leadership's commitment to introducing a multi-party system is greatly to be welcomed. Hungary, too, now has its round table, and may well be the first eastern European country to hold fully democratic elections.

These are historic steps forward. The post-war period has been a difficult and tragic time for eastern Europe, but we must be realistic. Even for the peoples of Poland and Hungary difficult times still lie ahead, but the crucial point is that they are increasingly in control of their destinies. They have real choices to make, and their decisions will have enormous significance, not only for them but—we hope—for the rest of eastern Europe. Let us also not forget the less fortunate nations whose Governments have yet to go down the path of reform and greater freedom, but there is pressure for change in all those countries, and in the end it must prevail.

As has been said, the Council of Europe has an important role to play in this time of change. That was clearly recognised by the Committee of Ministers in the political declaration adopted on 5 May. I wish to refer particularly to the parts of the documents that concern relations with eastern European countries: they concentrate on the co-operation that can encourage greater openness and respect for human rights and contribute significantly to reform and democracy. It must be right, however, for the Council of Europe, in developing further links with the eastern Europeans, to follow the appropriate course for each country.

We must take full account of the actual process of reform in those countries when agreeing new forms of co-operation. We must look for real achievements and not for empty rhetoric, and co-operation must aim to support the reform process. We endorse that aim, and will support increased co-operation where there is substantial work to be done.

It is equally important to follow the guidelines set out in the political declaration. Each case must be judged on its merits; there is no virtue in pursuing contacts for their own sake. There can be no question of giving a Council of Europe "seal of approval" to countries that refuse to embrace proper reforms.

As has been said, the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe has also played an important role in developing links between the Council and eastern Europe. On 11 May, the assembly unanimously approved a resolution which, as we have heard, set out special guest status in the assembly for certain east European assemblies. In June the assembly decided that Poland, Hungary, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia should be granted such status. Delegations from those countries were able to take their seats in the assembly for the visit of President Gorbachev in July.

I understand that, as I think the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) suggested, special guest status will be comparable to the rights that delegations with observer status enjoy. Of course, only Israel currently has that status. As I understand it the delegations will be able to speak at the assembly with the prior approval of the committee concerned. I must echo the notes of caution sounded by my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate, who was rapporteur of the assembly's political affairs committee. He emphasised that the credentials of those legislative assemblies requesting such status should be strictly examined each year to ensure that they fulfil the conditions for participation.

Of course we hope for further and wider ranging reforms in eastern Europe, but we must also be vigilant to ensure that there is no regression. It is not just in the European assembly that the eastern Europeans have shown an interest. Member states have agreed that both Hungary and Poland can accede to the European cultural convention. That is one of a number of Council of Europe conventions that are open to ratification by non-members, and the Soviet Union has likewise expressed interest. Other non-members may also pursue this line. We will, of course, have to consider all cases on their individual merits, and ratification must depend on the country's ability to meet fully all the requirements of the convention.

There remains the question of closer association with —and possibly membership of—the Council of Europe, but this must depend upon a degree of democracy and a respect for human rights which is consistent with the Council's founding statute. Such conditions do not yet exist. There is a danger that an excess of enthusiasm might lead to the dilution of the Council's important basic principles, a cornerstone of which is the European convention on human rights. We look forward to the day when some of these countries can fulfil those obligations; and the sooner the better.

Some hon. Members, including my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson), spoke about the development of links between the Western European Union and eastern bloc countries. Although the Council of Europe seems to be a more appropriate body than the WEU for increasing links with eastern Europe, the WEU assembly can play a useful role in talking to parliamentarians and to other opinion formers in the Soviet Union and other eastern European countries. It is good news that the assembly has already begun exchanges with the Supreme Soviet. I hope that these can be developed in future, and perhaps expanded to take in equivalent bodies in other such countries—notably, perhaps, Poland and Hungary.

*[Mr. Francis Maude]*

I have seen the assembly's report of 3 May this year on the development of East-West relations and western European security. Since the publication of the report, there have been a number of developments that the authors would surely welcome—notably the conclusion of a successful NATO summit at the end of May, which included agreement on a comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament. That document provides a coherent and imaginative basis for the development of the Alliance's role in both protecting security and improving East-West relations through arms control.

There has also been the presentation on 13 July in Vienna of proposals by NATO for reducing the number of combat aircraft, helicopters and United States and Soviet military personnel. This followed the tabling of proposals in March on reductions in tanks, armoured troop carriers and artillery.

All these developments illustrate the way in which the western Alliance, including the WEU members, are vigorously pursuing a reduction in conventional forces in Europe. The initiative lies firmly with the west, and we look to the eastern countries to respond constructively when the talks are resumed in Vienna in September. We shall, of course, continue to follow these events closely within the WEU in the run up to this autumn's ministerial council meeting.

It remains the key aim of the WEU to promote the Alliance's cohesion and the maintenance of credible deterrent capability, with full United States and Canadian participation, at a time of rapid change in eastern Europe. It also remains a key aim to ensure that arms control will enhance stability as well as reduce force levels. Within that framework, I hope that the assembly will make its own very special contribution to increasing links between East and West.

As I have said, the main focus for building links between East and West should be the Council of Europe. It was indeed appropriate that President Gorbachev should visit Strasbourg in the Council's 40th anniversary year. The Council of Europe is not just some comfortable club. It embodies our most fundamental values. Those values must not be compromised.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** Will my hon. Friend bear in mind that a good NATO ally, in a key strategic location, that fulfils all the criteria for membership—Turkey—has formally applied to join the WEU? In the Council, will my hon. Friend try to persuade his opposite numbers to listen favourably to Turkey's wish to accede in full to the Brussels treaty and join the WEU? That would be greatly to the benefit of the organisation.

**Mr. Maude:** I hear what my hon. Friend says. He will appreciate that I am new to these matters and I hope that he will forgive me if I do not respond fully to that point. I shall look carefully at what he has said.

Adenauer, that great European statesman, subscribed to the two virtues of unity and freedom. He would have welcomed the changes in eastern Europe today, and the role that the Council and the WEU have played in them. He, too, would have counselled us today—as he did in his own lifetime—that freedom must come before unity; unity yes, but freedom first. Those who wholeheartedly adopt the values of the Council of Europe will welcome fellow inhabitants of the common European house.

This has been a valuable opportunity to debate the merits of the Council of Europe. I am grateful to all those who have taken part in the debate. I am well aware of the hard work that they do and of the distinguished contribution that the Council of Europe makes. I urge them to continue to pay it good attention. I assure all of them that the Government take extremely seriously what the Council of Europe does.

# North East Shipbuilders Limited

10.7 pm

**Mr. Bob Clay** (Sunderland, North): I am thankful for the opportunity to raise with the House what I and many of my hon. Friends regard as a major national scandal. It is not some regional, parochial matter or one that concerns simply an important national industry: it is a matter that in many ways exposes the most appalling incompetence, and concerns issues of great constitutional importance to the relationship between the Government and the European Commission.

I shall start simply by stating what are by now irrefutable facts about the reality of what has happened. On the River Wear are the shipyards of North East Shipbuilders Limited, regarded as technologically the most advanced in Europe. Many other shipbuilding nations consider them to be the most enviably advanced merchant shipbuilding yards. We have a highly skilled, superb work force, mainly either languishing on the dole or working on short-term contracts away from the town, their home and their families.

Two organisations are willing, here and now, to purchase those shipyards. Both had clear signals earlier this year that the Government and British Shipbuilders were open to offers. Both have made it plain that they do not require any intervention fund subsidy on future contracts should they acquire the shipyards. Both have orders ready to place immediately in the yards. These are orders on their own account, as both are shipowners. We are not talking about orders from a third party. The ship-owners are prepared to place orders in the yards, if they secure the purchase of them, and it is now an undeniable fact, contrary to the Government's expectations last year, that the market for merchant shipbuilding is rapidly increasing throughout the world. The market for the categories and sizes of ship that the Wearside yards build is increasing even more speedily.

It is ironic that we are hearing literally daily from ship-owners and ship brokers in Europe and other parts of the world of the increasing difficulties that they are having in placing contracts in any yards. The cutting continued for so long that Europe and many other parts of the world are moving towards serious under-capacity.

We have superb yards, willing buyers, no requirement for public subsidy, a privatisation process that started at the instigation of the Government, two owners with massive financial resources and no one querying their ability financially to sustain the yards in any opening or teething period. How can it be that the yards remain closed and that the Government refuse to allow them to reopen?

As the pathetic saga has unravelled, the Government have been forced to say that they got it wrong. They have done so in a mealy-mouthed way. They can no longer dispute, despite their persistent refusal to accept this earlier, that there is clear, statistically undeniable evidence of an upturn in orders. That vindicates the position that Opposition Members took last year, when we argued that, although we were opposed to privatisation in principle, if the Government wanted to persist with privatisation they should at least get the timing right. We argued throughout that an upturn in the market was coming and that it would be logical to privatise a yard that had orders and could take more orders rather than a yard that was facing difficulty with an existing order and had nothing else on the order book. How right we have been proved about that.

There is plenty of evidence that the Government got it wrong last year about possible new ownership. Early last year the directors of North East Shipbuilders Limited drew up their own plans to rationalise the yard—it would have been a painful process—and to retract to an efficient one-site operation with one outfitting facility and one shipbuilding yard. The board of British Shipbuilders rejected the plan on the ground that it was too late to commence it because the Government had already begun the privatisation process. I ask the Minister to tell us whether the decision of British Shipbuilders to reject the proposal of NESL's directors was the result of Government instructions or advice.

As last year unfolded, it became clear that another bizarre matter had been misunderstood and that the Government had got it wrong. A document was deposited in the Library by the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton), who is now the Secretary of State for Social Security, which sets out the Government's record on some of the unfortunate matters to which I have referred. The document sets out the Government's account of how it all happened.

At the end of the second page, and as part of the explanation of why the Government were in such a rush to privatise NESL, there appears the following sentence:

> "This applied especially to any bidder interested in the possible series of orders from the Cuban shipping company Mambisa."

What was meant by "this applied"? Intervention fund support was likely to be reduced after 31 December 1988. It was therefore important, we are now told, in the Government's view to have a prospective purchaser in place by that date so as not to lose a little intervention fund support on the Cuban order. It is extraordinary for the Government now to say that the urgency of securing that Cuban order was a critical factor in the timing of privatisation—particularly since, only months before, the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke) told the House repeatedly that the Cuban order did not exist. That is something else that the Government got wrong.

The Government also said that there were no serious bidders for NESL last year, yet they now say that one should not be suspicious about the way in which the West German bidder, Egon Oldendorff, came into the picture this year, when it was around as a serious bidder all last year. How can the Government say, on the one hand, that last year there were no serious bidders, and, on the other, that a bidder now regarded as fairly serious was around last year too?

The document placed in the Library by the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton), to which I referred earlier, makes mention of the Government's belief, in respect of bids made this year, that

> "Against the experience of the previous autumn, shipbuilding proposals seemed unlikely."

In other words, the Government restated their view that after last year's experience, it seemed unlikely that shipbuilding proposals would emerge during the stay of execution in the first six months of this year. The Government were wrong again. There were two substantial bids. That might explain why, when the

*[Mr. Bob Clay]*

Government were confronted by not one but two serious bids, they found themselves in a state of shock and did nothing for a considerable length of time.

It is extraordinary that the Government should state in a document deposited in the Library that they did not expect any serious shipbuilding proposals this year, when the chairman of British Shipbuilders, Mr. John Lister, repeatedly expressed the view last year that a probable outcome of the whole sorry scenario would be that serious bidders would wait until the yards' closure was announced before moving in to buy—in the mistaken belief that they would be able to obtain their assets more cheaply and easily. How wrong the Government were. Nevertheless, that view was persistently, if not publicly, expressed. The Government must have been well aware of that view of the chairman of British Shipbuilders, so it is extraordinary that they should now plead that they never expected any such thing to happen.

The Government's most serious error was their understanding of the European Commission's attitude in the event of a renotification by the Government of the reopening of one yard, or both yards, in the light of a serious bidder coming forward. How did the Government get all that wrong? I shall briefly run through some of the key dates this year. Bids were not made suddenly in June or July this year. At the end of January, the Anglo-Greek bidders wrote to British Shipbuilders expressing interest in shipbuilding in Sunderland and asking to visit the yards immediately. On 22 February, the Anglo-Greek bidders met British Shipbuilders and announced that they wanted to buy the yards. On 9 March, they wrote again, referring to the meeting of 22 February. On 6 April, after wondering what else they had to do, the Anglo-Greek bidders made a formal offer, subject to contract.

According to a written answer I received from the Minister today, on 13 April the West German bidder expressed interest too. Finally, on 10 April a senior civil servant spoke to a senior official of the European Commission. The document in the Library states clearly that the difficulties that have now arisen over British Shipbuilders' commercial borrowing were not mentioned in the 10 April discussion. The document also reveals that, on 11 April, bidders were informed of difficulties that might arise with the European Commission.

There are two different versions of that development. Certainly bidders were informed that, if they wanted to continue receiving intervention fund subsidy, there would be problems with the European Commission. But at least one of the bidders believes that it was informed that if it did not want intervention fund subsidy there should not be a major difficulty. It is not just one of the bidders who believes that to be the case, but British Shipbuilders, which was selling the yards. It also takes the view that it was only much later in late June that it was made clear that even a non-intervention funded bid could produce considerable difficulties.

It is interesting that, after the first formal discussion between the Government and the Commission, a discussion that should have taken place much earlier, advice to bidders about difficulties that could arise with the European Commission was never even put in writing. A written answer that I received today confirms that that advice was only given orally. What an extraordinary way for the Department of Trade and Industry to behave. But how convenient that it was only given orally, because now we can only take one or the other side's word for it and we shall never know precisely what advice was given, as there is no written documentary proof of it.

On 17 April, the Anglo-Greek bidders, in response to whatever advice they were given, put in a further offer making it clear that they did not want any subsidy. On 3 May the West German bidder did the same. Even on 7 June, when the right hon. Member for Braintree gave evidence to the Select Committee on Trade and Industry, there were only the slightest hints, if one really read between the lines, that a serious difficulty would arise with the Commission from a non-intervention funded bid.

Finally, on 27 June, the right hon. Member for Braintree met Sir Leon Brittan, the Commissioner responsible for competition, and discovered that it was alleged that the Commission would reopen the whole question of what happened last December and would, if the British Government renotified it of a reopening of the yard, place in the way serious obstacles that would effectively make it commercially impossible for anyone to take on the yards.

We are not talking about an act of God. This was not due to the weather. I am not particularly interested in whether responsibility lies 100 per cent. with the EC, 100 per cent. with the British Government, 50:50 between the two or any proportion that anyone likes to devise. It lies 100 per cent. in some proportion between the two—no one else.

It is extraordinary that people were told that the Government were open to offers, that they received offers and that weeks and months went by. This is a serious case of commercial misrepresentation. If people are told that it is possible for them to buy something and if they then come forward and meet all the commercial requirements only to be told that a sale was not possible in the first place, that is commercial misrepresentation. It is about time that we stopped the pathetic business of the European Commission saying that the Government should have known all along and the Government saying that the European Commission never told them and that they did not know what to ask anyway. One or both of them should own up. If the Commission is right now, the Government must have been wrong then, or vice versa.

The crucial matter is that of unsubsidised bids. On 8 February the hon. Member for Braintree wrote to me. His words are clear and they have been quoted before. He talked about the difficulties that would arise if bidders wanted intervention funding, and he said:

> "My comments are of course related to the issue of *subsidised* shipbuilding. Should anyone wish to purchase some or all of the Sunderland facilities for shipbuilding without any form of assistance, that would entail only the negotiation with BS of acceptable terms for acquiring the facilities in question."

We now have the pathetic spectacle of Ministers and civil servants scurrying around trying to work out how to explain that. We are being told that subsidy in that case did not necessarily just mean the intervention fund; it meant the strange mechanism whereby, if the yard reopened, British Shipbuilders' past losses, accepted by the Commission last December, could be regarded as triggering off commercial debts that would be imposed on a new owner of the yard. If that is the case, it would have been impossible to sell the yards in the first place. If the Government are saying that what they meant by "subsidy" in February was that a new buyer would inherit £90 million worth of commercial risk with the yard, the yards were unsaleable, and bidders should have been told that. In that case, the letter should have been rewritten as follows: "My comments are, of course, related to impossible shipbuilding. Should anyone wish to purchase some or all of the Sunderland facilities by invoking a miracle, that would entail only the negotiation with British Shipbuilders of acceptable terms for acquiring the facilities in question." It is nonsense.

The commercial misrepresentation went back long before this year. In a sense, if what the Commission is now saying is correct, it was never possible to sell the yards. We are told that British Shipbuilders' losses were so great that its accounts and the subsidy that had already gone in until the end of last year were so far in breach of the sixth directive that something had to close. Let us put it this way. If the Government had gone to the Commission in December and said, "We have a buyer for the Appledore yard in Devon, we have a buyer for the Ferguson yard on the Clyde, a buyer for the Clark Kincaid engine works and also a buyer for Sunderland"—much bigger than the rest of the operations put together—what would the Commission have said? Would it have said, "That's okay; fine; get on with it," in which case the logic must be that the Commission cannot object to Sunderland reopening now? The Commission's objection to Sunderland reopening now must surely mean that it was going to insist on a pretty substantial closure of some kind last December.

The Government must have known that all along. They could have done the correct thing and refused to accept that the Commission had a right to close British shipyards. If they did not want to do that, they could at least have done the honest thing politically and said, "We accept the Commission's rights to impose closures on us. We shall now choose which yards to close and which of the remainder to put up for sale." Instead, they put the whole lot up for sale, knowing that they could not sell all the yards. That was commercial misrepresentation as well.

The Government nearly got away with it. What went wrong was this: the hidden agenda last year was to close Sunderland because it had no orders. Then something very embarrassing happens. One of the world's biggest shipping lines, Mambisa of Cuba, wanted to place what would then have been the biggest merchant order in the world with Sunderland, because it thought that Sunderland was a very good shipyard from which it had had many good ships in the past. The then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pretended that the Cubans were not there; he pretended that they wanted unreasonable terms; he pretended this and pretended that, but the Cubans just would not go away. It was extremely embarrassing and it prolonged the whole business.

Let me get back to what is happening now. The Government's failure to allow the reopening of the yard revolves around the attitude of the European Commission —that, at least, is the excuse that they are using. But in addition to the European Commission, we have a European Parliament made up of elected representatives. A deputation from Sunderland, which included me, went over to Strasbourg a couple of days ago, and there is now a resolution before the European Parliament, which was laid by Alan Donnelly, MEP for Tyne and Wear. It

"Calls on the Commission to withdraw any contemplated actions that deter the Government of the United Kingdom from proceeding with a sale of Sunderland shipyards to buyers who wish to utilise these facilities for shipbuilding purposes and who do not require Intervention Fund support on future contracts."

That resolution has been presented to Henrique Barón Crespo, the new President of the European Parliament, who has said to me and to others in the deputation that he hopes that the resolution will receive sympathetic and serious attention from the Parliament. I am sure that it will, and, moreover, it is a Parliament which is looking to assert more authority vis-à-vis the unelected Commission.

Perhaps the British Government will say that the European Parliament is a meaningless and irrelevant institution and a waste of time and money. Unless they say that, they must accept in logic that if the European Parliament passes the resolution after due process, the European Commission may take some note of it. If the European Commission takes notice, the obstacle which, according to the Government is the only thing standing in the way of the reopening of the yards, has been removed. I hope that the Government can give us an assurance tonight that, as long as the European Parliament is considering the matter, they will do nothing to break up the assets or even sell the assets of the yards to anyone other than a shipbuilder until the European Parliament has had the opportunity to express its view to the Commission.

Furthermore, when I refer to the Commission, it is clear that the Commission is not embodied solely in Sir Leon Brittan. We were told over the past two days that at least one other Commissioner seriously questions Sir Leon Brittan's judgment in relating the Sunderland enterprise zone to a renotification of reopening the shipyards.

Whatever Sir Leon Brittan may propose to the rest of the Commission, he will need nine votes to get his proposal through—if it goes to a vote. The Government should bear that in mind, because they have been far too ready to accept that as one Commissioner, who may be the lead Commissioner in the matter, is apparently presenting obstacles that is a good enough excuse for them to throw up their hands and say, "We can do nothing more about this."

The Government have got away with this extraordinary situation because it revolves around historic incidents and very technical European directives about an industry which, although it is important, is sadly regarded as rather regional. It is not a clapped-out sunset industry, it is a high-technology sunrise industry and the country will rue the day that it loses the industry. Nevertheless, the issues are historical, technical and complicated. They are woven with incompetence and deceit. Sadly, the national media in this country have for some reason not grasped what is happening.

Therefore, I must provide a metaphor to explain the sheer scale of the scandal and lunacy: a patient lies in a bed. He does not have an incurable illness or disease. However, he is profoundly sick and on a life-support machine. Misdiagnosing hunger as a duodenal ulcer, the surgeon operates and cuts out the appendix by mistake. One inappropriate drug regime after another has produced more and more catastrophic side effects.

It transpires that the doctors have been reading the wrong text books which, in any case, were in a foreign language that they did not really understand. So obsessed are they with their absurd remedial measures that they will sacrifice the patient to test the cure.

*[Mr. Bob Clay]*

The chief nurse is frequently drunk. Most of the competent medical staff have fled the asylum for early retirement or other jobs. The hospital manager—or the manager up until a few days ago—is a decent well-meaning soul who has developed quite an attachment to the patient. From time to time, he intervenes to stop the final fatality occurring. Unfortunately, he has little idea of the reality of the hospital's extraordinary environment beyond his own office door, other than an occasional embarrassed visit to the sick room. Even when he begins to suspect that something has gone profoundly wrong, he cannot face the consequences, let along decide how to put matters right.

The hospital manager's secretary really runs the show. He is an extremely clever man, but is showing some signs of schizophrenia. So carried away has he become with demonstrating his administrative genius that he often forgets that the purpose of it all is to return patients to health.

The hospital room has become a nightmare. The patient's family sends for a second opinion. Having overcome the hospital's misdirections about its location, and after, on several occasions, being asked to come back next week, the new doctor eventually examines the patient. "Basically," the doctor says, "the patient should be fed rather than starved. Stop the drugs and try some exercise. I will take the patient away and I am pretty sure that I can effect a cure. I will nurture the patient and give him a new life. I will charge no fee for this responsibility and I will ask for no support in future. Indeed, I will pay you generously if you will allow me to take your patient away and care for him." "Sorry," says the hospital, "It is against our rules unless we switch off the life support machine."

Towards the end of the sorry saga, the patient's constituency Member of Parliament is increasingly asked why he does not just let the poor old thing die in peace. Few seem to understand his outrage at such a question.

To end the medical metaphor, if, in medical terms, this crazed and macabre farce finally leads to the murderous outcome that I have described, eventually all those responsible will go to trial. Some might get away with more than others, but they will all be barred from medical parctice for life—they will be struck off. Eventually, the political equivalent will catch up with those responsible for the wanton and unnecessary destruction of jobs in Sunderland and 600 years of proud shipbuilding history.

Even tonight it is not too late. There is a new Secretary of State and a new Minister dealing with shipbuilding. They should take a deep breath and think again. If they must continue their obsession with the European Commission's interpretation and their interpretation of the rules, they should go back to the European Commission and say, "It is nonsense that a directive which, rightly or wrongly, was designed to reduce subsidy in European shipbuilding is now being used to eliminate the one yard that is going to have a go at shipbuilding without subsidy—a contradiction in terms."

They should say, "We are renotifying you that we have accepted one of these bidders. We are going ahead and we are prepared to negotiate the consequences, but we are not prepared to have the absurd situation in which one of the best shipyards in the world, with a willing and skilled work force looking for jobs, and with ships waiting to be built when the world is booming with orders, is allowed finally to close." The Government really must think again.

10.36 pm

**Mr. Chris Mullin** (Sunderland, South): My hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) has made an impressive, detailed and damning case. I hope that the Minister will address the serious charges that he made. I look forward to the day when the Select Committee gets its teeth into this matter, because it will not go away. The Minister has been in his present office only a few days, but the matter will be in his in-tray and those of his masters for some time yet.

I regret that the recent reshuffle means that the Ministers who presided over the closure of NESL and the disastrous events of the past 12 months are not here to account for their stewardship. All that we can hope for tonight—it is no criticism of the Minister—is a mechanical recital of a brief and as much bluster and synthetic indignation as the Minister can muster—having seen the Minister on previous occasions in his Home Office days, we know that that is quite a lot.

One of the problems in engaging in a rational dialogue on the fate of our shipbuilding industry is the frequency with which those responsible for the shipbuilding industry change. My hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North will have a better idea than I of the exact count, but there have been more Ministers responsible for shipbuilding than coups in Bolivia.

Many people in Sunderland feel betrayed by what has happened in the past 12 months or so. My hon. Friend has documented what has happened. My role tonight is merely to underline some of the points that he made and to draw attention to one or two other aspects.

One of the consistent themes in what has happened to our shipyards in Sunderland is the constant moving of the goalposts. When privatising industries, it is customary to fatten them up first to make them attractive to potential investors. It is unusual for an enterprise to be put on the market when its fortunes are lowest and when it is liable to be least attractive to potential investors. Yet that was the moment when the Department of Trade and Industry chose to privatise NESL. Just at the moment—it seemed to be disastrous at the time—when the Danish ferries order fell through, the Department saw the opportunity to close NESL once and for all.

It reckoned without a number of factors. First of all, it saw no orders. People in Sunderland are not daft; they are quite realistic—if there are no ships to be built, there cannot be shipyards. However, as my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North said, there was a potential Cuban order worth £110 million. The Department of Trade and Industry declined to take that order seriously, I was present, along with my hon. Friend and others, at a meeting at the DTI when the then Secretary of State—which is two Secretaries of State ago—the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke), admitted that he had not taken the Cuban order seriously, although he now did. That was one rare piece of frankness in this sorry saga. In about June of last year—some time before my hon. Friend had raised the matter—the Cuban order was at last being taken seriously.

A new problem then arose—there were no buyers for the yard. We had a yard and an order, but we did not have any buyers. Many of us took the view, which was shared by *Lloyd's List*, that the decent thing to do would be to go for the order, and any other orders that were available, and worry about finding a buyer afterwards. However, that was not what happened.

In December last year, we were told by the newest Minister responsible, the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton), that there were no suitable buyers, so the yard would have to close. The right hon. Gentleman was, however, decent enough to say that he would do his best to keep the assets intact, in the hope that some use could be made of them in the near future. What I suspect he did not expect was that not one but two potential buyers would shortly emerge. As my hon.Friend the Member for Sunderland, North has said, it was a situation that the Department failed entirely to predict and, even when it was staring it in the face, it took some time to wake up to it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North quoted the letter to him of 8 February, in which we were told that, while there would be a problem, because of the closure in December, with anyone wishing to undertake subsidised shipbuilding—God knows there is no shipyard in the western world, even now, that does not enjoy some degree of subsidy——

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): Anywhere in the whole world.

**Mr. Mullin:** Yes, anywhere in the whole world, as my hon. Friend said.

We were told, however, that there would be no problem should buyers come forward who were prepared to buy the yard without subsidy. My hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North, quoted the precise passage from a letter, which I think bears quoting again. I hope that the Minister will deal with it, because no one from the Government has dealt with it so far. It said:

> "Should anyone wish to purchase some or all of the Sunderland facilities for shipbuilding without any form of assistance, that would entail only the negotiation with British Shipbuilders of acceptable terms for acquiring the facilities in question."

We cannot have it clearer than that.

According to the document deposited in the Library, on 17 April the first of the two potential buyers, the Anglo-Greek interest, told the Ministry that it would require no subsidy. So from 17 April, the DTI had one buyer, who was not after any subsidy. By 3 May it had two —the Olendorf company had also come forward as a buyer and it, too, did not require a subsidy. There was no greater evidence of the shipyard's viability, because those were commercial interests—they were not charities. They were not doing it for their love for North East Shipbuilders or necessarily the people of Sunderland. They would be the first to admit that they were doing it for commercial interests.

Therefore, by 17 April and 3 May, those hard-headed commercial interests thought that it was possible to build unsubsidised ships in North East Shipbuilders. Such had been the strengthening of the market and the rise in shipbuilding prices around the world, that it was rightly predicted by my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North, and others with an interest in these matters, that unsubsidised shipbuilding would be possible.

At that time, the goalposts were moved again. There was talk of a threat to the enterprise zone that the Minister had announced in December and of the new owners inheriting British Shipbuilders' debts of £90 million. It is

*[Mr. Mullin]*

hard to believe that those threats were serious, because no one purchasing a new enterprise for between £7 million or £9 million would contemplate taking on debts of £90 million. They would have said, a long time before that, "We are not interested, good night." The potential purchasers did not say that, the goalposts were moved again and everything was done to discourage them, no doubt in the hope that they would go away. However, they persisted, which was a tribute to the strength of the market and to the changes that had occurred in it over the previous six or 12 months.

We were told, finally, that the European Commission would not accept the deal. We were further told that the Minister was not aware of that possibility until he visited Sir Leon Brittan on 27 June, but I do not accept that. A copy of Sir Leon's letter dated 12 July has now been placed in the Library. Presumably, it is the most authoritative statement of the Commission's view, although, as my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North said, he is only one Commissioner and if there were a vote there is a possibility that he would be out-voted.

Although Sir Leon's letter is not very helpful, it does not mention an outright objection to the sale of the yards, nor does it say that the enterprise zone would have to go. It merely talks of a "reappraisal", and not of cutting off aid altogether but of reducing it.

There is good reason to believe that the use of the Commission as an alibi was exaggerated and that if there had been the political will there would have been no difficulty in finding a way to reopen the yards as commercial enterprises.

If Ministers set out to sink what remained of our merchant shipbuilding capacity, they could not have done better. Who needs foreign competition when we have the Department of Trade and Industry?

The Department of Trade and Industry grossly under-estimated the revival of the market. A cynical interpretation of the letter dated 8 February, which was mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North, would be that it never dawned on Ministers when they undertook to keep assets intact until 30 June that there would be any takers. If that interpretation is correct, it suggests that they were woefully misinformed and ill-advised.

The Department of Trade and Industry and all concerned grossly under-estimated the strength of feeling in Sunderland. The industry did not begin 30 or 40 years ago; it has deep roots in the culture of Sunderland. For 600 years, ships had been built on the Wear, and people not much older than me can recall when one could not walk in the main streets of Sunderland without hearing the sound of hammers on rivets coming from the shipyards that lined its banks. Generations of people in Sunderland owe their livelihoods to the shipyards. They are deeply proud of the yards, and for good reason. There was a time, within the living memory of most people, when the yards accounted for more than half the world's merchant shipping output.

Not least of the Department's mistakes was to under-estimate the strength of feeling in Sunderland. The whole town has been united in our campaign to save the yards. All political parties on the borough council have lent their voices to this, as has the chamber of commerce, and the local newspaper, which gives donations to the Conservative party, has been unstinting in its support. Above all, the work force has united under shop stewards who command greater respect than any I have come across. I pay tribute to all those who have played a part in the magnificent campaign, which is far from over, to save our shipyards.

For some time, the Department has been perpetrating a cruel hoax not only on the people of Sunderland and the workers in the shipyards but on the commercial interests that seek to buy them. It pretended to solicit bids, when in reality it discouraged bids. I can conclude from his letter of 8 February only that the Minister was unaware of the sixth directive and did not become aware of it until the end of June when he visited Sir Leon Brittan. I do not want to be too hard on the previous Minister of Trade and Industry. All of us acknowledge that he is on the merciful wing of his party and inherited decisions made by others. I recognise his genuine concern for the fate of Sunderland. Perhaps that was what led him to preside over the present mess.

The circumstances of North-East Shipbuilders Limited has implications for the country. As an island nation, we depend on shipping, yet we lack the capacity to build our merchant ships. Once we had the biggest fleet in the world, but now our erstwhile shipping capacity is under foreign flags and crewed from the poorest nations. It has implications for the defence of our country. Only the other day, the Select Committee on Defence drew attention to the shortage of merchant shipping available in time of war.

Above all, it has implications for all those interested in the malign effect of the EC on the British economy. It may come as news to many that the EC cannot merely veto subsidies, but can veto a commercial arrangement that requires no subsidy. This saga illustrates our enormous loss of sovereignty to the EC over the past few years. Many wonder whether Germany or France would tolerate such interference and suspect that, if the market revived soon to allow a German yard to reopen, we would hear no more about the sixth directive.

**Mr. Clay:** Is my hon. Friend aware that Sir Robert Atkinson wrote to me and said that the French act first and argue afterwards? Does he agree that that is interesting, coming from somebody with direct experience as a former chairman of British Shipbuilders?

**Mr. Mullin:** We could learn a great deal from the French and Germans. At the end of the day, our problem is not in Europe but in a lack of political will in Whitehall and Westminster.

There is one other aspect of EC policy I should like to draw to the Minister's attention. Renaval is the programme of aid that the EC operates for various regions that have been badly hit by closures of merchant shipbuilding yards. I understand that no application for such aid has been made on behalf of Sunderland, although the Government have applied for aid for Plymouth, Strathclyde and, unbelievably, Gibraltar, which are much less hard hit than Sunderland.

Last week, I and others had a meeting with the Commissioner responsible for regional development, who confirmed that no application had been made and expressed surprise at that. He was confident that if one were made, it would be favourably considered. On 10 July, the leader of Sunderland borough council, Councillor Charles Slater, wrote to the then Chancellor saying:

> "I would be furious if my officers had neglected such obvious issues as those now confronting you in any negotiations undertaken on the Council's behalf."

He was referring to Renaval. The letter continued:

> "I assume that you are equally displeased with your officials and that they have been instructed to resolve matters as quickly as possible, and to Sunderland's advantage."

I checked yesterday with the office of the leader of the borough council and, as of yesterday, he had not received a reply to that letter. I hope the Minister will tonight assure the House that an application is under way.

**Mr. Clay:** The Government have been telling us for months that nobody wants to risk the aid that is going to Sunderland for remedial measures by reopening the shipyards. In other words, Sunderland needs the aid so much that we should be prepared to keep the shipyards closed, rather than risk losing the aid package. At the same time, it seems that the Government are refusing to apply for another aid package, the Renaval aid, which would do just as well as the aid being given for closing the shipyards. That shows the hypocrisy of it all.

**Mr. Mullin:** I agree with my hon. Friend. The Government cannot have it both ways. Given that there has been a massive loss of jobs in Sunderland, it is clear that, if part of the shipbuilding industry there were to be revived, it would not be incompatible to obtain Renaval aid for areas which are not revived. It is time that those responsible got their skates on.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North began by saying that we in Sunderland have one of the most modern yards in Europe and that millions of pounds of taxpayers' money had been invested in it. We have a skilled work force, there is a rising world market and the sixth directive—the alibi given for the closure of the yard—is due to be renegotiated in 18 months' time, no doubt taking into account changes in the world market. There is, in addition, a strong possibility—as my hon. Friend discovered on his recent trip to Strasbourg—that the EC is prepared to reconsider the issue.

It would be an act of gross vandalism to destroy those yards now. We want an assurance from the Minister that while any possibility remains—and it seems that a large one remains—of a future for those yards building ships, which is what they were built for, they will be kept intact. At least until the European Parliament has had an opportunity to see if it stands by the claims that have been made for its position on this matter. We in Sunderland do not want to see those yards destroyed if there is any hope of them being retained, and we believe there are considerable grounds for hope in view of the dramatic revival in the world market. We seek an assurance from the Minister to that effect.

A friend of mine who has worked in the yards in Sunderland all his working life told me recently that he had been offered a job in a shipyard in north Germany. He said, "Shipbuilding in Sunderland is not dead. Sunderland workers will still be building ships, but they will be building them in German yards." I cannot think of a sadder epitaph for the Government's policy or for merchant shipbuilding in this country than that they have turned the proud shipyard workers of Sunderland into a race of guest workers in the yards of our competitors. That is a sad state of affairs.

10.58 pm

**Mr. Doug Henderson** (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) on initiating this debate, on his excellent contribution and on the role that he has played, in company with my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin), in campaigning to retain shipbuilding in the north-east and to retain a merchant shipbuilding capacity in Sunderland. If my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North has shown nothing else today he has shown that when he eventually retires after a long period of service in the House he would make an excellent ombudsman for the National Health Service. No doubt a future Labour Government will bear that in mind.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg) on his appointment as Minister of State. I hope that he is given a little more leeway by his boss than was given to his predecessor. The fact that he represents a particular town in the midlands may give him the influence that some of his hon. Friends enjoy. He will probably say that it does not, because he has not exactly been bequeathed the most enviable of tasks by his predecessors at the Department of Trade and Industry.

As for the relationship between the Government and the European Commission on trade and industry matters, I am not sure whether we can expect to see the pattern that was established in the past recurring in the future. We have been told this week that there will be no change of policy. I am not sure whether that was the Prime Minister or Bernard Ingham speaking. I am sure that we all look forward to hearing the Cabinet's view of the relationship between the interests of this country and the way in which those interests are dealt with in Europe. The history of the DTI and of British Shipbuilders' involvement in this whole business is one of complacent incompetence.

My hon. Friends have raised several questions and in the short time available to me I shall summarise three or four of their main questions. First, why were the terms of any sale not clarified by the Department after it announced that offers could be considered on 17 January? I have a little experience of negotiations and it has always struck me that the first thing to do when entering a negotiation is to examine the ground rules, consider how they might change and decide what options might be available later. From the evidence that we have heard in the debate about this whole saga, it does not seem as though anything of that nature was undertaken by the Department. Indeed, in the letter sent by the previous Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North on 23 January this year, there was absolutely no acknowledgement or identification of the problems that could arise in the future.

Secondly, after the Commission said that intervention fund money would not be available in response to the issues raised by the Department in April after a bid was received on, I believe, 6 April, why did the Department not then seek to clarify whether any other conditions would apply? We are told that the Department was told that the rules of the game had changed and that intervention fund money would be available, but surely it is a basic tenet of negotiating that one should then seek to clarify whether any other matters would be laid down as the conditions in which aid might apply.

Thirdly, after the previous Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was told by Sir Leon Brittan on 27 June about

*[Mr. Doug Henderson]*

the problems which existed in relation to any bid, did any further negotiations take place with the Commission between that date and 13 July, when a further statement was made to the House? If negotiations took place, what was their nature and what conditions were suggested by the Government in response to the talks on 27 June?

I do not want to elaborate too much, but the fourth question that must be answered is why British Shipbuilders did not seek to give the Government advice on the difficulties of interpretation which might arise in regard to the sixth directive. British Shipbuilders has someone permanently based in Brussels who is supposed to keep the industry briefed on a day-to-day basis about the things that happen there. British Shipbuilders must surely have been aware of some of the difficulties which might lie ahead—or if not, why not?

Only two interpretations are possible at this late date. Either the Government welcomed the Commission's veto or they have been given the runaround for the past year and have accepted in a docile fashion an edict by officials in Brussels which would never have been acceptable to the Italians, the Germans or the French. Can anyone imagine an Italian or German shipyard, which had been closed but was given the possibility of reopening, being treated in this manner? Can anyone imagine the German, French or Italian Government giving in to the Commission as the British Government seem to have given in on this issue? Can anyone imagine the Germans or French not clearing the ground early so that they knew the conditions which might apply and could therefore give the issues the widest consideration?

The Minister has a difficult task today. He inherits a grave situation. I ask him to forget the past, to start again, to look to the future and, even at this late stage, to reopen negotiations with Brussels to seek a new package. If he does not do that, he will face another question—what happens to the yards?

If there is no attempt to reopen negotiations, and no satisfactory conclusions to such negotiations, the only conclusion that I and the people of Sunderland can draw is that their yards, their inheritance, their history, their traditions, their skills and their expertise are being thrown to rust and decay in the cold north-east winter winds. I assure the Minister that although I represent a Newcastle constituency, I occasionally visit Roker park. The winds there bite the football ground and they bite the shipyards that are left to decay. Surely it would be better to reopen negotiations and, while they are going on, keep the yards intact in the hope that, with the widely acknowledged upturn in world shipping, there will some day be another option for the people of Sunderland which will allow shipbuilding to take place.

I have this evening asked the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to examine the circumstances in which the Government failed to take the opportunity to dispose of a public asset in a way that would have given hope to a great industrial town and raised public funds. I have also written to the Chairman of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry asking whether he can examine the implications of the closure of North East Shipbuilders Limited for the maintenace of a merchant shipbuilding industry in Britain. That Committee has twice discussed shipbuilding and NESL. Twice it has received submissions from Ministers and twice, I believe, it has not been told the whole truth. I hope that the Minister will join me and willingly make himself available, with his civil servants, so that the Select Committee can get to the bottom of the matter.

Rather than damning reports from those Committees, which I think very likely, I should much prefer the Minister to re-establish a proper and effective working relationship with his old friend, Sir Leon Brittan, with whom he had a close relationship, and to reopen negotiations in Brussels on this sorry affair.

11.8 pm

**The Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry (Mr. Douglas Hogg):** The future of Sunderland, particularly of North East Shipbuilders, is serious and important.

I am grateful to the hon. Members for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) and for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) for raising this matter, as it gives me an opportunity to explore some of the relevant considerations. I am also grateful to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, North (Mr. Henderson) for his kind welcome. This is the first time that we have had the great pleasure of debating one against the other.

This is my first venture in the House as Minister with responsibility for industry and enterprise, and I am glad that it should coincide with a debate on the future of industry and enterprise in a town with strong manufacturing traditions and traditions which are deeply rooted in engineering.

I hope that the hon. Member for Sunderland, North will forgive me if I say that I do not accept his criticisms of my right hon. Friend the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. No one was more anxious than he to bring prosperity to Sunderland, and his commitment to that task was well known. On his behalf, I am grateful to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South for being good enough to pay tribute to him.

At the end of last year, my right hon. Friend had to focus on the future of the shipbuilding yards. His predecessor, the present Secretary of State for Health, had promised that if there was no successful bid for NESL a suitable package of measures would be introduced to allow the town a new future. Bids had been invited by the end of September, and I know that—having examined the advice from British Shipbuilders on those bids—my right hon. Friend was impressed by the advantages of retaining shipbuilding, if that were possible.

A number of factors had to be taken into account, and my right hon. Friend took them into account. Sunderland, as I have said, had a strong tradition in the industry, and there was much inherent skill in the town. However, my right hon. Friend had to be conscious that only bids that were capable of providing a viable future for the industry should be seriously considered. He had also to be conscious—as indeed he was—that, even had such a viable bid been made, there would in all probability have been a substantial fall in employment.

My right hon. Friend also had to consider the positive advantages of creating enterprise zones. He was very conscious of what had been achieved at Consett, Corby, Scunthorpe and elsewhere. That argument was fortified by points made by, for example, my hon. Friends the

Members for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) and for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) on the occasion of his statement on 13 July.

I think that the House will acknowledge that my right hon. Friend took immense trouble to find a shipbuilding solution for NESL, and that it was only with the greatest regret and after examining all the relevant factors that he announced, on 7 December, the decision to close the yards. He announced that decision in conjunction with a range of positive measures designed to ameliorate the position that he knew would ensue. Prominent among those measures was the creation of an enterprise zone of some 150 acres for Sunderland.

My right hon. Friend announced a variety of other measures: for example, £10·5 million was to be provided through British Shipbuilders, of which £5 million was designed specifically to help the work force with, for instance, retraining and job replacement, while another £5 million was intended to promote enterprise within the borough of Sunderland. Another element in the package was the provision of advanced factories worth some £7 million through the agency of the English Industrial Estates Corporation.

Both Sunderland Members will acknowledge that the position has improved, contrary to their fears when the closure decision was announced. I understand that, although about 2,000 men were made redundant as a consequence of that decision, 1,100 or so have now found some form of permanent employment. Opposition Members shake their heads. I can only act on advice and no doubt the matter will be further examined. I have given my understanding of the present position.

I should now like to speak about developments between last December and today. The hon. Members for Sunderland, North and for Sunderland, South have understandably focused on these matters. I cannot give a complete account of what occurred, but shall touch on only one or two matters that seem of special interest. In that respect the two hon. Members who represent Sunderland adopted a similar approach. In a debate on 14 December 1988, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy made it clear to the House that it was possible in principle to renotify the Commission with proposals about shipbuilding at NESL.

My right hon. Friend made it crystal clear that he was not willing to put at risk the remedial arrangement that he had already announced for Sunderland, nor was he prepared to put at risk the disposal of the smaller British Shipbuilders facilities. The European Commission decided on 21 December not to raise objection to a package notification for British Shipbuilders which included details of the terms of disposal of some of its smaller facilities together with the corporation's forecasts for 1988 and 1989, proposals for the closure of North East Shipbuilders and the £10·5 million element in the remedial package that I have outlined.

On 22 December the Government notified their intention to introduce the enterprise zone in Sunderland. On 17 January, at a meeting in Sunderland with the "Save our Shipyards" campaign, at which I suspect one or other or both hon. Members for Sunderland were present, the former Chancellor of the Duchy made it clear that he was prepared for the NESL yards to remain in being at least until 30 June to allow for any new interest that could use the existing investment to make proposals to British Shipbuilders.

Against the experience of the previous autumn, shipbuilding proposals seemed unlikely. More likely were proposals for repair and conversion.

The next significant event was that the Commission formally cleared the enterprise zone for Sunderland. I understand that that occurred on 2 March.

**Mr. Mullin:** In his rundown the Minister seems to have passed 8 February, the date of the letter to which my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North and I referred. Perhaps the Minister will come to that in a moment, but there must be some explanation of the remarkable statement in that letter.

**Mr. Hogg:** The hon. Member for Sunderland, South seems to have forgotten the explanation that has been given. He will recall that precisely that question was put to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy during his statement on 13 July. If the hon. Gentleman cares to look at column 1151 of *Hansard* of that date he will see my right hon. Friend's reply. I could not do better than repeat that answer, but as it is already in the *Official Report* I do not propose to trouble the House further about it.

A first offer was received on 6 April and this was later amended on 17 April to exclude the requirement for intervention fund support. This followed a meeting between Department of Trade and Industry officials and Commission officials about the difficulties likely to be encountered in any renotification of shipbuilding proposals for NESL.

Both the shipbuilding interests which sustained their bids were advised that an offer requiring intervention fund assistance or the equivalent was bound to result in the Commission consulting other member states in a "procedure". They were also warned of potentially serious difficulties even if funding was not required, but prospects could be improved only if bids were without such assistance and there was some lasting reduction in capacity in the yards.

On 3 May, British Shipbuilders received a second serious offer from a shipbuilding interest, which was also confirmed as being without intervention fund support. Both these bids required further clarification and proof. In addition, two non-shipbuilding bids were confirmed on 26 May and 6 June respectively. In these circumstances, and recognising that the Commission could be expected to give a clear opinion only on the basis of a full appreciation of the plans of the two shipbuilding interests, the Government thought it right to take stock of the position as a whole, and to define the framework within which decisions could be taken.

The House will also recall that my right hon. Friend gave a written answer on 7 June this year setting out how the Government intended to proceed. He said that he had asked British Shipbuilders to give advice about each of the bids by 30 June and that the Government would take decisions in the light of a number of factors. Among these, the position under the sixth directive was only one. Meanwhile, preparations for the enterprise zone and other remedial measures in Sunderland were put on ice.

Following final clarification meetings between British Shipbuilders and the bidders, which gave him a full picture of what was likely to be proposed, my right hon. Friend visited the responsible Commissioner in Brussels on 27 June. The responsible Commissioner was Sir Leon Brittan, whom I had the privilege to serve as parliamentary private

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secretary. He made it plain that if shipbuilding were to be continued at NESL the Commission would feel it necessary to open a procedure under article 93(2) because, in his view, the commitment implied by the Commission's acceptance of the notification of the closure of the yards was a commitment to keep them physically closed for at least five years, and that that commitment would have been called into question. Accordingly, the Commission would need to reopen the package notified last December.

Moreover, aids accepted as restructuring would have to be redefined and any excess repaid. In practice, that would mean an increase in British Shipbuilders' market borrowing, a sum of £90 million the previous December, because otherwise the corporation would have been in breach of the sixth directive.

Secondly, the Commissioner made it plain that in any circumstances he would be bound to recommend a procedure, which would take some six months. Thirdly, the Commissioner also made it plain that, since he regarded the Commission's clearance of the enteprise zone as dependent upon the closure of NESL, the Commission's continued approval of the zone could not be assumed.

**Mr. Clay:** We understand why the Minister is reading from the statement in the Library. However, he has reached the crux of the matter. We have just heard the two crucial points. What the Minister has read out about the problems of British Shipbuilders' commercial borrowing, he has read out as being the Commission view. According to that, by definition, it would not have been possible to sell off the yards. In other words, the bidders were wasting their time if the Government accepted the Commission's view, because no one could buy the yards.

The second crucial consideration for the Government is the enterprise zone, because they do not want to risk that. Is it not extraordinary that another Commissioner is querying Sir Leon Brittan's judgment, and querying whether the competition Commissioner can link the two matters? Despite that query, the British Government have accepted Sir Leon Brittan's judgment and caved in.

**Mr. Hogg:** As the hon. Member for Sunderland, North has already made plain, in this regard Sir Leon is the lead Commissioner. We have to form a view as to what is the likely effect of the advice that the lead Commissioner is bound to give to his colleagues. Having regard to the advice that he set out in his letter of 13 July, it is inevitable that if the lead Commissioner gave the advice there set out, it would have the consequences there itemised. Even if that is not a certain consequence, on any view of the matter it is a highly probable one. That assessment has to be judged against the other benefits that will flow to Sunderland from the establishment of the enterprise zone.

The other issue raised by the hon. Member for Sunderland, North touches on the effect of the borrowing. It is clear that a substantial debt transferred to an acquiring bidder creates a problem for that bidder. I suspect that it would put the problem too high to say that the transaction thereby became impossible. Clearly, however, such a debt would increase the problem. Were the Government to renotify the shipbuilding proposals for the yard, the future of the Sunderland measures could be called into question. In any event—perhaps the hon. Gentleman would care to reflect upon this—progress would be delayed for at least six months.

**Mr. Andrew Rowe** (Mid-Kent): I realise that conditions vary in different parts of the country, but it may be of some consolation to the hon. Members for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) and for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullins) if I recall the fact that after the Chatham dockyard closed, with cataclysmic results for the morale of those living in Chatham, two enterprise zones were declared. Chatham now has remarkably low unemployment and a thriving economy with a large number of businesses. I hope that that may be of some consolation to the hon. Gentlemen.

**Mr. Hogg:** That echoes the point that I have made already. My hon. Friend's experience coincides with experience at Consett, Corby and Scunthorpe, where the establishment of enterprise zones has led to a substantial increase in prosperity and employment. I hope that the hon. Members for Sunderland, North and for Sunderland, South will take that message back to their constituents.

When considering the future of Sunderland, the Government must take account of the relatively certain promise of the enterprise zone and the other measures that were announced in December 1988. The current estimate is that at least 3,000 to 4,000 jobs would result from those initiatives. That is one relatively certain proposition on which we must reflect. We must also consider the shipbuilding proposals, which as a result of the attitude adopted by the European Commission are likely to involve delay for at least six months. They would call into question the enterprise zone, and they are likely to result in financial obligations that would make the transaction extremely unattractive.

**Mr. Clay:** The Minister has still not responded to the central question. If what he has said is true and that is the Government's judgment, that must have been true in January. The enterprise zone would have been in danger then. Against that background, why did the Government allow people to waste their time and money bidding for the shipyards? If the Commission has changed its mind and hardened its attitude, why do not the Government say to it, "We are sorry but you should have told us this before; we have bidders now, so we shall get on with it."?

**Mr. Hogg:** I understand that intervention to be a reference to the acquisition by the acquiring bidder of the capital debt.

**Mr. Clay:** And the difficulty of the enterprise zone.

**Mr. Hogg:** Indeed. Officials had estimated that any redefinition of cost by the Commission within the rules of the directive would be capable of being covered by British Shipbuilders' expected net income over the years to come, provided that there was no intervention fund support and that the Pallion yard remained closed. In other words, they did not accept in their assumptions that there would inevitably be an odd capital obligation of the sort set out in the Commissioner's letter of 13 July. Officials considered the problem of the co-existence of the enterprise zone with some renewed shipbuilding activity, but felt that action of the kind ultimately taken was proper. The criticism of those officials by the hon. Members for Sunderland, North and for Sunderland, South is not warranted.

The Government concluded that in all the circumstances, the enterprise zone and the other measures described were in Sunderland's best long-term interests. My right hon. Friend accordingly invited British Shipbuilders, in consultation with the Tyne and Wear development corporation, to undertake further work with the existing bidders in examining the use of the yard's assets for purposes other than shipbuilding, with a view to making final recommendations in due course.

The establishment of the enterprise zone and all the other elements of the package of measures to promote enterprise and new jobs in Sunderland will press ahead with all possible vigour. My right hon. Friend the Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton), the former Chancellor of the Duchy, devoted considerable energy and personal commitment to finding the best way forward for Sunderland. After careful examination of all the facts, he concluded that the enterprise zone solution was the best. From all the material that I have examined, I see no reason to differ from that view. Advantage must be taken of the measures that the Government have made available.

Sunderland's shipbuilding traditions have been strong, but as well as bringing periods of prosperity, they brought periods of great uncertainty. The means are now available to the Tyne area, through the enterprise zone and other measures, to grow in terms of prosperity and employment. I hope and believe that the energy, skill and determination of the people whom the two hon. Gentlemen represent in their respective constituencies will achieve that highly desirable result.

# Railways

11.31 pm

**Mr. Roger King** (Birmingham, Northfield): For six weeks the British public endured the inconvenience of a national rail strike. Tonight, we learned that, at long last, the end is in sight, and the the National Union of Railwaymen has decided to accept the 8·8 per cent. offer that has been on the table for two weeks or more and to resume normal working. We can be grateful for that, but the dispute revealed for all to see the sheer incompetence of British Rail's management and the bone-headed stupidity of the NUR.

The malaise that affects that once great industry is clear to see—a constant struggle between employers and employees to extract the last ounce of concession, with the innocent public left as the victims. The irony of the latest dispute is that the other two rail unions settled earlier for a not unreasonable 8·8 per cent. pay increase, which is the same figure that now has the NUR's agreement.

Rumour has it that Jimmy Knapp, the NUR's general secretary, would have done a deal earlier if his union had allowed him, but that he had a little local difficulty. In making known their view that the union should settle, the Opposition did so in as quiet a voice as possible, lest anyone should hear, and made no impact on the parties involved reaching agreement. No one in the NUR believed the Leader of the Opposition. If they had, a settlement would have been reached sooner.

Meanwhile, British Rail's management procrastinated in a ritualistic way, promising a service on a strikebound day, only to find that the system had to be totally shut down, Yesterday, some semblance of a service was provided, and perhaps that showed the unions involved that they could not continue the dispute with any credibility.

The general public were forced to endure unbelievable discomfort, struggling to and from work stuck in a coagulated traffic jam in record temperatures. Our newspapers have been full of traffic jams on the M25 and the main arterial roads into London, as elsewhere throughout the land in many of our cities.

In essence, apart from a basic pay increase, the NUR's desire to maintain a national wage structure, as opposed to a regional one, can be understood in terms of union influence and power, but hardly at all in terms of common sense. The NUR concedes that it is some 7,000 staff short in the south-east, yet it is not prepared to get round the table and discuss regional pay in order to encourage people to join the railway industry in an area where they are desperately needed.

This nonsense of a dispute need never have arisen in the first place. Talks broke off when one party, the NUR, wanted to go to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service and the other wished to use British Rail's tribunal. The result was a complete impasse—absolutely unbelievable. I make no distinction between the behaviour of the management and the behaviour of the unions. Blame can be attached to both in equal measure.

Britain's workers, certainly those employed in the public sector, need what I would describe as a contract of negotiation; a legal document which clearly sets out the negotiating procedure to be adopted by both parties. The failure of those parties to agree to negotiate in the set legal way could lead to court action. It would be incumbent on

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the union to ensure that it had fulfilled that legal contract of negotiation before it could conduct a ballot for strike action. Then we could avoid the nonsense whereby, in the final act of arbitration, there is a dispute over which body the parties should go to.

I accept that the NUR viewed British Rail's wage tribunal as unacceptable for the purpose of discussing an alteration in pay structure. It is a tribunal which exists to negotiate pay terms, and its reason for not wishing to go to the tribunal could be understood, since it preferred to go to ACAS, where the method of payment within the railway industry could have been discussed.

For its part, the management may not have made itself too obviously available to negotiate a settlement with ACAS, believing that the tribunal could resolve matters. A legal document such as the contract of negotiation that I have described would have left no grey area for dispute between management or unions. Only in that way can we eliminate the sort of nonsense that we have recently witnessed. Only after that could a strike ballot be legally called.

During the recent one-day stoppages the commuter has either had to stay at home or struggle, often for hours, to his place of work. I can vouch for the fact that roads into London are now becoming jammed with traffic before 6 o'clock. A short five-mile journey into the House of Commons at 6 o'clock can land one in a very long tailback, negotiating difficult junctions.

The Government have exacerbated the problem by providing more parking spaces for cars when it could be argued that we really need fewer parking spaces. We need not extra parking spaces in Hyde park or Battersea park but the removal of existing parking spaces in order to deter a massive influx of cars into the capital which end up in hours and hours of jammed traffic with practically no business being conducted. That would encourage the concept of car sharing.

I hope that we shall not have to experience this annual charade again and that a formula can be found to ensure that we do not. However, having settled on pay, in a few weeks' time we may well witness further disruption if the pay structure that the British Rail Board wants to alter is not agreed with the unions, and we shall be back to one-day stoppages again. We should encourage further steps to keep our cities moving.

The population in general would request the Government to do a little more than they have done over the past six weeks of one-day stoppages. I have already mentioned restrictions on parking places—a perfectly reasonable concept. We should go further, and perhaps, if necessary, issue an order to restrict car usage—when appropriate—to those sporting odd numbers on their number plates one week and those sporting even numbers the next. I know that some people have two cars and could use their odd-numbered car one week and their even-numbered car the next, but they are the exceptions, and such a system would, by the law of averages, reduce traffic considerably. It would free the city's traffic and enable us to combat the effects of an industrial dispute far more successfully than we have over the past six weeks.

Such a policy would place greater emphasis on other public transport systems—buses and coaches in particular. With traffic congestion roughly halved and bus journey times greatly reduced, it ought to be possible to cater for most people's needs. It must surely be beyond dispute that commuting conditions would improve as a consequence. If we are to stand up to disputes such as this, we must use all the weapons at our disposal to ensure that the life of our cities continues with as little interruption as possible.

I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to talk to all interested parties, especially the Bus and Coach Council about how best to keep our cities moving in the event of a repetition of the rail strike. I do not think that it helps to cancel bus lanes, only to accommodate more cars—a policy that the Department has tried in the past few weeks. On the contrary—we need more dedicated bus routes, and we should certainly keep the bus lanes open to enable buses and coaches to bring passengers in with as much haste as they possibly can.

The present rail dispute has brought our rail system under the microscope. It was built when there was no alternative and has since been subjected to intense competition, especially from road vehicles. Nevertheless, some say that a new railway age is about to dawn. I would not dispute that. There is much sense in the assertion, but only if we can accept the challenge of new policies.

British Rail has a monopoly. Some of its resources are grossly under-used while others are near saturation point. A monopoly brings with it monopoly union power and the ability to hold everyone to ransom.

**Mr. Peter Snape** (West Bromwich, East): How original.

**Mr. King:** Sometimes one needs to state the obvious to emphasise the problems that we face.

We should explore the possibility of breaking up the monopoly. That would need a great deal of courage on the Government's part, but the time is ripe. We can thank Jimmy Knapp, the NUR and the British Railways Board for bringing this item on to the agenda. The dispute has brought into focus the challenge of how to make our railway system more efficient and more answerable to the country.

There are a number of options open to us. Privatising the whole system at one go would solve absolutely nothing, and it could even make matters worse, so that idea can be disposed of very quickly. We should still be left with a monopoly rail system. For many people, rail is the only available mode of transport and for them, the monopoly remains.

Privatising by operating sector has its attractions, and I used to favour it, but it is fatally flawed. One would need a track authority, separate from the operating companies, and that could lead to signalmen and others holding operators to ransom if they wished to do so. There is no indication that they would, but the opportunity would be there for them to do so, very much as air traffic controllers can hold airlines to ransom, as we have seen over the past few months.

I believe that privatising along the lines of the old regional companies—still present under the existing regime but now known as regions—wins on points and has many advantages. As an initial exercise, I would favour the creation of three operating divisions, which would have to be big enough to generate sufficient business that avoids too many complications of cross-regional traffic. The old railway companies suffered problems with the amount of cross-border traffic. That caused problems in accounting as revenues were transferred, sometimes between two, three or four different regions and the system became horrendously complicated. We have a national railway system at present and it would be extremely difficult to unscramble it back to the system that existed in the days of the railway companies.

If the system is broken up into three companies, one would be based in the west of the United Kingdom and another in the east. Both would contain elements of the Scottish railway system. The third company would be located in the south and south-east, comprising, generally speaking, Network SouthEast. The southern network, because of its essentially radial trackwork, may well lend itself to individual line privatisation. Individual companies used to radiate out of London, and a few years ago the Southend line was considered a candidate for a self-contained private system.

It would not be necessary to privatise all three systems at the same time. One might be privatised initially, with the others following at intervals. The new companies would be free to develop their services as they wished. The social obligations would remain as they are at present, so that they provided the services that people wish them to provide as was the case under the old metropolitan transport authorities.

It may make good sense to convert some of the little-used secondary lines into busways. Experiments to that end have been most successful in other countries. We must remember that railways are particularly expensive to provide.

Before a train has travelled a line, the standing costs are extremely high. In many parts of the country the system is used for only 3 per cent. of the time—it stands idle for the other 97 per cent. The opportunities to simplify the system by converting many of our little-used railway lines into dedicated busways must be considered. The idea has much merit and it has worked in some cities, in particular in Canada.

During the Beeching era, 60 miles of the great central railway from Rugby to High Wycombe were closed. That track was built for high-speed running and the trackway has lain derelict ever since. Much of it has now been built on and it would be far too difficult to reconvert the trackway to transport use. However, it could have been converted to a bus or coach way which would have enabled operators to gain access to central London while avoiding the present heavy traffic. We could weep for the loss of that marvelous asset. The opportunity of using that trackway as an alternative to the railways has probably been lost for ever.

There are many ways in which a railway system can be converted satisfactorily for road use. Not so very long ago in the west midlands we developed a bus system called Trac Line. That was a guided bus which ran along a small narrow track way. It had small wheels on either side of the vehicle for steering. The experiment ran only for about a quarter of a mile and it is no longer in use because it could not be adapted immediately for a city environment. However, there are opportunities to build on that system to provide an alternative transport system to the railways.

Road coach travel in the United Kingdom has proved very successful in providing some competition to the rail system in whatever format we may choose to develop it. We could leave the system in its present state guise in which the dangers of a continuing monopoly will mean that we can expect periodic stoppages and disruptions. We may decide to privatise sectors. That would create competition and allow railwaymen to participate in their own business; we know from previous privatisation that that has proven to be a very effective spur to the work force to invest in its own business and to produce profits with an expectation of wage increases.

That would provide a great spur for those businesses to respond to customers' needs in the way that only privatisation can. Even in the privatised form that I described, they would not have the necessary competition to provide the extra efficiency that we desperately need. According to newspaper reports, last year about 60,000 passenger trains failed to start. That is a considerable number, but as a percentage it is not very high. I am sure that all hon. Members have experienced great inconvenience through trains being cancelled. Obviously, we deplore that and would wish to introduce a system to reduce the increasing number of trains that do not start on time.

The trouble with road passenger coach operations trying to compete with the railways is that they have great difficulty fighting their way through the traffic of London. That problem would be eased considerably if my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State would take the concept of bus lanes a stage further and ensure that, instead of operating in rush hours, they were freely available for use by buses and coaches throughout the day. Both those modes of travel are extremely energy-efficient. It is a great shame that we expect them to bash their way through heavy traffic, mixing their paths with those of cars, lorries and so on on the roads.

There are opportunities for route swapping with the railways. Not long ago, British Airways was obliged to give some of its routes to British Midland to provide the internal competition that we desperately wanted. Hon. Members have seen the high quality of service that both airlines provide and, of course, the generation of traffic that greater competition and efficiency have provided for both operators. British Midland and British Airways have done and are doing exceedingly well. If we could dedicate a route for coaches to get into the centre of London with the minimum of disruption, we could provide the sort of competition with which the railways can compete. At the moment there is a complacent take-it-or-leave-it attitude, and we must fight it.

Not so long ago, there was much talk about Marylebone station being converted into a coach station, with access to the city centre via the old central rail system from near High Wycombe. The opportunity now presents itself for that proposal to be re-examined so that we can provide an alternative for the customer—the person who wants to travel from A to B—who, so far, is largely condemned to travel by British Rail. Time and again we have found that privatisation with employee participation spells a better deal for the consumer, but the opportunity to create competition for the railways, in whatever guise they adopt, should not be lost.

I have mentioned that the rail dispute has thrown into perspective the opportunities that the railways must exploit over the next few years to provide the service that the community demands. That service cannot be provided under the present structure, with the intransigence of the trade unions and the poor quality of the management presently operating the railway system.

A privatised system along the lines that I have described would make the various railway companies compete with each other. The railway system has no substantial

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competition other than fairly realistic competition from coaches. It will not have a real substantial alternative until we can resolve some of the problems that other modes of travel experience in gaining access to our major cities. If the Minister for Public Transport can offer some hope that he will take on board the initiative of allowing the coach industry a greater opportunity to compete with railways through the maintenance of busways and through the provision of new routes into our city centres, which may utilise existing redundant railway routes, he will be well on the way to providing us with an efficient and highly effective form of public transport.

11.55 pm

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King). I thought that he would talk about railway policy, but I suppose that coming from Northfield and a motor manufacturing area, it was appropriate for him to comment on coaches and roads. I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman is typical of the new theology, which is so common on the Conservative Benches, especially among newer hon. Members.

**Mr. Snape:** An old theology.

**Mr. Spearing:** It may be an old theology, but it is spatchcocked into conditions that do not pertain, as they might have done—I am not sure that they ever did—in the 19th century. It is competition by compulsion, privatisation of public assets and conning the public by asking them to buy what they already own. There is a concern—it may be a proper one—for competition for the railways, but over the past 10 years we all know that long-distance coach travel, with usherettes, television, coffee, deep seats and, above all, the use of the motorways has provided that competition in a way which would hardly have seemed credible a few years ago, even with respect to speed, which is, of course, sometimes above the legal limits.

There is also the denial of the proper role of unions. A Birmingham Member speaking about London problems, I suppose, is just about legitimate, but I remind the hon. Member for Northfield that privatisation of some of the major roads of Birmingham for a few days in a year, which he may have supported, denies those roads to the public of Birmingham—even the motor coaches on which he is so keen.

The public have been sympathetic to the cause of railway workers, because they understand far better than many Conservative Members the difficulties and problems of working on the railways. The railway for a professional railway worker is a dangerous place. The public see them, of course, in their workplace, which is extended over hundreds of miles. Without the necessary training, discipline and experience, the safety of the public is at risk, as we have unhappily seen in the past few years.

Experience, loyalty and morale, all of which are essential to the running of a railway, together with teamwork, do not show on the balance sheet. I put it strongly to Conservative Members that, in their obsession with the annual balance sheet, they lose out on human factors that cannot be bought and sold and will not show even on a capital balance sheet.

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): Will my hon. Friend accept that chief among the human factors has been the extent to which over the years the railway work force has been undervalued in terms of low pay, and that part of the reason for the Clapham incident, for example, was the enormous amount of overtime that railway workers had been forced to work to make a decent wage?

**Mr. Spearing:** My hon. Friend puts it correctly. The southern region has been existing for several years on its drivers doing forced overtime. I made that point in the House at the time of the Clapham disaster. Overtime is forced by management on an unwilling work force because of the Government's edict about such things as efficiency. I do not consider that efficient at all. That is where competition of the worst sort gets us. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Northfield would agree on that. In the 1930s, Conservatives passed Acts on the road coach industry to prevent men and machines from competing each other into the ground. Some new Conservative Members do not understand the mistakes that were made in the past and introduce new schemes without realising the dangers involved.

My hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) mentioned morale. The railway will run only if the rule book is both kept and ignored. The railway is a family concern, literally and metaphorically, which requires teamwork and loyalty. If management is stupid enough not to recognise loyalty and teamwork as first desiderata, things will go wrong. I agree with the hon. Member for Northfield that higher management has been inefficient, but it has been forced into taking stupid action by Government requirements.

Tonight, an 8·5 per cent. pay increase was provisionally agreed. Presumably the hon. Member for Northfield has not agreed with the action taken so far by the railwaymen, but is it not a fact that if they had not taken such action they would have been accepting a cut in pay? I ask the Minister for Public Transport to reply to that question later. Would he expect people who work shifts and unsocial hours and who are being increasingly ground down by difficult conditions to take a pay cut? I do not believe that he would. Conservative Members have talked so much twaddle over the past few weeks that the anger in my voice is forgivable. Does the hon. Member for Northfield agree that if railwaymen had not taken action they would have been accepting a pay cut?

I spoke earlier of unsocial conditions, morale and loyalty. A feature of the railway system over the past 30 years has been national conciliation and pay bargaining. Conservative Members believe that the labour problem on the railway will be solved by regional pay structures. Local incentives have been available in the Civil Service and public service for various reasons, but workers in the water industry, teachers, doctors or anyone else who is in dispute with this wretched Government——

**Mr. Anderson:** Or the National and Local Government Officers Association.

**Mr. Spearing:** Yes, or NALGO. All those people are in dispute not only about pay but about conditions. Labour Members are aware of that only too well, but ignorant Conservative Members know nothing about it. The hon. Member for Northfield may smile, but what counts are the conditions of work—hours, time off, arrangements with the foreman, and so on. Railway drivers on southern region, who are at the peak of their profession, have begun to resign. Who would believe that people who have climbed the ladder in the railway profession would resign to take up a job in industry because the conditions there are easier and more congenial?

As part of their grand scheme for all industries and trades, the Government are trying to get rid of national pay bargaining. That is a retrograde step. That is why the agreement that has been reached today is only provisional. The bargaining currently going on is about national conditions. If national conditions are removed, workers can be undermined. I hope that this is a civilised society. The Prime Minister talks frequently about the need for the family. Good conditions of work, safety and all the other matters that I mentioned are fundamental.

I commend to Conservative Members the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) at business questions today, when he told us that some of his constituents took home less than £90 a week on which to keep a family. The Prime Minister was present and for once heard the facts. We hear that sometimes she listens and learns. I hope that she learned something during her uncustomarily lengthy stay at business questions today.

Bad industrial relations in the motor industry did not start with public ownership. The problem was endemic. The hon. Member for Northfield may know about this. It is most intriguing and unfortunate that a gentleman from the motor industry has been involved in the recent railways dispute. I do not blame him personally. He is a professional man with a career. He has been the chief arbitration negotiator. The psychological needs of employees and employers in the two industries could not be more different. The history of the one is markedly different from the other. How far has that been at least a contributory factor in the unhappy few weeks that the country has been going through?

I well recall the equivalent gentleman, Mr. Rose, who took part in the discussions on flexible rostering. He was a good man. I believe that that episode helped to hasten his death. He knew that what he was being asked to do was not in line with experience, safety, morale and the family spirit which alone makes the railways operate properly.

**Mr. Snape:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Spearing:** My hon. Friend, who also knew that gentleman, agrees with me.

It is a great pity that this new broom attitude is coming into London Regional Transport. I shall not dwell on the question of safety on the deep tubes, as I have already mentioned it and the Minister wrote to me about it, but he should consider carefully matters on which he has taken a provisional decision. In the past two or three weeks I have been going through King's Cross. On Sunday night an escalator there was screaming blue murder. It sounded as though an animal was being murdered. It has been juddering and screaming like that for at least three weeks. When I inquired about it, I was told, "Oh, yes, we have sent for the engineers, but nothing has been done." I should have thought that King's Cross was the last station at which LRT could keep an escalator running in that condition, but I understand that the escalator service and engineering in LRT is still in difficulties.

The Select Committee on Transport issued a little known report which I have quoted before, but it is worth quoting again. I refer to HC 44 of the current Session, and the Minister is directly involved. The concluding paragraph reads:

> "On 12 June the Secretary of State, in answer to a Parliamentary Question, said 'I would have to hear convincing arguments from London Underground Limited before I agreed to pricing people off the Underground.'"

Peak hour pricing has been proposed to reduce overcrowding. The paragraph concludes:

> "We hope that the arguments would have to be more convincing than those presented to us by London Regional Transport on 7 June. We intend to keep the matter under review."

That was the view of an all-party Select Committee after hearing the evidence of Mr. Wilfred Newton, chairman of London Regional Transport.

It is curious to think that LRT is responsible for the planning of all passenger rail traffic in London. That was news to me when I was told it in a written answer by the former Secretary of State for Transport. Statutorily that is correct. There is now no strategic planning in London, but as that issue will be debated later tonight I shall not dwell on it now, save to say that such planning as we have is the summation of borough plans, and LRT is responsible for co-ordinating all passenger transport by rail and bus in London. But LRT is not in a position to do that. The result is that the Minister issues advice—he commissions reports and comes up with advice, and I will cite a few instances of that later.

British Rail and its imaginative management in the early 1980s had plans for transport in London. In November 1980, the then chairman wrote in a book entitled "Cross-London Rail Link":

> "We are publishing this during difficult economic times for the country. But it is essential to maintain the impetus of forward thinking as part of BR's strategy for changing our services to meet new demands. Moreover, it is necessary that we consider now what sort of railway services the nation will require in the 1990s and at the dawn of the new century because major developments in transport systems and infrastructure involve long lead times."

The management of BR was certainly looking forward at that time. It said that its cross-London rail link scheme would take three years to plan and six years to complete. Had the Government implemented that scheme, we would not have the present overcrowding. But the Government said that they did not want it. They probably said that as it would not pay 7 per cent. it could not be done. That was a narrow, confined, non-public and, in the end, stupid and unsustainable attitude on the part of the Government.

Earlier, Conservative attitudes had been different. The famous Mr. Marples—who had nothing to do with the equally famous lady of that name—had the wisdom to approve the Victoria line, even though it was known that it would lose money. He was a Conservative with a civic attitude to life.

Conservative Members are entitled to believe that today we need enterprise and efficiency and people with dynamism and vision to use private capital to provide services and goods for customers. They do not appreciate, however, that for that strategy to work properly, there must be within society not only abstract but absolute physical provision which is common to all. Without that commonality of service, the activities that people can do best in an enterprise will not flourish and cannot operate on any basis of fundamental consistency and expectation.

*[Mr. Spearing]*

Railways—particularly in and around London—come into that type of public service expectation, with efficiency of course.

Instead of that, we have the central London rail study, and the Government say that, in respect of the cross-rail link, they will agree to have it for Paddington to Liverpool street if the developers pay something. As for the east London rail study, the Government say that the developers must pay some money, and the provisional document relating to the east London study, published yesterday, is nothing more than an Olympia and York benefit. Because there has been no real strategic study in London, Olympia and York get partly conned in that they go to the Isle of Dogs and find that the only transport there is the docklands light railway, which is not big enough, and that the only approved road, at least until recently, was one planned in the post-Napoleonic war era and four carts wide. That was planning, up to a point. Olympia and York has now approached the Government saying, "To make it viable and to make east London worthy, let us have an east London rail study." But it is not for east Londoners—it is for the shareholders and brothers who run Olympia and York.

Stratford is an excellent place for a Channel tunnel terminal because it now has cross-rail and may also have the other line to which I have referred. Again, this point shows up the Government's lack of planning for the rail needs of London and the Channel tunnel. British Rail has said that Waterloo will be fine—no doubt with Government backing—and certainly without strategic planning. Although it said that Waterloo is all that is needed, it is now saying that King's Cross is needed as well. However, only four platforms at King's Cross are to be used for international traffic. Even if the six planned platforms were used, one cannot stretch the station and increase its size. There has clearly not been very much planning in that regard. In other words, although the Government are now saying that they need more railway infrastructure and better planning, it is being done on a piecemeal basis.

Perhaps the Minister will tell us whether the new railway for Heathrow is to be privatised. Obviously, it should be part of a through rail system for London, perhaps from Stratford where a new Channel tunnel terminal could go straight through to Heathrow and—if some common sense were shown—loop back to Waterloo.

Those are some of the ways in which the Government are not concerning themselves with proper rail planning. Through their theological obsession, they are requiring an input from developers when everybody in our society knows that we should develop wise long-term planning strategies. For the Government, everything is short term. They will not plan ahead.

I contacted the Department of Transport five or six years ago about a matter in my constituency. I can measure the time by the fact that the right hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) was then Under-Secretary of State. I begged her to put in some DLR extension earthworks to the new roads in the area, but the Department would not do it. There are now plans for a six-lane motorway in east London over a new bridge, the design of which was announced last week. Five or six years ago I asked that that bridge have the facility for an extension of the DLR to Thamesmead, but the Department would not even consider the idea. This week there has been a new east London rail study and—lo and behold—it is proposed that a railway will run not far from that very bridge and that it could also include the DLR. The duplication and lack of forethought is almost mind-boggling and cannot be understood. Even the post-war Conservative Government did better under people such as Mr. Marples.

In conclusion, the ideas of the hon. Member for Northfield about privatisation are totally impractical because of his lack of knowledge of the working lives, aspirations and need for good conditions in relation to both efficiency and safety on the part of those who run and those who work on the railways. We must recognise above all the experience that has been collected over the years. The management must use that experience, as well as new ideas, and match the two together. That is what we all want. I only wish that Conservative Members knew a bit more about the technical and human side of running railways. They would then not say the stupid things that they have been saying in the past few weeks.

12.18 am

**Mr. Andrew Rowe** (Mid-Kent): In recent months I have learnt a little bit about railways—of course, not as much as my hon. Friend the Minister who, in addition to his sharp mind, has the benefit of an assiduous staff. But nevertheless I have learnt something.

I know that my hon. Friend sometimes grows impatient with me because, as he told a friend of mine, I get things wrong, but I plead in mitigation that too much of my information comes from British Rail; and as we all know, what British Rail tells us on Monday is wrong by Wednesday. In that context, it might interest my hon. Friend to inquire why British Rail has changed the permitted gradients on its proposed high-speed rail line from one in 50 to one in 90.

However, my hon. Friend will be relieved to learn that I do not intend to spend time tonight on the great British Rail project which is tearing my constituency apart and frightening out of their wits the residents of parts of England's most beautiful countryside.

I shall meet the new Secretary of State—I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the former Secretary of State, who I thought was a remarkable Minister in many ways—tomorrow. I shall raise then the many concerns with which my constituents charge me and which I am happy to represent to him.

I propose to apply some of the lessons that I have learnt from this business to a broader argument about the future of the railways in the United Kingdom. I am not sure whether my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) is sceptical about or sympathetic to the view that I am about to put forward, but I believe that Europe stands on the threshold of an enormous economic and political revolution comparable with the industrial revolution. Just as the latter could not have been achieved without dramatic advances in transportation, nor can the European revolution of 1992.

To those of us who are old enough to remember the Beeching axe, the proposition that Europe's future hangs on its railways sounds bizarre. When the chairmen of Europe's railways met the European Community Transport Commissioner recently, they proposed to build no fewer than 19,000 miles of track, two thirds of which would be entirely new. That is $100 billion-worth of railway line.

**The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Michael Portillo):** How many private Bills?

**Mr. Rowe:** Why? Because they know that, in the richest trading bloc in the world, there will be a myriad of journeys long enough to carry passengers who would otherwise travel by air and to carry freight which would otherwise go by road. The French experience alone has shown that rail is an effective competitor with air over distances from 125 to 600 miles, and is far quicker than road. It is twice as fast as a car and half the price of an aeroplane. On the Paris to sud-est line, 1·2 million passengers, or 56·5 per cent. of the market, have transferred from air to rail, according to the latest count.

Here, all this excitement seems set to pass us by. Not for us the comprehensive planning of a national network that is designed to snatch traffic back from aircraft and lorries. Not for us the prestigious purpose-built stations to welcome visitors to Britain or to speed them into Europe. For us there is to be one hurriedly planned, grudgingly financed, under-protected high-speed line boring its way not to one carefully designed terminus, but two.

British Rail's view of whether two termini or one is a good idea depends on the date and the audience to which the opinion is being delivered. At present, I think that it is believed to be a good idea. I hope that it is, because Waterloo and King's Cross, on present plans, are to provide the welcome of 21st century Britain to hundreds of thousands of European business men and tourists.

Of course, which stations are available will not matter if there are no staff to man them or if the trains break down mechanically. I rejoice for my constituents in the fact that the National Union of Railwaymen has tonight reached agreement, however provisionally, with British Rail. By the time the tunnel opens, we must have a better system of running our railways. That is why I am speaking in this debate. I believe that 21st century Britain cannot play its full part in the railway revolution while it insists on a 19th century view of railway investment.

I understand precisely why the Government, faced in 1979 with a sluggish, nationalised leviathan that swallowed subsidy in preference to earning income by providing services, subjected BR to the discipline of a 7 per cent. return on its capital projects and have tried to reduce its dependence on subsidy. There have been great benefits from that discipline. Management is tighter—although it is sometimes hard to remember—subsidies are lower and customers are beginning to feature in BR's publicity, its thinking and even occasionally in its services. As a result, investment in BR has never been higher, and the Government deserve great credit for that.

I must tell my hon. Friend the Minister that that will not do as a long-term strategy. When lines are closing, passenger demand was declining and journey miles were limited by the English channel, the strategy contained the costs of a dwindling asset, but the situation is now reversed. If conditions are right, railways could become as vital a part of United Kingdom infrastructure as roads or airlines.

So far, British Rail, constrained by rules set by the Government, has been unwilling to invest in the expectation of creating a demand. Instead it confines itself to investing late to meet a demand that is already there. That is bad enough in a crowded passenger market; in an intensely competitive freight market it is suicidal. It is time that railways and roads in the United Kingdom were treated on equal terms.

Roads, which can use up to four times as much land as railways, are not built and maintained by the owners of the cars and lorries that use they daily; they are paid for out of general taxation. The Treasury may join the motoring organisations in claiming that the road user pays for the roads through road and petroleum tax, but that is a specious argument. If it were sustainable, four times as much would be spent on the roads programme. User taxes in 1987-88 yielded £14,664,000,000, while roads cost £3,578,000,000. The discrepancy shows clearly that road taxes are no more hypothecated than any other tax, and the hidden costs of congestion, pollution and accidents further distort the comparison.

We need to incorporate the railways fully in our strategic transport planning. It is imperative, for example, that instead of wrenching a new railway to follow haphazardly an existing motorway—as is the case with the M20 and the new Kent line—we should be able to plan new roads and railways in tandem. New technology in transport wagons cries out for coherence in route planning; intermodal wagons capable of travelling on both road and rail make it essential that we change our systems.

Let us take freight capacity. British Rail believes that, if it tried very hard, it might capture up to 6·1 million tonnes of freight by 1993. Eurotunnel believes that it should be 7·4 million, and SNCF 7·2 million. For 2003, British Rail looks for 7 million, Eurotunnel for 11·4 million and SCNF for 16·4 million. Those are huge differences. I believe that they are explicable only because British Rail is so demoralised by its present financial constraints that it dare not think big.

Hitherto, freight has always been BR's poor relation. "Oops!" it will say, "here comes a passenger train. Shove the freight into a siding." But 21st century Europe looks for time-sensitive deliveries over thousands of miles, guaranted free of traffic jams and hold-ups. Rail could deliver that, but to build a United Kingdom network capable of complementing its thrusting Euro-network on the back of British Rail's unique system of finance, which effectively rules out any cost-benefit calculations comparable with those used in planning roads, is beyond the scope of both the present management and any management likely to emerge. Let the taxpayer pay for the building and maintenance of the tracks, and let British Rail or private contractors run the services on them.

If we want some lines to be toll lines, that could be even more easily arranged than toll roads. Let proposals for new lines be subject to planning procedures. Nothing could be worse than what we in Kent have had to endure during what have been laughably called the consultation procedures. It is not, I think, because British Rail is malicious—I believe that it wants to consult, but does not know how to—but because it is trying to do too much too quickly.

We have a new Secretary of State for Transport. He has an opportunity and, I believe, a duty to provide Britain with a modern railway system able to stand comparison with the great new systems of Europe, and capable of taking massive burdens of freight and massive congestion off the roads and airways of the United Kingdom and the

*[Mr. Rowe]*

continent. If he wants to do that he can, but he cannot do it if he continues to treat the railways as though they were quite different from all other forms of transport.

I do not expect my hon. Friend to make a radical commitment late on the last night of a long hot Session. All that I ask is for him to look with a fresh eye at the whole business of building, financing and running railways, which will still be here long after even his youthful countenance has turned to dust.

12.29 am

**Mr. John Bowis** (Battersea): I do not know why my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) was so reluctant to ask the Minister to provide answers on the last night of the Session. It is an ideal time, because the Minister can slip away and escape cross-examination. I have decided to contribute to the debate not least because the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) was so scathing—perhaps he was crotchety due to the late hour—in his references to new Conservative Members. I thought that, as the hon. Gentleman had not yet heard any new Conservative Members, perhaps he ought to hear one to enable him to judge whether the views expressed about them are correct.

I welcome the debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent was quite right to refer to strikes. Both management and workers in British Rail should be told that the one thing that undermines public confidence is strike action such as we have seen. To those of us who want to see confidence return to British Rail and genuine options to road transport, it is rather dispiriting to see public confidence dissipated by strikes.

**Mr. Spearing:** In my speech I referred in general terms, while understanding that there are exceptions, to the general theology of capitalism that is being propounded. The hon. Gentleman condemns strikes. Does he disagree with me about people who go on strike to defend their general living standards? If the strikers had accepted the offer, would that not have meant a reduction in their income?

**Mr. Bowis:** Their action affects the living standards of others, and in the case of a public service one must be careful about how one uses the strike weapon. I do not deny people the right to strike, but they must ask themselves what effect it will have on others.

My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) talked about running buses on disused railway tracks. I do not disagree about that, but my hon. Friend must ask himself where the wretched things will park when they get to the inner cities. There are already far too many buses trying to park on the roads, especially in inner London, and we need to take account of that.

The hon. Member for Newham, South also spoke about staffing and negotiations. There was an element of truth in what he said, but one must look at the whole question of attracting people to work on the railways. I pay tribute to the many excellent people who work there and I want to see more. One of the reasons for staff shortages is lack of housing or the inability to pay for it. I should like to see British Rail management using its imagination to go for equity-sharing schemes which would enable people to live in London and other cities.

I want to support British Rail, but sometimes it does not make it easy. Aside from strikes, the public would be more willing to use our railway service if they were convinced that it was safe, reliable, regular and comfortable and met its timetables with more accuracy. Quite often those requirements are not fulfilled. There is also the matter of safety, but one must be careful about knocking safety on the railways lest one undermine public confidence.

Clapham junction, where the recent accident occurred, is in my constituency. It is the busiest rail junction in the world, but it had never before in living memory sustained an accident in which there were casualties. We must stress the safety record of our railway system time and again so that more people will feel confident about using it. Nevertheless, I still want British Rail to come up with a more comfortable and reliable service. In my part of London, too many trains arrive with too few coaches and they are overfilled. There is no chance of people getting on. If they push, they will probably land back on the platform with bodies on top of them.

Why is British Rail so reluctant to extend platforms? It should bring forward a programme for that so that longer trains could be used in our capital city. That matter has been greatly discussed, but there is still no programme for extending platforms. Why is BR so reluctant to reopen old lines and old stations so that the load can be spread for commuters coming into London? Why has British Rail been so reluctant for so many years to do something about the Waterloo and City line, the 50-year-old Drain? Why does it make life so difficult for those who wish to cycle to the train, put their bike on the train and cycle again at the other end? Unless one travels out of the rush hour, one cannot put one's bike on the train. Why is there not more parking for commuters using stations on the fringes of London, so that they can drive to the station and park? There is not the hunger for passengers that one would like to see.

Why is it that, when we want to encourage freight on to the railway lines, British Rail designs a freight service that sends the freight at a slow speed, on long trains, at night, through the urban areas, disturbing everyone? Why is freight not sent cross-country to its destination? When those of us who want the Channel tunnel to succeed offer alternative proposals, why are they not considered properly? The Stratford option in particular should be studied. I agree wholeheartedly with the hon. Member for Newham, South about the Stratford option and the route to Heathrow, but my heart sank when he talked about a loop back to Waterloo, as that would undo all that I am trying to achieve. Why do we have to send passengers coming in from the Channel tunnel on a tourist route with a six-mile detour to see Battersea power station on the way to Waterloo? The only reason is that British Rail has a commitment to use existing lines as far as possible.

Why does British Rail not do more about the litter and the graffiti on the trains, so as to make them more attractive? All these whys and wherefores arise out of the frustration of one who wants to support British Rail and to see it winning the battle for passengers, and one who is tired of having to apologise for the service.

I have said to my hon. Friend the Minister before, and I will say it again, that we need an underground link to

Clapham junction, the busiest rail junction in the world, but still not connected to the Underground. I also agree with the hon. Member for Newham, South that my hon. Friend should speak sharply—as severely as he likes—to the chairman of London Regional Transport. We do not want people priced off the Underground system. Nor do we want, as LRT is now describing it, the increase in passengers to be priced off. We want people to be priced on to the system, and we want the money gained from the extra passengers to be ploughed back into the system.

12.37 am

**Mr. Peter Snape** (West Bromwich, East): When I saw, on the list of the debates on the Consolidated Fund Bill, that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) was introducing a debate on the railway system, I was surprised. As a Member representing a Birmingham constituency, he is known—I suppose that he is quite proud of it—as a motoring Member of Parliament. I thought that at last the penny had dropped, and even he had realised that the private car is not the answer to the nation's transport problems, and that we might hear from him some sensible alternatives. Alas, all that we got from him was the usual collection of clichés. It is typical of the hon. Gentleman that, a couple of days after a reshuffle that, once again, did not bring that much-desired preferment to him and others like him, he is peddling the same old song.

It is to the credit of Conservative Members that, although they are not as brutal as I about telling the hon. Gentleman, they have left him in no doubt that what he said about transport was the usual load of old cobblers. Predictably, he talked about the stupidity of one side of the rail dispute. He attacked the National Union of Railwaymen, my old trade union, but I would not expect anything better of him. He gave a nod towards the stupidity of the management. He gave no signs that he knew any more about the ins and outs of that dispute than he knows about the nation's transport problems.

The hon. Gentleman talked about the massive influx of private cars into our cities every day, and came up with the not particularly novel solution of the use of number plates. Presumably, if one has a car on which the number plate ends with an odd number, one comes in on a Monday, and if it has an even number, on a Tuesday. I suppose that the hon. Gentleman is living up to his reputation of being the motorists' Member. He wants to ensure that we all have two motor cars and that motor car sales are doubled. I do not think that his suggestion will do much to curb congestion in our inner cities.

There are two reasons why motorists drive their motor cars into our cities. First, it is infinitely preferable to drive than to use a congested transport system.

**Mr. Portillo:** When there are strikes?

**Mr. Snape:** The Minister will have his turn in a moment. We are aware of his simplistic solutions. As he is still in his place, I suppose that he will have a few more months to peddle the tawdry wares that he has to offer.

The company car rules supreme in the United Kingdom despite the best efforts of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. As long as the taxation system makes it more attractive for employers to give motor cars to their employees than to pay them properly, it is understandable that employees will continue to drive their cars into our congested cities. I do not know what restriction on car usage the hon. Member for Northfield would favour other than the magical number plate solution.

The hon. Gentleman's novel solution for railway privatisation would not take us very far. It seems that he wants three operating companies—east, west and south. I do not want to be accused of perpetuating the north-south divide, but the hon. Gentleman seems to think that the north is not worthy of an operating company of its own. Perhaps we should rename his constituency Birmingham East, West or Southfield. The hon. Gentleman's railway operating companies would not provide many opportunities for the north. It is a novel suggestion, but it would not work. Like most of the hon. Gentleman's suggestions, it is ill thought out. I think that we can safely ignore it.

The hon. Member for Northfield talked about buses. I am sure that we all agree that buses can make a great contribution to the provision of commuter traffic in and out of our major cities. They will not make that contribution, however, as long as we have a passion for one-person operated buses. I talk to tourists in London and they ask, "What is the point of catching a bus when it is almost as quick to walk?" If we are serious about congestion, energy-saving measures and public transport generally, we would not be moving down the road, if I may use that pun, of even more OPO buses in London. However, given the balance-sheet mentality of whatever company is supposedly running London's buses these days, that is exactly the road down which we shall move.

Anyone who spends any time in London, whether on foot or driving a car, will know that one of the greatest causes of congestion are OPO buses. Given the balance-sheet mentality, who cares that they are costing society millions of pounds? The millions of pounds do not appear in the company's balance sheet or in those of the various divisions which have given themselves such fancy titles. No solution is offered by OPO buses.

The hon. Member for Northfield spoke about the Trac Line bus in Birmingham. I did not realise that the scheme had won an award. I do know that it disappeared without trace. To say that it sank without trace would be to use a mixed metaphor. The scheme did not appear to offer a satisfactory solution to Birmingham's transport problems and it did not last very long. If the Government were serious about tackling Birmingham's transport problems, they would not be behaving as they are in relation to the cross-city line. The electrification proposal is still being passed backwards and forwards from British Rail to civil servants at the Department of Transport. The nonsensical criteria that have been set to prove the need for the electrification of a busy railway line must be agreed before the Minister even sees the proposal. I am not sure what sort of transport policy the hon. Member for Northfield thinks that is. I am sure that most of us would consider it nonsense.

Perhaps even the hon. Member for Northfield would concede that railway staff are fed up with long years of low wages, long hours and high fares. British Rail's fares are the highest in Europe, and its staff have the lowest morale. Certainly they are the lowest paid in Europe, and they work the longest hours. That is not the kind of record of which even the hon. Member for Northfield, with his one-line—or, all too often, one-word—solutions to the nation's transport problems can be proud.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) referred, rightly, to the low morale, low pay and

*[Mr. Snape]*

excessive overtime worked on British Rail's southern region. I hope that the Minister will, in the 10 minutes available to him, answer my hon. Friend's question, whether it is reasonable to ask low-paid workers in any industry, but particularly on the railways, given the unsocial hours that they work, to accept a pay cut for the third successive year. That is what British Rail's original offer meant.

Does the Minister accept that, as British Rail's annual report showed, productivity on the railways has increased by 17 per cent. over the past two years? That is much higher than British Rail's percentage pay offers of the last two years, and certainly much higher than the amount put into railway workers' wage pockets, even though negotiations with their union representatives were still in progress.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South referred to British Rail's industrial relations, and paid tribute to BR's former industrial relations officer, the late Cliff Rose. He had the courage to defend the closed shop at meetings of the Confederation of British Industry, saying that it at least enabled him to ensure that people kept to agreements once they made them. If only that were true of British Rail's present administration.

I do not wish to cast too many personal aspersions on British Rail's management, but perhaps I may refer to its industrial relations director. Even the hon. Member for Northfield might agree that in thinking of the one company from which one would not recruit an industrial relations director, British Leyland would immediately come to mind. Yet that was the source of the executive who is now in charge of British Rail's industrial relations. He is a man who said a couple of years ago, in the hearing of several trade unionists, that the trouble with the railways was that they were too cosy. They are not too cosy now that he has taken over. Cosiness has gone out of the window, together with job satisfaction and morale. It is a pity that the hon. Member for Northfield did not acknowledge that, instead of stringing together a lot of job-hunting clichés.

I pay tribute to the contribution of the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe). If anyone is entitled to complain about the attitude of British Rail's management, he is. Much of what he said makes sense. We cannot go on expecting the railways, uniquely among transport modes, to produce an 8 per cent. return on every investment proposal that BR's management makes. How can a sensible, modernised national railway system be developed if every piddling little scheme must be supervised by the Minister and his civil servants—who are conspicuous by their absence at 12·48 am? Presumably they are out somewhere, studying a railway scheme to establish whether it will offer an 8 per cent. return on investment. That the hon. Member for Mid-Kent should say what he did about the future of the railways despite the problems that BR management has caused in his part of the country, and in his constituency in particular, is entirely to his credit.

The hon. Member for Mid-Kent spoke of rail freight's contribution to the 1990s and to the next century. Representing as he does a constituency in the south of England, the hon. Gentleman knows that if rail freight's potential is not developed, the alternatives for his constituency, like others in the so-called garden of England—coming from the north, I do not view it as the garden of England—is not peace and tranquility but a tidal wave of juggernauts. I know that he recognises that.

Without national planning—that is anathema to the Minister, the survivor of the purge in the past week in the Department of Transport—the Minister's clichés about privatisation and railwaymen being on strike will not help the hon. Member for Mid-Kent, his constituents or the south of England once the Channel tunnel opens. Unless we have a national plan and a Government who are determined to get freight back on the railway, the congestion that the hon. Gentleman foresees will come about.

Most of the contribution made by the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) was fairly sensible, although I am not sure whether I will enhance his career by saying so. I find most of the contributions that he makes on these matters to be fairly sensible. The hon. Gentleman asked why British Rail does not improve the Drain. That is the one line that the Government want to privatise, even though it is the only line that ran during the strike last week. Schemes to improve the Drain do not meet the Government's 8 per cent. criteria. British Rail will tell him that privately, and that is why it struggles along with 1940s rolling stock on that line.

The hon. Gentleman asked why British Rail does not open new railway lines. The Minister, the boy wonder in the Department of Transport and the lone survivor of the purge of the past few days, demands that market forces shall prevail. The new Secretary of State, whose father, like mine, was a platelayer, will have to come up with some better ideas than his number two, the whizz kid, has.

If the whizz kid prevails, misery will prevail for the constituents of those Conservative Members who have had so many sensible things to say this evening. They are sensible indeed when one considers the contribution of the hon. Member for Northfield—the motorist's friend, the railway's enemy, the ever-ambitious and, I hope, permanent Back Bencher.

12.51 am

**The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Michael Portillo):** The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) is never overly keen to give me my full 10 minutes, in case I prevail over his arguments.

I am amazed that the hon. Gentleman, with his knowledge of railway matters and Government policy, should be wrong about the Waterloo and City line. In the subsidised railway sector we do not demand that new projects show an 8 per cent. rate of return. We demand that the case for investment should be the most economic, taking into account the alternative of doing nothing. Where there is old rolling stock which is difficult to maintain and unreliable, British Rail could put forward a good case for reinvestment. I am expecting such a proposal to be made shortly for the Waterloo and City line.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) on securing the debate this evening and giving us the opportunity to have this interesting discussion. He began by saying that he thought that there was little difference between the National Union of Railwaymen and the management in the recent dispute. I was sorry to hear him say that, because I thought that there was a difference—that the management was trying to run a railway service and was content to go through the recognised procedures for settling disputes on the railways, but that the NUR took the matter to strike action none the less, thus bringing the railway into disrepute and inconveniencing thousands of customers.

The tribunal recommended an increase of 8·8 per cent. for clerical and supervisory staff when the Transport Salaried Staffs Association took its dispute to the tribunal. The other unions, including the NUR, refused to do so. British Rail offered 8·8 per cent. not just to clerical and supervisory staff but to all staff. The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the TSSA accepted that offer. We then had to go through another two days of strike action before hearing now that the NUR is willing to accept that.

During all that period the railway management has been trying to run the railway. It has provided the offer that was recommended by the tribunal. The management has always said that if strike action was called off it would be willing to discuss the other issue, which is the matter of the bargaining machinery. The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East, his senior colleague as transport spokesman and the Leader of the Opposition all know that for the past 10 days the NUR has put itself in an extraordinary position. The British public has known perfectly well that the NUR has had nothing left to strike about, even given that there was any cause for the strike in the first place.

I will go further and reassure my hon. Friend the Member for Northfield that the record of the British Railways Board over the past five years is a good yardstick by which to judge it, and the industry is in better shape now than ever before. It is carrying more people; it is investing at record levels, and it is requiring 50 per cent. less subsidy than it did five years ago. That is a tribute to the leadership of the board and, granted, it is also a tribute to the men and women who work in the industry. It is very much to the credit of British Rail's chairman, Sir Robert Reid, a career railwayman of outstanding dedication who deserves the recognition not just of the Government but of the whole House for his services to the railway.

My hon. Friend the Member for Northfield suggested that there should be some form of contract for negotiation in public sector monopolies. Perhaps that matter should be considered. I remind my hon. Friend that procedures have been laid down for settling disputes on the railways and that the NUR chose not to follow them. The NUR did not want to go to arbitration. It claimed that it could not discuss matters in the tribunal, although those matters could have been settled by the Railway Staffs National Tribunal, which is fully able to consider all aspects.

The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) asked whether I advocated that the men should take a pay cut. His remarks imply that people should automatically have pay rises above the rate of inflation—in other words, that there should be no reference to what the industry can afford and to what it can pay without harming its competitive position, and no reference to the effect that a pay rise might have on the number of people the industry can employ, on the rest of the economy or on inflation. I can remember exactly where such thinking led 12 or 13 years ago.

The hon. Member for Newham, South then decided —rather extraordinarily—to launch what was, I take it, an attack on the non-maintenance of escalators. But as there is also industrial action targeted on the escalators by the engineers who maintain them, I ask the hon. Gentleman to say that he regards the action as wrongly targeted. It puts people to great inconvenience and, theoretically at least, could have implications for safety. It is exactly the sort of industrial action that ought to be condemned.

**Mr. Spearing:** My response is the same as that of the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis). Would it not have been sensible, however, if officers at King's Cross and elsewhere had made it clear that defects in the escalators were due to industrial action and not to bad management?

**Mr. Portillo:** Perhaps so, but I think that the hon. gentleman agrees with me that it is deplorable when industrial action leads to such an important part of the system being unavailable to the public.

The hon. Gentleman then launched several further attacks. He said that there was no planning and proceeded to attack every plan that we have, including the central and east London rail studies. He then attacked the idea that developers should be asked to contribute to the east London rail study, as though it was necessarily better to invest taxpayers' money than to persuade the commercial sector—the profit-making entrepreneurs—to contribute to the line.

The hon. Gentleman then complained that there would be only five platforms at Waterloo and four at King's Cross for the Channel tunnel service, ignoring the fact that the Channel tunnel service consists of no more than two railway lines. It seems to me that a ration of nine platforms to two railway lines is generous, and it is extraordinary for the hon. Gentleman to suggest that if matters were planned carefully, we should end up with more platforms than that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) has become a noteworthy contributor to railways debates recently. He criticised the fact that there was no planned network. If I worked in British Rail, I should not be encouraged towards planning a national network by the attitude shown towards the proposals in Kent. Those must have been very discouraging. There are enormous difficulties in this country in trying to build new railway lines. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent referred to the planned line as miserable and under-protected, but the proposal contains £500 million-worth of environmental protection. My hon. Friend can travel the continent without finding a line with that level of proposed investment for environmental protection.

My hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) should be aware that we are likely to see proposals for investment in the Waterloo and City line in the way that I have described, and there is also a programme of platform lengthening under way with plans for Kent, which, as my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent said, desperately needs rail improvements.

Recently there has been an enormous expansion in investment in the railways and the Government have been very pleased to see that happen. However, the success of the railways in future will depend on their reliability and their attractiveness to the public. It is highly regrettable that recently the railways have provided such a very poor advertisement of their reliability to the British public.

## Latin America

1.1 am

**Mr. Calum Macdonald** (Western Isles): It is my pleasure to lead this debate about Britain's relations with Latin America, a region with which we have long historic and sentimental ties with which all hon. Members will be familiar. We also have ties of interest involving economic, financial and trading links which to some extent developed around those historical ties. The historic ties give British exporters and traders a head start to develop those ties and links further. The economic links, in purely quantitative terms, are still very small in comparison with our links with other regions and countries, but they can be developed, especially if the debt problem can be resolved. No matter how small the links, the United Kingdom needs every profitable trading partner that it can get in the present economic circumstances.

I wish to refer to two countries in particular which I believe are the most exciting countries in Latin America at the moment—Chile and Nicaragua. The juxtaposition of those two countries may appear strange and even somewhat bizarre but anyone considering the political processes in those countries at the moment, given the troubled pasts which they have had to overcome in recent years—each in their separate ways—cannot fail to be excited at the prospects.

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Chile for the first time and returned full of a greater confidence and hope for that country's future than I could have imagined before my visit. It appears to me that the political process towards democracy in Chile is still proceeding smoothly. I do not think that there is any reason at this stage, given the way in which the Chilean people have organised themselves to reach this point, to be pessimistic about the culmination of that process at the end of this year.

The temporarily troublesome constitutional reforms have been approved. They are not perfect or complete, but they provide a good basis on which to go forward. The opposition parties are united, and that is a key to the further development of democracy in that country. President Pinochet has been increasingly isolated since the referendum, and that is no small contributor to the progress towards democracy. Even the Right-wing elements who have not had to practise genuine politics in the past because they have been able to rely on a dictatorial regime are increasingly working within the system, organising themselves politically, and thinking about how to mobilise their point of view within a democratic framework. If matters proceed as smoothly as they appear to be at present, we can hope that in just a few years people will look back at the period of dictatorship as a horrible aberration in Chilean history which is shameful and embarrassing to the Chilean people.

Great strengths are underpinning progress. One is the relative economic growth of Chile compared with other Latin American countries, which gives a happier context for progress to democracy. I will say another word about the economic context in a short while as it may not be so sound as it might at first appear. Perhaps the greatest strength—much greater than economic forces—is the spirit of the people, who did not cease to demand and cry out for democracy during the dictatorship. Something which was new to me and which struck me quite forcefully in Chile was the history of the technocratic approach which imbues much of the professional classes, the middle classes to some extent, and the civil servants working within the political system. The technocratic or professional ethos has strong historical roots.

Despite all the acts of oppression for which the dictatorship was responsible during its rule, there was a remarkable absence of petty financial corruption which can reach quite large amounts in Latin American countries. That was most clear in the dying months of the regime when privatisation measures were rushed through before the introduction of democracy and the will of the people again began to be predominant in Chilean society. One might deplore any such measures being rushed through before the new democratic era can begin and before people can express their wishes through the ballot box, but no matter how much one might deplore the privatisation scramble, it does not seem to be marked by obvious corruption of the kind that one might expect in a Latin American country.

That great strength underlies and underpins the progress towards democracy, and it is most clear in the work of the electoral commission. I had the great pleasure of meeting the organiser of the recent referendum, who will also organise the next election. I was left in no doubt about the electoral commission's integrity and ability to conduct a democratic, fair and clean election in Chile, if it is allowed to do so.

Despite those strengths, there are also problems to which I believe that our Government should be paying attention. Some of the problems are internal—for example, the difficulty that a new democratic Government in Chile will face in reconciling the need for stability in the new political framework with the satisfaction of social demands. Unions have been oppressed and hounded to a disgraceful extent, but they will find their voice in the new democratic context and the Chilean Government will have to reconcile that with the need to maintain stability.

There will be the perceived problem concerning those responsible for human rights violations, but here again the distinctive character of Chilean political culture will come to the rescue. To some extent, the Pinochet regime in the past has been able to cover human rights abuses with a veil of legality and thus has exploited respect for the legal process which exists in Chile. It is that very respect for the legal process—that tradition of legality—which will be the undoing of those who were responsible for the abuses in the past as the legal system in Chile takes its course unhindered by those who wish to cover up past abuses.

There will be problems, too, in the new political framework after democracy. There are questions hanging over the readiness of those on the far Right, who have had a clear run for the past decade and a half, to reconcile themselves not just to the outcome of democracy in Chile, but to the full vigour of democracy in Chile.

The biggest problem will be one of economics, which all Latin American countries face. There has been talk of a Chilean miracle. I have already referred to the relative growth in Chile compared with other countries. We should not be led into thinking that somehow Chile has reached the same level of economic take-up as the tiger economies of south-east Asia. That clearly is not the case. Chile is still very much dependent on the world economy. Though it has benefited nationally as an economy in a period of relative world growth, it could just as easily suffer if there is a period of relative stagnation. That is why it is important for the prospects of democracy in Chile that steps be taken to solve the debt problem which, in common with every other Latin American country, Chile still faces.

The British Government's policy towards Chile in these times should be to encourage the progress that has already been made. They should applaud it, welcome it and discourage utterly any thoughts of regression or backsliding after the election. Unfortunately, however, we do not gain much encouragement from the Government's handling of other matters—for instance, their rapid embrace of China so shortly after the massacre in Tiananmen square. The Government's attitude sends out entirely the wrong message. I hope that the Chilean military, having witnessed the British Government's spineless response to China, will receive a message from this debate that the same will not be tolerated in Chile after the elections.

The biggest problem facing Chile, like all Latin American countries, is its debt problem. It is no use pretending that the solution to the problem will not cost the western economies money. The debt problem is common among Latin American countries. Brazil has perhaps the most severe debt problem, amounting to £110 billion, and in terms of its gross national product is expected to pay back three times as much as Germany after the first world war. That is intolerable and unfair.

Nicaragua, too, has severe economic problems, although its achievements since the revolution have been truly momentous, as anyone who has visited it can attest. Its most notable achievements have been in the social realm, literacy, public health and democratic politics, which are sometimes not appreciated by the Governments here and in Washington. One has only to compare Nicaraguan society with other central American states to realise how open and democratic it is. Some people like to tell stories of newspapers being closed temporarily and of people being imprisoned temporarily, but we must remember that Nicaragua is or has been at war with a foreign invader. When Britain faced a similar military threat in the last war, we locked up our Oswald Mosleys. Such occurrences must be understood, if not always applauded.

The British Government's attitude to Nicaragua has been truly miserable and grudging, and it is a further example of their deplorable overseas aid record. Their grudging attitude was exemplified by the humiliating reception that President Ortega was given at Downing street. Perhaps "humiliating" is too strong—it would be more accurate to say that the reception was intended to be humiliating. The fact that the Nicaraguan revolution had survived the United States' attacks for years and that its president was received by the United States' foremost ally showed that President Ortega and the Nicaraguan people had triumphed.

Travelling in Latin America, one finds that almost everyone of every political shade is disaffected with the British Government's attitude to the region. Whether Right-wing or Left-wing, they all feel that the United Kingdom is throwing away a heritage of good will which could be put to good use. If we listened to our interests and best instincts rather than to Washington, we could develop a policy towards that region which would be more rational and humane.

1.19 am

**Mr. Ray Whitney** (Wycombe): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on joining us at this late hour to talk about the important subject of foreign affairs in general and Latin America in particular. I hope that it will be a pleasure for him, as it is for us. I also congratulate the hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) on giving us the opportunity for this debate.

This is our second debate on the subject and it is becoming something of an annual fixture. As the chairman of the all-party Latin America committee, I greatly welcome that, as does my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold), who is its excellent secretary. It gives some of us the opportunity, whatever the hour, once a year to recognise the important historical, cultural, trading and political links which have existed between the United Kingdom and Latin America for two centuries. We all recognise that in recent decades those links have fallen away. We particularly lament the decline in trade and applaud the efforts of the Latin American Trade Advisory Group, Canning house and individual firms. We hope that British industry will come increasingly to understand that Latin America is by no means entirely as the media portray it. Those of us with knowledge of Latin America lament the wholly woeful and misleading image created by the extremely small handful of British journalists who concentrate on the region. I could give several recent examples, but in view of the time and the encouraging number of hon. Members who wish to speak, I shall forbear.

Latin America has serious problems. The hon. Member for Western Isles referred to the debt problem. I hope that the Brady plan, which has been given another impetus recently, will lead to progress, but it will not be easy. The problem is of a different order and character from, for example, the debt problems of sub-Saharan Africa, on which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken such an impressive and encouraging initiative. We cannot take a similar initiative in Latin America because the context is different. We need to collaborate on the debt problem and I hope that the Brady plan will show us the way forward.

We are collaborating on drugs. It is a two-way problem —the supply and demand of a market. We in the western world must recognise our heavy responsibility for creating the demand. If there were no demand in our societies, the problems associated with drug trafficking in the region would be greatly diminished or even removed. We need international co-operation, and I am glad that the Government are showing the way forward.

Sadly, too, we share problems of violence and terrorism. A number of countries in Latin America have struggled, on the whole successfully, to develop and promote democracy against a background of violence unknown to us even in Northern Ireland.

Another area in which increasing collaboration between us and Latin America is important is in respect of ecology and the rain forests. My right hon. Friend who has been elevated to the position of Secretary of State for the Environment pointed the way in his most successful and last overseas visit as Minister for Overseas Development, with his agreement with Brazil making progress in that area.

Those are the problems, but the successes in Latin America should also be recognised, especially the

*[Mr. Ray Whitney]*

development and progress of democracy. Argentina has recently had elections and for the first time in 60 years one democratically elected Government handed over to another. In December there will be elections in Chile, and the hon. Member for Western Isles spoke of his impression of the evolution of the democratic process in Chile. There will be elections in Peru in July. President Stroessner has departed the scene in Paraguay. Uruguay has recovered its traditional stability, and even in Mexico the PRI—the Partido Revolucionario Institucional—which has for long in effect been the country's one party is now having to yield and allow alternatives in some of the provinces.

Those are important changes, but the change on which I wish to concentrate is that which is occurring in Argentina, in view of the important effect on this country. Mr. Carlos Menem frightened many people, including many Argentinians, in his election campaign. He is a Peronist and as yet nobody knows what his utterances mean in terms of political reality. Some of his campaign rhetoric, including his talk of shedding blood to recover the Falkland Islands, created the worst fears in many of us who wish to see a stable and prosperous Argentina. As things have turned out so far, however—I accept that only a brief time has elapsed—the prospects look different. He has announced courageous policies to tackle the extraordinarily difficult economic problems that he inherited and has made appointments which have surprised everyone and appear to augur well. Sadly, he suffered the sudden death of Senor Roig, the Finance Minister, only days after he was appointed, but another executive has been appointed who seems determined to carry out the kind of policies of which Conservative Members would approve—policies which have demonstrated their efficacy wherever in the world they have been applied. The prospects in Argentina domestically, against a hugely threatening backdrop, are far more encouraging than one would have dared hope before the change of presidency.

Another area of change which affects us deeply and directly is the apparent change of policy of President Menem, his Foreign Minister and his Government in regard to the Falkland Islands, and I hope that in his reply the Minister will give an idea of the reaction of the British Government to the developments because, as I say, in the election campaign Mr. Menem spoke of recovering the islands, if necessary, "by blood and fire."

Since then the change of tone has been absolute. The Foreign Minister, Domingo Cavallo, has said in an interview:

> "Our objective is the re-establishment of full relations. The idea is to find a formula so that each side can preserve the rights it has—or believes it has—in the islands. In that way the advantages that are gained from the re-establishment of relations do not prejudice either of the two countries in their rights over the islands."

Other statements in the same vein have been made by the Argentina Foreign Minister and by the Argentine President. Indeed, the President's response to the message of good will from our Prime Minister was also positive. The House will recall that it was in significant contrast to the response of President Alfonsin at the time of his inauguration in December 1983, which verged on the churlish. President Menem has shown a different tone, so the spotlight returns to us and to our response.

We are talking about practical improvements. I accept that the British Government's record is good. They have made a series of forward gestures in opening trade and being easier about visas, but there is now a distinct and new atmosphere which we must seize and of which we must take full advantage. I understand the concerns that such statements cause in the Falkland Islands, but the long-term interests of the islanders can be guaranteed only by a different set of relationships from those obtaining at present. The people of this country will come to expect a positive move forward.

Six months after the 1982 war, I was fortunate enough —if that is the appropriate word—to be invited to a foundry in my constituency where the war memorial to be erected in Port Stanley was being cast. It was to list the names of the 250 of our men who fell in the Falkland Islands conflict. Over that weekend, I had the privilege of meeting about 25 per cent. of the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the war. If there was one sentiment common to all those families—to the widows, the mothers and the fathers to whom I spoke—it was, "I recognise that my son died in a just cause and that he was doing his duty as a member of the regular forces, but I look to you, as politicians, so to change the position that no others need to die in that cause—there must be another way."

I believe that there is such a way, and we must not miss the opportunity that is opening up, although I recognise that we must be cautious. My hon. Friend the Minister's predecessor and the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes), who usually speaks on Latin America for the Opposition, have produced reactions that were on the cool and even negative side. New thinking is needed.

I close with what used to be a fairly well-known Shakespearian quotation but one which is less heard these days:

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shadows and in miseries.
> On such a full sea are we now afloat,
> And we must take the current when it serves,
> Or lose our ventures."

This is such a venture. The re-establishment of a sensible relationship with Argentina on the Falkland Islands to preserve the interests of the islanders is an opportunity that we must not lose.

1.34 am

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): I shall be as brief as I can as this debate can last for only one and a half hours and others wish to speak. Unfortunately, the subject is yet again being debated in the middle of the night, although there is something rather special about debating Latin America before 3 am as it usually comes up at around 5 am. The debate is valuable, if only to demonstrate that one of the problems with British policy towards Latin America is that there is no policy—just a series of decisions which may or may not be made on national or economic issues. There is very little overall strategy.

I do not wish to get involved in the discussion about the Falklands, but I must say that I opposed the Falklands war and I never want there to be another one. I suspect that Conservative Members may one day realise that the fortress Falklands policy, which has so far cost £3·5 billion and will cost us considerably more, maintains only a state of armed neutrality in the south Atlantic. They know that at some stage there will have to be a move towards real peace, if only to avoid spending such ridiculously large sums of money, which are designed to promote the image of the Prime Minister leading the country to a great national victory when in fact she did not take the opportunities for peace that were open to her at the time.

Destruction of the tropical rain forests, and the pollution that goes with it, is extremely serious because the world requires large areas of forest cover to convert carbon dioxide into oxygen, which sustains life. We all know that what happens to the Amazonian rain forest is crucial to the rest of the world. Any encouragement to countries in the Amazon basin to conserve the rain forest and to use it in a sustainable way so that it is a permanent resource for the world rather than something that is pillaged, as is currently happening, is greatly to be welcomed.

I recognise the deep sensitivities involved in other countries lecturing Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Guyana and Suriname on the preservation of the rain forest. President Garcia of Peru asked, cleverly, how it is that western Europe, having destroyed all its own forests, is now lecturing them about conserving theirs. That is a fair point but, like others, he has also considered the economic circumstances which lead to rain forests being destroyed. The Governments and peoples of the countries in the area do not necessarily want to destroy the rain forests—it is simply a matter of economics. We have a great deal to answer for in that respect. Through European money, International Monetary Fund money and particularly World Bank money, much destruction has been financed to provide cheap minerals for multinational capital elsewhere.

There has to be a change of attitude and an understanding of the strong link between the economic policies pursued by the world's financial institutions and damage to the environment in grossly indebted countries. One cannot separate the two. I hope that there will be continuing pressure on the World Bank to adopt even better environmental policies and that support for the protection of the rain forests and the people who live in them will continue. The construction of the trans-Amazonian highway and railway and mining schemes involve the murder of Indian people in their thousands. We must do all that we can to ensure that our policies preserve the rain forest and make it a viable proposition for all time. At present, we are destroying plant and animal species by the hour, and thousands of acres of forest by the day. If this continues, it will be to the cost of all of us.

Only a short time ago the House debated the Antarctic Minerals Bill. Chile and Argentina both have substantial claims in the Antarctic. I hope that they do not ratify the convention on the regulation of Antarctic mineral resource activities, which will pave the way for the investigation and, I believe, exploitation of minerals in Antarctica. If we are serious about preserving the world's environment, we must look at equally sensitive ecosystems existing in an entirely different climate.

My hon. Friend the Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) spoke at length about the growth of debt in Latin America. It is indeed frightening that around 1960 Latin America was not an indebted continent but 29 years later it is deep in debt—not because it is intrinsically infertile or over-populated, nor because it cannot produce food or does not contain many able and brilliant people, but as a result of a world economic system which seeks to take considerable resources out of the continent and to repatriate large profits from multinational capital. As a result, the poorest people in the poorest countries are suffering the effects of debt.

When Peru attempted to limit its debt repayments to no more than 10 per cent. of its gross national product, the world's banking institutions conspired to home in and prevent it from carrying out that policy, insisting that Peru accept IMF conditions which it may or may not negotiate in the future. Exactly the same conditions operate elsewhere—they are always linked with what is euphemistically called economic restructuring, but is in fact our good old friend Tory economic policy writ large, involving cuts in public expenditure, large-scale privatisation of industries and damage to the living standards of the poorest people in some of the poorest countries of the world.

If we are genuinely concerned about those people, we must come up with something better than either the Baker plan or the Brady plan and start talking in terms of improving commodity prices, limiting the repatriation of profits by multinational companies and writing off and rescheduling debt. Otherwise the eternal cycle of debt, poverty, further debt and further poverty will go on and on. The Brady plan is aimed at privatising countries out of debt, but it will not work because it merely transfers political control to those who have pushed that policy.

My hon. Friend the Member for Western Isles mentioned Chile. Obviously, no one will be happier than I shall when democracy has returned to Chile, when there is genuine freedom of speech, when trade unions can operate openly and freely and the police do not have the power to gun down, tear-gas and arrest people for exercising their democratic rights. I also very much hope to see the end of General Pinochet. We should give the new constitution a cautious welcome, although it is not completely democratic. Inbuilt powers still exist for Pinochet and his successor and for the armed forces, and it cannot be called a democratic constitution according to the European model. We should also remember the thousands who lost their lives following the murder of President Allende in 1973, and those who sought refuge and asylum in other parts of the world. I hope that the nightmare in Chile is ending, but I suspect that in its death throes the military dictatorship will get up to all sorts of awful things in the next few months.

My final point on national matters in Latin America concerns El Salvador. I understand that soon the Government will welcome the ARENA president of El Salvador, President Cristiani, to Britain. I hope that when he arrives the Minister concerned will raise with him the matter of the proposed legislation which is designed to destroy popular movements in El Salvador and covers the military encirclement of trade union offices, the continuing growth of death squads, continuing violence, the disappearance of people who support human rights and democracy and the corruption, if that is the right word, of what remains of the land reform programme in El Salvador. Until there is social justice in El Salvador and in the rest of Latin America, there will never be real peace. I hope that the Government will address those problems when they welcome President Cristiani to this country.

I hope that the Government also recognise that the American approach to El Salvador is causing the problems. America pours in more military aid than it gives

*[Mr. Jeremy Corbyn]*

to any other country with the exception of Israel. El Salvador is impoverished, a fifth of its population consists of internal or external refugees, and most of its people live in the worst possible conditions. Yet despite those facts, all the American aid goes to support the country's armed forces. I want to see real peace and democracy in El Salvador, but the realisation of those hopes is not consistent with the amount of military aid being poured in by the United States. Until the social injustices are put right, there will never be real peace in El Salvador.

1.46 am

**Mr. Jacques Arnold** (Gravesham): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) for initiating the debate. He and I represented the House in a delegation from the all-party British Latin American group which went to Chile in May. The hon. Gentleman played a significant and fair-minded part in that delegation. I welcome to the Front Bench my hon. Friend the Member for Hove (Mr. Sainsbury). I know that he will enjoy the traditional warm good will that Latin Americans show to Britain and I wish him all success in his task.

I hope that the debate, which follows the one held last year and which was the first for 38 years on the subject, demonstrates a growing revival of interest by the House in Latin America. Britain was the godmother of Latin American independence and many regard Canning, the Foreign Secretary of the day, as the godfather. Much of the infrastructure of Latin America's economies, its transport and banking systems and industrial heritage were put in place by Britain. We have a long history of co-operation rather than domination in the continent, which provides a good base for strengthening our relationships.

Perhaps the greatest problem in Latin America for us rests in Argentina. The scars of the Falklands crisis are still too vivid to be forgotten, and we are in the absurd situation in which otherwise normal relations between our two countries are in suspense, despite historic ties of blood, commerce and culture which go back more than two centuries. Argentina is again a democracy, and for the first time for many years we have seen one democratically elected president taking over from another.

Despite the many blood curdling aspects of his election campaign, Carlos Menem is showing good signs in the direction of a resolution of the problems which currently underlie relations between our two countries. We should take encouragement from President Menem's statement about the Falklands, in which he said:

> "Sovereignty is a subject which we, the Argentinians, are never going to renounce—and I do not think the United Kingdom will do so either."

As my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney) pointed out, Argentina's new Foreign Minister is already looking at ways in which a dialogue can be opened up rapidly between our two countries. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will take full advantage of that window of opportunity to open up talks and achieve a normalisation of diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations.

When Latin Americans talk of Britain, they say that one of the principal contributions that we have made to the world is that of democratic institutions. They hold this place in the highest regard. Over the past few years, almost all the republics of Latin America have returned to democracy, some from subjugation by exceptionally brutal military regimes. Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and others are struggling to foster responsible representative democracy against the background of horrendous economic difficulties.

One of the principal problems lies with the restoration of effective democratic parties following the destruction wreaked by military dictatorship. That is particularly true of Chile, where the Right-wing parties have suffered notably more than those of the Left. I wonder whether we, as representatives of the "mother of party democracy", are applying sufficient resources in this area in which we have such an impressive wealth of practical experience to contribute.

Many countries in the region deserve congratulation on their transition to democracy. The latest example has been Chile, which has astonished the world with its smooth process through constitutional referenda towards the presidential and congressional elections due to be held in December. Despite the reservations that we may have about their brutal record on human rights, President Pinochet and his regime deserve recognition for the determined way in which they have led the country back to democracy. Perhaps the greatest endowment that they will bestow on the restored democracy will be the relatively most healthy economy in Latin America. The test of that democracy will be whether its new policies can be compatible with continuing and growing economic prosperity. Argentina under Raul Alfonsin is a bitter warning to Latin American democrats of the penalties for irresponsible policies and failure to take the necessary decisions.

A number of Latin American countries have still to return to democracy. Nicaragua last voted in 1984, in elections which were delayed and then staged under conditions so open to poll rigging that the main opposition alliance boycotted them. The Government of Nicaragua are committed to elections next February, and the opposition have agreed to contest them, but will the Sandinistas, with their record of repression, political prisoners and censorship, give a fair wind to the elections? What democratic guarantees will be on offer? Independent oversight of the poll and the freedoms of campaigning and the press must be upheld.

We all know what happened as a result of the May election in Panama. Haiti has reverted to yet another military dictatorship. Paraguay has recently returned to democracy, but we must never forget that the recent election there was held under Stroessner's distorted electoral law and voters list. Nor should we forget that President Rodriguez was a close associate of his dictatorial predecessor. We must make it clear that we continue to have considerable reservations about all those countries.

A growing interest in Latin America is centred around the real threat to the rain forest in the Brazilian and Peruvian Amazonia. We have a major part to play in view of our technical expertise, which is particularly manifested in the Oxford Forestry Institute and at Kew. Experts in tropical rain forests, such as John Hemmings and Ghillean Prance, have much to offer to enable an economically viable but ecologically preserved Amazonia to prosper. This is why we must welcome the recent agreement concluded with Brazil by my right hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Mr. Patten), which brings much of this expertise to bear in co-operation with the Brazilians. It is the first agreement of its sort and contrasts well with the rhetoric emanating from the United States and elsewhere which so inflames the Brazilian public and political opinion.

We should speak out also against the international desecrators of the rain forest. We rightly take an interest in British companies which perhaps inadvertently have Brazilian subsidiaries and affiliates which commit environmental excesses, and we should speak out against destructive exploiters of the rain forest. I think in particular of the Japanese exploiters of hardwood, who have already wreaked havoc in Burma and Borneo and are reported to be planning the rape of the Brazilian state of Acre along a transport route through Peru.

British trade with South America has had a sad record in recent decades. Even now, our share of Latin American imports has risen to only 3 per cent. I note the significant increase in British trade missions in recent years and the increasing number of Ministers making visits, but one visitor who would make a major impact is my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. The Government's great successes in transforming the British economy, vastly increasing productivity and pioneering privatisation have excited the interest of Latin Americans. A visit by the architect of that transformation would focus interest on the potential for business with Britain. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will note that and consider enticing my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister with the prospect of a visit to São Paulo, Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro, to Colombia and Venezuela, and to Chile after the restoration of democracy.

We also need visits by many more business men to the region to foster British exports and investment. The great Latin American cities provide sophistication and comfort to rival any in Europe. It is not a discomfort prospect. Business men will need to gain a knowledge of the languages, which are Spanish and Portuguese, and although it is not the subject of the debate, I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will emphasise to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science the importance of those languages. Spanish, after all, is the most spoken international language after English.

The debate has necessarily been short. We spend little enough time in the House on foreign affairs, and most of that is on European affairs with a little on the Commonwealth, but we must never forget our friends in Latin America and the outstanding potential of a region whose GDP is greater than that of Africa, the Indian subcontinent and south-east Asia put together. The opportunities for us are immense if we do not neglect that continent.

1.58 am

**Mr. Hugo Summerson** (Walthamstow): I shall start by sketching a little history of Latin America. If time had permitted, I should have gone back to the Incas and perhaps even earlier. Unfortunately, time does not permit, so I will go back only about 200 years to the period when the great liberator, Simon Bolivar, was hard at work getting rid of the Spanish yoke. There was Bolivar in the north and San Martin in the south, and we should not forget the help that the British Government of the day gave those two liberators. It should not be forgotten that British troops fought beside the liberator. Nor should we forget the reverence in which Bolivar is still held. I remember well crossing a square in Caracas where there was a splendid equestrian statue of the liberator. A man was on duty, and if people attempted to carry parcels past the statue or to sit on the steps around its base, the man would advance blowing a whistle to drive them away. Could we find such an example of reverence for a great national figure of the past?

We have heard a great deal about Argentina. I have reservations about President Menem because I have strong reservations about Peronism, which seems to be rather an unpleasant creed. None the less, we must wish him well and every success with his beautiful country, which has the potential to be one of the most prosperous in the world. Let us hope that he gets it right.

I continue to skate northwards very rapidly, to Nicaragua. It is my belief that the United States Government got it wrong, and that the Somoza regime was particularly unpleasant and should not have been bolstered and kept going. America should have taken the longer-term view by getting rid of Somoza and encouraging Nicaragua to take the road to prosperity rather than repression.

Other hon. Members have touched on the Falklands. I have just received the latest issue of the *Falkland Islands Newsletter*, which mentions Peronism and the fact that it directs that

> "Argentine school children be taught from infancy that 'The Malvinas' are theirs by right so that they actually believe it."

That is not the way forward. Good will is needed on both sides, not that sort of propaganda.

I spoke briefly of Britain's historical contacts with Latin America. Even to this day, the English are much liked in south America.

**Mr. Corbyn:** So are the British.

**Mr. Summerson:** I apologise to the hon. Gentleman. He is absolutely correct, particularly bearing in mind that Admiral Cochrane was a Scot.

To this day, the British are well liked in south America. Twelve years ago, I spent six months travelling around south America, and as soon as the local people discovered that I was not "Americano" or "Yankee" but "Inglese", their attitude changed. There is a great fund of good will for the British in south America, and we should not throw it away but develop it.

2.3 am

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): By leave of the House, even at this late hour I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) on securing the debate, and welcome the hon. Member for Hove (Mr. Sainsbury) on his first appearance at the Dispatch Box as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

As other hon. Members have observed, Latin America is increasingly at the margin of British interest. The total value of our exports to Latin America in 1987 was less than that of those to Norway. In the past 30 years, Britain's share of Latin American imports has fallen by two thirds, and that country's share of British imports by four fifths. Britain makes a relatively insignificant contribution in terms of services to Latin America, whose total share of British aid is less than 3 per cent.

To most British people, Latin America is an unknown continent with a negative image of debt, rain forest

*[Mr. Donald Anderson]*

destruction, poverty, drugs and dictatorship, but in the past decade there have been extensive moves to democracy in Latin America. One thinks of Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Argentina—and this year we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the overthrow of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua, to which the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) properly referred.

Elected Governments in those countries are increasingly under pressure as democracy, sadly, fails to deliver in economic terms. A regrettable feature of centre Governments is that they are increasingly losing out to the extreme Left or extreme Right—and the end of that road may be a a return to military dictatorships, as people yearn for the stability offered by military Governments of the past.

We must constantly remind ourselves that democracy is not just a matter of constitutional structures but of human and social rights. A democracy that cannot deliver is a shaky democracy. In particular, one now sees problems in Peru, Brazil, Ecuador and Argentina.

The debt problem has been mentioned. The net outflow of resources from Latin America last year was in excess of $28·9 billion and the flow of investment to Latin America was only $4·3 billion. There are no clear signs of growth and inflation is high. One asks whether democracy can find an easy route in such circumstances.

What role can Britain usefully play, given the decline in our influence and commitment to Latin America? The hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney), who has an extensive knowledge of the region, bewailed the few British journalists in the area. He might also have mentioned the decline in language studies, other than French, in Britain.

Save for the peculiar bilateral difficulties of the Falklands and Argentina, our policy towards Latin America will increasingly be seen in a European context, particularly because of the important historic and cultural links between the Iberian countries. I do not suggest that there should be an exclusive relationship, but that special relationship in the past will have to be addressed.

What, then, are the specific and general areas of impact on the United Kingdom which are worth recording? The debt problem was much stressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn). The foreign currency spent on servicing debt clearly reduces growth and the possibility of imports from the First world. Short-term emergency packages are insufficient. As the hon. Member for Wycombe stressed, the Baker plan did not work, but the Brady plan for debt reduction at least has some greater hope of working. Are the British Government planning any initiative to reach a lasting settlement? I see that not in the context of bailing out those banks—particularly the American banks, but not exclusively so—which in the 1960s and 1970s saw it as their job to lend. Certainly the structure and composition of the debt is different from the public debt which applies in Africa south of the Sahara.

The drugs problem has also been mentioned by several hon. Members. It is significant that 40 per cent. of the cocaine seized in Europe last year came from Colombia and 20 per cent. from Ecuador. What co-operation are the Government receiving from Latin American countries on the drugs problem and to what extent are the Government prepared to assist in measures such as crop substitution?

My hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North mentioned the destruction of the rain forests. The Opposition welcome the initiatives of the Secretary of State for the Environment in his previous incarnation as Minister for Overseas Development and we hope that he will carry that same commitment to his wider responsibilities in his new Department. In particular, we note his pressure on British companies which operate in the area, such as Shell in Brazil, following allegations of their supplying fuel to mineral prospectors in Bua Vista in the north of Brazil and elsewhere.

It is in human rights that the Government have had the greatest failure in the past decade, in particular in their non-intervention when so many Latin American Governments tolerated death squads and vigilantes who co-operated with the security forces. I recall that in 1983, in the port of Valparaiso in Chile, on the 11th anniversary of the bombing of the Moneda palace the British ambassador was handing over a warship to the Chileans, while, in contrast, the French ambassador had completely immersed himself in human rights problems, co-operating with others. Britain had resumed diplomatic relations with Chile ostensibly to make representations on human rights after the torture and maltreatment of Dr. Sheila Cassidy and the death of William Beausire, a British subject, but despite the purported reasons for establishing diplomatic relations it was clear that trade was the main motive.

**Mr. Corbyn:** And military co-operation.

**Mr. Anderson:** And military co-operation, as my hon. Friend says. To add to what my hon. Friend the Member for Western Isles has already said about Chile, we rejoice that Chile now seems firmly on the road to democracy, although that is no thanks to the British Government who seemed happy and at home with dictators.

The hon. Member for Wycombe referred to the Falklands and Argentina. Clearly, circumstances have changed since the election of President Menem, who has given many signals that he wishes to enter into a dialogue with Britain. In that regard, may I ask the Minister whether it is true that the Argentine Government have offered to meet the British Government in Brasilia—as Brazil acts as agent on our behalf—and, if so, what has been the response?

After the war we had established the principle of no change by military intervention and held, and could have acted from, the high ground. Unfortunately, there has been a substantial slippage since then because of the failure of both Governments to respond to the situation. It is wrong that countries which have had such a long history of friendship should fail to move, but at least the way now seems open for some positive development. As the hon. Member for Wycombe will know, a high-powered delegation of congressmen from Argentina will be here for the Inter-Parliamentary Union conference in September, which may afford an opportunity for discussions.

Back in Chile, the dark night of Pinochet is almost over. The consensus agreement on constitutional changes agreed between the Chilean Government and Opposition last month suggests that progress towards democracy is now almost unstoppable. I hope that the British Government will help in the process, as the elections promise to be fair and there is every expectation of an Opposition victory. I hope that the British Government will in no way welcome Pinochet to this country in view of his background and in particular his treatment of British subjects.

My hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North mentioned our major concerns about El Salvador. Our real concern is that the Government will seek to encourage ARENA and make it respectable. Clearly, the United States was mightily embarrassed by the rigged elections in Salvador. By their past attitudes and by the death squads, those in ARENA have proved themselves to be a bunch of murderers, although it is fair to say that President Cristiani has been the respectable face of a very unrespectable group. Is it true that the Government propose to invite President Cristiani to visit Britain in the autumn, and if the visit goes ahead, will he be accompanied by Mr. d'Aubuisson? It would be a disgraceful blot on the British record if d'Aubuisson, who is the real power behind the throne, were welcome at either No. 10 or the Palace, or both.

The Government now appear to be seeking in every way to make ARENA, which has always been linked with the death squads, acceptable. They should surely draw the line at welcoming d'Aubuisson, who a previous American ambassador described as "a pathological killer". Are we making representations to El Salvador about the increasing human rights abuses and the newly published programme for changes in the penal law mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North?

Nicaragua has been perhaps the greatest victim of Thatcherite ideology over the years. Is it not now time, after 10 years of blockade and isolation, to help restore peace and to rebuild Nicaragua's shattered economy and resume direct British aid to that country?

Sadly, to a large extent Latin America is marginalised in comparison with the grand role that our people played in the area in the last century. If that role is currently marginal, it is potentially very important. I have referred to the impact of debt and drugs. I hope that our foreign policy towards the region as a whole will be less ideological in future and more oriented towards human rights and development. I hope that it is less based on the Reagan-Thatcher axis which has done so much harm to the area's development potential and particularly to that of central America. The time is now set for the tone of our policy to change in response to the signals from that continent.

2.15 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Sainsbury):** The Foreign Office is not noted as a Department that frequently brings legislation before the House. It can fairly be said that it is not a Department whose responsibilities frequently feature as subjects for debate. Therefore, I am more than somewhat surprised to find that before my second day—or more accurately, my third night—in my new post, I have not only taken a Bill through all its stages in the House, but I find myself replying to a debate. I welcome these opportunities. I thank my hon. Friends the Members for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney) and for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold) and the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) for the kind welcome that they extended to me on my new responsibility——

**Mr. Anderson:** In spite of the hour.

**Mr. Corbyn:** Or because of it.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Despite of or because of, I am not choosy. When my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham initiated a debate on our relations with Latin America this time last year—almost to the day—he remarked that it was the first time for 38 years that the House had debated the subject. I am certainly pleased that we have returned to it after a briefer interval on this occasion, although the hour is rather similar. In view of my relatively short time in post, I hope that the House will understand if I necessarily speak with some diffidence on the subject.

However, I can confirm that a lot has changed since last year's debate, much of that change being for the better. Last year, my right hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker), in her previous position as the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, spoke of the continent's return to democracy. That welcome trend has continued and has gathered momentum. A series of presidential elections is in prospect in the region. It is easy to forget that 10 years ago most Latin American countries were dictatorships while most are now democracies. Even in those countries in which democracy is not yet fully established, notably Chile, there have been clear moves in the right direction. I know that the hon. Member for the Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) recently visited Chile and I welcomed what he said as a result of the impressions that he gathered during his visit.

Our relationships with the region are full of potential, as many hon. Members have said, but they have also moved forward. When he addressed Canning house in December last year, referring to relations with Latin America my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House, the then Foreign Secretary, said:

> "now we can say, without any fear of contradiction, that the period of neglect is over."

Events since have borne him out. Quietly but continuously we have developed our relations with the region. British investment, always a major component of that relationship, has continued at high levels. We [illegible] a significant investor in Brazil. In 1988, investment flows from the United Kingdom made us the second largest foreign investor that year both in Venezuela and in Colombia. The region remains an important trading partner for us, even if, as hon. Members have said, our share of the market remains far lower than it should be.

The degree of interest shown by the United Kingdom companies that attended the Foreign and Commonwealth Office-organised seminar on trade and investment in Latin America last May heartened all of us. More than ever, our message to the United Kingdom companies that have not yet discovered Latin America is to go and look. The opportunities are there, as has been stressed in the debate, and United Kingdom companies trading in Latin America are doing well. The Foreign Office, the Department of Trade and Industry in London and our posts abroad stand ready to offer every assistance to those that do go and look. I accept that we could and should do better, as my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe has said.

In other matters, too, our relationship has thickened. Hon. Members will be aware of the recent very successful visit to Brazil by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. Our co-operation with Latin American countries to combat the worldwide scourges of narcotics and terrorism has continued and intensified. I shall say more on those themes in a moment.

*[Mr. Sainsbury]*

Not surprisingly, Chile has frequently featured in this debate. The hon. Member for Western Isles referred to it as one of the most exciting countries in the region. I note the concerns that have been expressed, but Chile has a long history of democracy, and the British Government want to see that status fully restored. We have been encouraged by the progress that is now being made to that end and by the great sense of responsibility being demonstrated on all sides during this important political transition, and we wish it well. We will continue to give every encouragement to all those in Chile who aspire to democracy. Together with our partners in the Twelve, we look forward to working with a democratically elected Government, expected to assume office in March next year, following the general and presidential elections to be held in December this year.

The success of the Chilean economy in recent years has been particularly notable. My hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham referred to that. It is certainly true that there has been sustained growth since 1983 of over 5 per cent. per year, substantial debt reduction, and an impressive diversification of exports. All the major political parties and presidential candidates are pledged not to alter the basic economic framework put in place by the present Chilean Government. Candidates' differing ideas on the social policy that a democratic Government should follow will be put to the vote in December, and it will be for the Chilean people themselves to decide. There will be plenty of scope for economic co-operation by Britain with the new Government when they are in place. The unified European Community market in 1992 will offer plenty of opportunities for trade which we would expect not only Chile but other Latin American countries to grasp.

Let me now say a word about human rights in Chile, which have been referred to rather too often, one might think. Sadly, they continue to be abused in many parts of the world. Unfortunately, Latin America is no exception. The British Government's views on this matter are very clear, and we make no bones about putting our views squarely to the Governments concerned, including the Chilean Government, which we do frequently, as we do to the Colombian Government about the different problems in that country. We and our European Community partners have frequently made it plain that we are concerned about continuing abuses, not only in Chile, but wherever they occur, and we are not afraid to take a clear public stand, including in the United Nations. *[Interruption.]* I emphasise to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) that we must also be ready to recognise real improvements. By doing that, we encourage the further improvements that we all want to see.

I shall now cross the Andes to Argentina, which has also been mentioned by most of the hon. Members who have contributed to the debate.

Hon. Members will have seen reports in the press of "a new approach" by the new Argentine Government on the Falklands. We have been struck by the new tone of official Argentine statements since the inauguration of President Menem. We certainly welcome the constitutional transfer of power through elections, which my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe rightly pointed out was for the first time in 60 years. We wish that new Government well. The full nature of the Argentine position is not yet clear. There have been numerous statements, not all entirely consistent with each other. But their approach seems designed to restore a more normal relationship with us, while putting the difficult issue of sovereignty on one side, which we welcome.

We have consistently expressed our willingness to work for more normal relations by making progress on practical issues of potential benefit to both sides. I have in mind the removal of trade and financial restrictions and the restoration of air links and the establishment of contacts on fisheries, where we have important common interests in the conservation of fish stocks.

I hope that we can look forward to a period of tangible achievement in our relations with Argentina. That is certainly our aim, and I hope that it is shared by the new Argentine Government.

A number of hon. Members have asked about the reports of contacts with Argentina. I hope that they will understand that this is a very delicate matter and that they will not expect me to go into details at this stage. I cannot comment on the press reports, but hon. Members may rest assured that we will respond positively to any proposals, consistent with our commitment to the Falkland Islands.

The debt problem has been generally recognised as very worrying, but, of course, it is not all gloom. On a more positive note, after lengthy negotiations, Mexico has reached an agreement with its commercial creditors, which we warmly welcome. We hope that that will make a major contribution to economic recovery in Mexico and to the successful implementation of the Brady plan.

The Government are very concerned about the difficulties faced by many Latin American countries as a result of their heavy debt burdens, but it is important to remember that the majority of Latin America's debt is owed to the commercial banks, and arrangements for dealing with that debt must be primarily a matter for debtors and banks to negotiate between them.

However, in Latin America, creditor Governments have made a substantial contribution towards debtors' external financing needs. That has been through both new lending from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and by rescheduling official debt in the Paris club, where countries are prepared to undertake the often difficult task of economic reform.

Furthermore, the Government appreciate the importance of commercial debt reduction, and recognise that international financial institutions can play a useful facilitating role. We support the strengthened debt strategy for the highly indebted middle-income countries, known as the Brady plan. We endorsed it at the economic summit in Paris.

My hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham and the hon. Member for Islington, North raised the important matter of the rain forests and the environment. That has been fully debated twice this year in the House, but I recognise that there is an extraordinary degree of public interest in the issue at the moment. I mentioned earlier the successful trip to Brazil by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment in his previous post as Minister for Overseas Development. I hope that hon. Members will recognise that as a concrete demonstration of the importance with which we view environmental problems in the region and of our interest in doing something effective to help. Perhaps less prominent have been the continuing difficulties of urban pollution in Latin

American cities, which my right hon. Friend also looked at during his visit. Not surprisingly, there is great sensitivity in certain Latin American countries at anything that smacks of foreign interference in those affairs. My right hon. Friend said during his visit, and I repeat here, that

> "there is no intention whatsoever of interfering in sovereignty",

Brazilian or other. We wish to help Latin American Governments to tackle those very difficult problems, and are glad to be able to put at their disposal our considerable expertise in the forestry sector. My right hon. Friend signed a memorandum of understanding with the Brazilian Government during his visit, opening the way to just that sort of sensible, practical co-operation. Overseas Development Administration officials are now looking at specific ways in which we can help. We are in no doubt that this is a much more responsible approach to important issues than any calls for pressure to be put on Latin American Governments.

Hon. Members mentioned the important subject of drugs. The hon. Member for Swansea, East asked about the co-operation that we receive. We have developed increasingly effective programmes of co-operation with Governments in the common struggle against drugs, including direct links between our police forces and Customs services. For obvious reasons, I would prefer not to give details of those links. We have provided radio equipment to police forces in several countries. At present we are negotiating anti-drugs agreements with Mexico, and my predecessor signed one in Brazil last November. We plan to host a conference on this most important subject next year.

All hon. Members who contributed to the excellent debate mentioned the difficulties that Latin America faces. No one is more aware of those difficulties than the Government. We know that there is much work to be done in solving the problem of the region's external debt, and that democracy requires consolidation. It would be wrong to look only at the darker side of the region as a whole or our relations with Latin America.

Latin America is almost unique in the world outside Europe in its widespread return to democracy, and its attachment to western values. I am hopeful that the region's economic difficulties will prove temporary. I have often heard that nobody who has been there can fail to be impressed by the region's potential and by the capabilities of its people. I am new to this job, but I am much looking forward to seeing for myself before too long the problems and opportunities that we have been discussing tonight.

We mean it when we say that we value our relations with Latin America. Over past years, particularly over the past 12 months, we have established a particular momentum in those relations. We intend to continue to expand and to strengthen our links with a continent so close to our own in its culture and history.

## Green Field Sites (Development)

2.32 am

**Mr. Mark Wolfson** (Sevenoaks): However late and grey the hour, I welcome the opportunity to debate the continuing development on green field sites around towns and cities. In so doing, I welcome my hon. Friend the Minister to his expanded duties in the planning sector. He will need all his skills as a steersman, boxer and umpire in this arena, to which he is no stranger, and I wish him well. I am pleased and relieved to see that other hon. Members have stayed the course and are present to debate this important subject, late though it is.

The issue is of vital concern to people all over Britain, but it is particularly acute in the south of England. A dominant London, a vigorous economy, rapidly developing job opportunities, attractive countryside and even a relatively benign climate combine to create an insatiable demand for new homes and other development in the countryside. That phenomenon is not new. Victorian and Edwardian suburbs bear witness to past demand. Ribbon development in the 1930s and the growth of boroughs such as Enfield, Bromley, Harrow and Woodford, and similar developments on the edge of other cities, show the strength of demand for homes built on green field sites in the years between the wars. They are a clear warning, as are many post-war developments, of how much acreage can be built on in one, two or three decades.

Our framework of planning law was established to balance the demand for more and better housing in an attractive environment with the need to preserve the countryside from the character of towns. Despite this framework, however, a frightening amount of green field land is still built on every year. As Mark Twain reminded us long ago, there is not an unlimited supply of this commodity. He was speaking of America. In Britain it is even more clearly the case. Many hon. Members from a multiplicity of constituencies are worried by that, but we are not blind to the need for new and better housing, nor to the desire of families for an improved environment.

The debate is about two issues—how to limit the pace of green field development and at the same time finding other land for housing. With many of my colleagues, I contend that great opportunities still exist to use derelict and underused land within and on the edge of many of our towns and cities as land for housing and other developments. Far too many people are still condemned to live as neighbours to decay—closed factories, empty warehouses, defunct power stations, unused wharfs and shrunken mental hospitals. Those useless monuments to the changed industrial and social life of Britain make bad neighbours for those who live beside them. Vandalism and dereliction, dirt and decay ensure a rotten environment. They create hopelessness, undermine initiative and cause depression and gloom. Land and buildings unused and uncared for are not just an economic waste but a social cancer.

Much of such land is still in the hands of central and local government, nationalised industries and other public bodies such as the Health Service. Several factors militate against the use of this land, including little or no financial incentive to sell, management which lacks dynamism, public sector managers whose accountability is limited and often diffuse, inadequate entrepreneurial know-how and

*[Mr. Mark Wolfson]*

drive, and limited or non-existent knowledge of property development. In some cases, it is continuing political resistance from some local authorities.

Where those factors can be changed a dramatic and rapid alteration follows. London's dockland is the prime example. My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) was the mover behind the London docklands development scheme and he deserves continuing credit for it. I hope that there will come a time when he is again in a position directly to influence the course of government to the benefit of many.

My hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen), with expert advice from outside the House, has evolved public land use management schemes as one way to overcome the problems which too often stand in the way of selling public unused and underused land for housing and other purposes.

I have spoken of the social cancer that derelict land represents, and there is still far too much of it. Figures from the Department of the Environment show more than 17,000 acres of derelict land in England as owned by county and district councils, with a further 28,000 acres owned by other public bodies. That was 40 per cent. of the total listed as derelict land in public ownership.

Not all but much of that land could be used to meet housing demand and thus help to limit the need to provide more and more green field sites for developers. Where derelict land and other urban land is used for housing, it is vital that development schemes are comprehensive, responsive to the desires of individuals and provided with a satisfactory environment around them.

Local authority city housing schemes of the 1960s and 1970s were often a disaster because planners, architects and, I have to admit, politicians paid scant heed to the wishes, though they were articulated clearly enough, of the often reluctant residents. It has taken us 25 years to learn the lessons of tower blocks. Where houses have been built for sale, the consumer has always had a say. That opportunity for choice now has a better chance of occurring in the rented sector under the Government's new initiatives, but there is still a long way to go. If the rapid development of city and other urban land is to take place, and thus relieve the pressure on green field development, such action can be successful only if homes and the lived-in environment around them are attractive to the people. Britain has not been good at achieving attractive modern towns and cities. The challenge now and in the future is to make them better places in which to live.

I return to the subject of green field sites and Government policy on specific planning applications. Pressure from would-be developers is relentless, be it for warehousing, factories, offices, shopping centres or new towns. My purpose in initiating this debate—and many of my hon. Friends will share my view—is to make it clear to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, whose appointment I welcome, that there is growing concern about existing and potential over-development in parts of Britain, particularly in the south. We want him to take full cognisance of our concern because it reflects that of many of our constituents and supporters, who look to the Government to balance the demand for homes against the need to protect the environment. They are not arguing like Luddites against all things new—they want planning law to be used to achieve a proper balance, and if it is inadequate for that purpose, it should be changed.

**Mr. Andrew Rowe** (Mid-Kent): Is my hon. Friend aware of the way in which what appears to be a certainty suddenly becomes an uncertainty? For example, there is a proposition to build on the edge of my constituency a parkway station in the middle of a gap which every local authority in the area had designated as a gap which should not be closed. Now we are all apprehensive lest once the station is built there will be no way of protecting the area, so that what was a complete certainty has suddenly become a total uncertainty.

**Mr. Wolfson:** My hon. Friend reinforces my point, and no doubt other hon. Members will refer to specific changes.

Regional and county structure plans provide a framework for the control of growth. Land earmarked for future development is known, local authorities can make their dispositions accordingly, and local people know roughly where they stand. But the readiness of development groups to challenge existing guidelines—and to do so with blatant disregard for the stated views of Ministers, local authorities and communities—is setting the cat among the pigeons. An application to build a new town in Oxfordshire, to be known felicitously as Stone Bassett, is a prime example of that. Happily, that scheme has been thrown out. That scheme, which had no place in any county or district plan, was evolved between a development consortium and a local farmer. The cost in money, time, worry and stress to the small community that would have been engulfed by the scheme has been immense.

My constituents and I have benefited from a similar decision taken on an application for a major out-of-town shopping centre at Hewitts Farm close by the M25 in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook). There, too, developers had been repeatedly warned by Ministers that such an application was most unlikely to be successful because it fell outside all the relevant criteria. The developers nevertheless persisted but, I am glad to say, without success. That is the response that we look to the Secretary of State for the Environment to give in such cases—and not, as has happened over Foxley Wood, in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley), to allow the application on appeal. My hon. Friend raised that issue in the House only this afternoon.

I end by asking the Minister to convey to the Secretary of State my request that as one of his first acts in his new job he should reconsider the Foxley Wood decision and overturn it. That would give a clear and definite signal that on the development of green field sites his tiller is hard over to green.

2.45 am

**Sir Peter Emery** (Honiton): The late hour and the number of hon. Members who wish to take part in this debate emphasise the extreme importance that a number of senior hon. Members attach to planning and to the protection of the environment.

In your other role as Chairman of Ways and Means, I suggest that it might have been helpful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the 10-minute rule on speeches had applied throughout these debates because we might thus have saved an hour and a half for other speeches or for time in which to bowl along through the other debates because many hon. Members have spoken for longer than 10 minutes. However, I shall attempt to hold to that time limit.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) should be congratulated immensely on bringing this matter to the House's attention. The fears that he has expressed are evident not only in the south-east and around London and all the main cities; but in many other parts of the country, not least in the south-west. I shall use east Devon and my constituency of Honiton as an illustration. It contains some of our most beautiful countryside, such as the deep coombs and valleys, the commons at Woodbury and the red cliffs along the coast from Lyme Regis to Exmouth. The ancient farmland, village life and the seashore make for an ideal constituency with more than its share of countryside of outstanding natural beauty.

The natural beauty of many parts of the country has been bequeathed to us by past generations and is something that we only borrow and use. We should protect it before handing it on—I hope unsullied and unspoiled—for the benefit of future generations.

The concrete jungle is spreading not only in our big cities and towns, but in many parts of our countryside. Once spread, it eats into the greenness of the countryside which can never be restored and that is something to which we should begin to pay considerable attention. The speed of the movement of the population around the country, and especially into the south-west, bears on this problem.

Having been a Member of the House for six years, I was defeated in 1966 and 330 days later came back in a by-election as the Member of Parliament for my present constituency. That was in 1967. My constituency then included part of the city of Exeter, Topsham, Ottery St. Mary, rural and town, right up to Broadhembury where a former and well-known hon. Member, Sir Cedric Drewe, still has his family home, Payhembury and Plymtree, and had an electorate of about 63,000. I have lost those areas. I still have all the coast, Honiton, Axminster, Budleigh Salterton and Sidmouth. If I added to my present electorate of 83,000 the parishes that I had in 1967, the electorate would be 107,000—an expansion in 21 years of more than 70 per cent.

**Mr. Anthony Steen** (South Hams): Is my hon. Friend not illustrating something about which we are all worried —the way in which the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, which is controlled by the Government, presents statistics on population development which become a self-fulfilling prophecy? If it says that another 50,000 people will move to the Honiton area in the next 10 years, the planners give credence to that projection by allowing development which enables 50,000 people to move into the area. Does my hon. Friend agree that the Government must consider how they move people who have no intention of moving until the Government direct them to do so because the Government's statistical department says they should?

**Sir Peter Emery:** I understand my hon. Friend's argument, but it is not so much that the Government direct them there.

I was about to say that we cannot go on in this way. There is no way in which the countryside can continue to absorb so much housing if we are to maintain its beauty. I accept the considerable need for housing, but we have to balance that need with the impact on the environment.

Many retired people would like to find a home in east Devon or the south-west. Many thousands have already done so, but we cannot simply continue to build homes so that demand is automatically met. East Devon cannot continue to absorb this catastrophic population explosion. We cannot, and must not, allow the continued spread of the concrete jungle as, once it has come, it cannot be taken back.

When I first represented Exmouth, it had a population of 17,000. It has been allowed to spread out and more than 30,000 people now live there. Looking down on Colyton from the hills, one can see the beautiful, old, small country town, but the expansion into housing estates around it is ruining it and the countryside.

I am taking the example of my constituency, but I believe that the same applies to the north-east just as it does to the south-east. We cannot allow this spread of the city. There is now the possibility of about 280 acres being taken from Exeter airport. The Devon agricultural show is being moved from inside the city to east Devon. There is a possibility of a new industrial estate being put on Stuarts land, which also is outside Exeter.

Given the way in which inquiries are now proceeding, and the way in which appeals are being allowed by the Department of the Environment, I believe that in the next 15 years we shall see development spreading out of those sites. Within 20 or 25 years, Exeter city will be demanding that its boundaries be widened to eat into approximately a quarter more of east Devon. I do not think that that makes sense either to the Government or to those who wish to protect the environment in which they live.

I wish not merely to complain, but to make suggestions. First, I believe that the views of the local planning authority and the advice given by parish and town councils must now be allowed to stand, and to be overturned only in extreme instances by the Department's officials or inspectors on appeal. The views of local people must be taken into account much more.

Secondly, we need to revise the Government's guidenotes to local authorities so that they do not lead developers to believe that they will be able to get around local officials. Local officials should not use them as a "guard" with which to advise councillors to grant planning requests, because if they do not they are likely to find that the guidenotes will allow appeals: often councillors do not hold to their preferred judgments, having been warned by officials that any appeal will be won by the developer.

The Department's guidance note No. 12, published in 1988, stresses the need for

> "clear up-to-date local plans, consistent with national, regional and structure plan policies and setting out detailed policies and specific proposals for the use of land."

When a matter goes to appeal, the inspector will have the views of the local planning authority and the developer and the guidance notes on the needs of housing. The balance is two-to-one in favour of the developer if a local plan does not exist. That local plan should be immediately available.

I urge the Minister to back the policy that I am supporting in my constituency: that local people and local parishes should produce a draft local plan and submit it to

*[Sir Peter Emery]*

their district council. Even if not approved, it can be used in evidence until something is approved, so that the inspector can refer to some aspect of local planning.

I have to tell my hon. Friend the Minister that his Department is immensely unpopular in the south-west. The Government are not seen to be bending over backwards to protect the environment. Ministers say that that is what they want, but their words are not borne out by what happens when inspectors deal with appeals. If Ministers do not quickly come to grips with the matter, it will become a serious problem not only for the Government but for the country.

3 am

**Mr. Jerry Wiggin** (Weston-super-Mare): I start by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) on a most lucid exposition of the bare bones of this important case. I wish that at this extraordinary hour of the morning we could all put across a case so well.

I welcome the appearance of a new Minister on this subject and hope that he will appreciate that for years some of us have been seeking to pressurise the Government to take a different view. We are aware of his open-minded approach and I hope that he will feel able to take yet another look at the background to the difficulties raised by planning applications, not just in the south and south-east but around our urban conurbations,.

Among those who take an interest in these matters are colleagues from cities such as York, Chester, Manchester and Liverpool and from as far west as the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery). That shows that the problem is not confined to the south-east, although for obvious reasons the pressures on the home counties are greater.

Previous Ministers have sought to dodge the fact that central Government must take responsibility for deciding where planning applications should be accepted. As my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen) hinted in his intervention, there is no point in a system in which the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys is required to produce a figure that is revised by an astonishing degree in a short time—such as 30 per cent. in two years. That is then cut by the Department when it suits the Department to do so. The south-eastern SERPLAN and the counties that belong to it are then required to share the number of houses and provide room for them. That is not planning. It is necessary for the Government to state the figures that they will approve for SERPLAN.

I commend the concept of planning regions and think that the Government are working on it in an attempt to extend the general thought of planning by region. I hope that the Government will start to take some responsibility for deciding total numbers because it is not good enough to do it in the way that it is being presently done. Some people understand that to mean telling people where to live, but that is not the case. It is saying where planning applications will be granted, and from that decision economic consequences will flow. At no time during discussion of such matters has our group ever moved from the acceptance of the fact that if planning applications are continually refused in areas of heavy pressure, it will have economic consequences.

One has only to look at planning applications and house prices in the north to see that what we propose has a beneficial side effect. It is that parts of the country where there has been some economic neglect will begin to receive extra attention because of the relative cheapness of housing, better facilities, easier modes of transport and greater availability of labour. The Government should acknowledge that they have a role in planning the nation's population and location. If they did that, much of the problem would start to go away. I hope that the Minister will not shelter behind the excuse that he has a quasi-judicial capacity in such matters and is unable to comment on individual cases and applications. That has often happened in the past.

We have a very British system, in which the Government put themselves at arm's length from the initial application by allowing, quite correctly, the local authority to deal with it in the first place. Then there is an appeal, they appoint an inspector and do what they were going to do anyway. The whole process has become ludicrously expensive. A huge legal industry has arisen around it, with vast costs. My hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks mentioned the personal distress caused to many people during such a process.

While I welcome a number of the decisions that have been taken recently against some of the activities of such organisations as consortium developments, the Foxley Wood decision stands out as an illogical extension of everything that the Government have said. My hon. Friend the Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) is active in this case and has worked closely with us on it. He raised the matter this afternoon. The Foxley Wood application is contrary to the local plan and to the county structure plan. It takes in a large part of a site of special scientific interest, and the local inspector recommended that the application should be turned down. My right hon. Friend the previous Secretary of State for the Environment said that he was minded to overturn the inspector's decision. I suggest that my right hon. Friend the new Secretary of State be unminded, and that he has a close look at this. Overturning the decision will do more than cause an enormous amount of anger in a part of the country where the Government still command a great deal of respect and support. I would not wish to make too much of this point, but it is a fair one. It will also establish an unfortunate precedent and will give a green light to those developers who believe that, by modestly decreasing or increasing numbers, they can establish new towns of 4,500 houses, with all the consequence that such a development produces.

Such a development would be too small to develop much of the infrastructure that is needed, so the local hospitals and schools, special facilities and roads will be overloaded by up to 20,000 people. It is not so small that it will not have an effect. One could go on for a long time about the undesirability of such developments. People have said that the county accepted the figures, but it did not. It was told the figures by central Government and was allocated the figures by SERPLAN. If the Government insist on allowing substantial planning applications for housing developments in the home counties, including northern Hampshire, my right hon. Friend the new Secretary of State will have a load of political trouble, and a great deal of support for our party will be used to prevent such precedents. I hope that Foxley Wood will be an example of the new view prevailing in Marsham street.

**Mr. Steen:** I hope that my hon. Friend will forgive me for raising two points in an intervention, but he makes an important point about infrastructure. Is not the problem in the south compounded by the Government's failure to provide the necessary infrastructure when they allow development—whether for 10 or 50 houses—by way of roads, police, schools, hospitals and lighting? People coming to an area are expected to be absorbed and the infrastructure is expected to cope, so Government funding is not made available to provide the facilities that those people rightly expect. Should not a criterion for planning in the future be that the Government should agree to give planning permission for the development of a village or two only if the public funds are available to maintain the existing high standard of facilities for those who move in?

**Mr. Wiggin:** I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. It is worth saying that we are concerned about those who are our constituents now. We would, of course, be deeply interested if others were to move in. It is our duty, however, to protect those who are our constituents now. That is only right and proper. I have never flinched from the charge "Not in your back yard." So what? Surely that is my responsibility. I accept entirely what my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen) said about the quality of life.

I understand that a planning Bill is to be introduced during the next Session and that it will contain a proposal to alter the not yet well established procedure of structure plans. It has taken about 14 years to complete the first round of structure plans. When the procedure is just about beginning to work, it is somewhat precipitate to throw it overboard. We should bear in mind that housebuilders, who in these circumstances perhaps cannot be seen as our friends, believe that a firm structure plan is better from their point of view than too much flexibility. They need firmness. They need to know the amount of land that will be available so that they can plan their land banks, assess demand and establish their pricing and numbers. I understand that the Council for the Protection of Rural England will say that it does not believe that abolishing structure plans is likely to be helpful from its point of view. Many of my colleagues believe that the Government will be treading on delicate ground if they proceed with the abolition of structure plans as they propose. It is the rigidity of the structure plan that we want to see maintained.

We have come to find ourselves in an unholy mess with what I can describe only as planning by bribery. If a developer wants to erect a large number of houses, he need think only of an imaginative scheme to go alongside it. That can be a road, for example, or in a case—but perhaps it would be best not to go into my constituency problems. I am remaining somewhat neutral about one in particular. A developer can approach a local authority and say, "Wouldn't you like to have this and that? Incidentally, I want 1,500 houses." That leads to planning by bribery, and that is not the concept which those who drafted the original legislation 40 years ago had in mind. A way must be found of overcoming the problem.

The political reaction to all these matters originates in a deterioration in the quality of life when too many people come to live in too small an area, and here I take up the argument of my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams. If the quality of life can be maintained, the democratic objection to an increase in housing numbers in an area will be much reduced. Unless the Government can find ways of providing the necessary facilities—I have roads in mind especially, which are in a scandalous condition in constituences such as mine—the problem will continue as each housing application comes forward.

I hope that my colleague from the county of Avon, the hon. Member for South Hams, will establish himself as being extremely green minded. Those who speak on these matters and who take an active interest in them have been as green as it is possible to be. Accusations that the Conservative party is ignoring these matters should be set against an account of our activities. I hope that the deep feelings that are held by many of us will be respected. The number of us who are in the Chamber at this extraordinary hour should reveal the depth of feeling among the supporters of the Government.

3.14 am

**Sir Geoffrey Pattie** (Chertsey and Walton): I have been in this place for 15 years and in each of those years planning issues have formed the largest part of my constituency case load. If anything, the case load has increased in recent times.

I was playing a tape of Michael Flanders and Donald Swann the other day in my car. During the course of the tape Michael Flanders says that a friend of his has gone to live in a suburb of south London called Brighton. That is rather daunting as the tape was recorded in about 1963. I fear that we are well on the way to that kind of "megopolis", whereby it would be possible to drive from the south coast to north London, with all the communities between them joined together.

The centre of my own constituency of Chertsey and Walton is only 22 miles from Westminster. As it is so conveniently within commuting distance of London, many people want to live there and housing developments in the area have proliferated over the years. During my time in the House, motorways have also arrived in the form of the M25 and the M3, which bisect my constituency. One can add to that the proximity of Heathrow, helicopter routes, a small local airfield, and the most recent and sensationally grotesque proposal for a waste tip, which is to take the form not of landfill but of what I can only describe as "landbuild" as the waste to be disposed of by Cementation will reach a height of 70 m. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister and other right hon. and hon. Members will dwell on the prospect of a waste tip 70 m high in the rural heart of my constituency.

My constituency is not helped topographically by having gravel deposits below the surface. There are constant battles over gravel extraction, and in recent years the local community has been successful in saving Chertsey Meads, where people can walk or exercise their horses, and Wey Manor Farm. Nevertheless, planning pressures lead my constituents to look for greater protection from planning laws, not less. They seek to avoid the joining of small communities, which is different from some of the problems described by my right hon. and hon. Friends. It is all part of the same picture, but one is not necessarily always talking in terms of lovely rural countryside which risks having a Foxley Wood dropped in the middle of it. For my constituents, it is important that their relatively small towns and communities are not joined together. Even if the individual areas of green land

*[Sir Geoffrey Pattie]*

which separate them appear insignificant, they are the only lungs available to my constituents for recreation and exercise.

As my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen) said, planning expectations become something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Developers take a long-term view and do not mind holding on to land for 10, 15 or 20 years. They continually make applications and wear down the local council. I should like to see an escalating tariff, which would make it more and more expensive for developers to continue submitting fresh planning applications. The local community often has to make great efforts to raise money to retain a Queen's Counsel, only to be certain that even if they win an appeal the chances are that the developer will soon be making a similar if not identical application. The developers do not need to worry as they have the time and the resources to continue relentlessly grinding down the local community. That is highly unsatisfactory.

Developers often denigrate the political process by their comments in local newspapers or at public inquiries. To them the process of local democracy is somewhat inconvenient—a rather tedious formality which stands in the way of the inevitable, ongoing process of joining up all the communities in a constituency such as mine until only a vast outer London sprawl remains.

As Members of Parliament, we have a duty to try to protect for future generations something resembling a decent environment and a decent quality of life. We therefore look to the Government to operate the planning laws in a way that is certain and tough and that shows that some things will not be allowed. The message will finally reach some developers that there are some activities in which they will be able to engage. We need development in some parts of the country in the controlled and careful manner that my hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) described when he introduced the debate in such an admirable manner. Our fundamental duty as Members of Parliament is to do all that we can to prevent any further erosion of the standard of living and quality of life of our constituents, and so much of that depends on how the planning laws are operated.

3.20 am

**Mr. Anthony Steen** (South Hams): It is always a pleasure to see my hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) at any time of the day or night. Even at 3.20 in the morning it is a great delight to see him here.

My hon. Friend will agree that the group of hon. Members here tonight are the advance party. The Minister is undergoing a small test of how he will respond to what is in fact an army of about 100 Members of Parliament, whose force he should not underestimate, representing Conservative Members from all over the country, who feel that the Government have got their planning policy hopelessley wrong.

We are delighted to see my hon. Friend the new Minister on the Front Bench. We hope that he will take back to his Department what is being said by the advance party. I feel sure that the new team in the Department of the Environment, including the Secretary of State, would wish to come to terms and to grips with what to us is probably the most serious problem in our constituencies —the unrestrained and tasteless growth of the population with a consequent increase in housing on a scale that has never been seen before and that is destroying the quality of life and the beauty of the countryside in our constituencies on a scale and at a rate which is utterly unacceptable to many of my hon. Friends.

I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to realise that, although there is a small team of comparatively senior and influential Members here tonight, it is nothing to what he may see if the Government do not get this right and start having a meaningful discussion with the Back-Bench groups who feel that something has gone wrong and needs to be put right.

We welcome my hon. Friend the Minister on the Front Bench tonight, but we have seen a great number of Ministers in that place. No sooner does a Minister get to grips with the problem than he is moved on again. It is rather like Dante's "Inferno". As soon as they get a grasp of the problem my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister moves them on again. I do not know how many Ministers have preceded my hon. Friend or how many Back Benchers have tried to explain the problem to those Ministers. As soon as they understand the point, off they go again.

I hope that my hon. Friend will dig his heels in and say, "I am not moving on. I am staying right here until I have dealt with this tremendous problem." We know of my hon. Friend's conviction in planning matters. We know that this is new to him and we know that Lewisham does not have the green fields that he would like it to have, but we feel sure that he would not wish all our constituencies south of Watford to be an unrestrained growth of concrete. That is what we are here to discuss.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks, who is known to be balanced in his judgment and approach, introduced the debate in the most measured tones. We are not saying that there should be no development in the south. We are not saying that there should be no growth, no new homes, no starter homes for people in low-income groups. We are desperately keen on more homes for indigenous local people, who are being driven out of the rural constituencies in the south-west because of the great demand, especially among the retired population, to come to live in these beautiful areas.

We want more starter homes and more growth, but it must be restrained, it must be indigenous and it must be controlled to ensure that the necessary infrastructure exists. It is no good building more and more homes if there are not sufficient schools to which the children of families who live in them can go. Ivybridge in my constituency, just south of the Dartmoor national park, is one of the fastest growing towns in Europe; the county council has allowed so much growth that the schools have 30, 40 or even 50 children to a class. That is quite scandalous.

As one builds more and more houses, one places greater demand on hospitals. The Government should not allow areas to expand if there are not enough hospital places. Similarly, the police say that they do not have sufficient manpower to protect all those people and that the population is growing too fast. That, to my mind, is unrestrained and irresponsible planning. Any amendment of the structure plan must include a relationship between growth and infrastructure, and we must spell out what infrastructure is required per thousand people before allowing any further growth.

Our first message to the Minister is that we do not oppose expansion and development, but we oppose pure market force development which pays no regard to the quality of life of those who live in our areas. There is nothing wrong in Conservative Members saying that, and we know that it will have considerable support from the new regime at the Department of the Environment. I hope that, as a starting point, the Minister will convey our belief and our concern about that.

My remarks will be on a slightly different tack from those of other hon. Members. I have had one concern for more than 10 years, and I am getting nearly as bored with it as are Ministers who hear me make almost identical speeches every time they are here to answer a debate, but the point is worth making again because it remains just as relevant. The pressure on the green fields around our cities is aggravated by the fact that the Government have repeatedly failed to use the vacant, dormant, underutilised land in public ownership that exists throughout the country, which is allowed to continue to grow in quantity in spite of the register set up by my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), the then Secretary of State. My right hon. Friend rightly said, "We do not have to continue to build on green field sites at the present rate if we can release some of the land that exists amid our urban sprawls. It is vacant, dormant and derelict; it is surplus to requirement and it is in public ownership." As many of my hon. Friends will know, that is a matter on which I have majored. I have been driven almost to the point of distraction in my search to discover how much land there is, where it is, what is happening to it and why it is not being used.

In this short debate it might be worth refreshing the Minister's memory of what we are talking about and why there is a correlation between the continued demand for green field development and the Government's continued failure to do anything about the amount of public vacant land which continues to increase and continues not to be used.

Between 1982 and 1986, on a broad-brush approach, there were more than 100,000 acres of public unused and underutilised land on the Department of the Environment's register. That figure is fairly accurate because there are 39 full-time officials in the Department of the Environment dealing with the register and the Minister may like to talk to them about it. The register is like an A to Z telephone directory. It contains the lists of all the lands that are vacant, dormant and underutilised in the country. It is enormous and lists thousands of sites. It is the job of those civil servants constantly to update the register and to put down a marker as more and more land becomes available.

It is true to say that, whereas there were more than 100,000 acres on the register until 1986, that figure has been reduced. There are now about 85,200 acres. However, that comprises 8,134 sites. We could build an awful lot of homes, hospitals, schools and industrial and office buildings on 8,134 sites. The Minister should not be mistaken about this. Those sites are of one acre and over because my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley, when he was Secretary of State for the Environment, insisted on the exclusion of great tracts of land. Therefore, those 85,200 acres are only land that fits the criteria laid down by my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley.

Professor Alice Coleman of Kings college, the famous lady who deals with land use, says that the true figure is nearer double the 85,200 acres if we ignore the exclusions. Whether it is 85,000 or 170,000 acres, the important point for the House to consider is that that figure is not static.

The most fascinating result of my research into these matters is that each year the Minister will claim that an enormous number of acres have come off the register, but an equal number have been added. The planning process is creating more and more land. It is like a food machine: more meat is put into the mincer, and understandably more comes out.

In February 1989, in reply to a parliamentary question to the former Minister, before he moved into his next phase of Dante's "Inferno," I was told that, while in 1984 some 6,800 acres of vacant land were removed from the register, the Minister had to admit that 7,700 acres came on to it. In 1985, although 12,300 acres were removed, 10,800 acres were added. In 1986, some 6,300 acres were added, and 7,700 acres were added in 1987. In 1988, 4,800 acres were added. However many acres come off the register at one end, the very planning process produces more vacant, dormant and derelict land in public ownership at the other end. However many acres the Government say they have got off the register, we can be sure that more and more will be coming on to it. The Government should not feel complacent about the fact that land is coming off the register when so much continues to go on to it.

Since 1982, a total of 37,805 acres have become vacant, dormant and underutilised. That means that 37,805 acres could and should have been used, and could still be used, for housing before green field sites have to be used. Also, much public vacant land will become private vacant land when nationalised industries are privatised. For example, 2,231 acres are in electricity industry ownership, and 2,952 acres are in water authority ownership. I am sure that my hon. Friends would like to know that the Minister's own Property Services Agency has 936 acres of vacant land. Surely the Minister should set an example to the country and get rid of some of that land before he starts to poach green field sites belonging to local authorities and other developers.

The point that I have been making tirelessly and tiresomely for many years is that nearly 49,000 acres of land were in local authority ownership on 31 May 1989. Also, 7,900 sites are on the land register, and we are being pressed to use more green field sites in preference to public vacant land in unused or underutilised areas. That is my first contention. *[Interruption.]* As my hon. Friends know, I can go on for a day and a night. This matter is so important that the House would like to hear more about it at any time of the day or night.

The planning process is creating and developing more public vacant land, and the Minister's Department is doing nothing to use it first. He may wish to be reminded of a splendid publication called "PLUMS—Public Land Utilisation Management Schemes", which I must admit that I wrote. That book offers a solution to public vacant land problems. At this time of the night, I do not wish my hon. Friend the Minister to think that he can get off lightly by being told the plot and the way in which the story unfolds. I am told that the book is better than Horlicks. If he takes the book home tonight, it will give him an insight into how he can tackle the problem.

It would be quite wrong to continue any further. I told the Minister about chapter one. There are another nine chapters, and they should be brought to successive debates

*[Mr. Anthony Steen]*

that the Minister has the good fortune to hear. At the moment, all he should know is that he has seen the advance party approaching. If another 90 colleagues were present, he would find himself in the Chamber for a considerably longer time. I urge him to stress to the Secretary of State that not an idle group but a cross-section of our great party is deeply concerned that the Government have failed in their responsibility to tackle the problem of tasteful development and to preserve our green and pleasant land.

3.38 am

**Mr. Nicholas Baker** (Dorset, North): This has been an excellent debate. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) on his introduction and I congratulate my hon. Friends on the variety of points that they have made. I shall try not to repeat any of those points, but I strongly agree with the force of the arguments. The surroundings that we enjoy are far more important to people than politicians yet seem to realise. We have a duty to leave to our children and grandchildren an environment of which we are leaseholders and not freeholders. The point of my hon. Friend's case is right and I hope that the Minister will recognise that.

I say to the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) that we are right to say what should happen in our back yards. We are concerned about green fields, more particularly in the debate this evening because of our constituents who live in or near them, but also because those green fields are there for people from Hammersmith to come and enjoy. They are, therefore, an asset to the people of Hammersmith. My hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) mentioned that we are committed to making inner cities places in which people want to live and work. That is the other half of our debate.

The former Secretary of State for the Environment was certainly a strong protector of the green belt. His decision on the Grange estate, just outside my constituency, was especially welcome to the people in Dorset and to my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley), who would have liked to have been present for this debate. That illustrates that we are concerned not about the green belt over which the former Secretary of State was resolute, for which I praise him, but about the other green fields, where bodies such as Consortium Developments—the bulls in the delicate china shop of our environment—behave in a co-ordinated and over-powering way in launching their attacks to try to establish new towns in a completely inappropriate manner. I hope that the new Secretary of State will resist new towns in Foxley Wood and elsewhere.

On many occasions I have said that our planning system is out of date and needs to be changed because it does not meet today's needs. I shall make two general points which I do not think have been mentioned before. First, I believe that our planning law should recognise environmental capacities. By that I mean that a place's capacity to absorb new development is finite. That should be a factor in planning law. Developers argue all the time that any number of new developments could be fitted in. Our planning law should look at the matter from the other perspective and say, "What developments can a place and its infrastructure take on?" That will give us some different answers.

My second point, which has been mentioned by some of my hon. Friends already, concerns numbers. I want to see assessments of numbers based upon need and not the demands of the developers. Indeed, one of my concerns about the White Paper is that I understand that its assessment of numbers is based upon the SERPLAN system of producing anticipated numbers. The SERPLAN system of numbers is really developer based and driven out of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. I do not believe that is good enough. We should not be trying to assess numbers in that way. It is based not on need, but on demand, which is developer driven.

We shall be discussing the White Paper in the next Session of Parliament. The Government put out proposals in 1986 to try to simplify and speed up the planning process. That is an aim that I share and applaud, but I believe that that aim can be achieved only by tightening up the planning system, so that at every level, national, regional and local, it is made clear—certainly more clear than it is at present—how the land is to be used. It is proposed that county structure plans should be abolished and replaced by district development plans, accompanied by a statement of county planning policies.

At first glance, the White Paper seems to share some of the objectives that some of my colleagues and I put forward in a pamphlet entitled "This Pleasant Land", which has already been mentioned.

**Mr. Steen:** It is very good.

**Mr. Baker:** As usual, my hon. Friend is very kind.

Having read the White Paper closely, I am concerned that the Department of the Environment will produce the figures on which, at every stage, the plans are to be based. The figures will be provided not by local authorities or determined with their agreement but by the Department under the SERPLAN system.

My grounds for fearing that the White Paper proposals will involve the Secretary of State at a lower level of the planning process appear in paragraph 2.13 of the White Paper. The Secretary of State will have to agree that a statement of county planning policies shall cover any matters other than those set out in the six-point core of strategic issues. The paragraph continues by saying that county planning statements must be updated and, indeed, altered following the issue of planning guidance by the Secretary of State. Under the White Paper's proposals, the Secretary of State's powers will increase considerably, which gives me—and should give many other people—considerable cause for concern.

In the past week, I have put forward some proposals for low-cost housing in rural areas. Rural towns and villages have become affluent and prices have risen more rapidly than elsewhere. Migration of people from cities, movement on retirement, inadequate planning policies and lower-than-average incomes have restricted access to low-cost housing for local people. In many rural areas—especially, though not exclusively, in southern England—the problem is acute. Inadequate attention is being given to the housing needs of people on lower incomes, whose contribution to community life is essential, and they are being squeezed out of the villages in which their families have lived, often for hundreds of years.

To deal with that problem, housing surveys should be carried out locally. The Department should support the process of carrying out surveys and should give advice on how they should be done. Parish meetings should be given powers to conduct the operation and to require local authorities to carry out surveys in the absence of parish or town councils. The cost should be met by district councils with help from the Treasury.

Having identified sites in a parish or town, parish councils should be encouraged to propose to their annual meetings that village housing trusts should be formed for the provision of low-cost accommodation to meet local needs. I should like to see a more consistent approach to the provision of low-cost housing. I advocate, in this and in many other ways, greater powers of responsibility being given to parish councils in planning policy. They are generally aware of the parish's needs, including the need for more jobs to replace those that agriculture no longer provides and the need for local housing. They are exactly the bodies which should oversee planning. I no longer believe that council-owned housing is the way to deal with problems in rural areas.

I support my hon. Friends' remarks about the urgent need to change our planning legislation and I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will consider carefully the speeches that have been made.

3.49 am

**Mr. Clive Soley** (Hammersmith): The Labour party shares the concerns expressed by Conservative Members about what is happening to the countryside and the villages of England, particularly in the south. About a year and a half ago, I spoke to the Royal Town Planning Institute and said that the south of England was no longer the countryside that we remembered, but a form of urban parkland, because it was managed countryside with an increasing amount of building.

Conservative Members have brought this on themselves. In the 1960s and 1970s, increasing over-development was a serious problem in the south of England. The last thing it needed was what it got in 1979, when the new Secretary of State for the Environment boasted of having a bonfire of planning controls. He has had the audacity to complain because the now recently departed and little lamented Secretary of State for the Environment poured petrol on the flames.

The Conservative party destroyed planning as we had known it. It handed planning on a platter to the developers. Now it complains because developers are reaping the benefits. The Government's other fatal mistake was to undermine and devalue local government to the extent that it no longer controls its area. Those are the reasons why so many Conservative Members are saying, "Please give some power back to my local authority, the planners and my local community." The Conservative Government took that power away.

The Government then fell back on the daft argument about market forces. I could hardly believe my ears when the hon. Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen), first looking round to see that no Whip was present to report him to the Prime Minister, said that market forces could undermine the quality of life. Of course they can. The Government have made it much easier for market forces to operate, although there can never be a free market for housing. By trying to pretend that there is a free market, they opened up the worst aspects of ordinary development which are on green field sites.

The hon. Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) complains about green field site building. It makes much more sense to build on green field sites than on derelict land, because it is cheaper and easier, and provides more flexibility in development. When he opens a debate about ending green field site development and using derelict land, he should make it clear that there are only two ways to achieve that: by introducing more planning legislation for local authorities, not by undermining and destroying them, or by subsidising builders to develop derelict land.

The "not in my back yard" syndrome is caused by Government policies. Either people build on a green field site or not at all. It is worth examining the building figures for the past 12 months. The Government expect the free market to provide the housing that is necessary. The new build figures this year are 20 per cent. down on last year's figures. Why? Because of interest rates. Who is being provided for? The hon. Member for Sevenoaks believes that there is choice in housing. What is there for his constituents—not just those on average or below average income but above average income—to buy or rent? There is a catastrophic shortage of low-cost accommodation for rent or sale in southern Britain.

Whenever I make a speech on this, I receive letters and phone calls from people who live in areas such as the hon. Member's, saying, "I live in a £200,000 house but there is nowhere for my son or daughter to rent or buy. There is nowhere for the village postman, the nurse, the driver or teacher." What used to be regarded as an inner-city problem is developing in rural areas. Communities are being torn apart, just as they were in inner-city areas. Unless we address that through planning, we shall have the same problems in rural areas as we have in the cities.

It is daft to suggest that we use docklands as an example. It is an appalling example of the Government pouring taxpayers' money into massive subsidies which result in developments occurring in the opposite way to the way they occur in every other developed country. Other countries put the infrastructure in first, subsidised by the public sector, and then the private sector is allowed to complete the development.

In docklands, where it is happening the other way round, the money is pouring into the pockets of the developers out of the pockets of the taxpayers, and we are getting the wrong type of development. How can people who need low-cost housing find homes in docklands? I warn the hon. Member for Sevenoaks that it will happen in his constituency in the same way as it is happening in London.

The answer is to give local authorities back their planning powers, to cease to undermine and demoralise local councillors and planning officers and to make sure that the planning rules put the ball in the court of the community and councillors and not in the court of the developers.

Developers are at present setting the pace, not just because of the appeals system but because of the way in which the Government have structured the market. It can never be a free market, because the supply of land and buildings is too inelastic; because the subsidy system works against it being a free market, particularly mortgage income tax relief, which destroys the concept of a free market; and because, although the Government have destroyed many of the planning regulations, there are sufficient regulations left to ensure that a free market cannot operate.

*[Mr. Clive Soley]*

One of the tragedies of the philosophy that has been rammed down our throats for the last 10 years is the belief that a free market is the best of all possible options for most people. In fact, it is a short-term policy, and for the quality of the environment in areas such as the south of Britain, where 20 million people live, it is a disaster. That is why the Conservatives are getting into so much trouble in this part of Britain.

3.56 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Colin Moynihan):** I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker) that this has been an excellent debate. I fully respect the clear strength of feeling that exists on this issue, as evidenced by the speeches of a number of my senior hon. Friends who, among them, have decades of much-valued experience and whose views have provided a helpful and thought-provoking debate and an excellent start to my work on this subject.

I assure my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen) that we will listen carefully and attempt to match our words with deeds, an objective which was sought by my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery). I became somewhat concerned when my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams said that as soon as a Minister said, "I understand", he was moved on. After just 18 hours in the job, I face that prospect with some trepidation. I have listened carefully and I am beginning to understand, and I hope that when I wake up later in the day I shall not be moved on because a number of important and challenging issues have been raised.

I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson) for raising an issue that is of fundamental importance to the future character of the nation's towns, cities and countryside. Underlying all the policies has been concern that the pressure of development poses a threat to the environment. At at a time of unparalleled economic prosperity, that pressure and those concerns are heightened, particularly in the south-east of England, but —as my hon. Friends the Members for Honiton and for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) said—in other parts of the country as well.

The debate, therefore, is about how to accommodate economic growth in ways that enhance the quality of life in urban and rural communities and conserve our countryside heritage. As my hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks said, it is a question of balancing the demand for homes against the existing environment. That process cannot ignore the changes that are taking place in society and in people's expectations.

Population growth is critical in this area, and I am grateful to hon. Members for assisting my learning curve by highlighting a number of important matters, not least the numbers question, an issue at which I shall look closely.

I shall, in the short time left to me, reflect on what I consider to be an essential matter that was raised by my hon. Friends. I refer to the availability of land in towns and cities and the need to ensure that such land is used in preference to green field sites. I agree with my hon. Friends on this point. I represent an area at the heart of the inner city—Lewisham—and I know that it is important that full and effective use is made of land within existing urban areas. My experience has shown that there are many opportunities arising from conversions, improvement and redevelopment, the bringing into use of neglected, unused or derelict land, including sites on land registers—I take on board the points made on that issue—and sites suitable for small-scale housing schemes in inner-city areas such as my constituency.

The important point is to put the land that is available in areas such as my constituency to good use. It is also important to make every effort to ensure that such land is placed as a priority over green field sites so that we can retain green field sites and the green belt. I appreciate that the debate has not dealt primarily with the green belts and I appreciate also my hon. Friends' comments on the success of that policy. I believe strongly that green belt policy should not allow for flexibility about what is or is not green belt land. However, that is another point and I hope that we can consider it carefully on other occasions. Many important points have been raised, not least the need to respond to local people and to ensure that their needs are met and that there is a mechanism to facilitate listening to and implementing their wishes more fully.

Those are only some of the issues that were raised. I have listened to all the issues discussed. I hope that my hon. Friends will forgive me for not responding to all their points because of the time constraint, but I look forward to a constructive and—I hope—long-standing debate on this issue which will enable us to work constructively to achieve many of the goals that my hon. Friends have set for the Government in this constructive debate.

## Strategic Planning (London)

4.1 am

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): I hope that hon. Members will forgive the pun, but as I came into the Chamber it dawned on me that on the last morning before the summer recess last year I had a slot at about the same time. On that occasion, the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley), replied on behalf of the Government in her maiden speech as a Minister.

My debate on that occasion was on the global environmental crisis. Little did I anticipate that the subject that I aired then would take off politically in the way that it did in the ensuing 12 months. It not only became the dominant issue at my party's conference in September, but it became the subject of the Prime Minister's now famous September speech and the major new issue on the political agenda. I hope that the issue that I raise today will become an issue of equal importance on the political agenda in this country and in our capital city, although I do not pretend that it has significance beyond that.

I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the draft strategic planning guidance for London. You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and other hon. Members who do not represent London constituencies benefit from the tradition of having a strategic plan for your areas as part of the general planning system. Indeed, that is something that we had in London. Such strategic plans were prepared by local government until the abolition of the Greater London council.

During the passage of the Act abolishing the GLC, we had substantial debates about what should happen in relation to the planning of the capital city and the metropolitan area once the GLC was abolished. The debate concluded that a body to be called the London planning advisory committee should be set up, to be made up of the planning committee chairs or other representatives from all the London boroughs and the City of London. The committee's task was to advise the Secretary of State on all London-wide planning matters. It was agreed that its first task was to advise on the content of strategic guidance for the capital city. So it was that the London planning advisory committee was set up. It worked extremely hard and, on 25 October last year, produced the document "Strategic planning advice for London: Policies for the 1990s" as its advice to the Secretary of State.

One of the special things about the document is that it received unanimous support from the three parties which were represented on the committee. It was signed by the three party leaders. I think that everyone will pay tribute to the chairman, who happens to be a party colleague of mine—Councillor Sally Hanwee of Richmond. She and her committee and their officers produced a very worthwhile document.

The document presents some uplifting thoughts. The committee identified four themes which have made London what it has been at its best: London as a civilised city, London as a world city of trade, London as a city of residential neighbourhoods and communities, and London as a city which offers opportunities for all.

The committee says that it has attempted to set forth the planning policies necessary to ensure London's success into the next century. It also says that the complexity of considering strategic planning matters for London, which accommodates 15 per cent. of the nation's population and work force and accounts for nearly one fifth of the gross domestic product, made it difficult to produce the advice. The need to provide a co-ordinated context for 33 separate planning authorities presented a greater problem than in the other metropolitan areas. Nevertheless, the committee did so unanimously. The document went to the Secretary of State and he issued, in March this year, draft strategic planning guidance for London, which is a much shorter document, mainly because it omits many of the important matters on which he was given advice and which I—and, I believe, the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr Soley) —will argue should have been included.

The debate is timely because it could not have happened later. We always knew that the Secretary of State planned to issue his guidance before the end of July. I understand that it is no secret that the Secretary of State may issue his guidance today—by which I mean Friday, not Thursday which is where we still are in the parliamentary time warp of an all-night sitting. I ask the Minister to agree, and to ask the Secretary of State to agree, not to issue the guidance today, but to have further consultation on it, especially on the matters about which there is still anxiety. The new Secretary of State, who I welcome, has an opportunity here to apply his mind to the document.

It was obvious from his time as Minister for Overseas Development that the Secretary of State is particularly concerned about environmental matters worldwide. He has been shown a good deal on our television screens this week padding around the Brazilian rain forests—and all credit to him for that—but I hope and believe that he is no less concerned about environmental matters closer to home. In many people's experience the environment is in pretty poor shape in our capital city, and I hope that I can persuade the Minister to agree that there is no need to insist dogmatically on publication today. I believe that the Secretary of State and his Ministers must be willing not to go ahead and issue a final strategic planning guidance that would show little change from the draft document.

Once produced, the document will effectively act as the strategic plan for London, and as a basis on which the local authorities will then draw up their unitary development plans. I know that that process should not be put off for months, with the whole exercise being repeated, but I believe that there are good reasons for delaying it somewhat. As the Minister probably knows, there has been widespread criticism of the draft guidance by those who have been consulted. Perhaps the most important criticism has come from the London advisory committee itself, again on an all-party basis. Other critics have been the London Boroughs Association, the Association of London Authorities, the Royal Town Planning Institute, the Town and Country Planning Association and the Association of London Borough Planning Officers.

Along with the hon. Member for Hammersmith and the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire)—who apologised to me some hours ago for not being able to attend the debate as he had a prior engagement to spend the evening with his family—and the three other Members of the group equally representative of the party groupings in the House, I am a member of the parliamentary cross-party London housing group of MPs, who are linked with a body called the Campaign for Homes in Central

*[Mr. Simon Hughes]*

London. We, too, have looked at the draft guidance, which was the subject of a conference held in county hall, and share the view that there is sufficient criticism and cause for concern for the document to be revised.

I have another reason for suggesting that the Minister should think again. Given the importance of the document, there has been inadequate consultation and debate. This is the first time that it has been debated in Parliament, the only other public debate being the one at county hall which took place in the middle of May. The consultation period was only 10 weeks.

It is important to delay if necessary because it is important to get things right. It has now become almost a cliché that London is grinding to a halt. Our transport system is increasingly clogged, and not just when there are rail, tube or bus strikes. It is generally more difficult to get around the capital, even without the additional influx which will result from Channel tunnel rail termini. Increasingly, there are staff shortages in key jobs and it is often impossible for people to acquire affordable homes. Those problems are not raised by people with a partisan political view. For example, Coopers and Lybrand was commissioned by ELPAC to carry out an independent survey, the result of which appeared in May. The survey report was called "Access to Housing in London" and confirmed the matters that I have mentioned.

The problems are so serious that it is imperative for us to get things right. I shall concentrate on one or two of the most significant matters and mention some others that are also important. The most significant matter in terms of immediacy and importance to the people affected is that we must strive to make London successful not just economically but in a way that will make it pleasant and satisfactory for Londoners to live in and for people to move around and work in.

To do that we must deal strategically with housing and housing policy. We need affordable housing and it must be continually available in our capital city. The Minister is a London Member and knows the pressures in his borough, as do the other London Members who are present. Unless there is a change to enable planning powers to intervene and influence the provision of housing, the market forces at work in London will continue ineluctably to drive up house prices. That is because London is a capital city and an international city to which people come. That produces additional forces which are not applied to our other towns and cities. Those factors price out people who have always lived here or less well paid people who need to live here because of their work.

We need a planning use class that enables land to be zoned specifically for low-cost or affordable housing. That idea has been considered in the Department because our all-party group has had discussions with Ministers responsible for housing and planning. Escalating amounts of public subsidy are spent on acquisitions in competition with the private sector in order to provide a decreasing number of new homes. Cost limits, which were developed to limit expenditure on, for example, housing association acquisition costs, mean that central London is getting fewer affordable homes.

I have as many constituency pressures as any hon. Member, not least because in the docklands there are expensive developments while on the other side of the road people are still living in poor council accommodation. The recommendations made to the Secretary of State by LPAC should be adopted. It recommended in paragraph 2.17:

> "Increased emphasis on the provision of satisfactory housing at affordable prices, particularly for those on low incomes."

Paragraph 3.5 refers to

> "An approach which emphasises housing needs rather than simply meeting housing demands."

Paragraph 3.2 talks about

> "The objective of sustaining and developing stable and secure residential neighbourhoods and communities and preventing any losses from existing dwelling stock."

In paragraph 4.3 LPAC mentions

> "Housing capacity figures for boroughs linked to assessments of need for low-cost housing and a requirement to demonstrate how these will be met, including key workers and groups with special housing need."

Paragraph 4.4 refers to

> "Agreements with developers to ensure the maximum amount of low-cost housing in new-build schemes with a minimum of 25 per cent. affordable homes in larger schemes."

The proposal was clearly made that a high proportion of new dwellings should be for social or non-market housing. The Coopers and Lybrand report, "Access to Housing in London", said as strongly as any such report could how urgent the matter is. It concluded:

> "Access to housing in London will only be secured for those who legitimately require it if action is taken on a scale not yet seen or even contemplated."

It says that London's housing market is a special case. Because of the international position of the capital city, the usual pricing mechanisms do not apply—the point that I made earlier. However, our economy is dependent on low-paid service sector workers, who find it increasingly difficult to live here, and so have to live away and commute in, which they also find difficult. In the meantime, prices are pushed up by wealthy people coming in from outside. Some methods exist, such as section 52 planning, but they are insufficient and we need more.

The document does not even mention the problem of homelessness. It mentions the importance of providing housing for lower and middle income households in London, but no objectives or mechanisms for ensuring this housing accessibility. Almost incredibly it says:

> "The need for new homes will be met by maintaining the present rates of new construction and conversion in the private sector, and the continuing buoyancy of demand."

That does not explain why, so far, the market has not provided affordable homes for large numbers. It is inadequate to see conversions as a major source of new low-cost homes. The implication is that more homes will meet housing need, but that is not true. More affordable homes would do that, but there must be a policy to provide such homes.

The presumption in the Greater London development plan, which is to be superseded by the guidance once it is finalised, against loss of housing will be eroded by a policy requiring boroughs to show that they are making reasonable provision to accommodate demand for business development if they wish to retain sites and buildings in residential use. This could be particularly devastating for central London communities in places of pressure, and in boroughs such as mine. This set of pressures—particularly those which force out affordable housing—is the most severe problem facing individuals and families, often at the most desperate end of the social needs scale. Some of them are Londoners, but some are those who come here and cannot find anywhere cheap to live.

We need also a co-ordinated transport policy. My constituency provides a good example of this need. We are discussing whether there will be a Jubilee line extension, going from Green Park through Westminster and Waterloo to points east. We are anticipating the Channel tunnel rail link, going under the constituency. British Rail is consulting about widening the viaduct at Southwark cathedral. There is the faint possibility of an extension of the Bakerloo line. But none of these ideas is being considered in a co-ordinated way, and they are not to be integrated, for example, with the plans for the expansion of Waterloo and the siting of the second terminus for the Channel tunnel rail link at King's Cross or Stratford. There is no strategic transport planning. It is irresponsible for a capital city of a congested country such as ours not to have a strategic and integrated transport policy.

The document that we have on these matters is extremely weak. It is about time that the statements about public transport and the need for an integrated provision were made more boldly. It is these parts of the document which betray its innate weakness, and it is in these areas that the document is ambiguous, simplistic and poorly co-ordinated. There are descriptive statements of effects but not policy statements. With the advice of those who are experts, and officers and members of councils across the party divide, the document so obviously stands ready for improvement. We must seize the opportunity.

As for the integration of public transport, there is a reference in the document to the central London rail study and another to the east London rail study. That suggests that the Government thought of one study and then the next. I think that the announcement of the result of one was made during the week when it was announced that the other would be set up. The studies are interlinked, and it is not possible to plan adequately for transport in the new and developing dockland area without knowing how that will fit in with transport in the middle of the capital.

We read in paragraph 31 that the Government intend to extend the deregulation of bus services to London in the early 1990s. It is stated:

> "This will give London the benefits of greater competition and innovation and reduce levels of subsidy that have been achieved elsewhere in the country."

It does not say that the extension will produce further traffic congestion and greater difficulties. We often hear complaints in the House about the horrendous problems caused by coaches which bring tourists to the area and park along the Embankment or on Westminster bridge. They were parked two or three deep the other day when I came to the House. It is naive to make a supposed statement on deregulation without any analysis of the consequences.

Paragraph 34 states:

> "The Government also recognises that undesirable car commuting traffic will be discouraged."

Almost all car commuting traffic is undesirable. The majority of it carries one person into the capital and the same person out. Generally, the individual's car is not used from the time he arrives to the time he leaves in the evening. Properly subsidised and adequately supported public transport would reduce the number of private cars and ease the enormous congestion. The predictions of the numbers of vehicles using the roads of the capital are horrendous. It is forecast that the number of cars owned by people living in London could increase by 22 per cent. to 34 per cent. by the year 2001, bringing the total up to 3 million. The problems are bad enough already without increasing the number of cars to that extent.

We need to be firm about green belt land and the environment generally. We must make it clear that green belt and metropolitan open land and other open land is sacrosanct and clearly stated to be so. In the statements on metropolitan open land, it is not clear to me that the borough of Southwark would not be able, consistent with the policy behind the strategic guidance, to sell off part of Burgess park—a metropolitan open land park created by the London county council and the Greater London council—for housing development for sale. Does the presumption against development of the green belt apply equally to metropolitan open land so that that would be something that the Minister would be likely to turn down? How strong is the protection? That still seems unclear and requires much more specific analysis.

Paragraph 61 deals with an enormously important and controversial matter—important views and the River Thames. It seems that the Secretary of State intends to issue further guidance on the protection of strategic views, such as those of St. Paul's and the Palace of Westminster. Soon, the planning inspector's report on Hay's Wharf, which is opposite the Tower of London and next to the southern end of Tower bridge in my constituency, will land on the Secretary of State's desk. The original design, for a building whose architecture resembled that of the Houses of Parliament, was—thank goodness—called in after a request made by myself with the support of others. Three options were then offered. In my view, none is sufficiently good to justify occupying that site again, and English Heritage agrees. In any event, clear guidance is vital if we are not to lose the character of the Thames riverline and spoil it for generations to come. The Thames and the river front are unique features of our capital and any new development there must be right.

Paragraph 63 of the draft refers to archaeology:

> "Local planning authorities should also take account of the desirability of preserving ancient monuments and their settings. They may wish to draw developers' attention to the Code of Practice drawn up by the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group when considering developments which will affect known or presumed archaeological remains. Any conditions proposed in a planning permission for such development should be consistent with the principles laid down in DOE Circular 1/85: Use of Conditions."

That does not begin to advise Southwark or any other council as to what should be done if something like the Rose theatre is discovered. I was at the meeting of Southwark's planning committee when it was told, "You'll just have to sort it out yourselves."

The site of the Rose theatre has been scandalously treated. I visited it again this week. Because of the former Secretary of State's refusal to reschedule the Rose, not only will the new building be inadequate in its height and other dimensions, and in ways that the late Lord Olivier and others, including the Theatres Trust, warned against, but the developers—having promised to protect the site—have dumped all kinds of material and equipment on it. The Rose is the only Elizabethan theatre ever discovered, and it happens to be of national importance—but under the non-specific wording of the draft guidance, it is entitled to no greater protection. A draft as weak as that is completely unacceptable.

*[Mr. Simon Hughes]*

Other paragraphs deal with hotels, tourism development, retailing, and so on, but in most cases make bland or generalised statements. If the London planning advisory committee had submitted a bland or generalised document, I could not have criticised the Secretary of State for saying, "This is the advice I received, and I cannot be blamed for adopting it." But that is not what happened. The committee submitted substantial advice agreed by all the parties involved, on the basis of well-tried arguments refined over a considerable time, and finally presented earlier this year.

That same committee is of the view that the draft strategic guidance is still inadequate. It concludes that the priorities are the provision of homes for those on low to middle incomes; a much-expanded Underground and rail investment programme; restraints on traffic, particularly in central London, to mitigate the severe and increasing problem of mobility within the capital; adequate investment in environmental improvements and renewal of the infrastructure; and increased Government financial support in helping to plan for a better quality of life.

I make an 11th hour plea to the Minister to emphasise to his colleagues that it will do them enormous credit, and Londoners and our country enormous good, to produce the best possible guidance. This debate could be of unusual significance in the planning of London into the next century by presenting an opportunity to convert the draft into guidance of real benefit. I hope that the debate will make the Government think again and persuade them to get the guidance much more right than it is in its present form.

4.34 am

**Mr. Clive Soley** (Hammersmith): I support much of what has been said so appropriately by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), who has been involved in this matter for some time, together with me and the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire), who cannot be here tonight.

It is appropriate that the subject for this debate follows the previous one. If the Minister has any doubt about the growing importance of the planning and land use issue, he need only run his eye over the subjects for debate tonight and he will see that at least four are directly related to planning and land use and one or two others are probably indirectly related.

The previous debate dealt with the problems experienced mainly by Conservative Members in rural areas of southern Britain. Essentially the same problems are experienced in London. The difference between the urban and rural areas is obviously significant, but the underlying problems are not different. Much of what I said in that debate could be repeated now. Those problems relate to the crisis that results from not having a proper housing policy and when the role of local authorities, particularly in terms of planning, has been largely undermined.

The Government are paying the price of abolishing the Greater London council, as are Londoners. The idea was that with the abolition of the GLC the Secretary of State would issue the strategic planning guidance. Contrary to the Government's wish, the other place insisted on a planning advisory committee being set up. Again, I join the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey in congratulating the members of that committee. When it was set up the Government took the view that it would not be effective. It was, as the hon. Gentleman pointed out, an all-party committee. Given the extraordinary difficulties of trying to produce a planning document on London from the sort of the base that it was operating on, it has done a good job. It is clear that that committee has done far more thinking, as have one or two other organisations, on the needs of London and its planning aspects than the Government have done.

The first thing that I want to do is to echo strongly the appeal made by the hon. Gentleman and the many people outside the House who are concerned about these matters that the Government should not issue the final strategic planning guidance until further consultation has taken place.

A rumour began to go round the House this morning that the Government would make a statement or publish a written answer on the issue and it took some time before it emerged that the Government were talking about issuing the final planning guidance in the next 24 hours. The rumour was an agitated one precisely because people did not know what was happening. On such important issues, where many people are worried about planning and guidance, there is a strong case for the Government undertaking not to issue the final guidance until there has been further consultation.

The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey pointed out that only 10 weeks were given for consultation and there were only a limited number of public statements about the matter in the press and two voluntary organisations ran conferences on it. I do not know whether the Minister has had the notes on the conference report for the Campaign for Homes in Central London, but if not, I advise him to have a look at it. He is welcome to have my copy if he so wishes.

The level of concern among those who are aware of the importance of this matter is high. Needless to say, something like strategic planning guidance in London will not grab the headlines in the national press. However, I can say categorically that unless the Government address the issue carefully London will continue to seize up in terms of transport, affordable housing, the supply of labour and the economic problems that stem from those matters.

An absurd contradiction lies at the heart of the Government's draft strategic planning guidance. It is the very contradiction to which I referred in the previous debate—their belief that if they reduce planning problems and lessen controls, the free market will somehow produce a solution. I repeat that that will not happen, and it is even less likely to happen in London because land is in inelastic supply, to use the market definition, because housing is slow to respond to changes in the market and because the existing planning and subsidy systems distort the market out of all recognition anyway. That means that we shall never have a free market.

In addition, we must consider the points made by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey, who quoted the Coopers and Lybrand report, which also points out the special nature of the London housing market, and I shall return to that in a moment.

The Minister's previous boss at the Department of the Environment, now the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, strongly felt that if the Government could get local authorities off people's backs—as he would have described it—and allow free market forces to reign, that would result in a better-run society. We know that at least 100 Conservative Members believe that that argument is seriously flawed and there is reason to believe that a growing number of Conservative Back Benchers no longer believe that theory, which in my view is nonsensical.

Let us deal first with housing. As I have said a number of times, housing is in crisis in Britain and in desperate crisis in London. I do not know how any person who is born and brought up in London and who does not earn well above the national average wage can find anywhere to rent or buy. In areas such as mine, one-bedroom flats cost about £80,000. What sort of first-time buyer can afford that? Suppose that one is looking for rented accommodation in my area. When I was elected in 1979 my council had a waiting list of about 4,000 people and hardly anyone in bed and breakfasts—and then only for short periods. It now has a waiting list of 10,000 and hundreds in some form of emergency accommodation. The council is trying to reduce the amount of bed and breakfast accommodation that it uses, but nevertheless the accommodation offered remains short-term accommodation. That is true of local authorities, both Labour and Conservative, throughout London. They are in acute crisis.

There is no point in believing that the housing associations will solve the problem. The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey did not deal with the statement in the Coopers and Lybrand report that the housing associations would never do anything except provide for a small section of the market. That is true. Housing associations have still not restored their building programmes to their mid-1970s level, yet they are being urged to take over council housing. If housing associations are being told to take over council housing—which does not add to the stock of housing—and at the same time to build, buy, repair and renovate, clearly they will not be able to supply the housing that is needed in London.

That leaves the private sector, and that brings us to the biggest disaster of all. The previous Secretary of State for the Environment believed strongly that if the Government allowed market rents to be charged and made it easier for landlords to gain repossession, the private market would expand. It did not; it contracted, and it continues to contract. The tragedy is that for some years now, well over half the private lets in London have been outside the terms of the rent legislation, yet still the private sector is declining and still rents are increasing. I have spelt out the reasons for that before, and I do not need to go into them tonight, except to say that is caused predominantly by the way in which we subsidise housing in Britain—by the fact that a generous subsidy goes to buying and a less than generous subsidy to renting.

Transport in London is also in crisis and that is obvious if we walk on to the streets. We have a devalued public transport system which has been run down and has suffered under-investment for many years. It is unreliable and now operates more slowly than it used to. People are also more afraid to use it, particularly late at night when they most need it.

I remember not long ago cycling beside a traffic jam in London. When we sit in traffic jams, we often feel frustrated and angry. We might even curse the other traffic. However, when I cycled beside that jam, I witnessed the enormous and dangerous absurdity of what is happening in London today. I saw hundreds of cars and other vehicles standing still, belching out fumes and depleting the ozone layer, but there was usually only one person in each car. Everyone was getting nowhere fast. What nonsense.

If the Greater London council still existed we might have more cycle groups as there are in many other cities. We do not have the facility now to provide complete London cycle routes. As the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey pointed out, we do not have the facility to use the river to its best advantage. We have simply been told that the Secretary of State will take a view on the river. My worry about the previous Secretary of State taking a view of the river is that he might simply have stood at the top of Marsham street towers and gazed out over at the river wistfully, perhaps thinking of concreting it over. There is no policy to allow London and its surrounding areas to have a good transport and planning system designed to serve the community and to enable businesses to operate effectively.

The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey also referred to the arts and to the Rose theatre. I congratulate Southwark council and the hon. Gentleman on what they have done in that respect. I find the whole affair utterly amazing. I still have not managed to convince Conservative Members that the Rose theatre discovery was the No. 2 headline news in the United States. It was a major story in most of western Europe and in many other countries as well.

We should say to ourselves, very slowly, "The British have discovered the remains of the Rose theatre where Shakespeare acted. It was the first Elizabethan theatre of its kind." Shakespeare—a name that is known to everyone, not just to English people, who have had the good fortune to go to school. We should then pause and say very slowly, "The British are going to build an office block on top of it." No wonder the rest of the world cannot believe their ears.

In purely commercial terms there is an enormous opportunity to use the Rose theatre site simply for tourism. In commercial terms, using it for tourism would far transcend the return on 20 office blocks on the site.

There is no strategic guidance in London to deal with problems such as those with the Rose theatre. I am sure that the previous Secretary of State would have been happy to put the office block on the site whether there was a regional planning authority or not. However, it is nonsense to operate in that way.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) may be aware that when the original plans which would have put the office block's piles through the theatre's stage were designed, no planning power other than scheduling could have stopped that. Had it not been for individuals surrounding the site and negotiations in which the Government and English Heritage persuaded the developers to rethink, English Heritage and the Government would have allowed the piles to be sunk. The present planning process could not stop that happening.

**Mr. Soley:** That is interesting. I find the whole incident completely amazing. We will be condemned for this by future generations.

Figures that were released yesterday by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys show that the population of London may again be declining. The trouble

*[Mr. Soley]*

is that it is difficult to know what is happening to the population of London and the south-east. There is a case for having a careful study of the population of Britain of the type that was carried out in the 1940s. We need some idea of population movements to get our strategic planning right.

There is a tendency to move out of the cities again. That has certainly been happening for the past 30 or 40 years and it has been producing some of the problems that we associate with the inner city. Some people are trapped in the inner city and are unable to move either within the area or out of it, and other people are wealthy enough to move in and out of it, or even have two or more homes and be able to switch between them. As I said to Conservative Members in the previous debate, we are now finding some of the problems of the inner city emerging in rural areas. Villages are adopting the same pattern in which half the houses are empty for half the week and come to life again only at the weekend. We need to look at population movement. Again, in the draft guidance there is no sign that that matter has received the attention that it needs.

There is a general deterioration of the environment. Opposition Members have always argued that the Conservative philosophy of the free market economy, which, as I said in the previous debate, tends to be a short-term policy, leads to private affluence amid public squalor. We are seeing that more often in and around London. The implications for the economy are serious. The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey quoted the Coopers and Lybrand report. I draw the Minister's attention to the comments of the London chamber of commerce—the people in that organisation support his party—which, in 1987, said:

> "The high cost of housing in London and parts of the South East deters even highly paid staff from moving South. At the other end of the scale inexpensive housing for rent does not exist. Urgent action is needed."

Because of the cost of housing, even international companies are having to offer additional money to people who are to go to London to work. That distorts the housing market in the way that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey mentioned. Houses in areas such as mine are sometimes rented for up to £1,000 a week because international companies can afford such rents. Incredible rents are being demanded. That drives out the local population and makes it a difficult area for the local community to stay in.

An important argument about London is that we have alllowed communities to splinter and become run down. One of the co-ops in Waterloo, in which the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) is involved and which the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey and I have visited, is a good example of an attempt to recreate a strong and vibrant community. That is happening increasingly throughout London. Again, without good strategic planning we will not be successful.

I emphasise that it is feared that the situation in London will continue to deteriorate unless the Government take planning in London seriously. They chose to abolish the GLC. I think that they were wrong, and they think that they were right. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the argument, surely there is a need for something more than the draft strategic guidance that we have at the moment. No one can seriously believe that we can abolish a tier of government that dealt with matters such as transport, housing, and population, and studied the needs of areas as well as the economy, and replace it with the document that we have been given as draft guidance. There will be no serious sign for bodies outside the House about what the policy will be or how we put it into effect.

We need a proper planning framework and more consultation. That is why I inform the Minister that there is a desperate need to make sure that the draft strategic guidance remains a draft at the moment. I plead with him to consult more widely and take account of the growing problems of London—they are affecting his own party as dramatically as any other, so he has a political interest —that are affecting employers who say that they cannot get employees, accommodation and so on in London. All that must weigh very heavily with the Minister. If it does, I suggest that he makes it clear to the House, and to those outside who are concerned about the matter, that the Government will not go ahead with the final document until they have consulted more widely and in much more depth.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** Does the Minister have the leave of the House to speak again? That is the case.

4.55 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Colin Moynihan):** The major plea from Opposition Members has been for a delay in the publication of the strategic guidance. I respond to that by making two points. First, having listened carefully to the arguments of the hon. Members for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) and for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), I have noted a number of points that have been made already in representations and during the consultation phase on the draft strategic guidance, which urged changes from the draft to the final document. Many of the points raised this morning have been covered. When later today, in everyday parlance and tomorrow in parliamentary parlance, the strategic guidance is published, hon. Members will be pleased to see that a number of their important points have been taken into account.

Secondly, consultation on the preparation of the guidance began in 1986, and it is our view that it would be wrong to prolong that process further. The reason why we believe that is because London needs an effective up-to-date series of unitary development plans in place as soon as possible, or plans will simply not keep pace with the rapid changes taking place in London.

Opposition Members will have noted that, while I have been with this portfolio only since sunrise this morning, I have tried to maximise the number of hours available to look at the strategic guidance document against the draft and against the representations that were made, some of which I will comment on. I am satisfied that a number, not all—Opposition Members would not expect all—of their points have been covered in the extended final draft, which we intend to send to all London Members of Parliament and to place in the Library tomorrow.

The publication of the guidance marks an important stage in the introduction of the new planning arrangements in London, based on the unitary development plans which will be prepared by the boroughs. That new system of plans will replace the present two-tier system based on the dated Greater London development plan prepared in the 1960s, and local plans prepared by the boroughs.

The guidance will provide a framework for the boroughs to prepare the well-focused and effective unitary development plans which London needs as it faces the challenges and opportunities of the 1990s.

It is important to remember what the guidance is, and what it is not. It is not intended as a comprehensive "masterplan" for London setting out policies for all planning issues in this great city. Those who still think that it is the job of Government to impose such a design will be disappointed. The Government believe that such an approach is inflexible and wrong. The future of London must be shaped, above all, by the initiative and energies of its local communities, businesses and people, not by blueprints laboriously prepared and handed down from above.

The purpose of the guidance is straightforward. It is to assist the boroughs to prepare their UDPs by setting out clearly the Secretary of State's guidance on those land use planning matters that need to be dealt with on a Londonwide basis. It also draws the planning authorities' attention to other statements of the Government's planning policies in planning policy guidance notes and circulars. It does not deal with aspects that are essentially local, because we believe that each borough is best placed to decide those matters with all relevant interests as they prepare their UDP. The guidance will be kept under review to reflect changing circumstances.

**Mr. Soley:** The Metropolitan police, who are a Londonwide body but are not controlled by an elected authority, are regarded as being important enough to be allocated a debate in Government time in which London Members take part. Given the way that the Minister is describing the purpose of the guidance and given that he wants local authorities to take their guidance from the Secretary of State, will he suggest to his colleagues in the Department and to the Leader of the House that a day should be set aside for a debate on the guidance that is issued annually?

**Mr. Moynihan:** More than anyone else, the hon. Gentleman will know that that is not a matter for me. I shall put the hon. Gentleman's suggestion to my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House.

I stress that the guidance is concerned with matters directly relevant to the use and development of land. It concentrates on matters that the town and country planning system can sensibly and properly influence. It is a dangerous illusion to imagine that planning guidance and unitary development plans are a suitable instrument for tackling every problem that London faces. That is a recipe for discrediting the planning system. For example, the problems of skills mismatch and access to housing are important issues to which the Government are addressing a range of initiatives in training and housing policy. Planning powers can make only a limited contribution to alleviating such problems. It would be wrong for the Secretary of State in his guidance to pretend otherwise.

The objectives of the guidance, which should be reflected in UDPs, are to foster economic growth, bearing in mind the importance for the national economy of London's continuing prosperity; to contribute to revitalising the older urban areas; to facilitate the development of transport systems which are safe, efficient and have proper respect for the environment; to maintain the vitality and character of established town centres; to sustain and improve the amenity of residential districts; to allow for a wide range of housing provision; and to give high priority to the environment, maintain the green belt and metropolitan open land, preserve fine views, conservation areas, surrounding countryside and the natural heritage.

I hope that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey will allow me to write to him about the distinction that he made between green belt and metropolitan open land. That subject has not appeared on my desk as rapidly as it should have today, but I am sure that it will in the near future. I assure the hon. Gentleman that I will write to him on that point and on any other that I am unable to answer.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** The Minister is reading from a paragraph that is no doubt entitled "objectives of the guidance." Does he now include in the final guidance a transport objective, which did not appear in the original guidance? Does he accept, as he seemed to in his introduction, that guidance that takes as its premise economic growth, but which exludes other dimensions, is imbalanced? The fundamental criticism of the guidance is that it predicates economic growth and does not acknowledge that transport and other planning must be co-ordinated so that growth is not prevented by all the other features and failures that have been identified.

**Mr. Moynihan:** There is no doubt that predication of economic growth is not at the heart of the final version of the guidance. Many of its aspects take into account a range of other important issues, not least transport, about which I can speak from constituency experience. The assessment studies take into account issues wider than those of borough interest. Quite rightly, they must take into account not only economic growth but other aspects of the environment. Of course I support a balanced approach to the development and planning of London.

The guidance takes into account the advice put forward by the London advisory committee on behalf of the London boroughs.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** Can the Minister say whether a transport objective is now included?

**Mr. Moynihan:** I can assure the hon. Gentleman that there has been an elaboration of the transport issue, not in the form of specially defined objectives, but as additions to the draft because of representations made.

We welcomed the constructive spirit in which the advice was prepared and put forward. We were also pleased to see that in not much more than two years from the abolition of the GLC, all 33 boroughs could reach agreement on the advice. The hon. Gentleman highlighted that point. That was an important and constructive move forward and it has been taken into account.

My right hon. Friend has welcomed and given the greatest attention to the London planning advisory committee's advice in preparing his guidance. Our approaches and emphasis differ on some aspects, but there is a great deal of common ground between us and the boroughs on many matters, and that is reflected in the guidance.

*[Mr. Moynihan]*

We share, for instance, a common commitment to the importance of protecting the green belt and metropolitan open land, and the value of other local areas of open space and "green chains" of open land in the built-up area. The guidance gives high priority to both the natural and the built environment. It covers nature conservation, protection of buildings of special architectural and historic importance, conservation areas, preservation of ancient monuments and their settings, protection of views and the character of the River Thames.

The hon. Gentleman commented specifically about the Rose theatre. He will be interested to see that the paragraph on achitecture has been amplified.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** That is a bit late.

**Mr. Moynihan:** The hon. Gentleman will not be surprised that no specific theatre, however considerable and important its merits—I do not dissent from the hon. Gentleman on that point—is mentioned in the document.

We have also taken account of the LPAC's advice in giving guidance on the number of additional dwellings for which each of the boroughs should make provision in their UDPs in the period up to 2001 and these figures are set out in the guidance. It is for the boroughs in the UDPs to indicate suitable locations, densities and standards of parking so that they can decide how best to accommodate the additional housing within their area without detriment to the local environment.

I have already touched on the question of access to housing. The Government recognise the importance of providing housing for lower and middle-income households in London. The main way we are achieving this is through housing policies to encourage forms of low-cost home ownership and the provision of rented accommodation by the independent sector. Last year we also carried out a consultancy study to examine the potential for major housing development, including low-cost housing of five large underused sites in east London. We are keeping in close touch with the local authorities and landowners concerned to ensure that these sites come forward for development.

Planning can also play a part. Planning conditions cannot normally be used to impose restrictions on tenure or occupancy and we do not support, therefore, policies which aim to impose such conditions. They would be unenforceable and likely to lead only to unproductive wrangling between local planning authorities and potential developers. But the planning system can help by ensuring that there is an adequate and continuing supply of land for new housing, and that UDP policies on densities and conversions take account of the demand for smaller units.

The continuing prosperity of London as one of the world's foremost business and financial centres is vital for the national economy and employment. That is why it is essential to provide a favourable climate for business investment and development, while taking careful account of the effects on the local environment and transport. The regeneration of docklands has shown that a positive, flexible and realistic approach to new business development is essential in order to revive rundown areas of inner and east London. Much progress has been made under this Government in returning prosperity to these areas. Many further opportunities will arise in the next few years with the Government's massive programme of road improvements and proposed rail investment in east London, and the release of large sites previously required by public utilities and services.

The guidance devotes considerable attention to transport and land use matters. It explains the Government's broad strategic approach and current initiatives to improve transport conditions in London and relieve congestion, and sets out committed public transport and trunk road investment which the boroughs will need to take into account in preparing their UDPs.

London's transport systems have come under increasing pressure in recent years. I share the hon. Gentleman's concerns about the impact of that on London. To a large extent, it is the result of the growth of prosperity and economic activity which inevitably brings with it increasing traffic movement. The Government are firmly committed to improving London's transport systems in order to sustain economic growth and development and increase travellers' comforts and the comforts of local residents who are affected. The guidance describes current action being undertaken to achieve this and the proposals for further investment. Taken together, these measures represent the most ambitious package of transport improvements in London for decades.

The Government's main aim now—and I believe that it is shared by the boroughs—is to implement successfully and quickly the new system based on the unitary development plans. It is important to achieve a good coverage of UDPs in London as soon as possible within the framework provided by strategic guidance. The Secretary of State has made a commencement order for 28 of the 33 planning authorities in London to begin work on their UDPs. This will take effect from 11 August. The remaining boroughs will be included in a further commencement order at about the end of the year.

Many boroughs have already started preliminary work on their UDPs and I look for them to make rapid progress, reaching deposit stage within two years, or considerably sooner in some cases where there is already a good, up-to-date local plan. The UDPs will provide an up-to-date framework for development control, which should contribute to quicker decisions on planning applications. By providing greater certainty about the intentions of planning authorities, they can assist developers and public services in considering future investment and the allocation of resources. The process of plan preparation also enables members of the public and local voluntary groups and business to participate in decisions affecting the future of their areas.

The Government believe that London has achieved and maintained its greatness by its ability to adapt to change and take advantage of new opportunities, while respecting and conserving the environment and use inheritance from the past. The role of the land use planning process is to facilitate development while protecting the local environment. That is the keynote of the Secretary of State's guidance, which should be reflected in the new UDPs. I urge the boroughs and their local communities to grasp the opportunity provided by the new arrangements to prepare truly effective plans to take London into the next decade.

## Abortion Act 1967

5.11 am

**Mr. Ken Hargreaves** (Hyndburn): At the end of a parliamentary Session which has seen the pro-life movement inside and outside Parliament at its most active, it is appropriate that we should debate the administration of the Abortion Act 1967, although some of us would have preferred the debate to take place at a more civilised time.

I am grateful to the Minister for being with us at this late hour and I welcome the support of my hon. Friends the Members for Basildon (Mr. Amess) and for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe), who applied for similar debates.

During the passage of the Abortion Act in 1967, the then hon. Member for Maidstone was reprimanded by Mr. Deputy Speaker for reading a newspaper in the Chamber. He defended himself by saying that he was briefing himself for taking part in the debate. I have a feeling that the present hon. Member for Maidstone will need no such aid tonight, and I look forward to hearing her contribution.

When the Abortion Act was passed in 1967 it was claimed that it would be the answer to many problems, and few could be found to oppose it. Indeed, only 29 hon. Members voted against it on Second Reading. It was said at that time that the Act would reduce the rate of illegitimacy. Now, over 21 years later, it is running at 15 per cent. and rising. We were assured in 1967 that the Act would mean that every child would be a wanted child. Today, every time we pick up a newspaper we read of yet more cases of sexual or physical child abuse. In 1967 women were assured that the Abortion Act would make them free. Today, there is a dramatic increase in requests for post-abortion counselling, so damaged are many women by the abortions that they have had.

Far from solving society's ills, easier abortion has resulted in more problems and I believe that many people are coming to accept that no problem is so big or serious that only the death of a helpless, unborn child will solve it. The right to life is the most basic of all human rights and we in the pro-life movement will continue to speak up for the small, naked, nameless and voiceless being which is the unborn child.

This morning I wish to concentrate my remarks not on the major victims of abortion—the mother and child—but on those who are victims of discrimination because they wish to have nothing to do with abortion.

Section 4 of the Abortion Act 1967 provides that except where it is necessary to save life or to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman,

> "no person shall be under any duty . . . to participate in any treatment authorised by this Act to which he has a conscientious objection."

That conscience clause protects all those who are expected to play a part in the team effort leading to an abortion once the decision to perform an abortion has been reached. It therefore protects doctors, nurses, pharmacists, ancillary staff and clerical workers who play a necessary part in carrying out an abortion.

Those with conscientious objections to abortion are protected in the following ways. Staff may not be asked to make appointments for patients to have abortions. Nurses or paramedics may not be asked to help undress a patient admitted to hospital to have an abortion; and they may not be required to prepare the patient for the operation. Operating theatre staff may not be required to prepare the theatre or sterilise instruments for abortion. If a theatre is used exclusively or almost exclusively for abortions, a conscientious objector may not be required to take part in the work of swabbing down either before or after an operating session; neither shall he or she be required to clean instruments or tubes used in abortion procedures.

Unfortunately, however, there are many different ways in which the present conscience clause of the Abortion Act does not work effectively. Management can indicate that promotion prospects will be damaged if medical personnel do not take part in abortions. Candidates for interview for medical appointments will not be successful in some cases unless they agree in advance that they will take part in abortions. Peer group pressure—the burden falling upon other overworked medical personnel—can persuade individuals to become involved in abortions about which they are unhappy. Ancillary workers, such as medical secretaries, may be dismissed if they refuse to become involved. Unless an individual has been informed of his or her rights to object to becoming involved in abortions, when confronted with a problem, that person is unlikely to know how to opt out. For all those reasons and for many more, it is clear that the conscience clause does not work in practice and that it should be reviewed.

The case of the Carlisle baby is an example of the fear under which some doctors and nurses work. I need hardly remind the House that the case involved a baby who was aborted at 21 weeks and survived for almost four hours. Through the protests of nurses, who appealed to the local Catholic chaplain, the case came to light. However, they were terrified of losing their jobs. I stress that the young doctor who was called to see the baby when it continued to struggle to breathe was opposed to the Abortion Act and had refused to become involved in performing abortions. The gynaecologist who was responsible for the abortion had gone off duty and when he was asked to return, he refused.

Thus, nurses who disliked the operation and a conscientious young man who had opted not to carry out abortions were left to cope with the results of somebody else's work. Apart from the baby's horrifying death, the Carlisle case epitomises the total ineffectiveness of the conscience clause. Nurses who were too frightened to opt out became involved in abortions on their wards. When there was an inquiry, they were too frightened to speak up for fear of losing their jobs. A young doctor was made to appear the villain of the piece and left to cope with the remains of someone else's botched-up piece of butchery.

I was recently told of a matron who said at a meeting:

> "The Conscience clause works in theory . . . but it most certainly does not work in practice. I have to run a hospital and I cater for shifts, holidays, staff illness, ensuring that patients are looked after throughout their treatment."

Obviously this is bound to create problems and it is hardly surprising that in some hospitals—although not all—nurses are made to feel that by opting out they are creating problems or being anti-social.

In others the pressures go further than that. Perhaps one of the most extreme cases about which I have been told is that involving a young African nurse who, on being appointed a staff nurse at a London hospital, made it absolutely clear that she was opposed to abortion and that she would take part in abortion operations only to save the mother's life. For a year she was left in peace. However, she began working at nights and her duties involved her

*[Mr. Ken Hargreaves]*

with patients in the hospital who were having abortions. At night, the number of staff was limited and the technique most commonly used in this hospital, which carried out private abortions, was to insert at some time during the night, prostaglandin pessaries in the vagina to soften the cervix before surgical intervention. The nurse refused to insert such a pessary.

At first, one senior, presume taking advantage of the fact that the nurse was foreign, told her that she could be charged for refusing to obey the law. Far from cowering, I am delighted to say, this outraged the young woman, and she made it clear that she would go to prison rather than become involved in an abortion. Her senior then became rather more devious, bringing all manner of pressure to bear on her, and picking on her work. Finally, in a great attempt to be persuasive and reasonable, the senior urged the nurse that she was not asking her to do anything unreasonable, and that all she had to do was to put the prostaglandin pessary on the patient's bedside table, instructing her how to insert it. The nurse was told that that would not involve her in an abortion and was the least required of her under the law.

At that point, the nurse, who was an evangelical Christian, went to her church minister, who put her in touch with the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, which sent her a solicitor's letter and guaranteed all her legal fees if the hospital persisted in its conduct. The girl sent the letter to the hospital authorities and was left in peace.

How many other young women have similar experiences but are not put in touch with people who can counsel them? The case involving Trent regional health authority came to light as a result of the work of CARE and the SPUC, but I wonder what would have happened if they had not learnt what was going on.

The Lane report referred to complaints that chances of promotion in the disciplines of obstetrics and gynaecology may be lost by those with a conscientious objection to the termination of pregnancy, but believed that it was probable that that affected only those departments where there were few staff or where the workload was heavy. Complaints and allegations of discrimination have been received, especially about fully qualified doctors who are debarred from appointments. Nurses are also affected, and their general position is difficult.

The Lane report said that, in the National Health Service, the Abortion Act 1967 has brought unhappiness to hospital nurses. The Royal College of Nursing has said that some nurses are reluctant to exercise their right to contract out under section 4 because to do so would create problems for their colleagues.

I shall let some of those who have suffered speak for themselves by reading out their letters. The first says:

"Dear Sir,
I shall be most grateful if you will give me some advice re: abortion for I am having problems at work.

The position is that I am a midwife working on the labour ward at a large London hospital. We do a lot of scans, for we have an excellent scan department, so patients are referred from all over the country. Also they do fetoscopies on patients not only referred from around the country but from abroad. Many of our patients are found to have abnormal foetuses more so than from a normal catchment area, so this causes problems, for although many of the referrals go back to their home area for abortions, lots are aborted here (for they want the foetus for research purposes).

Three years ago when I applied for the post in London I made my position regarding abortions clear—that is that I would not wish to be involved in abortions at all. The then senior midwife assured me that this was not a problem for they rarely did abortions. However, while this was true three years ago, it certainly is not the case now.

The senior midwife has changed three times since then and at present we have no direct person in charge on labour ward so all the sisters have a share of power. As far as I can see they all agree with abortions, and while some don't like them being done on labour ward, none can accept my objections to caring for these patients.

So at least once a week there is trouble and I find myself having to argue my point. This has happened before, the pattern seems to recur every few months. I have up to this been reluctant to go to the chief nursing officer for I know what will happen: I will simply be moved off labour ward. Also I know it will not go well in my records, and seeking references in the future is a consideration.

I do feel very unhappy about this, apart from religious views, on an emotional level I find it difficult to cope and would find it absolutely impossible to give advice and support to a woman having an abortion while I feel so strongly that it is wrong. Just before Christmas they aborted an abnormal foetus, but at delivery it was perfect, it nearly broke my heart. The Abortion Act 1967 does have a conscience clause, but no one pays attention to it. I asked the student nurses about the position on the 'gynaecology' ward where all the social abortions are done. They said they are not allowed to opt out. If they were Catholics then they could object and would not be sent to the gynaecology ward at all, so missing this experience, but also making themselves unpopular.

A doctor whom I asked about this issue . . . said they fare even worse than midwives, for they are all but told if you don't want to do abortions don't bother coming into obs and gynaecology.

I should be interested to hear your view and would appreciate any advice you can offer."

A second letter said:

"I work in an operating theatre in a London hospital as a trainee O.D.A. We work as scrubbed assistants to assist the surgeon and also as anaesthetic assistants.

We have operations for women when they have had a miscarriage and they are called E.R.P.C. (evacuation of retained products at conception). However, it has come to my attention that some of these are actually 'clean-ups' after hormonally induced abortions. There is no way they indicate these women have been having a miscarriage as the result of a dose of hormones.

I feel extremely compassionate for women who have had a genuine miscarriage, but I am worried and upset about those miscarriages that aren't really miscarriages. At work I was told that any miscarriage is a miscarriage, and that since it isn't an abortion they have not got to tell us that it is a hormonally induced miscarriage and that I have no right to refuse them. I want your point of view on this."

A third letter sent to the SPUC said:

"I am employed as a staff nurse at my local hospital to work in the general operating department. Occasionally I am put down on the duty rota to assist in the day care theatre during the gynaecological lists which often include as many as ten abortions. I have stated my objection to assisting in abortions to the senior sister who will only assure me that I would not have to be the instrument (or scrub) nurse. However she does expect me to be present in the theatre to assist setting up the theatre, tying gowns, opening packs and clearing away, believing that this role cannot be described as 'being involved'. On Wednesday 16th September I attended a meeting at Bideford parish church where a speaker from S.P.U.C. showed us your video on abortion. Since then I feel very strongly that I must make a committed stand against the abortions taking place in my hospital and . . . have absolutely nothing to do with them.

Before I go and see the senior sister again I would appreciate your advice on how far I can take the clause in the 1967 abortion act in making a conscientious objection to assisting in abortion. Can I refuse to be present in the theatre during an abortion?"

The letters that I have read out give some indication of the problems faced by many members of the medical profession since the 1967 Act came into force. Clearly we are putting an unfair burden on the consciences of many people. Some can be helped—as they have been—by pro-life organisations like the SPUC and its conscience code, but many others are unaware of their rights and afraid to exercise them.

Others—as in the case of Mrs. Barbara Janaway—do not appear to have rights under the Act. Mrs. Janaway, a medical receptionist, was dismissed after refusing to type abortion documents, and it was held that she was not entitled to the protection of the "conscientious objection" clause because she was not participating in a termination of pregnancy in the meaning of the Act.

Earlier this year, my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon introduced the Abortion (Right of Conscience) (Amendment) Bill, while I introduced a similar Bill to cover ancillary workers. The Bills were based on a simple principle: doctors, nurses and ancillary workers should not be expected or required to be involved in any way in the performing of abortions unless they had first made it clear that they had no conscientious objections to being so involved.

This reverses the current impractical position in which doctors and nurses are required to take part in abortions unless they declare that they have conscientious objections to such involvement. The Bill took the sensible approach of requiring those involved to opt in rather than to opt out of abortion. The Bill's purpose was to prevent medical and ancillary personnel from being cajoled or pressurised into taking part in abortions when they did not wish to do so. That suggestion has merit and would help to resolve what is undoubtedly worrying many medical staff. I hope that if a similar Bill is introduced next year the Government will look favourably on it.

5.30 am

**Mr. David Amess** (Basildon): Despite the late hour, I welcome the opportunity that my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) has given the House to debate the administration of the Abortion Act 1967. I pay a warm tribute to my hon. Friends the Members for Hyndburn and for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) for the magnificent job that they have done in the past year to make sure that the fundamental issue of abortion is raised in the House on every conceivable opportunity so that it does not move far from the minds of hon. Members.

I also pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health for the courtesy that he has shown in responding to all our debates and in providing us quickly with the information that we have sought. Our hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) has a close interest in these matters and I am pleased to see him here for the debate. It would be extremely churlish of me not to mention the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson), because, although we fundamentally disagree with her view on the subject, at least she recognises the great importance of the matter and is here to take part in the debate.

I hope that when the Minister responds he will tell us about the Government's intentions on the Warnock report. I note that only this week his Department issued a strict new code of practice governing the use of the foetus and foetal material in treatment and research. I trust that he will take this opportunity to enlarge on the issue. Perhaps he will also give some detail about how the Government intend to handle the Warnock report.

Will there be an opportunity to vote on the time at which an abortion can be obtained? I hope that every party in the House will allow a free vote on the time limit. It would be conceived nationally as an outrage if any political party imposed a Whip on that issue. There is little point in being a Member of Parliament if the House cannot meet and decide that protection is needed in respect of the time at which life begins. A recent newspaper story carried the headline:

> "Tiny Thomas wins brave battle for life".

The story says:

> "Tiny Thomas Johnson shouldn't even have been born until the end of next month.
>
> But already he is 10 weeks old and doing very nicely, thank you.
>
> Doctors even refused to speculate on his chances of surviving after he was born 16 weeks premature and weighing just 1lb 15oz in May.
>
> 'They just said we would have to take it hour by hour, day by day,' said proud mum Christine Johnson of Wood Street, Elton, Bury."

That is what we are debating. My hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn spoke about the Bill that I sought to introduce on the conscience clause, but I shall direct my remarks to the financial involvement of private clinics. I am proud to be a Conservative. I have no trouble dealing with the profit motive that we enjoy in this country. However, I am outraged that anyone should make a profit out of the abortion industry. When Abortion Act was being debated in 1967, a press conference was held by pro-life gynaecologists, and it attracted much abuse because one of the doctors described what was then the Abortion Bill as a

> "licence to print money for the shady end of the medical profession."

Doctors pleading for the law to be passed immediately protested that money was the last thing to be included on their agenda. They simply wanted to help poor women in need of support. Yet, when the law came into effect, in the words of Sir John Peel, at that time the Queen's gynaecologist as well as president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists,

> "they all removed themselves from the back streets to the front streets".

Once there, they increased their fees and the number of patients beyond belief.

It was hardly surprising that within only a few months, London became known as the abortion capital of the world—and once the United States Supreme Court had made its famous and disastrous decision to allow abortion on demand up to birth, we saw London reduced to the abortion capital of Europe. I need hardly say that abortionists made a large amount of money as a result of the passage of the Act.

However, life was not as easy as the abortionist believed that it would be. As we know, doctors and clinics cannot advertise. Thus, in order to reach the public, they needed some way in which to promote their service. Without the ability to advertise, they were held back. Then somebody had the brilliant idea of opening an agency, called the Pregnancy Advisory Service. There was no law to stop it from advertising. In turn, it would refer the girls who responded to its posters on stations, in tubes, at bus stops and in newspapers to the abortionists and, overnight, a considerable amount of money was made.

*[Mr. David Amess]*

Such is the way of the media that these agencies were presented as some kind of guardian angels, looking after the well-being of girls in need. In fact, they were abortion referral agencies that got round the existing law and touted for clients through advertising. Shortly after they first came into being, two of them succeeded in getting themselves registered as charities. I would not suggest that they have broken any charity laws, but I would add that whereas most of us think of charities as made up of people acting from love, there is little doubt that doctors and others in the service of charitable pregnancy advisory services have been provided with incomes from their labours.

In the case of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service —for example—its total income in the year 1986 was £4,383,000. Of that, £2,176,000 went on staff salaries and wages and a further £750,000 went on medical and doctors' fees—meaning that about 67 per cent. went on salaries and fees. In comparison, only £536,000—12 per cent.—was spent on medical and other supplies. Even more surprising—considering that we are talking about a charity—is the fact that the minute sum of £32,000 was given in grants to "indigent patients" and a further £51,000 was "written off" in loans to patients. In other words this charity gave only 1·9 per cent. of its income to patients in comparison with over 66 per cent. in payments to doctors, nurses and others.

Over the years many of us have had cause to become increasingly worried about the quality of the counselling that is given to girls through the so-called pregnancy advisory services. Is the advice given more to the benefit of the doctors and others than to the girls?

Bernadette Thompson, to name one girl, runs British Victims of Abortion. It is an organisation which helps women who are experiencing trauma. Bernadette had an abortion about 16 years ago through the services of a pregnancy advisory counsellor, and a charitable pregnancy advisory service at that, but she would say that she received no counselling. She was merely referred for an abortion, an operation which she has regretted ever since. There are many thousands of women suffering as Bernadette Thompson did.

About six weeks ago there was an article about Bernadette and her experience and the work of British Victims of Abortion in the women's magazine *Bella*. Within one week Bernadette received over 150 calls from women asking for help, and some of them had been grieving for a number of years. She is still receiving calls. This shows the sort of feeling that there must be throughout the country among women who have gone through similar experiences and have since regretted it. Many of the women had been aborted through so-called charities and they did not want to return to them for support and help during their grieving.

There are many who do not agree with me on the principle of abortion. I know that the hon. Member for Barking is one of them. I make no secret of my opposition to the killing of unborn children, which is shared by my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton). Yet when he introduced the Abortion (Financial Benefit) Bill, he was amazed by the amount of support he received. The aim of the Bill was to hit directly at profiteers in the private sector. It aimed to sever the links between abortion agencies and private clinics, and called on medical practitioners referring women for abortion to make a declaration that they had no financial interest in the place where the abortions were performed and derived no benefit from it.

As most hon. Members will be aware, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists opposed any amendment to the Abortion Act 1967 yet even the college wrote to my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield:

> "We have seen in the press that you intend to introduce a Private Members' Bill to implement the recommendations of the 1976 Select Committee on abortion, so that there should be no financial links between doctors and agencies who refer women for abortions, and the institutions in which abortions are carried out.
>
> We at the Royal College would like to support the spirit in what you are trying to achieve, as we think that this, after all, is only right and proper."

Among the groups who were threatened by the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield was a company. I am loth to use parliamentary privilege on this occasion and so I shall call the company Miss Y. It advertised its pregnancy advisory services. Clients—not patients—were referred to a hospital by a Mr. X, who was not a medical doctor. He was a business man who ran a private clinic.

The matter becomes much more worrying when we realise that Miss Y, who runs the agency, is none other than Mr. X's wife. Not surprisingly, they have become extremely wealthy. Their business covers abortions and cosmetic surgery, as a result of which they were exposed on the "That's Life" programme in January 1985. That programme revealed that medical services offered in connection with cosmetic surgery through certain advisory agencies had led to tragic results. The same programme also exposed other abortionists. It apparently takes a certain kind of mentality to exploit unhappiness, whether it be caused by an unplanned pregnancy or dissatisfaction with one's appearance.

Mr. X responded to that broadcast by threatening to sue the BBC—a tactic he apparently uses to silence anyone who attacks his methods. When a newspaper announced Mr. X's intention to open a hospital to perform abortions, he threatened legal action against a group that leafleted the area in an attempt to arouse public opposition to his plans. He claimed that the newspaper story was incorrect, but seemed to make no attempt to have a correction published.

Late in 1987, my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield was informed that eight referral agencies had financial links with clinics providing abortions. The number rose to 32 when he asked about individuals who were directors or trustees both of companies or charities providing abortions and counselling and of clinics offering abortions.

There is no doubt that immense fortunes are made from abortion clinics. The answer to a parliamentary question tabled at the end of 1987 revealed that a total of 594 beds in private clinics were licensed for abortions, and that 114,621 abortions were performed that year. That meant that each bed was used an average of 193 times a year.

At that time, the cost of a private abortion, including the referral agency's charges, was, at a conservative estimate, £200—thus producing an income of £38,592 per licensed bed. The total turnover realised from that barbaric industry reached £22,923,648 annually. As a Conservative, I am absolutely ashamed at the profit that is made from destroying lives. Returning to Mr. X, the income of the private nursing home of which he is a director, and which is provided with clients by his wife, totalled £810,600. That is not a bad income from a clinic with only 21 beds.

Earlier I spoke of a "barbaric industry." When the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) introduced his Bill, a video showing a D and E abortion was introduced to this country. In the earliest stages of abortion, a technique known as D and C—dilation and curettage—is used, whereby the mouth of the womb is dilated and a curette is used to scrape the inside, in the process of which the foetus is cut to pieces.

After about the 12th week of pregnancy, a curette is not sufficiently strong enough to tear apart the bone structure and limbs of the unborn baby, so the instruments used are decidedly stronger. They are rather like those used in carpentry and other forms of building work. A different title is given to that technique. It is known as dilation and extraction. That sounds harmless enough, but the video "Eclipse of Reason" proved otherwise, and showed precisely what an abortion of that type involves.

One aspect of pro-abortionists that worries me most is the way that they distort the truth, while pro-lifers are told by politicians of all shades of opinion that dilation and extraction is not a form of abortion that is performed in Britain. The pro-abortionists plant newspaper stories claiming that pro-lifers arouse public feeling in an emotive fashion, with stories of outdated abortion techniques not used in this country.

The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys monitors show that those claims are untrue. Far from D and E being used less, it is on the increase, particularly in private clinics. There are several reasons for that. It can be upsetting for nurses, to whom my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn referred, caring for a patient having an abortion by the use of prostaglandin to see a whole baby emerge when the abortion takes place. In contrast, D and E ensures that nothing but mangled pieces, often crushed and battered beyond recognition, emerges.

A second reason is that the D and E takes far less time than a prostaglandin abortion. When money has to be made and the whole procedure has to be completed as speedily and efficiently as possible, why not use the technique which takes the least amount of time?

I was sickened when I met a doctor who had just visited a private abortion clinic in London which specialises in late abortions. There the pieces torn from the baby were so large that huge pieces of arm and leg of spine were put through one of those large mincing machines that we see in butchers' shops to enable them to pass through the sluice.

I conclude with the latest figures. In 1987 in the private sector 12,222 abortions were carried out at 13 weeks or more and of those 3,698—nearly one third—were carried out by D and E. Those tiny humans, whom we know feel pain, are being destroyed for money. That is the kind of barbarity which I and my hon. Friends are determined to stop.

I shall never cease to be amazed at the manner in which some of those involved in the abortion industry seek to deceive themselves. The chairman of the trustees of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service wrote to doctors saying that abortion does not typically require them to diagnose and treat a morbid condition, but rather to consider the wishes, wonders and worries of normal people in normal health.

Is that really the way in which they bemuse themselves when they tear a child limb from limb, having to put the larger pieces through a mincing machine in order to get them down the sluice?

I and my hon. Friends who have spoken tonight are appalled by that, and the British nation will join us in our abhorrence.

5.52 am

**Miss Ann Widdecombe** (Maidstone): I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in the debate and I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) on securing a debate for which several hon. Members applied, because it is an issue, which has dominated the last two parliamentary years. Frequently, attempts to resolve some of the worries that have been voiced tonight have been defeated, not because a body of opinion in the House resented what was being done but because we were not allowed to have a free and fair vote.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister can confirm our hope that when the Warnock proposals come up for discussion next year we can have a free and fair vote on issues other than those strictly raised in the Warnock report.

The debate is on the Abortion Act 1967, which is administered far more in the breach than in the observance. In particular, there are several areas of concern where specific questions can be asked which I hope that my hon. Friend will answer.

In the first case, I am concerned about the administration of the Act and the way in which it takes on board the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. In an Adjournment debate on 8 June, my hon. Friend the Minister accepted that it was necessary to observe the Infant Life (Preservation) Act in the administration of the 1967 Act. In response to a point that I made in that debate, which was principally about the Carlisle baby, he said:

> "Doctors are properly mindful of the requirements of the Act and do not carry out an abortion, by any method, when they consider that a child is capable of being born alive."—[*Official Report*, 8 June 1989; Vol. 154, c. 465.]

My question to the Minister is this: if they do not carry out abortions when they consider that a child is capable of being born alive, what is the purpose of the injection of urea or saline, which is commonly used in the prostaglandin treatment to ensure that the child is born dead? What is the point of ensuring that a child is born dead if the doctor does not believe that it is capable of being born alive in the first place? The Act is not administered to take account of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act.

We now know that children are capable of surviving independently from the 24th week. Yet in a parliamentary answer the Minister told us that last year there were 17 cases of abortions after the 24th week, six of which were not even for handicap or to save the life of the mother; they were done under the social clauses. Will the Minister explain how he can reconcile the statement that doctors do not abort children capable of being born alive with the fact that they abort children of a gestational age in excess of that at which children do survive, and at which such survivals are fully documented?

In the light of the recent spate of survivals at 22 weeks, how can doctors abort after that age and seriously believe that the child is not capable of being born alive? In the

*[Miss Ann Widdecombe]*

Carlisle baby case, in which the abortion took place at 21 weeks, the child was not just capable of being born alive; she was actually born alive.

Will the Minister consider outlawing completely the D and E method? There is no good reason for dismembering alive in the womb, without anaesthetic, a child which in different circumstances would be in an incubator, loved and cherished, with everyone desperately fighting for his or her survival. Can the Minister imagine circumstances in which a child in an incubator could be dismembered alive? Can he imagine a National Health Service or a Ministry that was responsible for licensing private clinics allowing that? If it cannot be done to a child in an incubator, why should he allow it to be done to a child in the womb? It is not just a question of medical or clinical judgment—the panacea behind which so many of these issues disappear. It is not down to clinical judgment whether we dismember alive babies in the womb. It is a clear moral issue for society. There is an optional method. I do not particularly like that either, but at least it does not involve cruelty. That is the prostaglandin method.

Will the Minister bring into general conformity with the rest of operations abortions involving children under the age of 16? If a child needs its tonsils out, it must have parental consent for the general anaesthetic that will be applied. Yet in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt), the Minister said that young girls under the age of 16 do not require their parents' consent to have an abortion performed under general anaesthetic. Why is abortion singled out for exemption? Why is a child not allowed to decide to have her tonsils out when she is allowed to decide to kill an unborn child—at an age when she cannot possibly have a concept of the consequences and of all the moral issues involved, for which, surely, she requires parental guidance?

Then there is the question of the unperson, to use an Orwellian phrase. When I asked the Minister about the case of the Carlisle baby, and asked why the child was allowed to stay for three hours, breathing, with a pulse rate, fully alive—so much so that the nurses saw fit to baptise her—he replied that resuscitation equipment was not provided, and she was not registered for birth, and she was not registered for death, all for the same reason: the doctor in the case had decided that it was not a live birth.

If a living, breathing human being can survive for three hours, how can a doctor say that that is not a live birth and that none of the rights of life follows? If a small premature baby as a result of a normal premature birth is alive, then a small premature baby as a result of an abortion is alive. The Abortion Act 1967 is not administered fairly or equitably. Anything goes when it comes to an abortion. There is no way that a child born normally could be declared a non-person.

There is also the nonsense of piecemeal legislation for the foetus at all stages of development. The Warnock report proposes experiments up to 14 days. In the same breath, the Polkinghorne report states that foetal tissue may be used in the second trimester, which is from the 12th to the 24th week. Those two reports are not taken in conjunction with the Abortion Act 1967 and considered comprehensively. They are being taken piecemeal.

When it discusses Warnock the House will probably be deceived into believing that nothing will happen after the 14th day. But Polkinghorne states that experiments can occur at horrendously late stages. Will the Minister admit that we need one comprehensive Abortion Bill which reviews the working of the Abortion Act 1967, considers the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 and the financial administration—a matter raised so ably by my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess)—examines the workings of the conscience clause, and considers foetal tissue and embryology research. One Bill should do all that to clarify those issues and sort them out once and for all. We do not need a long series of attempts to amend each and every working of the gross Abortion Act 1967.

Is the Minister convinced that the Abortion Act 1967, in its own terms, is adhered to? The Carlisle baby was aborted under the terms of a clause which states that if there is a substantial risk, not just some sort of risk, of serious—and not any old sort—of handicap, that is grounds for an abortion. The Carlisle baby had a 50 per cent. chance of inheriting a very rare disease of which her father had only a mild form. Where does a substantial risk of serious handicap occur there? Will the Minister admit that abortions have been carried out for club foot, hare lips and all sorts of minor handicaps? The Abortion Act 1967 is not even policed properly in its own terms and there is no will to police it. Does the Minister believe that new advice should be issued, if not a comprehensive inquiry launched, into how well the 1967 Act is implemented even in its own terms and even before we have seen the abuses that result from it?

To sum up, I put these questions to the Minister. How can he equate the use of injections to kill a child with a statement that doctors would not abort where they thought that there was a possibility of a child being born alive? Will he consider outlawing the D and E operation altogether? Will he re-examine the requirements for permission for anaesthetics for young girls under 16? In what circumstances is a child declared a non-person when it has existed? We know that the Carlisle case caused horror, but there are probably other cases where children are born and live for only a very brief time. Are they also regarded as non-live births? Will he investigate the financial regulation of private abortion clinics and consider issuing advice on the interpretation of "substantial risk"? Will he overhaul the policing of the Abortion Act 1967 and will he consider the case for comprehensive, rather than piecemeal, reform?

6.4 am

**Ms. Jo Richardson** (Barking): Hon. Members have heard, as I rather suspected that we would, three highly contentious speeches in yet another debate designed to undermine the Abortion Act 1967. As usual, the speeches have been laced with many smears and much lurid language. I remind the House that there have been 14 Commons attempts by anti-abortion people to try to change the Abortion Act 1967, and two Lords Bills on the subject. All 16 attempts were introduced over the past 20 years. I have not been involved in all of them, but I have been involved in a good many—I am not an unfeeling person, contrary to what some hon. Members might think —and I have watched carefully and I have heard the same arguments, and I am not at all convinced that there is any need to do more than improve the Abortion Act 1967 by going a little further.

I have added up the time that has been spent over the past few years on debating abortion Bills and private Members' Bills and added on the time spent on private Members' motions about private Members' Bills on abortion, and ten-minute Bills and Adjournment debates. Parliament has spent more than 350 hours on the issue. Those 350 hours could have been more practically spent.

Attacks on the Act have been mounted from every quarter. The three hon. Members who have spoken in this debate have referred to a number of Bills that have been proposed during this Session. If my memory is correct, six Bills—they will not get anywhere now—have been put forward by Conservative Members. Over the years, particularly in the past two years, as the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) said, there has been a concentration on this issue. Not a trick or an opportunity has been missed by those who, if they were honest with the House and with the public, would like to see abortion outlawed altogether.

**Miss Widdecombe:** I have never denied it.

**Ms. Richardson:** I am glad to hear the hon. Lady say that. She does not deny it.

**Miss Widdecombe:** I have never denied it.

**Ms. Richardson:** I know that she has never denied it, but several people in her camp say that they are not against abortion in certain circumstances. I applaud the hon. Lady for being honest enough to say out loud, albeit from a sedentary position——

**Miss Widdecombe:** I am happy to rise and say that I have never denied it.

**Ms. Richardson:** The hon. Lady has stood up to say that she is anti-abortion. When hon. Members read the debate, they should take note of that.

While all those attempts have been going on, I have been at pains to point out to the House that public opinion has been going in a counter direction. The 1988 Marplan poll asked a sample of 1,552 people in 103 constituents

"Do you think that women should have the right to choose an abortion in the first few months of pregnancy?"

Eighty per cent. of the women and men who were polled agreed that they should. Eighty one per cent. of women were in favour. When the sample was analysed, it was found that 86 per cent. of those who said that they were Church of England were in favour, and, surprisingly, 67 per cent. of Roman Catholics were also in favour. The fifth report on British social attitudes in 1988 showed that 54 per cent. of men and 54 per cent. of women supported the idea that only the woman should decide whether to have a child.

Although no one likes the idea of abortion—contrary to what has been said here this morning—the sample shows that a substantial majority of the population believes that it is the woman who is important. I have been quite taken back during the debate by the lack of reference to the women who have to make agonising decisions and who do not like having an abortion, but who have one for various reasons which are personal to them, either medical or social. When we say "social", we mean things that are connected with their personal lives and their families. The public obviously recognise that those women are the ones who are important and who should make the choice.

A relatively small group of hon. Members, who are against abortion, have been trying to convince the House that women should have no say at all, and that public opinion should be treated with contempt, in favour of their narrow and, in my opinion, cruel, moral judgment. So far, thank goodness, they have been unsuccessful.

The hon. Members for Basildon (Mr. Amess) and for Maidstone have both asked the Minister directly—I, too, will be interested in his reply—whether the forthcoming Bill on embryo research and other matters that appeared in the Warnock report will contain some opportunity for the House to make a decision on abortion. My personal view is that I hope very much that that Bill will not contain any reference to abortion. As I understand it, the Government are proposing to give the House an option of voting for or against pre-embryo research, which is probably the right way to deal with it. However, to mix the whole argument up with abortion would be wrong and would, in fact, obscure many of the other parts of Warnock that need to be fully explored and fully debated. I hope that the Minister will resist any blandishments to include a clause on abortion.

The hon. Member for Basildon really went over the top when he talked about the millions that are being made, as he alleges, out of abortion clinics. I do not know very much about the commercial sector, but I know quite a lot about the charitable sector. I am a trustee of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, and I have seen or heard nothing of which I could be ashamed. I invite the hon. Gentleman to come along to see for himself. If he is talking about the commercial sector, which existed long before the 1967 Act came in, that is a different matter, and one which he must take up with the Minister and on which the Department of Health must decide. I am sure that the Minister will be able to confirm, however, that everything is all right in the charitable sector.

I shall give as an example some figures that I obtained only this afternoon, when I knew that I would be participating in the debate, and which I have had confirmed by the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, which is one of the biggest charitable organisations. The BPAS carries out one third of all the National Health Service abortions. Sixty eight per cent. of BPAS's total income is spent on fees and salaries, and 77 per cent. of the total NHS expenditure on abortion is spent on fees and salaries. The BPAS is not, therefore, paying out lavish money.

The average cost of a BPAS abortion, at 1989 prices, is less than £190, including overheads. The cost of a National Health Service abortion, at 1988 prices, is £190, excluding overheads. The BPAS cannot, therefore, be charging exorbitant fees. National Heath Service hospitals using BPAS services are, therefore, not wasting public money but saving it.

I wish that the hon. Member for Basildon and other Conservative Members would stop making allegations about the charitable sector. I do not deny that it pays wages, because people must be paid for their work and expertise. However, they are not millionaires and they are not trying to make profits in the dreadful way that the hon. Member for Basildon suggested. All BPAS counsellors and general practitioners are paid on a sessional basis. They therefore see however many patients turn up at a session, which includes contraception, infertility advice, pregnancy testing, and counselling on matters other than abortion, as well as abortion counselling and referral.

The consultant who performs the operation has no link with patients until they visit the clinic. There are therefore

*[Ms. Richardson]*

no incentives, links or profiteering. There is no Department of Health information to uphold claims of abuse of misuse. If claims of abuse or misuse had been made, the Department would have withdrawn the rights of the pregnancy advisory service or the BPAS to act.

Several references were made to the Carlisle baby. Of course everyone was shocked by what they heard, but I was shocked by the lack of concern shown throughout the saga for the mother. Much as been said of the baby, who was allegedly born alive and who breathed for a while before dying, which we regret. I also have feelings for the mother, who had her name, medical records and life history dragged through the courts, but for what? Why should she have been so castigated? Why should she have had to open up her life in that way?

**Mr. Ken Hargreaves:** The mother took the case to court.

**Ms. Richardson:** She took the case to court after a priest broke a confidence.

**Mr. Hargreaves:** No.

**Ms. Richardson:** Yes. Her personal life and medical records were dragged through the public domain.

I wish that Conservative Members, in their concern for premature babies—we are all concerned about premature babies—would think of the mother and the father.

**Miss Widdecombe:** We do.

**Ms. Richardson:** If Conservative Members do, they certainly do not mention it. Time and again, Conservative Members drag up the case of the Carlisle baby, but it will not further influence the public.

I know that the Minister wants to ask all the questions asked by the hon. Member for Maidstone, so I shall make one or two final points. The anti-abortion Lobby fails to face up to the fact that the Abortion Act 1967 was woman-centred legislation. It was enacted because before that women felt forced to go to back streets for abortions.

The force of the Abortion Act 1967 was to protect and support women. There is nothing wrong with that. We should now take it a step further and introduce earlier abortions for women who want them. At present they are alowed only in exceptional circumstances. Early abortions will be possible only if we amend the legislation to provide for self-referral up to 12 or 14 weeks.

We must ensure that NHS facilities are evenly spread throughout the country. Incidentally, that would deal with the arguments about the charitable sector. Women in the west midlands—an area which you, Madam Deputy Speaker, represent—have much more difficulty in getting an abortion than women in the north-east or south-west. Wealthy women always have and always will be able to get an abortion, even if the anti-abortionists succeed in repealing the Act, which I hope they do not, but ordinary women face great difficulties.

We are moving into the 1990s. Women are being exhorted to train for new technologies, to plan their lives, to enter new industries and fill the gaps in the employment market. How can they do that if restrictions on abortions make it even more difficult for them to plan their family properly? Family planning is being cut. I hope that Conservative Members do not approve of that. I certainly do not. How can women control their bodies if this male-dominated House makes it more difficult for them to plan their lives and keep their family happy?

Only this evening I was talking to a member of staff who told me that when many years ago a local friend of her mother's who had 13 children became pregnant for the 14th time and when she tried to abort the child herself, she died. I do not want those days to return. I want women to be confident that they are not being patronised and that the legislation supports and gives them as much information and as many facilities as possible, and then allows them to make choices about their life, family, partners and children. That is the way to approach this thorny subject. None of us likes abortions or wants people who do not want them to have one. We should improve the 1967 Act to give women the choice.

6.25 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman):** I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) on his success in the ballot and on introducing yet another debate on this extremely important subject. I also pay tribute to the eloquent contributions by my hon. Friends the Members for Basildon (Mr. Amess) and for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) and to the contribution by the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson).

These are important issues and, from my point of view, any hour of the day or night is appropriate to debate them. My hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone asked a number of questions. Although I shall, in the time available to me, answer as many as I can, I hope that she will permit me to write to her in due course so that I may answer them more carefully and comprehensively.

My hon. Friend the Member for Basildon drew attention to those who were present in the Chamber at this early hour, and he was charitable in referring to me, for which I thank him, and to others, including the Whip who was on the Bench at the time. It should be noted that one of the new members of the Whips' Office is now on duty. We congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) on his appointment and hope to welcome him to many more debates at these early hours.

On the Order Paper earlier in the day was a motion to wish the Serjeant at Arms well for the future. I am sure that hon. Members who are present now and were not in their places earlier will wish to be associated with those good wishes. It must be unusual for a distinguished servant of the House to be thanked and then to have to remain in the Chamber for the succeeding 24 hours. In regard to this debate he and I perform the same duties. We are servants of the House. My job as Minister is to make sure that the Act with which we are concerned is administered properly and to provide information and statistics to the House, but not to make moral judgments or take any initiative in relation to an extension or contraction of the Act. Therefore, I see my role as being to answer questions of fact and to assist in the deliberations of the House.

This subject has featured often in our deliberations. The hon. Member for Barking said that in the present Session, for example, the House had debated on 16 December a motion on the rights of the unborn child, introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Slough (Mr. Watts), and that six private Members' Bills on abortion-related subjects have been introduced, including the Abortion

(Amendment) Bill sponsored by my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone. There have been two Adjournment debates, one introduced by my hon. Friend who initiated tonight's debate, on the United Nations convention on the rights of the child, and the other on 8 June on the Carlisle baby case initiated by my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone. In addition, 112 parliamentary questions on abortion topics have been addressed either to the Department of Health or to the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, for which I have ministerial responsibility.

There has been reference tonight to the prospect of legislation on the issues dealt with in the Warnock report which the Government have said will be introduced during the lifetime of this Parliament. There has been considerable media speculation in recent weeks about its content and timing. Hon. Members will understand that I cannot go beyond restating that commitment to bring forward a Bill.

It would not be right for me to comment on the contents of the legislation and in particular on whether, as some hon. Members have suggested, it should contain provisions about abortion. I shall, as I have done in the past, draw the attention of the Leader of the House to the comments that have been made.

In 1967 Parliament was given the opportunity in a private Member's Bill to build on an existing framework of criminal law which prevented abortions except in a very restrictive set of circumstances. Parliament agreed to do so on a free vote. It is, of course, open to Parliament to alter that framework. I realise that many hon. Members feel sincerely that the law needs radical adjustment. It is against that wide divergence of views that the Government must operate. We also have the views of the Select Committee in another place, which has suggested a framework for amending the abortion law. Clearly, the Government must take account of all those factors, and of what has been said in this debate, in looking at the legislative position. That we shall carefully do.

This debate focuses mainly on the administration of the Abortion Act 1967. As the House knows, my Department takes seriously its task of monitoring the operation of the Act, which was introduced as a private Member's Bill and was passed by both Houses on the basis of a free vote. The Act allows abortion where two doctors certify in good faith the the risk to the life, or injury to the physical or mental health, of the pregnant woman or the existing children of her family would be greater if the pregnancy continued than if it were terminated.

As Parliament has decided that abortions may lawfully be carried out in the circumstances set out in the Act, the Government, like their predecessors, consider that facilities for abortion treatment should be available. The Government also have a duty to ensure that the provisions of the Act are properly applied until and unless Parliament chooses to change that law.

Within the National Health Service the level of gynaecological provision, including abortion, is, like any other provision, decided by individual health authorities. The Government believe that such decisions are best taken locally in the light of authorities' first-hand knowledge of local needs and priorities and competing claims on resources. The private sector adds to the range of options available offering flexibility to both patients and health authorities. It is for health authorities to decide the extent of any arrangements made for treating NHS patients in the private sector. In 1988 some 9,000 abortions were performed under such arrangements.

The operation of the Act is monitored closely by my Department, through its control of the private abortion sector and the investigation of specific complaints. All operating medical practitioners are required to notify the chief medical officer of each abortion that they perform. The notification form contains many details, including the grounds for abortion, the estimated gestation and the method of operation. Those forms are scrutinised by staff authorised by the chief medical officer to ensure that they do not indicate any contravention of the abortion law.

It might be helpful to my hon. Friends and to the House if I were to say something at this point about the way in which the operation of the Abortion Act is monitored in the private sector. Before we approve a clinic or private hospital for the termination of pregnancy under section 1(3) of the 1967 Act, the premises and facilities are inspected by the Department's medical and nursing officers, and persons connected with the application are interviewed by investigating officers. An important element in the process of approval, and subsequent monitoring, is the system of "assurances"—instituted in the early 1970s after some abuse of the original arrangements had become apparent. The assurances are specific undertakings which proprietors of "approved places" are required to give to the Secretary of State on the conduct of their premises and the facilities available. In effect, the assurances form a set of conditions on which initial approval depends and contravention of which could lead to the withdrawal of approval, thus preventing any more abortions from being carried out at that place unless approval is reinstated.

All private sector nursing homes, clinics and private hospitals approved under the Abortion Act are subject to periodic, unannounced inspections by the Department's medical, nursing and investigative officers. A thorough check of business and administrative arrangements is made and patients' notes and medical records are examined. Any irregularities are followed up and the appropriate action taken to obtain future compliance by the proprietors. In an extreme case this could involve the withdrawal of the Secretary of State's approval or, where there is evidence that a criminal offence may have been committed, a reference to the Director of Public Prosecutions. The machinery that I have described does not reveal any abuse of the Act. My hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone asked me to comment specifically on that.

The Carlisle baby case was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone. This case was the subject of the Adjournment debate on 8 June during which I addressed as fully as possible, and as far as the requirements of confidentiality and possible legal action allowed, the issues that gave rise to the concerns expressed by hon. Members. My hon. Friend asks again why no attempt was made to resuscitate the baby. As I told the House on 8 June, the doctor concerned made a clinical judgment that this was not a live birth.

**Miss Widdecombe:** The Minister says that the doctor decided that it was not a live birth. The question that I asked in this debate was how can one accept, when a child has been breathing without the aid of artificial equipment,

*[Miss Widdecombe]*

has a pulse rate and has survived for three hours, that that was not a live birth? Under what circumstances do we call a person an unperson?

**Mr. Freeman:** I am about to deal with that point. The decision was properly, and entirely, for the doctor, and it would not be appropriate for me to comment on it. It was a clinical judgment. I shall deal shortly with the circumstances surrounding it. If he had decided that resuscitation should have been attempted, the appropriate action would have been taken.

How doctors decide whether a baby has been born alive is a question that should be asked of obstetricians and paediatricians. My understanding is that a doctor's main criterion of a live birth before 28 weeks of pregnancy is that, when born, the baby starts to breathe properly. In these circumstances a heartbeat will, of course, be present, but a beating heart on its own would not be regarded as sufficient to label the delivery a live birth since delivered foetuses of 16 weeks or even less may have beating hearts although they have no prospect whatever of surviving. I am making no moral or ethical judgment.

Deciding that a live birth has occurred is only one step towards reaching a decision on the appropriate subsequent management. Very few live born babies of less than 28 weeks continue to survive without a great deal of intensive care. Even if they do survive, there is a significantly increased risk of their developing substantial handicaps. The doctor responsible for the care of the mother and the baby has to weigh all the relevant considerations and use his or her knowledge and clinical judgment to decide what action is appropriate and in the best interests of the mother and baby in the circumstances of each case.

My hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone asked me how a doctor could avoid the possibility of a live birth through the application of medical techniques or injections. My hon. Friend the Member for Basildon asked how doctors can use techniques such as dilation and evacuation. I am making no moral judgment, but these are matters for clinical judgment. It is not right for the Minister or any politician to make judgments about what are essentially clinical matters. I appreciate that my hon. Friends have strong views on this subject. All of us have strong views, but these are matters for clinical judgment.

The conscience clause has been mentioned. Section 4 of the Abortion Act 1967 provides that

> "no person shall be under any duty, whether by contract or by any statutory or other legal requirement, to participate in any treatment authorised by this Act to which he has a conscientious objection".

Under a longstanding agreement with the medical profession, no reference to termination duties should be included in the advertisement of hospital posts, but it should be included in the job description made available personally to all applicants. This procedure ensures that all practitioners, including those who, for whatever reason, do not wish to undertake such duties, are made aware of the requirements of the post before interview. National guidance about this was sent to regional health authorities in 1975 and 1979 by the former chief medical officer. In view of a recent error on the part of Trent regional health authority over the wording of an advertisement for a consultant post in obstetrics and gynaecology, the chief medical officer will remind regional medical officers of the existing guidance.

For non-medical staff, in a recent ruling in the House of Lords—R *v.* Salford health authority—Lord Keith of Kinkel stated that, in its ordinary and neutral meaning, the word "participate" in section 4 of the Abortion Act referred to taking part in treatment.

I am of course aware that my hon. Friends the Members for Hyndburn and for Basildon have introduced Bills proposing amendments to the conscience clause. They fall to be considered by the House in accordance with the procedures governing private Members' legislation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn spoke eloquently about the difficulties experienced by hospital staff who have a religious or ethical objection to abortion. Everyone can sympathise with someone who experiences pressure to take part in a form of treatment to which he has a conscientious objection. Any such pressures could take a number of forms, but it is very difficult, if not impossible—I am sure that my hon. Friend would agree—to legislate to encourage the development of appropriate attitudes. What is clear is that the law explicitly protects those who have conscientious objections to taking part in abortion treatment. The law is crystal clear on this subject, and we expect both the letter and the spirit to be observed. I am sure that the hon. Member for Barking will join me in that.

Let me conclude by dealing with the issue of financial links. Since the passing of the Abortion Act 1967, several attempts have been made to introduce legislation relating to the links between doctors and agencies who refer women for termination of pregnancy and the institutions in which they are performed. These have led to the existing requirements that all nursing homes must notify the Secretary of State of any financial arrangements between the nursing home and any medical practitioner, pregnancy advice bureau or referral agency, and must report any changes in existing financial arrangements. Furthermore, all pregnancy advice bureaux referring women for abortion at places approved under the Act must identify financial links with other businesses, and doctors must not operate on patients whom they see at a referral agency.

Those requirements are drawn to the attention of administrators of premises when the first visit of inspection is made. Checks continue to be made on subsequent visits, and company searches are carried out as necessary. Proprietors and administrators are well aware that failure to comply with an assurance could constitute grounds for withdrawal of registration of bureaux or approval of nursing homes.

I hope that this has been a useful debate, and that it has increased understanding of a very important issue.

## BAT Group (Bid)

6.41 am

**Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse** (Pontefract and Castleford): I wish to speak on the unwelcome bid by Hoylake Investments for BAT Industries. Before I begin, let me stress that I have no vested interest in either BAT Industries or the Transport and General Workers Union, of which I am not a member and to which I shall probably refer.

At £13 billion, this is the biggest takeover bid ever seen in this country—and among the biggest anywhere in the world. Outside the utilities and the oil industry, BAT is Britain's largest industrial company. Many of my constituents and those of many other hon. Members are employed by it. It contributes much to our local economies. British companies in the group include Argos, Wiggins Teape, Eagle Star, Allied Dunbar and British American Tobacco. It is acknowledged to be a world-class business with a leadership position in many key markets. Worldwide it employs more than 300,000 people in 19 countries; in the United Kingdom it employs 32,000 in about 250 constituencies. BAT has invested £668 million in fixed assets in the United Kingdom over the past eight years.

I believe that Hoylake is a consortium specially formed for the purpose of taking over BAT Industries. It consists of Sir James Goldsmith, Jacob Rothschild and Kerry Packer—the Australian gentleman in the stocking mask. There are some minor players as well, including GEC, Agnelli and some foreign banks intended to provide credibility.

Goldsmith is known for many aspects of his life. Among his sayings is, "Takeovers may be interpreted by some corporate raiders as being for the public good, but that is not why I do it. I do it to make money."

The idea is that instead of offering £13 billion in cash, which it does not have, the company should borrow more than £12 billion, pay off the loan by selling components of the company and then be left with the tobacco company for nothing. That would be highly damaging to the strength and success of such companies as Argos, the catalogue retailer, which operates in my constituency.

At the end of last year Argos had more than 220 stores nationwide. It is one of the biggest employers in the retail sector, with about 10,000 employees. It has in Castleford a distribution centre which was opened in 1984 with an initial work force of 52. In June this year, its work force on the site was 270 permanent staff and it provides temporary employment for a further 200 people at seasonal peaks.

The total investment by Argos in its Castleford distribution centre is £9·4 million. It plans to continue its investment, not only in that region but in the north in general and has plans to extend the number of Argos outlets to more than 600. The House will see that we are hopeful about the further increase in the number of jobs that Argos will provide in hard-hit areas, such as my constituency, with limited employment opportunities.

The House will be aware that I have frequently spoken about the problems that my constituents face as a result of the rundown of the mining industry. We have suffered severely and are still suffering, and it appears from the intention of British Coal to reduce in this financial year the number employed in the industry by 20,000 men, that those problems will continue. My constituency cannot afford to lose any more jobs.

Castleford may not be the first place that hon. Members would think of for a model of the fictional Gotham city, but we share with that city the belief that BATman has been good for us. We do not want any jokers or penguins to come along and spoil it. That would happen if the bid is allowed to go through, because many specific benefits result from BAT's ownership of Argos. It has access to expertise and technologies within the BAT group in areas such as information systems and training development. With BAT Industries behind it, Argos was able more easily to buy leases in places where it was not regarded as a prime tenant. That credibility gives a certain access to high-profile brands. Argos's ownership removes cash restraints enabling more rapid expansion and reinvestment than could be achieved independently or under new ownership concerned with paying back the purchase price before reinvesting. Under BAT Industries, Argos can continue to engage in long-term planning rather than having to concentrate on short-term gains.

As well as its contribution to Castleford, Argos brings much to the national economy in four main areas—jobs, investment, orders and shopping. The number of people employed by Argos alone averages 10,000 and rises to 16,500 to cope with seasonal demands. It is planning a £200 million expansion programme to treble its number of outlets and in 1989 it spent £25 million on shop fitting. It also plays a part in developing retail technology. Most goods are bought from British firms or United Kingdom subsidiaries of overseas firms. Approximately 40 per cent. of goods sold by it are made in the United Kingdom, allowing suppliers to invest in new technology, capacity and personnel.

The expansion of Argos is helped by its being part of BAT Industries and that has increased consumer choice for 45 million customers and increased retail competition. Significant investment in quality control and production safety ensures the supply of safe products.

I have put the Argos case as I know it and as I have had it explained to me. The Hoylake bid is bad because it is uncertain that a future owner of Argos would sustain the company's excellent progress and allow it to continue to generate record profits, expand and create even more jobs. The benefits gained from being part of BAT Industries would be lost, and there is no certainty that the new owners would provide the existing level of commitment to the growth of Argos. Highly leveraged bids put constraints on a company to produce short-term profits, often to the detriment of long-term growth. Without investment, it becomes harder for a company to compete in the market place or to develop new retail opportunities, which leads to reduced consumer choice and less retail competition.

I am no financier, but one does not have to be a big-shot financier to see that such backing and investment will not be available if the Hoylake bid succeeds. If it is successful, BAT will be financed not by shareholders' funds, but by what are called junk bonds. These are unsecured IOUs that offer much higher interest rates in return for accepting much higher risks. They were invented and developed in the United States, where investors were persuaded that the higher returns—often 3 or 4 per cent. higher—compensate for lack of security.

More than two thirds of the money raised in junk bonds was to be used to finance leveraged bonds. The term

*[Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse]*

leverage refers to the debt level necessary for raising funds. The bonds were originally intended to allow managements to buy their companies from divesting owners, but the leverage technique is increasingly being used to allow predators to acquire huge corporate assets on borrowed money.

Such acquisitions depend on substituting debt for equity. The acquirers buy the organisation, using junk bond funding to pay off the original shareholders. The junk bond holders require their high level of interest, and the bonds are due to be repaid in full at the end of the agreed term. In this way, the company's gearing or ratio of debt to equity is raised significantly. Servicing the debt becomes the paramount corporate objective, to the exclusion of longer-term concerns. Investment, research and development, training, employment and capital expenditure—all are subordinated to the need to bring in as much cash as possible.

Time, talent and resources are devoted to the short-term aim of squeezing assets to the limit so as to produce enough profits to meet the high interest charges. If sufficient profits are not forthcoming, assets have to be sold to cover the payments. All notions of corporate responsibility and investment for the long term frequently disappear. Average gearing rates would rise from 15 per cent. to more than 50 per cent., making companies more vulnerable in an economic downturn.

The United Kingdom has so far escaped the effects of large-scale leveraged buy-outs. The Hoylake bid for BAT Industries, involving a 14:1 debt equity ratio is greater by a factor of 15 than anything seen before in Europe. If it is successful, it will lead to the breaking up of a major British company and old-fashioned asset stripping on a scale never seen before. It will be the sale of the century of major British businesses with considerable worldwide interests operating on a global scale.

BAT does a good job for us in the United States. It is one of the largest United Kingdom companies in America, having built a business over the past 60 years worth $7 billion—from a $50,000 investment and all from retained earnings. The work of six decades would be gone within months. The new owners of these businesses will have to borrow money to buy them, and then they, too, will need to service debts before they are able to invest in capital equipment, staff training and development and research and development. The bid has important implications also for British industry as a whole and for companies in every constituency. It could open the floodgate for similar bids in Britain on the same scale as that which has been experienced in America, where about 10 per cent. of the capital value of publicly owned quoted companies has disappeared. The so-called retirement of equity could lead to the early retirement of many British workers.

Research that has been conducted on the United Kingdom plc computer model of the stockbrokers Hoare Govett suggests that half of the top-ranking alpha securities on the London stock exchange could be threatened. It is forecast that 32 major British companies could be subject to a leveraged takeover by 1993.

I do not know what the implications of that would be for the economy. I do not know what would ensue if large firms were to disappear from the stock market as a result of being asset stripped, but I do know what it would mean for leading employers in my constituency. I can guess that it would be bound to have a serious consequence for London's position as a leading global stock market. There could be repercussions for pension funds and other investing institutions. Where are pension funds, including my union, going to invest their money if major blue-chip equities have gone to the financiers' knackers yard? If junk bonds are raised abroad, will the interest add still further to the balance of payments deficit? What will be the loss of remitted overseas earnings?

I do not know the answer to many of these questions. I suspect that many hon. Members pretend to know them but in reality do not have the foggiest idea either. I believe, however, that these matters are of fundamental importance to British business, to jobs and the economy as a whole.

Enough basic questions about the long-term effects on the capital structure of the corporate sector and the effect on growth and further jobs have been raised for us to commission a major inquiry of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to allow us to determine what fears are justified.

I have mentioned the interest of the Transport and General Workers Union, which has set out its case to me by letter. It has supported the opposition to the bid. I shall quote two paragraphs from its letter of 19 July, which was sent to me by Mr. Peter Smith, a district secretary. He wrote:

> "The bidding group has openly announced that if the bid is successful they will dissect and asset strip all divisions other than tobacco, hence the fear and apprehension of the TGWU members involved (over 150 persons). It seems that the takeover bid will consider nothing other than the thirst to make a quick profit with scant regard for employees and their families.
>
> I would personally wish to point out that the TGWU has developed an excellent working relationship and has found the company neither remote nor insensitive to the desires and aspirations of their employees."

That is a reference to Argos. The letter continues:

> "Indeed, over a 3-4 year period, the Union has made real improvements both financially and socially in terms and conditions of employment.
>
> The Castleford Depot alone has in a relatively short period of time expanded and doubled the number of employees. Nationally the picture is reflected with new distribution centres at Welwyn Garden City and Bridgwater."

With all that in mind, I urge right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House to support my request to the Government to refer the bid to the commission before it is too late. By the time that the House returns from the recess in the autumn, BATman may have gone and the joker could be moving in on the major employers in the constituencies of a number of right hon. and hon. Members. I ask the Minister to refer the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

6.59 am

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** (Tatton): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) who is to make his maiden ministerial speech in this debate. Among the prophets of modern free enterprise capitalism, my hon. Friend has an honoured role to play. I count him second only to our right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in this House, and only just behind Sir James Goldsmith, as the person who has most popularised the concept of free enterprise in its modern form, which has done so much to transform the British economy.

I congratulate also the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) on his success in securing the debate, even at this hour. The hon. Gentleman spoke eloquently of his constituency interests and of his fears for the jobs of his constituents. I hope that I shall be able to reassure him.

I begin my speech, as did the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford, by declaring that I have no financial interest of any kind in any of the companies that are the subject of the bid or involved in making it. I stand to gain in no sense, except that we all stand to gain from companies being well run and the jobs of their employees being made more secure as a consequence. In that sense, the country as a whole benefits.

The hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford is entitled to express his concern, but he speaks before the full facts are disclosed and analysed. Neither the offer document nor BAT's response has yet been published. Together, they should provide the detailed information on which we can all base our opinions. It is appropriate to wait until their publication in August before rushing to premature judgment. Otherwise, the debate will be based on popular emotion and bias rather than objective views.

The burden of the hon. Gentleman's remarks was the possibility that the demerger of a conglomerate such as BAT could create unemployment. I draw attention to the irony of the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford rushing to the defence of a multinational conglomerate based on tobacco products, when such a company normally occupies a secure place in the Labour party's chamber of horrors of international capitalism. Nevertheless, I gather that the hon. Gentleman considers that BAT is an exception to the rule.

It has not been suggested that transferring the ownership of BAT's various subsidiaries would result in any closures. Certainly that is not the intention of the prospective bidders. The facts disclosed in due course will prove or disprove the suggestion that companies within BAT are poorly run—which is the case made by Sir James Goldsmith and his partners.

BAT is a disparate group of companies engaged in totally unconnected activities, ranging from tobacco and insurance companies to department stores and papermaking. The essence of the bidder's case is that the companies are underperforming and that their performance would be greatly enhanced by restoring their independence or joining them with others that can offer the appropriate and different skills needed in each of the industries concerned.

The demerger is aimed at making the subsidiaries much more secure and at protecting the jobs of those who work in them. The companies' prosperity would be enhanced, so their productivity and number of employees would increase. There would be increased investment in research and capital equipment, leading to higher profitability. If the case is made for all that, the suggestion that jobs are in jeopardy would be proved false. The opposite would be the case. Hoylake is, in a sense, trying to privatise within the private sector.

The objective is to liberate those subsidiaries from the control of the conglomerate. If there is a demerger it will be possible for those who run the companies locally to participate in management buy-outs and for the employees to acquire a real share in the enterprises in which they work. One of the beneficent aspects of the Government's period of office is that we have made it possible, not only within the public sector but within the private sector, for the benefits of capitalism to trickle down in that way.

BAT is often described as being a major British industrial company. The hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford made it clear that it is not a British industrial company in anything other than a very minor way. Its industrial activities in the United Kingdom account for only 9 per cent. of its assets and 8 per cent. of its profits. It is basically a holding company of foreign subsidiaries. Most of its industrial activities are overseas.

Therefore, the restructuring of BAT would result in a major return to this country of capital previously invested overseas which, when repaid to shareholders, would contribute to the continued industrial development of the United Kingdom. There is a great opportunity here for the repatriation of capital to Britain, something which I thought that the Labour party was in favour of.

It has been stated that the offer being made for BAT would result in the creation of an ongoing highly geared or heavily borrowed company, weighed down by debt to such a degree that it could render its future fragile.

The hon. Gentleman spoke with some feeling about the way in which the offer will be financed, saying that it would be financed by junk bonds. There is a significant difference between the proposal for financing this bid and junk bond-based bids. What is proposed here is not the issue of a bond to be financed out of future speculative profits, which is what a true junk bond is, but a bond which is to be financed by demergers and selling off the assets which are presently underperforming and so are undervalued.

The figures that are available for anybody to see in published reports show that if Hoylake succeeds in its bid it will not create a highly geared or heavily borrowed company. In fact, it will be a less highly geared or heavily borrowed company than BAT is at the moment. The debt that will be incurred will be repaid within a year from the proceeds of the announced disposal of those businesses that have nothing whatever to do with the traditional core business of BAT.

It can be seen from the reports available from City analysts that the resultant company would be classically financed, with substantial capital and a normal level of ongoing debt. Claims that a highly indebted and therefore endangered company would result from the transaction are false and seem designed to appeal to emotion rather than to reason.

Whatever the merits or demerits of the proposed offer for BAT, there can clearly be no element of restraint of competition. Therefore, there is no case for a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. That view seems to be shared by almost every commentator in all the quality newspapers with one exception.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** The hon. Gentleman will be aware that only this week the CBI recommended that the bid should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

**Mr. Hamilton:** That may be a point in my favour in view of the CBI's history in recent years.

If the hon. Gentleman has been reading the Library's newspaper cuttings on the bid he will know that the overwhelming majority of financial and economic commentators have come to the conclusion that there is no case on the basis of competition, which is the basis of the Government's policy for references, for a reference to the

*[Mr. Hamilton]*

Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Newspapers as diverse as the *Financial Times*, the *Evening Standard* and *The Sunday Times* have agreed that the bid is not an appropriate case for referral. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will agree with that.

My last point relates to the insurance companies that BAT owns, which are different from its industrial and trading companies because there is the question of trusteeship. It is natural, therefore, that some concerns should have been voiced in respect of those subsidiaries. The interests of the insurance companies' policyholders will be unaffected. The bidding company, Hoylake, is committed to dispose of the insurance companies, not to interfere in the management during the process of the disposal, not to increase the payments of dividends and to seek advice from the existing management in establishing the appropriate future for the companies. Hoylake has stated that it has no interest in maintaining a shareholding in the insurance companies and that there can, therefore, be no legitimate concerns about the interests of policyholders and other insurance clients.

The nub of the case for what Hoylake seeks to do is this: the shareholders of BAT should decide whether the offer should succeed or fail. That decision should not be made by Governments or by politicians such as the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford and myself, who have little locus standi in this matter. The basis of our free enterprise society is that is it shareholders, and not politicians or management, who have the right and responsibility to determine the basic issues affecting their company. I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to let the market be the test of the bid. In due course the shareholders will be able to judge between the case for Hoylake and the case for BAT and we can leave the future of the company and its employees safely in their hands.

7.2 am

**Mr. Gerald Howarth** (Cannock and Burntwood): I join my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) in congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) on making his maiden outing today as the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs. I have an interest in the fact that he has been elevated so early in his life in this place because I have occasionally been mistaken for him. Perhaps I shall continue to bathe in the reflected glory of his meteoric advance.

I thank the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) for affording us the opportunity to debate this important matter. I understand the concerns that he has expressed on behalf of his constituents. I hope that we can reassure him that his constituents stand to gain, rather than lose, from the proposals on the table. I, too, find it amusing to see the hon. Gentleman leaping to the defence of an international conglomerate which has, as he said, invested heavily in the United States. Perhaps, after he has heard all the arguments he might join us; then we should see the repatriation of funds to the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** My main concern is jobs in my constituency.

**Mr. Howarth:** I have never doubted the hon. Gentleman's purpose in bringing the matter before the House, and I am sure that his constituents will be very grateful.

A number of major British companies might look askance at the claims being made by BAT for its ranking in the league table. British Aerospace, which I know reasonably well, has an enormous number of employees —far more than BAT has in the United Kingdom.

I have no financial or constituency interest in the matter. My only interest is that I regard myself as a friend of Sir James Goldsmith, who has made a significant contribution to the industrial and commercial world.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tatton mentioned the acquisition by BAT last year of the Farmers insurance company in the United States. It was a hard-fought takeover battle, as they often are. During that struggle, Farmers attempted to establish that BAT was not fit and proper to own a United States insurance company. Much of that argument concerned the potential conflict of interest between selling tobacco on the one hand and providing health insurance on the other. In a number of states, the insurance commissioners decided that BAT was not fit and proper. Then, BAT added a very large sum to the price that it was offering for Farmers, and Farmers' management accepted the higher offer. Almost immediately, the insurance commissioners reversed their original verdict thereby demonstrating the ability of management, if it so desires, to convince insurance commissioners. That is important, because BAT is seeking to use the United States insurance commissioners as a means to thwart the offer by Hoylake.

This is how it works: in the United Kingdom, the Takeover Panel, which regulates all takeover offers, has set a timetable that governs all such transactions. That timetable determines that the maximum time normally available between the initial offer and the end of the offer is 60 days. If a method can be found to make it impossible for an offer to be completed within the 60 days, the offer will lapse and will not be renewable for 12 months. Therefore, shareholders would have been denied their right to vote.

It seems to many people that that is the purpose of BAT's strategy in using the United States insurance commissioners to delay their approval by more than 60 days. For their part, the United States insurance commissioners have a wholly legitimate responsibility to assess Hoylake, should Hoylake intend to own Farmers or to run it for an interim period. To satisfy the commissioners, Hoylake made it clear that it would form a special trusteeship which would hold the interests in Farmers.

The trustees, who would be leading figures from the insurance industry unconnected with Hoylake, would control Farmers. Their task would be to identify a buyer suitable to the United States regulatory authorities to be responsible for the management of the company during the interim and to distribute dividends no higher than the historic pattern established by Farmers as an independent company.

Despite those assurances, BAT's management has attempted to provoke the insurance commissioners to initiate a process that would take more than the 60 days permissible by the United Kingdom Takeover Panel. It is important that the BAT management should fight the matter on its merits and put it to the vote of the shareholders. It should not seek to use what many—certainly I—would regard as an underhand tactic simply to frustrate the due process established by Parliament in the United Kingdom to allow shareholders to reach their verdict. That is an unsavoury aspect of this takeover battle. I accept that all takeovers are a hard and cut-and-thrust business.

As I was leaving the House in the middle of the night, I saw a report on the news tapes that BAT has employed the services of a firm of private detectives called Kroll International. Presumably that has been done at the expense of BAT shareholders. Why have private detectives been employed? Are they to be sent round to bug Sir James Goldsmith, Mr. Packer or Mr. Rothschild? Will they put devices in their cars? That sounds like the sort of thing that my hon. Friend the Member for Torbay (Mr. Allason) might write about.

I understand that Kroll uses the consultancy services of a British journalist called Michael Gillard who works on *The Observer* and is responsible for the "City Slicker" column in *Private Eye*—which some of us have known rather more intimately.

In 1979, Mr. Gillard brought an action against Sir James Goldsmith, the chairman of Hoylake, who had described Mr. Gillard as a blackmailer. The case was held before a jury and, after a lengthy hearing of the events, the jury concluded that Sir James Goldsmith was justified in describing Mr. Gillard as a blackmailer. The jury's verdict was unanimous and the verdict was upheld on appeal to the Court of Appeal and to the House of Lords. The case was widely reported at the time and could not have escaped public attention. I am sure that all hon. Members today will be familiar with what happened.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** Does the hon. Gentleman appreciate that while all this intrigue is going on among the high financiers, some people want nothing more than to earn an honest living and have a job to go to?

**Mr. Howarth:** I am well aware of that. I am trying to point out to the hon. Gentleman that it is not Sir James Goldsmith and Hoylake who are employing private detectives. The top management of the company that the hon. Gentleman is trying to defend have employed that international firm of private detectives.

Last week another article appeared in the "City Slicker" column in connection with the Hoylake offer. It was distributed on behalf of BAT to the insurance commissioners to stimulate sufficient doubts in their minds to provoke a delay which might take longer than 60 days to resolve and which would thereby thwart the Hoylake bid and deny the shareholders their right to vote. One must ask oneself whether that is the proper action of a major British public company seeking to protect the national interest or whether it is designed to protect the position of the current senior management of the company.

It will be evident to most objective people that this is not a frivolous bid but one that many serious commentators view favourably. It is not an asset-stripping exercise, as the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford said, but a proposal to the shareholders of BAT for the better management of their assets and the improved performance of the company's constituent parts. That could be in the best interests of the company's employees and the hon. Gentleman's constituents as much as it will be for the benefit of the shareholders. It would be wrong to take any action to deny the shareholders the right to consider and vote on the proposal which, as has been said, is likely to be put to the shareholders early next month.

That is real company democracy. It is not employing private detectives to put bugging devices all over the place, to seek to poison the minds of the insurance commissioners in the United States and to engage in a ploy that is simply delaying tactics to deny shareholders here the right to consider the matter. As the *Financial Times* concluded on 18 January, on the evidence so far available, it should be left to the shareholders to decide.

7.21 am

**Mr. John Garrett** (Norwich, South): Like other hon. Members, I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) for raising what could become a major issue of industrial policy. Like everybody else, I have no financial interest in BAT, and certainly not in Hoylake, although there is an Argos outlet in my constituency.

Of course, like every other speaker in the debate, I welcome the Minister's debut on this issue. It is a pity that he could not have opened to a larger house, but Opposition Members look forward to hearing the views of a prophet of the free enterprise economy. No doubt he can enlighten us on the latest thinking in the world of prophets on this important development in industrial policy.

This case is likely to run and run, if only because of the delays that are becoming apparent from activities in the United States state courts. It is likely to become a landmark case in takeover history. Not only is the proposed £13 billion bid by Hoylake for BAT Industries the largest takeover bid that we have seen in this country, but it has clearly important implications for takeover and merger and, in this case, demerger policy. Therefore, Opposition Members would welcome the Government's preliminary thoughts on the issue. We have heard the free enterprise argument for leaving the bid without the intervention of the Government.

As *The Sunday Times* quoted on 16 July, in an article headed "Takeover mania",

> "No British public company—no matter how large—is now safe from corporate raiders . . . we are in the grip of takeover mania."

The size of this bid is not only a matter of public interest but marks the debut in this country of the highly leveraged buy-out, which was developed in the United States, with what most impartial observers would consider to be disastrous results. *The Sunday Times* article went on:

> "America's quoted sector has been ravaged by leveraged buyouts in the past few years—something similar is now expected here."

That is why this could be a landmark case. If it proceeds, the floodgates will be opened by similar takeover devices, probably financed from the United States where there is so much more experience of this kind of thing than there is here.

After more than 1,300 leveraged buy-outs in the United States, thousands have lost their jobs, a few have made many millions of dollars and there has been no perceptible improvement in corporate performance or efficiency. A number of studies, including one from the Brookings Institute, which have gone into the consequences of such a development in takeovers in the United States, bear out that contention.

The leveraged buy-out, usually called junk-bond financing in the United States and mezzanine financing in

*[Mr. John Garrett]*

this country—a term which I have only learnt to get my tongue around in the past few days—is really a process of financial manipulation. The process involves issuing bonds where the ratio of debt to security is very high—in other words, a very large loan is made against a rather small security. A leveraged buy-out almost invariably must be followed by a rapid break-up of the victim company, which is usually a diversified conglomerate, with a strong cash flow and undervalued assets. The predator stands to make exceptional gains from the exercise. It is anticipated that Hoylake could make £1 billion out of breaking up BAT. It has been calculated that some 44 of the FTSE 100 companies could be targets; especially vulnerable are those with strong brand names, the values of which could easily be realised in a dismemberment. I have a number of such firms in my constituency which I will not draw to Sir James Goldsmith's attention by mentioning. It is really just a sophisticated name for asset stripping and one can imagine the turmoil in some of our largest companies as a result. It is likely to stifle any rational planning and development in companies at risk.

**Mr. Neil Hamilton:** I should like to draw a distinction between classical asset stripping and what is proposed for the BAT bid. Classically, asset stripping is when one breaks up the company and sells off the assets, so that the company no longer exists and the assets are dispersed elsewhere. In effect, what is proposed here is a series of demergers, so that the subsidiary companies remain in existence but are better run, more profitable and, therefore, the jobs are more secure.

**Mr. Garrett:** I cannot accept the hon. Gentleman's definition, because there was plenty of classical asset stripping in the 1960s, when the companies were not entirely liquidated, but some kind of demerger activity of the kind proposed here was carried on. In the activities of Slater Walker, I believe that was more often the case. Asset stripping usually related to the realisation of real property assets, such as land and buildings. Therefore, it is fair to call this a modern version of asset stripping.

I do not know whether the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) saw last night's television programme on the career of Mr. Milliken, who is a junk bond guru in the United States, but is now under some suspicion. The hon. Member for Tatton said that there was no suggestion of loss of jobs, but on that television programme a senior executive of Goodyear—which was Sir James Goldsmith's last venture into such an activity—reported that thousands of jobs were lost from that great American industrial company, and Goodyear was lumbered with interest payments of $1 million a day, which had significantly altered the capacity for development of its business.

The predators in such takeovers have no intrinsic interest in the victim company, other than to take a short-term profit from the disposal of its assets. They make no positive or creative contribution to the economy, as United States experience has shown. The arguments that such takeovers shake up sleepy management do not hold water. That is be generally true of takeovers. After all, the DTI's 1988 report on merger policy listed nine separate academic studies which suggested that takeovers generally actually diminish efficiency and profitability.

In the main, the people who benefit from such an exercise are the lawyers, the bankers, brokers, accountants, public relations and advertising practices—and now, I hear, private detectives—who, and I quote *The Observer* of 16 July,

> "hover over the scene like vultures over a mediaeval battlefield."

Minorco's bid for Consolidated Goldfields was a quarter the size of the Hoylake bid and generated £50 million in fees for such advisers.

Sir James Goldsmith justified his bid by saying that BAT's companies were being stifled under the bureaucracy of a large conglomerate. He does not know whether they are being stifled or not, but the only companies likely to buy Eagle Star insurance group, Allied Dunbar, Farmers group, Argos, Wiggins Teape and other BAT subsidiaries are conglomerates. There will therefore be no diminution in bureacracy, if bureaucracy is the normal condition of a conglomerate.

There is no evidence that the bid will benefit the economy, BAT's 320,000 workers worldwide or its 32,000 workers in the United Kingdom. Indeed, in any unbundling of BAT, many thousands of workers throughout the country may find their jobs at risk, which was the prime concern of my hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract and Castleford.

Another worrying issue is the bid's effect on capital markets. It could lead to our corporate finance system being awash with poor-quality bonds. The issue is not whether the bonds in this takeover are of higher quality than the junk bonds that are customary in the United States, but the principle of establishing whether such a leveraged buy-out is acceptable. One can be sure that poorer-quality bonds will follow the ones that Sir James Goldsmith and Hoylake issue. Of the bid, the *Financial Times* said that it was

> "financed by unquoted IOUs from an off the shelf Bermuda-based shell company."

The Governor of the Bank of England has expressed concern that the development of the leveraged buy-out here could result in

> "a profusion of unsuccessful financial arrangements."

The bid could introduce massive instability into the British corporate scene. Leverage of the corporate sector debt levels in relation to the capital base has risen steadily in the United States, mainly as a result of the leveraged buy-out boom, so that, at present debt levels, 10 per cent. of United States companies will be acutely vulnerable to a recession on the scale of that in the early 1980s.

There is every sign that the BAT bid will pave the way for a flood of big leveraged deals in Britain, making our companies similarly vulnerable. The effect will be to encourage short-termism—to encourage managers to take a short-term view, cutting back on investment and research and development to deter predators, and, after takeovers, maximising cash flow to service excessive debt levels. Corporate planning in anticipation of 1992, for example, could be made extremely difficult.

In our view, the national interest should require that the onus of proof should be reversed in major takeover bids —a point that we made in Committee debates on the Companies Bill, and which we will continue to make when the Bill returns from the other place. The bid should be shown to be in the national interest before being allowed to proceed. The Tebbit doctrine of making the criteria for the takeover of companies relate only to competitiveness is not enough, and it is certainly inadequate in bids such as this.

Sir Gordon Borrie, the Director General of Fair Trading, said in December 1986 that takeovers should be required to show benefit to the economy and suggested that reversal of the burden of proof applied to takeovers of a certain size would be a way of tackling the problem of financial markets taking an excessively short-term view. He said:

> "The decision to buy or sell particular shares at a particular price does not necessarily bring about the most efficient deployment of and development of the assets which these shares represent."

We agree with Sir Gordon Borrie and the Confederation of British Industry that the bid should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, first, because of its size—the CBI says that one bid of this size could buy control of 25 per cent. of Britain's manufacturing exports—secondly, because of the creation of a massive amount of corporate debt and dubious instruments of finance and thirdly, because of the endangering of investment in plant and equipment and research and development in many of our large companies —the short-termism argument.

There are many issues of public and corporate interest in this dangerous development, and in our view the Government should refer the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for mature and careful consideration. As I said, it could be a pacemaking event in corporate finance in this country. It has a number of extremely dangerous implications and it should be considered very carefully, first, by the Government and, secondly, by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission before being allowed to proceed.

7.34 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. John Redwood):** We have had a good, wide-ranging debate. Although there may not have been many hon. Members present, what was lacking in quantity was certainly made up for in quality. I welcome my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) to his duties on the Front Bench and thank my two hon. Friends who spoke so kindly about me. I hope that all they said was meant to be praise and I take it in that spirit. I am grateful to the hon. Member for Norwich, South (Mr. Garrett) for his remarks.

The debate has prefigured many of the arguments that will be conducted by the participants in this matter over the next few weeks. I congratulate the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) on his success in obtaining this debate on the takeover proposal for it raises an important subject. How will our mergers policy deal with the phenomenon of leveraged or largely debt-financed takeovers? That was the prime concern of the hon. Member for Norwich, South and was mentioned by others. I hope to be able to reassure the House that both our mergers policy and legislation are equipped to deal with such takeovers.

The specific case of BAT is important as it is a large employer wih plants and offices in many parts of the country. It is naturally apprehensive about possible change. The hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford put his constituents' case well, drawing attention to the importance of Argos as an employer in his constituency.

The bid by Hoylake Investments for the BAT group comes under the duty of the director general of Fair Trading. He advises the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on whether particular mergers should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The director general is considering the proposed acquisition of BAT by Hoylake Investments and will consider any offer document that may emerge. There is no formal offer document that we know of yet. The Secretary of State will take his decision whether or not to refer this particular bid to the MMC in due course and in the light of the director general's advice.

I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will apreciate that it would not be right for me to comment in detail on this particular case, before the director general has advised the Secretary of State. I can assure the hon. Gentleman and the House that, as always, the director general and the Secretary of State will take into account all relevant aspects in the consideration of this proposed acquisition.

As the hon. Gentleman knows, the Fair Trading Act 1973 provides for a case-by-case scrutiny of mergers. Each merger or merger proposal which qualifies, because for example, the target company involved is larger than £30 million of assets or because the combined market share of the merged companies would exceed 25 per cent., is considered individually by the director general on its merits, in the light of all the circumstances at the time. Only if a merger is referred to the MMC, and the commission concludes that it would be against the public interest, does my right hon. Friend have powers to take action against that particular merger. Then my right hon. Friend can decide whether to block the bid or not.

I recognise that a particular concern in this case has been registered about the proposed financing of the Hoylake Investments' proposal—involving extensive borrowing. It has been widely reported that shareholders in the target company, BAT, will be offered not cash but various forms of loan notes, some of which are not secured and which are referred to as "subordinated debt", or to use the more pejorative United States phrase, "junk bonds". If such a bid were to succeed, it seems clear that the new company would have to service a large amount of debt.

But it is not at all clear that the financing of a takeover largely by debt—or "leveraging" as it is called—is likely to evoke a response from the market which diverges from the public interest more generally. One case in particular comes to mind where the financing of merger proposals was considered to raise public interest issues which deserved further investigation by the MMC. This was the Elders proposed takeover of Allied Lyons. In that case the MMC concluded in its report of September 1986 that the proposal would not operate against the public interest.

It found no evidence that the developments of the Allied Lyons businesses that Elders planned to retain would be prejudiced by financial stringency brought on by high capital gearing and low interest cover. The banks providing Elders' loan facility had expressed confidence in Elders' management, and on the basis of the available information, the commission did not think that Elders would make an imprudent future bid. In the event, Elders did not rebid.

There have, however, been other cases of leveraged bids where a reference has not been considered appropriate because the Secretary of State considered that the market was best placed to decide on the merits or otherwise of the proposal. Three cases that spring to mind are the

*[Mr. John Redwood]*

Demerger Corporation's bid in 1986 for the Extel Corporation, Valuedale's bid later the same year for Simon Engineering and Barker Dobson's bid for Dee Corporation. In those cases, incidentally, the offers were unsuccessful in the market.

I shall, in this context, quote from the Department of Trade and Industry's blue paper on mergers policy of March last year. It states:

> "The consequences of highly-leveraged bids have been a source of concern to some commentators, primarily on the grounds that such bids are often mounted on the basis of plans to break up the target company if the bid is successful. In the typical highly-leveraged case, the bidder will usually need to to sell off parts of the company he has acquired in order to meet the debt obligations he has incurred in financing the bid. Some observers see such post-merger divestment as inherently destructive, and apply the pejorative label asset-stripping to it. On the other hand, others have pointed to the possible benefits of leveraging in subjecting the incumbent managements of even the largest company to the possible threat of takeover and to its associated healthy disciplines, from which they might in practice have been immune without the growth of leveraged financing techniques."

Those two arguments have been mentioned today. The paper continued:

> "The Government's view is one of scepticism as to whether there is normally a divergence between the interests of private decision-makers and the public interest where leverage bids are concerned. Some highly leveraged bids are rejected by shareholders: the market can and does make sensible judgments in rejecting bids where the risks of a high degree of leveraging seem too great. However, where there are profitable opportunities arising from leveraged takeovers followed by break up of the target company, the presumption must be that the profit arises from the assets concerned being put to more efficient and more profitable use than in the original target company, and that this is to the benefit of the economy as a whole. Therefore the Secretary of State will not normally regard high leveraging on its own as a ground for reference. However, he will continue to consider referring such bids when he believes that a high degree of leveraging, combined with other features of the bid, may pose dangers to the public interest."

I have quoted from that document at length because it represents a good statement of the Government's position.

That policy was reflected in the reference of the Goodman Fielder Wattie bid for Ranks Hovis McDougall, which was referred in August 1988 because of concern about the possible effects on competition, especially in the market for bread. In the event, Goodman Fielder Wattie withdrew its bid and the reference was laid aside.

Concerns have also been expressed about the possible implications of this bid for the insurance industry. Of course, I cannot comment on actions that may or may not take place in the United States. But there are implications in this country, as BAT has a significant financial services group comprising Eagle Star, Allied Dunbar and Farmers.

I reassure the House that the legal position, under section 61 of the Insurance Companies Act 1982, is that anyone seeking to become a controller of an insurance company must give the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry prior notice of his intention to do so, and the Secretary of State will then consider whether he is a fit and proper person.

I should also emphasise that were this bid to be successful and were there to be any subsequent transactions resulting from it, each would be considered by the Director General of Fair Trading and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in the normal way—that is, individually, on its own merits.

I conclude by emphasising that the main, though not exclusive, consideration in determining whether mergers should be referred to the MMC should be their potential effect on competition in the United Kingdom. The Government's policy enables the great majority of proposed mergers and acquisitions which do not pose a threat to competition to be decided by the market, in the way recommended by my hon. Friends, without intervention from official agencies. The Government believe that there are considerable benefits in allowing freedom for change in corporate ownership and control through mergers and acquisitions. Generally, the market will be a better arbiter than Government of the prospects for the proposed transactions, and will ensure better use of assets, for the benefit of their owners and the economy as a whole. The Government should intervene only where the interests of the decision makers in the market are likely to run counter to the public interest.

The Government take the view that decisions about changes in the ownership or management of a company are generally best taken by the shareholders themselves, as the Government believe that the people best placed to make a judgment of commercial prospects are those whose money is at stake. It is not the role of the Government or statutory agencies to second guess commercial judgments. There may be a case for the public authorities to intervene in particular circumstances, typically where there are grounds for believing that the interests of private decision makers run counter to the public interest. The classic example of this divergence is where a merger confers excessive market power on the new enterprise, so that it offers the prospect of profits to the owners, but threatens to damage the public interest, for example by leading to distortion of the market and exploitation of the customer.

The current procedures for examining qualifying mergers provide a good framework within which to investigate—if necessary by a reference to the MMC—and to control mergers raising public interest issues. The same applies to leveraged offers. Where a high leveraged offer combined with other features might pose dangers to the public interest, we will also, having received the advice of the Director-General of Fair Trading, consider making a reference to the MMC.

# A27 (Bypass)

7.45 am

**Mr. Terence L. Higgins** (Worthing): I begin by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins) on his appointment at the Department of Transport.

Transport is an area with an enormous number of major political questions. The issue of the future route of the A27, together with the expansion of Worthing hospital, are the major issues confronting my constituents at present. I hope that my hon. Friend will understand if I do not elaborate on my congratulations because I stress that the time available to us is very short and I shall understand if he is not able to give a full reply. I thank my hon. Friend for sitting through the long watches of the night, as we have together, while waiting for this debate —*[Interruption.]* On the contrary, my hon. Friend has been here as long as I have—and I have been here all night.

This issue has a long history. Some 10 or 12 years ago, a study was carried out—inadequately in my view—which suggested four routes for the A27, none of which was a bypass. A preferred route was announced and a lot of property was bought up. I am happy to say that subsequently I was successful in persuading the Minister to drop that idea and the route was abandoned and the houses sold off.

Meanwhile, the traffic has been building up, and back in 1985 the Government decided that a further study should be carried out by Howard Humphries. It resulted in the recommendation of an inner route which, as the posters in my constituency make absolutely clear, is a throughpass not a bypass. I believe profoundly that Worthing should have a real bypass which avoids the town completely.

Indeed, Government policy is that through traffic should be taken away from towns. All the other towns and villages along the south coast are to have real bypasses and it is right that Worthing should have one, too. The strength of public feeling on the matter has been manifested in public meetings and massive petitions of about 24,000 signatures against the route that was selected by the Minister last week, in comparison with one of just over 1,200 in favour of the route selected by the Government. We have had a number of public meetings which, by modern standards, were enormous, with the vast majority of the views expressed being against the preferred route and in favour of a real bypass. I do not think that the assessment that the Government published last week reflecting the Howard Humphries report reflects the strength of public feeling in favour of a bypass and against the preferred route.

My hon. Friend's predecessor was kind enough to receive a deputation, led by the mayor, which spelt out the argument in considerable detail. The borough council thought it right to employ its own consultants, called Atkins, but no relation, I think, to my hon. Friend the Minister, and they drew attention to the serious deficiencies in the Howard Humphries report. The assumption about the speed at which lorries would travel if a bypass were built was far lower than is my experience. Such an assumption tends to bias the decision in favour of the inner route rather than a real bypass. We also believe that the disruption that could be caused to public services such as water, gas and electricity were grossly underestimated. In addition, we have considerable doubts about the traffic forecasts.

I regret the preferred route that has been announced. My hon. Friend's predecessor was influenced considerably by the argument that, if he selected the inner route, he would immediately be able to compensate those who were blighted, whereas if he selected the bypass, where there are no properties, those in the inner route would not be formally blighted——

**Ms. Joan Ruddock** (Lewisham, Deptford) *rose*——

**Mr. Higgins:** No, I am not giving way. I have no time at all. It is not a matter for the Opposition Front Bench.

With regard to the view that was taken by my hon. Friend's predecessor——

**Mr. Frank Cook** (Stockton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You will know that I am a member of the Select Committee on Procedure. I am somewhat puzzled that, in a debate on the Consolidated Fund Bill, when many issues are discussed briefly and at some speed throughout the night, and some hon. Members stay throughout the night to ensure that a balanced view is put, when an Opposition view is offered in truncated form, and when a Minister has refused to allow time, such a brief intervention is not allowed.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** It is for the right hon. Gentleman whose debate it is to decide whether to give way. I must add that this will be a very short debate.

**Mr. Higgins:** It is indeed a very short debate. This is traditionally an opportunity for Back Benchers to have their grievances redressed and argued before money is provided to the Government. It is not an Opposition Supply Day.

This is a constituency matter. The Government ought to go ahead with a careful study which will reappraise the Howard Humphries report. It has agreed to reconsider the figures in the light of criticism made by Atkins, and has been prepared to set up a public inquiry. I welcome both.

It is not sufficient, however, simply to revise the traffic forecasts, which have been severely criticised recently by the Public Accounts Committee, which said that the figures have tended to be underestimated and consequently less favourable to a bypass than they now will be. It is also important that a survey of traffic flows should be carried out.

I hope that my hon. Friend will carry out the survey of traffic on the basis of up to date data. The present figures are not up-to-date. It is clear that the bypass would remove traffic going from west to east and east to west, but it would also have a significant effect on traffic going from the north to the east, the east to the north, the north to the west and the west to the north. If the bypass were built, all that traffic would be removed from Findon valley, which is a built-up area in my constituency. If, however, the preferred route is confirmed—I strongly hope that it will not be—traffic will still come through Findon valley, and I believe that that means that the road will have to be made a dual carriageway. If that is so, those costs ought to be included in an appraisal of the economic value of the bypass on the one side and the so-called preferred route on the other. I hope very much that my hon. Friend will examine the figures.

*[Mr. Higgins]*

Another point of grave concern has been the delay. My constituents whose homes have been threatened do not know at what stage a decision will be reached. They have had a year of serious uncertainty, and clearly it will be some time before the revised figures can be produced and the public inquiry can take place.

I hope that my hon. Friend will make clear the position on blight, and will, if necessary, publish—in addition to the existing leaflets—a summary of where people stand. My impression is that, while those immediately on the route can now apply for a blight notice, those on either side—even if they are most seriously affected—have no prospect of compensation until 12 months after the final decision is made. That, in my view, is quite unfair, not only in this context but in the context of the Channel tunnel and other major developments. Those near to road or rail developments, as opposed to those on the exact route, must receive adequate compensation for the considerable anxiety and personal loss that they suffer. I feel strongly that the present compensation arrangements are inadequate.

Having said that, I welcome the fact that the Government have agreed to reappraise the figures. I hope that they will pay particular attention to the points that I have mentioned, including the additional cost of junctions that would be incurred if the inner route were selected—for example, at Salvington hill. I am, however, pleased that there is to be a public inquiry, which would not have happened 10 years ago. There should be a level playing field in regard to appraisal, and I hope that my hon. Friend will be able to ensure that that happens so that the inner route and the bypass route can be appraised.

The latest document issued by the Department says that figures will also be produced for a bypass route through the Findon gap, which is south of Cissbury Ring. I think that that would have serious disadvantages, not least because of the danger that building would go on up to that line. If the line is north of Cissbury Ring—which I believe is the alternative that we ought to appraise—we shall find that the building is effectively isolated by the existence of Cissbury Ring at that point. We need a clear choice between the route that has been announced as the preferred route and a real bypass, avoiding the town completely, through the Findon gap and north of Cissbury Ring.

7.57 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Robert Atkins):** I am extremely grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) for his kind remarks at the beginning of what has —inevitably and rightly—been essentially a matter affecting his constituency. Not only has my right hon. Friend a distinguished position in the House, but he is chairman of our Back-Bench committee on transport matters.

I hope that Opposition Members will not think me discourteous if I say that time has prevented too many interventions: the restrictions placed on me do not give me such time to answer the debate.

**Mr. Frank Cook:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister has properly mentioned the lack of time remaining for the debate. May I point out the strange nature of such an exchange? It was in fact, only through the courtesy of Opposition Members who truncated the previous debate that this subject was allowed to be discussed at all. There have, in fact, been three discourtesies, and I should like to place that on record.

**Mr. Atkins:** It was my understanding that this was very much a constituency matter, and I shall certainly read with care what my right hon. Friend has said on behalf of his constituents.

**Ms. Ruddock:** I congratulate the Minister on his appointment. Will he tell the House whether the proposal for the bypass has the support of the county council? What environmental damage does he think that the bypass might do to the South Downs?

**Mr. Atkins:** The hon. Lady will know as well as my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing that inevitably in all these matters, as I have discovered in the short time that I have been in this post, there are almost as many people in favour of a proposal as there are against. The persuasive powers of my right hon. Friend are such that I shall certainly look at all the submissions, whether from the hon. Lady, with whom I look forward to working, or from my right hon. Friend. We can reassure the people of Worthing who may or may not be affected by the proposals that my predecessor enunciated that their views will be looked at as carefully as possible.

*It being Eight o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.*

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

*Ordered,*

That Mr. Norman Lamont be discharged from the Select Committee on Public Accounts and Mr. Peter Lilley be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

## TELEVISING OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE

*Ordered,*

That Mr. Secretary Wakeham and Mr. David Hunt be discharged from the Select Committee on the Televising of Proceedings of the House and Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

**Mr. Terence L. Higgins** (Worthing): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a fundamental feature of our parliamentary proceedings that contol of money is crucial to the way in which power is exercised. The basis of our proceedings is that money should not be provided to Government from the Consolidated Fund until hon. Members have had the opportunity to express their grievances. That means that Ministers have to reply.

The Consolidated Fund debate is essentially one for Back Benchers to have an opportunity to raise matters of particular concern to their constituents. There is always a considerable constraint on time, and many hon. Members have not been fortunate enough to take part in the debate. Many hon. Members have been here throughout the night. I certainly have. It is quite wrong for points of order to be made which curtail debate even more.

While it is, of course, appropriate that Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen should intervene, this is not an Opposition day. As I have said, it is a day on which Back Benchers may address grievances to the Government and on which Ministers reply. In his point of order, the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) said that he is on the Procedure Committee. I chaired the Procedure Committee which made the arrangements whereby hon. Members are cut off at this hour. That was a fairly important reform and gives Back Benchers a chance to air their grievances.

Such an intervention was inappropriate. No one wishes to inhibit Front-Bench spokesmen, and I would be happy on any other occasion to give way to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock). I certainly did not wish to be discourteous to her, but I had a matter of major constituency interest to put forward and an incredibly limited time in which to deploy complicated arguments. I hope that she will understand why I did not give way.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. I think that it would be wise to leave the matter there.

## Street Lighting

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

8.4 am

**Ms. Joan Walley** (Stoke-on-Trent, North): At the outset, I should like to——

**Mr. Harry Cohen** (Leyton): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. The hon. Gentleman is cutting into the time of his hon. Friend. I hope that he will not do that.

**Mr. Cohen:** I hope that we are not adjourning the Consolidated Fund debate.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman has misunderstood. The Question has been put that the House do now adjourn. That means that he is cutting into the time of his hon. Friend. I hope that he will not do that.

**Mr. Cohen:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will oppose that motion.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman cannot do that.

**Ms. Walley:** Pedestrian safety and street lighting requires urgent debate and I am grateful for the chance to raise this important matter.

The Government have been in office for 10 years and pedestrians in various parts of the country do not feel safe outside their homes. In particular, they do not feel safe on busy roads where there is no easily accessible and safe place to cross the road. Very often, they do not feel safe in residential streets, particularly those built 30 or 40 years ago, which do not qualify for general improvement area status, and where the street lights are almost obsolete, and incapable of providing the lighting that is neded in 1989.

This is not just a constituency but a national matter, which affects mostly women, the elderly, the disabled and children. All are increasingly vulnerable when they go out after dark and find it difficult to cross the road because of lack of pedestrian crossings or of adequate in street lighting. As a result, the quality of life, which matters greatly to all, has suffered. Women do not even feel safe when collecting their children from nursery school after dark. They are afraid of attack. Elderly people are worried because although they know that the condition of the pavements is bad, with cracks and holes, they cannot see them if there is no light.

As citizens, we should be outraged when somebody almost has to be killed before a pedestrian crossing is provided on a busy street. We have to put up with all sorts of similar problems, and I do not want our elderly parents to have to live like that, or our children to be brought up in such an environment. I shall concentrate on the way in which public expenditure has become the victim of tunnel vision, instead of being aimed at meeting such needs, which were laid out in a recent report by the National Consumer Council.

How does this affect my constituency? I shall refer to the many petitions that I have received in the past year. The number of them made it essential that I took up the matter with the city council, Staffordshire county council

*[Ms. Walley]*

and the previous Minister with responsibility for district lighting. What went wrong? Why are so many people in my constituency concerned? What do we need to do, and who should do it? How can we ensure that something gets done? As the debate comes at the end of a long Session, I hope that it will enable us to shed some light on the matter. I hope that the Minister will use the recess to think about this, and that he will come back with some positive ideas for action to improve matters.

In many parts of my constituency there is not much light in the streets. For example, constituents in Duddell road presented me with a petition, shortly followed by one from people who live in Ashman street, who realised that the street lighting there was as bad as that in Duddell road. In Minder grove, in Sneyd green, residents feel that their street lighting is outdated. An estate in the Stanfields area of Burslem Park asked for help, and I took up the matter with the Midlands electricity board. It told me that the street lighting was out of date, so it was difficult to have decent lighting there. I have a series of letters, including one from the Hollywall estates residents organisation, which said:

> "We decided to ask for improvement in the quality of street lighting. A representative of the City Engineers Department, a Mr. P. Stephens, came to tell us how difficult it was going to be to get the work done on improvements, but even he admitted that the standard of street lighting on Hollywall Estate is 'Abysmal!'. The aim was, and still is to make the people of the estate, particularly the elderly, feel safe to go out from behind their locked doors after dark. We have started a Neighbourhood Watch and we hoped that this in conjunction with improved street lighting would help achieve our aim. We do not have a large vandalism problem, yet. We would like to prevent this."

Finally, I received a petition from residents on the Burslem Park estate. They want to have their lighting improved and they want lighting to be provided in many back alleyways and unadopted roads on the estate.

I took up these matters with the city council, the county council and the Minister who then had responsibility for these matters. Late one midsummer night this year—it had just about become dark at midnight but it was a night of pouring rain—I walked the streets of my constituency with members of the parliamentary lighting group, local residents, councillors and the city engineer. It was hoped that with the presence of the lighting group and representatives from Philips we would have an independent assessment of what needed to be done to improve the street lights in residential areas. It is to main trunk roads that the majority of Government moneys are directed through the county councils and the highways departments.

We took a close look at all the problems and it was explained to me by the chairman of the city council highways committee, Councillor Gordon Tuck, that the responsibility rests with the county council because Stoke-on-Trent is not a highway authority in its own right. The county council explained to me that it could not do anything because over the past two years its capital budget has been reduced by 40 per cent. The Minister will know that the transport supplementary grant is so organised that 95 per cent. of the money is spent on designated, named, major traffic schemes. The small-scale expenditure that I am talking about is not that sort of designated expenditure, and it would seem that there is no chance that the money will be made available. I learnt from the county council that £17,000 has been made available for street lighting for the entire county in the past year.

When the time comes for the Minister to reply, I am sure that he will leap to his feet—I know that he visited Stoke-on-Trent in a previous incarnation—to tell us that the matter has nothing to do with him and that another Department should realise what needs to be done. But if a local authority is not a highway authority in its own right, it has no control over the priority that is attached to street lighting. If a local authority has not been designated by the Department of the Environment as an urban programme area, as is the case with Stoke-on-Trent, funds that might be available to similar parts of the country are not available to spend on street lighting.

Stoke has no programme area status, and has been denied access to another budget that could have helped us to improve street lighting. Government cuts to local councils have left them without money to invest in essential infrastructure on the scale that is required and which I and others have identified in Stoke-on-Trent.

We could ask the Home Office whether it could help. A major part of the debate relates to crime prevention. I am sure that the Government will be aware of an important report by Kate Painter on the Edmonton project, which was funded by the Thorn lighting division. That project shows that, without doubt, improved street lighting can dramatically, immediately and at low cost reduce specific crime and—this is equally important—the fear of crime within a locality.

I asked the county council whether money could be made available through the police budget to improve street lighting. Costings show that for every £500 spent on improved street lighting, the cost of crime is reduced by about £2,000 annually.

If the existing obsolete street lighting is replaced there will be at least two further benefits. Photographs taken all over my constituency prove that the existing standards have rotted, and there is a clear danger that they could fall and hit people. Also, if the outdated technology is improved, huge energy savings will be made. Is there any possibility that the Department of Trade and Industry or the Department of Energy will consider the matter in terms of the energy savings that could result from a short-term investment?

I return to my constituency, and to the councillors, city engineer, and crime prevention officer who walked the streets of Tunstall, Burslem and Smallthorne with me in the pouring rain on a dark night in the hope of bringing the problem of street lighting in those places to the Government's attention.

It would cost approximately £500,000 per annum to replace the city's 22,000 street lights every 25 to 30 years. I have already explained that only £17,000 was available last year for the county's entire lighting needs. A large proportion of street lighting on Stoke-on-Trent's 361 unclassified roads is now at the end of its useful life and is deteriorating rapidly. Current lighting levels in those areas fall well below even the minimum recommended by the British Standards Institution, represented by the figure of 1·0. The average standard achieved in Stoke-on-Trent is only 0·6, which gives some idea of the extent of the problem.

It is a question of the quality of life, but so far no policy has been formulated for directing money at lighting needs. Perhaps it would be possible to increase the transport supplementary grant. The Cabinet is currently dispensing the public expenditure allocations for next year. Perhaps there could be greater flexibility, so that 95 per cent. of the money available will not have to be spent on major, named schemes, with very little left for smaller projects.

What are the Government doing to co-ordinate the activities of the different but relevant Departments? I should like to see established a rolling programme of street lighting improvement and replacement in my constituency and elsewhere in the country. I hope that, as we near the last day of the Session, the Government will announce the introduction of a mechanism to deal with the problems that I have described, so that in the future my constituents can leave their homes after dark and still feel safe—which is the most important thing of all.

8.14 am

**The Minister for Roads and Traffic (Mr. Robert Atkins):** I congratulate the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North, (Ms. Walley) on the way in which she has raised, with her own inimitable charm, the anxieties of her constituents expressed by way of petition and letter. It was right and proper that she should do so in some detail.

Being the charitable lady that I know her to be, she will realise that I am not yet in a position to speak with great authority. The forthcoming holiday will be the time when I work my way through a great deal of the documentation which will include matters relating to pedestrian safety and lighting which she has drawn to the attention of the House.

The hon. Lady will know that in a former incarnation within the Department of Trade and Industry, I was made fully aware of the activities of the parliamentary lighting group. Indeed, I addressed it on one auspicious evening. As a result of those responsibilities, I learned about the manufacturing problems arising from the lighting of pedestrian areas and streets.

I hope that the hon. Lady will understand if I say that I shall read what she has had to say and what I have heard myself so that I shall be able to deal with the details when we return after a much-needed recess.

Let me briefly touch upon what I understand to be the case for pedestrian safety, particularly in the context of lighting, which has been left to me by my predecessor and my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Department.

The hon. Lady may or may not know that a leaflet on pedestrian safety was published not too long ago. It contained new proposals for making walking safer. I was fascinated to learn that the hon. Lady trekked the streets of her constituency in the pouring rain one summer evening. We all get involved in such activities in one way or another. She may have recognised then, if she had not already done so in the course of her activities, that the safety of pedestrians, whether in daylight or at night, is a matter for the Department of Transport.

The document deals with five areas—education and training; road engineering; our conspicuity campaign to encourage greater use of fluorescent and reflective clothing; the responsibilities of pedestrians as well as those in the local authority who look after their safety, and, above all, research, one of the areas in which I was slightly involved in the Department of Trade and Industry.

The leaflet has been well received by many people, certainly by all those involved in such matters. As the hon. Lady says, street lighting is important to road safety. The number of night-time casualty accidents is 30 per cent. of the total number of accidents, whereas night-time traffic flows amount to about 25 per cent. of the total traffic. It is clear from those statistics that the accident rate is higher at night, a matter to which the hon. Lady drew the attention of the House. Moreover, night-time accidents in general are more severe, with a higher proportion of casualties killed or seriously injured.

Road lighting reduces night-time accidents by some 30 per cent. Most urban roads are lit. I have visited Stoke-on-Trent three times, but I am not familiar with all the roads there. However, I suspect that most will be lighted to a greater or lesser extent. Even so, about 95 per cent. of pedestrian casualties and 80 per cent. of pedestrian fatalities occur on roads in built-up areas.

In 1987, the latest year for which we have figures, 28 per cent. of pedestrian casualties and 45 per cent. of pedestrian deaths occurred during night time. The proportion of pedestrians killed or seriously injured is higher at night than in daylight—about 38 per cent. at night, compared with 28 per cent. in daylight.

Accidents at or within 50 m of pedestrian crossings are more frequent at night, but there are few such accidents on unlit streets. The Department's guidance on lighting at crossings includes advice on supplementary lighting on the footways in the vicinity of a crossing. Floodlighting of crossings leads to poorer relative illumination of the surrounding roadway, where more pedestrians are injured than on the crossing itself.

As the hon. Lady drew to the attention of the House, street lighting in urban areas has three benefits. There are the road safety and general pedestrian amenity aspects, as well as the deterrence of crime and, as the hon. Lady rightly said, the improved safety of women at night.

The hon. Lady asked about the involvement of a variety of Departments and I shall get around to answering her questions in due course. The Home Office and the Departments of Transport, of Trade and Industry and of the Environment deal with safety as it relates to street lighting and the general pedestrian amenity.

In England local authority expenditure on lighting has remained around 14 or 15 per cent. of their total road current expenditure over the past five years—although, as the hon. Lady said, in Staffordshire it fell from 16 per cent. to 13 per cent. in that same period. During the past five years local authorities have not always spent all the money allocated for road expenditure. The hon. Lady will know better than I do what Staffordshire spends and she will also appreciate that these are matters for the authority.

I cannot really comment on capital allocations overall, because those are matters for the Department of the Environment, and it is down to each county authority or metropolitan borough to decide how to allocate its expenditure. I can only suggest that if the hon. Lady speaks to her local authority with the same persuasive charm with which she has addressed the House its representatives will recognise the needs of her constituents in Burslem and other places where lighting is weak.

Road lighting is designed so that pedestrians will appear as a dark outline shape against a bright road surface. It provides some illumination of adjacent footways to aid pedestrians and forewarn drivers. Lighting should be in operation from about 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise. The practice adopted by some local authorities of extinguishing some lighting during periods of very low traffic flow is detrimental to the interests of emergency services, to public security and

*[Mr. Robert Atkins]*

especially to pedestrians, as well as incurring a loss of accident savings. Moreover, the energy saved is relatively small in terms of costs. Such a practice is not generally helpful to the safety of pedestrians in areas that need lighting.

Of the 108 English local highway authorities, only 71 included bids for street lighting expenditure in their transport policies and programmes submissions for 1989-90. Some of the planned work is likely to have been for the benefit of residential areas, although few authorities specified that. The hon. Lady asked what expenditure would be in the current public expenditure round. I am not in a position to judge at this stage. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury will doubtless be examining all matters relating to that in considerable detail. Time will tell, although, on a brief acquaintance with the Department for which I am now privileged to speak, it appears that we have had a very large allocation in our budget, and we hope that the transport community will benefit across the board.

The hon. Lady referred to other Departments. She may or may not be aware that the Home Office is sponsoring research into the link between low lighting and crime. So far, there is no research evidence to show that road lighting reduces crime rates, although common sense suggests that it must. Some research shows that better lighting significantly reduces the fear of crime. Of course people will be happier if they go out and can feel secure because they can see their way. We all know the problems that arise with dark alley ways, particularly on housing estates, and with underpasses. The Home Office is addressing itself to precisely those matters.

All in all, I am delighted that the hon. Lady has drawn my attention to these important matters, which I shall have to consider in detail. As I acquaint myself with the subject during the next few weeks I shall reflect on the hon. Lady's questions and ensure that I ask similar questions of my officials, to see whether we can find solutions that will be of benefit to pedestrians generally and especially to those constituents to whom the hon. Lady referred in the part of her constituency that had difficulties. I hope that next time we meet across a crowded Chamber, we shall be able to discuss the matter in more detail.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty-eight minutes past Eight o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Friday 28 July 1989*

*The House met at half-past Nine o'clock*

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PETITIONS

### Chinese Students

9.34 am

**Dr. Jeremy Bray** (Motherwell, South): I wish to present two petitions from citizens of the United Kingdom and students from Hong Kong and China resident in the United Kingdom.

Many Chinese students joined in sympathetic demonstrations in Britain in support of their fellow students and friends who demonstrated so courageously in support of democracy in China in June. Like those in Peking, they were filmed, blacklisted and threatened with future punishment by the Chinese authorities. The temporary extension of their visas is welcome, but not enough.

The petition states:

> "Wherefore your petitioners pray that your honourable House urges the Government to extend the visas and grant political asylum to those Chinese students who fear political prosecution if they go back to China and your petitioners in duty bound will ever pray etc."

*To lie upon the Table.*

The second petition is for the right of abode for all Hong Kong passport holders, a matter of continuing concern in Hong Kong since the House debated it on 13 July.

The House must establish a fully democratic Government in Hong Kong which can seek the best available international arrangements for the people of Hong Kong before 1997.

The petition states:

> "Wherefore your petitioners pray that your honourable House urges the Government to grant the right of abode to all Hong Kong passport holders."

*To lie upon the Table.*

### Development (Leicester)

**Mr. Keith Vaz** (Leicester, East): I wish to present a petition on behalf of Mr. Christopher Vernon and Mrs Anne Vernon of 49 Veredale avenue, Leicester and Mr. Don Finlay and Mrs. Diana Finlay of 51 Veredale avenue, Leicester, Mr. Freddy Miles and Wendy Clayton of 19 Warren View, Leicester, and Miss Betty Beck of 57 Veredale avenue, Leicester, and 700 other local residents who are utterly opposed to the proposed development by Barratt East Midlands Ltd., of a piece of land in the Barkby Thorpe road area.

It has come to the notice of residents that the land had been used for dumping and now comprises one of the largest areas of landfill gas in the country. It is the view of the residents expressed at the public meetings and in letters to me, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Leicester city council and Leicestershire county council, any works on the site would be dangerous and cause intolerable inconvenience.

The residents therefore ask for proper consultation with the local authorities to enable a strategy to be adopted which will result in a solution that is acceptable to the residents as they live there. I support them absolutely. I commend the work of the West Humberstone (Humberstone Lane Area) residents committee. The petition states:

> "To the Honourable, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled. The humble petition of Leicester residents sheweth that the people of Leicester object to the proposed residential development in the Barkby Thorpe area by Barratt East Midlands Ltd. Wherefore your petitioners pray that your honourable House encourage the Secretary of State for the Environment to take action to persuade the Leicester city council and Leicestershire county council to prevent the development from taking place."

*To lie upon the Table.*

# Gas Prices (Horticulture)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. John M. Taylor.]*

9.38 am

**Mr. Barry Field** (Isle of Wight): I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity for this morning's debate, and I thank my hon. Friend the Minister of State for being here to reply. It may be helpful if I quickly paint in some of the background to my request for this debate this morning.

In October 1988, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission published its report and recommendations about the future pricing of contract gas. That followed a long and sustained campaign by Sheffield forgemasters and others about the cost of gas for those with very big loads. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry accepted the report and asked the Director General of Gas Supply to seek agreement with British Gas to modify its authorisation to give effect to the recommendations. The proposed and agreed draft modifications were published at the end of January. There then followed a 28-day period for representations on the proposals. Early in that period, British Gas published an explanatory memorandum showing the likely form of the pricing schedules that would be introduced as a result of the proposed modification. That memorandum was sent to the 20,000 contract customers of British Gas.

It is fair to say that the National Farmers Union and the regional gas boards were taken by surprise by the MMC proposals and their effect. They had believed, and I believe had encouraged their customers likewise, that the MMC report was likely to affect large industrial users only. With hindsight they realise that they had not, as a result of their initial belief, made as strenuous representations as they might have done had they foreseen the effect on the glasshouse growers.

At this stage it is worth putting down a marker—I find it extraordinary that the MMC and the Office of Fair Trading seem to conspire against small business men in all their recent reports. We have seen that happen with publican tenants or responsible brewers building up their clientele, or—here I must declare an interest—local funeral directors trying to compete with the mighty Co-op.

In this case glasshouse growers are trying to compete with their Dutch competitors. Even before the proposed price increases resulting from the MMC report, our glasshouse growers faced a price differential disadvantage in comparison with the Dutch who are still buying gas in volumes as low as 25,000 therms per annum at the price of 15·5p per therm, compared with 16·1p per therm for 500,000 to 1 million therms charged by British Gas. So that there can be no doubt that alternative fuels are not an option, heavy fuel oil was, at the time of the published proposals, 15·91p per therm. It carries none of the $CO_2$ advantages of gas, which I shall describe later.

Those facts make the conclusions of the MMC report, that British Gas prices for interruptible gas supplies were broadly in line with the rest of the Common Market and that prices were also comparable for small-firm gas customers, all the more extraordinary and breathtaking. They demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the effect that the clumsy intervention and interference of the MMC with the established market will have on the small business man. The MMC's proposals, taken together with its obsession and that of the OFT for transparent pricing, demonstrate that they are a recipe for disaster for the small business man, the little entrepreneur and the fledgling capitalist that the Government have done so much to nurture and encourage.

After all, every French restaurant must, by law, exhibit its prices ouside the premises, but any self-respecting Englishman will tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that no one has ever succeeded in paying a bill that bears any relation to that published menu. Similarly, in the energy market, every liquid petroleum gas and fuel oil salesman in the country is rubbing his hands in glee at the prospect of pitching his undisclosed price just below the British Gas published price.

I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who is new to the post, will get to grips with the enclaves of theoreticians and academic gombeen men at the MMC, who have consistently failed to champion the cause of the small business man in practically every commercial sphere on which they have published reports. In this case, their philosophy to the market gardener seems to have been "tough tomato".

I have not come to this debate today as a Back-Bench banshee seeking to grab the headlines by screeching my complaints at my right hon. Friend. It is much more my style to seek the route of practical politics by endeavouring to find a solution without bothering the apparatus of Whitehall. In this case I have carefully examined the possibility of glasshouse growers connecting up their gas mains to one another so that they become a single customer of British Gas. That would mean that the total load would be eligible for the lower tariff prices; that would remove, or at least alleviate, the economic disadvantage faced by those growers. That proposition, however, is not financially viable and it would require capital investment beyond the reach of the growers. In any event, it would require such a long buy-back period as to be a financial disaster.

Under the new schedule, interruptible supply will be available only to single premises taking in excess of 250,000 therms per year. In the past, British Gas has allowed several independent nurseries to form a gas group so that the price could be based on their total consumption.

Being nothing if not resourceful, my second line of attack in practical political terms was to seek to use the MMC's directive that British Gas should make available its pipeline for other suppliers to contract gas supplies to commercial users. As the Wytch Farm gas and oil site is not far from my constituency, and as the chairman of the Isle of Wight development board is the recently retired chairman and chief executive of Mobil Oil, I asked whether he would investigate that proposal for our island growers.

The possibility of providing low-price gas to other island commercial customers appeared extremely attractive. Such gas could be used by other glasshouse growers in adjoining constituencies. The thought of establishing the island as a centre of low-cost energy appealed to my commercial instincts and would probably accelerate our economy quicker than any application for assisted-area status, which has been the longest running campaign that the island has ever mounted.

We were told, however, by Mr. Legatt, British Petroleum's section manager, that gas supplies from Wytch Farm are fully committed until more fields come on stream in 1991-92. I hope that my right hon. Friend will therefore appreciate that I have examined all the possibilities before bringing this matter to the House.

One other dimension that must be considered is the environmental effect of the MMC proposals. Glasshouse growers have invested heavily in $CO_2$extraction plants that take the $CO_2$ out of the flue gases from the gas-fired boilers and circulate it in the greenhouse, which is an essential ingredient to any plant's growth. Before the introduction of gas-fired boilers, growers had to purchase bulk $CO_2$ and introduce it into the glasshouses from bottled gas. It is extraordinary that the Government are, quite rightly, pursuing environmentally sensitive policies on the atmosphere, but the MMC report, if effected, will require growers to switch back to fossil fuels. That will therefore increase the amount of "nox and sox" put into the atmosphere.

By purchasing gas for their heating and recovering $CO_2$ from the flue gases, growers are pursuing as environmentally sensitive a policy as one could possibly get. That is especially true when one appreciates that it is coupled with an extraordinarily efficient energy-saving arrangement, whereby the heat of the flue gas is also used to heat water storage heat reservoirs, which are then used to supplement the heating requirements during the night-time drop in temperature.

Currently, the glasshouse industry of the United Kingdom has an output value of £271·4 million per annum for vegetable crops and £156 million for ornamental crops at 1987 prices. Those figures show that the industry is making a substantial saving in imports and therefore making a contribution to our balance of payments. Much as we love the Dutch, every British housewife would prefer to buy her pound of tomatoes from an English grower, providing that the price is right.

The glasshouse growers were encouraged to invest in the provision of new gas pipelines for their glasshouses in the expectation that the contracts into which they had entered with their local gas boards would be held in terms of the price for interruptible supplies for a few years hence. Indeed, in one case, taken together with the provision of the $CO_2$ extraction plant, the total capital expended on a gas main and new energy-efficient gas boilers has been £100,000

One can therefore imagine the considerable anger and frustration that the glasshouse growers feel in finding that, because of the MMC's requirements for British Gas to publish a price tariff, the price of interruptible gas will rise from 16.1p per therm—already less competitive than the Dutch prices that I have mentioned—to 26.5p per therm, assuming that the grower continues to opt for the same maximum period of interruption. That is a rise of 64 per cent., with no rights of negotiation and no discussions between customer and supplier.

As a result of the representations made to me by the glasshouse growers, I contacted the Director General of Gas Supply, Mr. James McKinnon, who kindly agreed to visit the Isle of Wight and see at first hand the enterprising way in which the glasshouse growers were conducting their business and the effect that this massive increase in their prices will have on their business. As a result of that arrangement and representations that he has received from parliamentary colleagues on the Conservative Back-Bench horticultural committee, he has published a seven-point set of proposals, which he has asked British Gas to look at. These state:

> "The number of bands in the price schedule should be expanded in firm and interrupted contract categories to cater for higher levels of volume. Aggregation should be available in both categories. The number of proposals for which firm supplies can be aggregated should be increased to cover all customers' circumstances.
>
> All legitimate trading affinity groups and energy management companies or other agents offering centralised contracts should be permitted to aggregate for the purpose of price qualification in both the firm and interrupted sectors.
>
> Load factors to be introduced without delay as further determinant of the prices charged to customers.
>
> Arrangements should be made to 'buffer' the impact of changing from one band to another.
>
> The existing matrix of choice should be expanded to provide a further range of options. An understanding should be given that interruptions under contract should, if possible, be pre-arranged with customers.
>
> A review should be carried out as to the choices which are presently offered in terms of an inflator or indices.
>
> Some customers have experienced very heavy increases in prices. For such customers the transition period should be extended to three years."

On Friday 14 July, I met the regional deputy chairman of Southern Gas in Southampton and put to him the points about the effect that those increases would have on the glasshouse grower, the point being that in most businesses the energy cost of heating the premises is a small proportion of the total overheads, but in the glasshouse industry it amounts to some 30 per cent. of total production costs. It would be fair to say that Mr. Webb, the regional deputy chairman, and I had a robust conversation, but I believe that, having spoken to Mr. Young, the regional chairman, having corresponded with Sir Denis Rooke, the chairman of British Gas, and having met on no fewer than three occasions the Director General of Gas Supply, it is time for a champion in the Department of Energy to blow the whistle on behalf of the glasshouse growing industry and say that enough is enough.

The simple solution to this problem would be to allow glasshouse growers who are members of a similar buying and selling co-operative group to aggregate their supplies, even if this meant that the regional gas board was committed to invoicing a single trading entity, leaving the members to divide the costs and recover the payments among themselves.

The information that British Gas has given me—that it believes that the MMC's report prevents it from doing this—is falsely based. That is certainly the view of Ofgas. It criticises my solution also on the ground that other organisations will be able to aggregate their supplies and obtain a lower tariff. On one occasion, it was suggested that every betting shop would wish to aggregate its demand. We in the House are well used to attempts to rubbish logical solutions by extreme argument. The fact is that, whether multinational conglomerates or high street retailing chains, they are none of them part of the same purchasing and selling consortium. Each is a trading entity or a cost centre in its own right. Even if these organisations are centrally supplied, they are not also a consortium for sales in the daily marketplace, and it is that that distinguishes the growers from other gas consumers. After all, the MMC accepted the exception for customers who used gas as a feedstock for ammonia production.

I believe that allowing aggregation is not such a problem, nor is it so likely outside horticulture, where, as in all things, growers, like farmers, are well used to pooling their resources to obtain a stable price for their produce and to buy as cheaply as possible their fertilisers, packing

*[Mr. Barry Field]*

requirements and so on. Also, these nurseries provide British Gas with summer demand, thereby balancing its total demand throughout the year.

I look to my right hon. Friend the Minister to champion this cause. I feel like a dog that has a flea in its tail; I have gone round and round in circles trying to end this small irritation. Like that flea, I believe that there is common ground between myself, the regional gas board and the chairman of British Gas on the view that the amounts involved for horticulture and the pricing of an aggregated gas supply for horticulturists are a fleabite in the total contracted interruptable gas supplies in the United Kingdom. British Gas has promised a response by September to the seven proposals from Ofgas. As my right hon. Friend the Minister lists gardening as one of his pleasures, I hope that he will ensure that, before we return to the House, everything in the greenhouse will be lovely once again.

9.56 am

**The Minister of State, Department of Energy (Mr. Peter Morrison):** I am delighted that my hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Field) has had the opportunity to raise this important matter in the House on the last day before we rise for the summer recess. I listened to him carefully and, without wishing to sound patronising, I was extremely impressed by the tremendous work that he put into not only his speech but the whole issue, talking to many people to find a solution. He did not in any sense give me the impression that he was a dog with a flea in its tail; rather that he was a lion who had stalked through the jungle.

I agree with much of what my hon. Friend said. He noted that I count gardening among my hobbies, so I take a particular interest in the glasshouse growers. They are a shining example of what the Government have been doing over the past 10 years, and especially of the lead that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has given. I can therefore assure my hon. Friend that I share his concern about the problems experienced by horticulturists and other customers because of the introduction of British Gas's first price schedule. I assure my hon. Friend that Ofgas, which is so ably led by Mr. James McKinnon, and, to be fair, British Gas, are alive to the difficulties and that British Gas has committed itself to considering a number of proposals for improvements and to reaching conclusions, as my hon. Friend pointed out in the latter part of his speech, by the end of September.

I shall return to the present position in more detail, but it is important first to put gas prices in context.

The House will recall that, when British Gas was privatised, the market for gas to customers using more than 25,000 therms—non-tariff customers—was made subject to normal competition law. Gas was already facing competition from other fuels, and, in order to promote competition in gas supply, the Gas Act 1986 included further provisions to enable others to acquire rights to use British Gas pipelines. In particular, Ofgas was given the power to make directions on charges and other terms.

In November 1987, following major anxieties about British Gas's pricing policy, the Director General of Fair Trading referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the issue of the supply of gas through pipes to non-tariff customers. In making the reference, the director general set out four matters of concern to him: the arbitrariness of individual prices and price changes; wider differences in prices paid by customers with similar requirements and levels of consumption; contracts only fixing prices for a very short period—three months or less; and British Gas's total control over whether to provide interruptible supplies.

The MMC's report was published in October last year. In it, the MMC said that it found extensive discrimination by British Gas in the pricing and supply of gas to contract customers, and went on:

> "We believe that this is attributable to the monopoly situation and operates or may be expected to operate against the public interest in a number of respects. First, British Gas's policy of price discrimination imposes higher costs on customers less well placed to use alternative fuels or to obtain such fuels on favourable terms, which in turn puts an arbitrary cost disadvantage on these consumers, and distorts competition in the markets in which they operate. Secondly, British Gas's policy of relating prices to those of the alternatives available to each customer places it in a position selectively to undercut potential gas suppliers. This may be expected to deter new entrants and to inhibit the development of competition in the market. Thirdly, the lack of transparency in pricing creates uncertainty in the minds of customers about future gas prices and renders more risky the business environment in which they operate. Furthermore, British Gas's refusal to supply interruptible gas to some customers imposes additional costs on those users; its prices for gas used in Combined Heat and Power schemes have inhibited the implementation of some such schemes; and its insistence on particular contract terms has imposed additional costs on users. We have also concluded that British Gas's failure to provide adequate information on the costs of common carriage, its ability to use information obtained when negotiating common carriage terms to identify potential customers of potential suppliers and the potential source of gas, and its position as a dominant purchaser of gas, may all be expected to operate against the public interest by deterring new entry to the market."

I accept that this is all rather a mouthful, but it led to a number of important recommendations which the MMC believed would encourage competition in the supply of gas and restrain British Gas's discriminatory policy on pricing and supply of gas until such competition was effective. The MMC's main recommendations were that British Gas should be required to publish a schedule of prices at which it is prepared to supply gas to contract customers, and not to discriminate in pricing or supply. Secondly, the MMC recommended that British Gas should not refuse to supply interruptible gas on the basis of the use made of the gas or the alternative fuel available. Thirdly, British Gas should publish further information on common carriage terms in sufficient detail to put a potential customer in a position to make a reasonable estimate of the charge that would be sought by British Gas. Fourthly and finally, British Gas should be required to contract initially for no more than 90 per cent. of any new gas field.

The MMC recognised—this was inevitable—that among British Gas's customers some would lose and some would gain from the recommendations. That is something which common sense dictates and which we had to accept in endorsing the commission's findings and recommended solutions. Like the MMC, we believe that price increases will be considerably outweighed by price decreases, that the MMC's proposals will contribute to the emergence of effective competition in gas supply, and that only such competition can produce a long-term solution to the adverse effects that it has identified.

Essentially, the MMC endorsed the basic approach of the Gas Act in making this section of the gas market subject to the normal requirements of competition, rather than going for a regulated system. Its regulations build on that, in order to make competitive pressures more effective.

On 19 October, Lord Young, then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, welcomed the report and set out the steps being taken. The Director General of Gas Supply, Mr. James McKinnon, was asked to seek agreement with British Gas on modifications to its authorisation to implement the recommendations on pricing and contract policies in the supply of gas to large users, and on the provision of information on its common carriage terms for transmission of gas. The Director General of Fair Trading was asked to consult interested parties with a view to proposing a scheme which would make it easier for companies other than British Gas to buy gas from developers of gas fields.

These measures have now been put into effect. Ofgas went out to consultation on the modification to British Gas's authorisation on 31 January. British Gas's first price schedule was published on 20 March and came into effect on 1 May. My hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs announced on 27 April a Government target for 10 per cent. of all new gas contracted from producers to be supplied to final consumers by suppliers other than British Gas. British Gas published common carriage information on 15 June.

Since British Gas's first price schedule was published there have been a number of reactions from these customers, including—and this is why we are here today—horticulturists, who felt that they would be adversely and unfairly affected. Some of these have been about obvious flaws in the schedule, such as the incentive to waste gas at the boundaries of the volume bands. Some have related to the level of price increases, which in some cases appear to have been higher even than British Gas's expectations; others have related to changes in terms such as the introduction of minimum periods of interruption into interruptible contracts. All these concerns have gone to Mr. McKinnon for him to pursue, and he has kept me informed of the situation. Only yesterday, he and I had a further full and detailed discussion of these issues. We are keeping them in the front of our minds.

British Gas's price schedule is subject to competitive pressures in the ability of some customers to switch to alternative fuels. Therefore, British Gas recognises the need to reconsider in the light of its customers' reactions.

Representations from horticulturalists have covered many of the points raised by my hon. Friend, who I suspect has already covered many of the following points. They say that some increases in gas prices are very large, with claimed instances of up to 100 per cent. Energy costs account for a quarter to a third of the total cost inputs to the business. Interruptible supplies are no longer available to growers with consumption below 250,000 therms a year. Buying groups are no longer recognised. Growers have made major investments based on gas, and because of their requirement to use flue gas—$CO_2$—for injection to glasshouses, they are particularly tied to gas. Their competitors in the Netherlands obtain firm gas at very low prices. They are believed to pay lower prices than customers in other sectors with similar consumption.

My hon. and noble Friend, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has given me a clear picture of the effects of the price schedule. My hon. Friends the Members for Broxbourne (Mrs. Roe) and for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Paice) have been in frequent contact with me on the matter, and other hon. Friends have written to me about the impact on horticulture in their constituencies.

I certainly recognise that this is a progressive industry. Glasshouse growers have invested heavily to incorporate the latest in heating equipment and environmental control technology. They achieve high energy efficiencies of up to 93 per cent. with modern systems, in addition to using the waste $CO_2$. They have been quick to take up and develop new R and D. They operate in competitive markets, not dependent on European Community support systems. With this background, it is clear that the problems the industry has raised are not just whingeing, but serious issues deserving attention.

On 17 July, Ofgas announced that British Gas had agreed to consider a number of proposals designed to improve the recently introduced system of pricing, and that British Gas expected to reach conclusions on them by September. The proposals were that the number of bands in the price schedule should be expanded in firm and interrupted contract categories to cater for the higher levels of volume; aggregation should be available in both categories; the number of premises for which firm supplies can be aggregated should be increased to cover all customers' circumstances.

The proposals also stated that all legitimate trading affinity groups and energy management companies or other agents offering centralised contracts should be permitted to aggregate for the purpose of price qualification in both the firm and interrupted sectors; that load factors should be introduced without delay as further determinants of the prices charged to customers; that arrangements should be made to "buffer" the impact of changing from one volume band to another; and that the existing matrix of choice should be expanded to provide a further range of options. An understanding should be given that interruptions under contract should, if possible, be pre-arranged with customers.

The proposals continued: a review should be carried out as to the choices which are presently offered in terms of an inflator or indices; some customers have experienced very heavy increases in price and for such customers the transition period should be extended to three years. In a separate press release, British Gas has confirmed that those are the areas that it is now studying.

Those proposals are not aimed specifically at horticulturists. To do so would be to engage in the sort of discrimination that the MMC wished to eliminate, and which has indeed been eliminated by the requirement on British Gas to operate to a published price schedule. However, from the representations made by growers, it seems that, to the extent that they are taken up by British Gas, a number of these proposals could assist the glasshouse sector.

The regulatory arrangements for gas are proving responsive and effective. The original problems were taken to the MMC and the MMC produced a set of interrelated recommendations designed to remove discrimination and encourage competition. Those recommendations have

*[Mr. Peter Morrison]*

been implemented. British Gas's first price schedule has admittedly resulted in difficulties for some customers and a number of complaints.

These have now been taken up by Ofgas and have resulted in constructive discussion between it and British Gas, and proposals which British Gas has agreed to consider. The system is working as it should and the matters are properly ones for Mr. McKinnon to follow through; it is now up to British Gas to be responsive to its customers' needs.

There is also a European dimension. We in the United Kingdom have gone further towards non-discriminatory pricing and the encouragement to competition than other EC countries. We shall be trying to persuade our partners in Europe to move in the same direction so that there can be no question of assistance to particular sectors in those countries from discriminatory fuel pricing.

I hope that British Gas is changing its attitude, from one which began as perhaps a little negative to becoming more positive.

## Occupational Therapy

10.15 am

**Mr. Keith Vaz** (Leicester, East): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise this important subject on the Floor of the House and I am grateful to the Minister for his attendance this morning. The crisis in the occupational therapy service affects thousands of my constituents and tens of thousands of people throughout the country. I believe that hon. Members share my enormous sense of frustration at the policy towards occupational therapy services. I have received complaints from the disabled and elderly whose lives are limited and restricted because of the grave difficulties in the service. Many are in agony and are prisoners in their own homes.

I begin by commending the work of occupational therapists. The overwhelming number—as many as 95 per cent.—are women and they work under enormous pressure. I also commend the following for bringing to my attention, and therefore allowing me to bring to the attention of the House, information of great relevance: the College of Occupational Therapists; the editor and staff of *Therapy Weekly;* Mr. Mick Welles, the deputy director of the social services for Leicestershire county council; Councillor Valerie Vaz of the London borough of Ealing and Mr. Ian Buchanan who is one of her officials. I thank them all for their efforts.

Social services departments the length and breadth of the country are only too aware of the severe delays experienced by disabled people in receiving a service from occupational therapists. Many of the departments have considered detailed reports on the problems in their areas. The problems have been compounded by the fact that many more people are becoming aware of what might be available to them and are going directly to the social services departments or going through their doctors. The service has expanded in many areas, but the real problem lies in the recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

The current vacancy level for occupational therapists in Leicestershire is running at 37 per cent. The national average is just below that. A survey by the Association of Directors of Social Services from January to April 1988 revealed a 35 per cent. vacancy rate and that 18 per cent. of posts were vacant for more than six months. The shortage has become critical. The association estimated that nationally it was short of 250 occupational therapists.

The Minister must acknowledge the fact that the Government's policies of reducing the number of patients in hospital have contributed to the problem. Those difficulties have been exacerbated by the provisions of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 in relation to the assessment and provision of services to disabled people. That Act will create even greater demands for the services and skills of occupational therapists.

About a year ago, on 26 July 1988, the Association of County Councils social services committee met to discuss this subject and endorsed its members' grave concern at the increasing demand for and limited supply of occupational therapists. In a meeting with the Department of Health and Social Security on 27 June 1988 and in previous meetings with the College of Occupational Therapists and the National Association of Health Authorities in England and Wales, it identified the loss of staff, the need to increase training places and the increased need for sponsorship for training as key elements in the strategy to overcome problems. Because of demand, local authorities such as mine in Leicestershire have had to prioritise work.

Local authorities have agreed that the resources of the occupational therapy service should be concentrated as much as possible on two categories of need as defined by the Department. Category A includes the very severely handicapped—persons who consistently need night care such as help with toileting or turning in bed and who, in addition to night care, need help with basic feeding, washing, dressing and daytime toileting. They are all situations in which handicapped people are unable to care for themselves, as many are bed or wheelchair-bound. Category B includes severely or appreciably handicapped persons who do not need consistent night time care but who may need considerable help from another person in order to cope with at least one essential activity of daily living—dressing or undressing, feeding, bathing or toileting.

Leicestershire and other authorities decided that the resources of the occupational therapy service would be best deployed in accordance with a scale of priorities. Priority 1 was to be acute cases, or referrals showing that, without immediate action by the occupational therapy service, the client's health could be seriously impaired. Included in this priority are those who are chronically ill —referrals showing that action by the occupational therapy service is required immediately to prevent the client's circumstances from rapidly deteriorating, with the possibility of hospital admission.

Priority 2 included urgent cases, or referrals which showed that the client was unable to sustain independence without further support or that informal carers could no longer cope without assistance.

Priority 3 included referrals that showed that the client was unable to sustain independence without further assistance but where support systems were available via informal carers and/or other support services that could at least help in the short term.

As the first call on the resources available to the occupational therapy service was to be for acute cases in priority 1, or the urgent cases in priority 2, the waiting list has built up for the other priority categories.

The waiting lists have become a damning indictment of the present system. According to the latest figures for Leicestershire, from March to April 1989, in the first category 245 cases were dealt with and 315 cases were being progressed. There were no waiting times for those in the acute or chronic category. The priority 2 category was for urgent cases. I remind the House of the terms of reference: referrals which show that the client is unable to sustain independence without further support or if informal carers can no longer cope without assistance. The current waiting time in the Leicester city east division is 36 weeks, or nine months. From March to April 1989, 249 cases were dealt with, 332 cases were ongoing, 450 new cases arrived on the desk of the director of social services, and a staggering 1,680 cases were awaiting allocation or assessment.

Priority 3 cases were clients to be visited as soon as possible. Again I remind the House of the terms of reference: referrals which show that the client is unable to sustain independence without further assistance but where support systems are available via informal carers and other support services, but only in the short term.

The waiting time is more than 35 weeks. From March to April 1989, 111 cases were closed, 115 cases were progressed, 219 new cases arrived, and 727 cases were awaiting allocation or assessment.

Those are the statistics. They do not tell us about the human misery behind them. For example, I refer to the case of Mrs. Jean Wilson of 3 Frisby road, Leicester, who wrote:

> "I am writing to you in regards to my situation. I am severely disabled . . . with a serious heart condition which means I can hardly walk and I cannot climb stairs . . . I have now been in the position of not being able to have a bath or sleep in a proper bed or be able to move around in my house for almost six years now. And I am virtually condemned to one room."

There is also the case of Mrs. Patel of 18 Coles close, Leicester. Her son wrote:

> "I have a mother, 60 years old, virtually disabled due to severe Rheumatoid Arthritis and can hardly walk without help. She has had three sets of complete knee replacement operations; two on one knee and one on the other. All her joints are gradually degenerating and deforming . . . The very first day she moved into this new house, she fell down on the staircase after having been to the toilet. She was hurt on the forehead and legs and taken to the Casualty department . . . Few days before my mother moved in this new house . . . I spoke to the Social Services regarding the Staircase Lift." They said that there was 'a long waiting list' for this facility."

They could not visit within a short period of time.

There is also the case of Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham, of 50 Croyland Green, Leicester whose granddaughter wrote:

> "My grandmother cannot work any longer due to health problems, she has recently suffered a very stressful colostomy operation. My grandfather is 63 years of age and is on the sick at the moment and is expected to be for some time. He suffers from asthma and he is due to go into hospital for an operation on his left leg. Their problems are made much worse because they are in desperate need of a new bath. I briefly explained when we last met, but things have not improved. My grandmother needs to keep herself clean because she is not immune to catch infection with a colostomy and my grandfather has not got the strength to lift her in and out of the bath due to his health deterioration and vast loss of weight."

The same applies to Mrs. Jean George, who lives in Maplin road in Humberstone. She has been waiting for a chairlift. On behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Spring who live on Bath street in Leicester, I wrote on 10 July to the director of social services, stating that I had been consulted by Mr. Spring

> "who has told me of the terrible delays that are recurring with regards to the assessment of his home for, in particular, a lift and a shower. As you know, Mr. Spring's wife has a serious disability, and he is having to carry her upstairs. Visits have been made, and promises have been given concerning putting this matter right, but I am sorry to see that there has been very little progress. Mr. Spring himself is in difficulties, because of course this constant activity is putting his own health at risk. This is a very serious matter, and I have written to you about these delays in the past. Indeed, I am minded to raise this matter in Parliament."

I have taken up all those cases and have written to the director of social services, Mr. Brian Waller, who seems as angry and frustrated about the delays as I am. He tells me that there is simply nothing that he can do to ensure that the delays are removed.

It is not all gloom, because I have figures showing that up to the end of the last financial year Leicestershire was ensuring that more home adaptation cases were being processed than almost every other county. It wants to ensure that it can provide a better service.

Within the past month, we have had the findings of the Blom-Cooper independent commission, which was

*[Mr. Keith Vaz]*

established by the College of Occupational Therapists at the end of 1987. The commission recommended a movement into the community and an expansion of the College of Occupational Therapists. It revealed that in 1988, 549 National Health Service occupational therapists left the profession.

Some initiatives can be taken in the short term. There is a need to increase the number of occupational therapists being trained. The number of training places must be increased, with the ever-increasing number of elderly people. It is imperative that urgent action is taken on training.

We must consider how occupational therapists are being recruited, even if it is on a part-time or sessional basis. For example, because many occupational therapists are women we must consider job shares, the establishment of creche facilities, better pay, refresher courses, and overall changes in the structure of their gradings. Sponsorship for training is another option.

The Government must realise that only quick, firm and effective action can resolve the problem. Every minute of every day someone is suffering because of the delays and the backlog. It is impossible for able-bodied persons to imagine the social and physical pain of those who wait month after month for assessment. In some cases, they are unable to move beyond a bed, a chair or a room.

Twenty years later, we are celebrating the technology of placing a man on the moon. Surely something can be done for those ordinary, helpless citizens. The answer, and the active lives of many people, rest inevitably in the Minister's hands.

10.32 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman):** I very much welcome the opportunity to debate the occupational therapy profession and the challenges facing it. It is a most important subject and the House is indebted to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) for raising it this morning.

The House has been sitting all night, and we are grateful for the fact that the Chamber is air-conditioned. Hon. Members present will wish to place on record our thanks for and recognition of not only the Chair but the Clerks and all those who work in the House. Their hard work often goes unrecognised and taken for granted, but I am sure that the hon. Member for Leicester, East and my hon. Friends the Members for Solihull (Mr. Taylor) and for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) will join me in wishing all the House's staff a restful recess.

I join the hon. Member for Leicester, East in thanking the profession for its hard work, which the hon. Gentleman rightly acknowledged in his speech. I unreservedly congratulate the profession on dealing with ever-increasing demand, for reasons that were accurately cited, in a professional way.

The occupational therapy profession has experienced a tremendous increase in demand for its services. As the hon. Member for Leicester, East said, that is because of the Health Service policy of discharging patients who no longer need medical attention but who may need sustenance and support in their homes, the ageing population, greater rights for disabled people and their increased determination, quite properly, to seek assistance from occupational therapists employed by the Health Service or local authorities.

In the face of that increased demand, the supply of occupational therapists has undoubtedly increased. The problem is that that increase has not been sufficient. There are substantial shortages, and I shall explain some of the ways in which the Health Service is dealing with vacancies.

Although I am the Under-Secretary of State for Health, I am not responsible for Leicestershire county council. I am ultimately responsible for the quality of service delivered, which is monitored and inspected by the social services inspectorate. In the final analysis, local authority occupational therapy services are a matter for the local authority. We are aware of the increased demand for those local authority services. Each year, we discuss their resource implications with local authorities. We have made more resources available through the rate support grant, but no one denies that demand is increasing.

I shall concentrate my remarks on the national picture and mention some of the issues that the hon. Member for Leicester, East raised about vacancies and the supply of more occupational therapists in the future. I understand the problems in Leicester, particularly in the hon. Gentleman's constituency. Leicester is an extreme microcosm of the national position. There is a much higher proportion of vacancies in the hon. Gentleman's constituency for occupational therapists, who work not only for the Health Service but for the local authority.

The subject of the debate is the occupational therapy service nationally. There is more than one service, as occupational therapists, uniquely among professional staff groups, are employed by the National Health Service and local authorities. A common and widely accepted definition of occupational therapy, made by the College of Occupational Therapists, is that it is

"the treatment of physical and psychiatric conditions through specific activities in order to help people reach their maximum level of function and independence in all aspects of daily life."

In practice in the National Health Service, occupational therapists work with people of all ages who may have physical disabilities, including the elderly, the elderly confused, those with learning difficulties and mental health problems, substance abusers or other forms of disability.

Occupational therapy developed in social service departments largely as a response to the statutory obligations placed on local authorities by the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 to provide certain services for people registered as chronically sick or disabled, such as the prescription and provision of disability equipment—mobility aids, bathing aids and hoists—and the assessment and recommendation of adaptions to the person's home. This role is developing to become more of an enabler, aimed at helping the disabled person to maximise his independence and quality of life.

I know that the hon. Member for Leicester, East is active in looking after the interests of all his constituents. In my constituency in Northamptonshire—not a million miles away—I have visited many residential homes for the elderly and many of my elderly and disabled constituents in their own homes. I have seen for myself what can and should be done. There is no doubt that the services of occupational therapists, particularly those working in the community visiting elderly people, can make a tremendous difference to the quality of their lives.

The focus of occupational therapy on the practical resettlement and integration of a whole range of people is closely linked to the Government's care in the community policy. The emphasis on resettlement and integration has seen a substantial increase in demand for occupational therapy services. This is due to a number of factors, including the reduction of the long-stay hospital populations, reduced length of stay in acute hospitals and improved survival rates for people with often very severe disabilities. Demographic changes, such as the increasing number of elderly people in our population, many of whom have physical or mental difficulties, have also generated increased demand for occupational therapy.

Occupational therapists are often the key to the continued independence of the many people who are now rightly living in the community rather than in the various forms of institutional care.

The hon. Member for Leicester, East has implicitly endorsed the Government's policy of seeking to care for as many people as possible in their own homes and the community if they do not require medical attention in hospital. That is a fair statement of a commonly agreed policy and aim.

NHS expenditure on occupational therapy services in England increased from £23 million in 1978-79 to £135 million in 1987-88, which represents a real-terms increase of 102 per cent. Expenditure on community occupational therapy services provided by the NHS, although still a small proportion of the total, has grown at an even greater rate than expenditure on the service as a whole. The real-terms increase in that sector since 1978-79 is 543 per cent.

The increased expenditure has led to more occupational therapists being employed. The number has doubled in 10 years—I am now giving NHS figures—from 2,500 whole-time equivalents in 1979 to about 5,000 whole-time equivalents at present. Of course, some are employed on a part-time or temporary basis. There has also been a rapid growth in the number of helpers and technical instructors employed in the NHS. The total number is about 3,500 whole-time equivalents.

Although the local authority occupational therapy service is much smaller than the NHS service, it has grown significantly since 1979. The number of qualified occupational therapists employed by social services departments in England has about doubled from 550 whole-time equivalents in 1979 to more than 1,100 whole-time equivalents now. The hon. Member for Leicester, East might be interested in the figures for Leicestershire social services department. I am informed that in June 1988 there were 57 whole-time qualified occupational therapists in post and in April 1989—I am sorry that I do not have a more up-to-date figure—there were 71 whole-time equivalent qualified occupational therapists. The comparative figures for non-professional qualified staff were 18 in June 1988 and 59 in April 1989. That is a welcome increase in about a year.

Unfortunately, the NHS and local authorities are affected by shortages of qualified occupational therapists. The hon. Gentleman was right to underline the basic problem, which is that we cannot fill the posts available. The NHS has about a 17 per cent. vacancy factor, and the hon. Gentleman mentioned the much higher figure for local authorities. I assure him that we are not complacent about that because we know that it affects the service to patients and results in some people waiting far too long to see an occupational therapist. We know that that causes particular problems in the local authority service when people are unable to receive the equipment that they need because they are waiting for an assessment by the occupational therapist.

The Department has taken several initiatives to resolve the problem. First, the hon. Member for Leicester, East may be aware that the fees and bursaries for occupational therapy students in England and Wales are currently centrally funded through the Department of Health at a cost of some £8 million. Training to become an occupational therapist can be undertaken in a number of ways. Most of the 17 schools in England and Wales offer the three-year, full-time diploma course, and four-year, day release in-service courses for helpers and technical instructors. In the forthcoming academic year, 1989-90, 60 additional places have been funded. We are therefore on target for a total of at least 160 extra places, funded by us centrally, by 1990-91. We are currently supporting 740 entrants into training each year.

Secondly, in addition to funding bursaries and fees, the Department has provided a great deal of capital—more than £2 million over the past three years—to a number of the schools of occupational therapy which has enabled them not only to increase their intake of students, but to improve their learning environment. That money has enabled two new schools to be opened, in Canterbury and Sheffield. Officials are also exploring possibilities of additional training schools to increase the number of available training places.

Thirdly, the Department has held discussions with local authority representatives about their contribution to the training of occupational therapists. They make a negligible contribution to the three-year diploma courses, although they take 20 per cent. of the available supply of qualified people. I understand that Leicestershire social services department is planning to sponsor two occupational therapy assistants on the proposed in-service course to be held in Derby plus one on the three-year diploma at Northampton. I welcome that and wish that more local authorities would take a positive attitude towards helping to meet the widespread national need for more students to be in training.

**Mr. Vaz:** Does not the Minister think it a little unfair to expect local authorities to make a larger contribution in view of the expenditure restrictions that have been placed on them by the Secretary of State for the Environment?

**Mr. Freeman:** I do not accept that argument. As the hon. Gentleman knows, each year there are discussions about centrally provided funds between the Department of the Environment and the local authority associations. The Department of Health is represented at those discussions and an assessment is made of revenue needs, including the cost of providing a local authority occupational therapy service and the cost of training. Training is part and parcel of the supply of services. The Government reach a determination of the central grant available, and it is then for the local authorities—in this case the county council —to decide specifically what the priorities are.

The fourth measure addressing the need to increase supply and reduce shortages is that the Department also recognises that imaginative ways are needed to enable suitable recruits to undertake training. While the profession should be congratulated on the work that it has

*[Mr. Freeman]*

done so far in this direction, it is felt that there are additional ways in which an increase in student numbers could be achieved. To assist innovative developments in this direction, the Department has provided a total of £135,000 in the current financial year, divided between five of the schools of occupational therapy as pump-priming money. They are to report back in the autumn with options on a variety of topics agreed with us. They include the progression through national vocational qualifications to state registration level, as well as refresher training for those returning to work after a career break.

It is important that we attract back into the NHS—I am now speaking in a slightly wider context—nurses and midwives, particularly women, who have taken a break for family reasons and who, perhaps in middle age, still have a good deal to offer. Refresher courses are clearly needed, particularly in occupational therapy, but there is no reason why those who leave the NHS in their twenties or early thirties to have a family should not plan to return. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would join me in encouraging the breakdown of any prejudices that may remain, not only in the Health Service but in local authorities.

No doubt the hon. Gentleman expects me to mention rates of pay. He may be aware that NHS pay is determined each year following the recommendations of an independent review body for nursing staff, midwives, health visitors and professions allied to medicine. That includes occupational therapists. In making its recommendations, the review body takes full account of the duties and responsibilities of occupational therapists, reflected in evidence submitted by the health departments, trade unions and professional bodies representing the staff concerned. The Government are committed to implementing the recommendations of the review unless there are clear and compelling reasons not to do so.

I should mention that since the inception of the review body in 1983, the pay of occupational therapists in the NHS has been increased by 24 per cent. in real terms. The hon. Gentleman will know that my Department has no direct influence over the pay of occupational therapists in local authorities.

We recognise that it is very important for health and local authorities to retain qualified staff. That is clearly a more effective use of resources than undue reliance on recruiting new people into the profession. Equally important is the attraction of non-practising occupational therapists back into employment. We know that there are many of them, and some health authorities have been successful in identifying this hitherto largely untapped labour pool, providing refresher opportunities and then offering flexible working hours.

As part of the NHS manpower planning advisory group's national professional manpower initiative, we are currently collecting information about retention and returner patterns and the strategies adopted by authorities to attract people back to work in the NHS and local authority sectors. We intend to disseminate that information to employing authorities, and to use it as a basis for considering what further action can be taken by the Department, the NHS and local authorities to effect an improvement in retention and returner rates of qualified occupational therapists.

It must be recognised, however, that good retention reflects good management. Some authorities have paid notable attention to such issues, and have provided good management support with appropriate training and development opportunities for their staff. That has reaped benefits, and I am sure that some authorities with particularly acute staffing problems could learn from the practice of the best authorities. I am not passing judgment on Leicestershire county council, or on the specific problems of Leicester city; I am making a general point.

The hon. Gentlemen concentrated on the difficulties in the local authority services particularly those that he has experienced in his constituency. As I think can be understood from my description of the profession's work, the operation of the local authority service cannot be seen in isolation from that of its NHS counterpart.

**Mr. Vaz:** Has my hon. Friend the Minister any more to tell us about his six-point plan? Assuming that he has not, may I question him on a point that he has raised?

Some of what he said will be welcome to those working in this profession; my concern, however, is with the backlog and delays in Leicestershire and other authorities. I realise that Leicestershire may be worse off than other areas. Although we have heard that the Minister is pledged to increase the number of training places, it will be three years before we have qualified occupational therapists. Can the Government do anything for local authorities such as Leicestershire in the short term?

**Mr. Freeman:** It may be convenient for the House and helpful to the hon. Gentleman if I now refer to my information concerning Leicestershire specifically. As I understand it, the hon. Gentleman's constituency covers the city east division of Leicestershire social services. That division has 1·5 occupational therapists in post, with 4·5 vacancies. Most are of more than six months' duration. Four occupational therapy assistants are in post, one of whom is to be sponsored for the three-year diploma course that I mentioned earlier.

Most waiting clients fall into what is described as priority category 2. Category 1 clients are seen within two to three weeks, while category 3 clients are invited to attend a clinic rather than receive a home visit: they are less disabled, and therefore able to travel. Category 2 clients wait for a long time. Most are awaiting assessment for home adaptation.

Leicestershire social services department is discussing with Leicester city council the idea of jointly funding a post just to assess for adaptations to homes. That innovative idea should help to clear much of the backlog. Leicestershire social services is also considering ways of introducing a self-assessment form for clients, so that it can determine who needs an occupational therapist to visit and who could be seen by an assistant. That is not a satisfactory or comprehensive solution; it is a means of satisfying as much demand as possible from the available resources.

Leicestershire social services' salary scales do not encourage occupational therapists to stay in post. If they wish to be promoted, they go back to the NHS. I understand that the division in the hon. Gentleman's constituency has lost two members of staff in that way recently. Recruitment to the NHS occupational therapy services has been good of late. Pay is clearly a factor in the problem in the hon. Gentleman's constituency. As a health

Minister, I cannot either take direct action or directly advise the local authority concerned—the county council —on the action that it should take. At least the hon. Gentleman and I seem to agree on the diagnosis of the problem.

Clearly, initiatives can be taken jointly by the county and city councils: I have already referred to one. Management is all-important. I do not know the specific circumstances of Leicester, East or, indeed, the city of Leicester, but good management and good direction can help to improve retention, and can encourage staff who have left to return.

**Mr. Vaz:** The Minister is being very diplomatic. Perhaps I can tease an answer out of him. Does he consider that an authority—perhaps not Leicestershire county council, but a fictitious county council in exactly the same position—should pay its occupational therapists more than Leicestershire is currently paying?

**Mr. Freeman:** The hon. Gentleman, with his rapidly acquired parliamentary skill, cannot draw me on that.

Let me emphasise that our policy for care in the community—that is, caring for more elderly people in their own homes if they do not need medical attention in hospital—is one with which I hope all hon. Members agree. The independent Blom-Cooper commission, to which the hon. Gentleman referred, has put valuable effort into looking at the future of the profession. Although its report is not expected until October, I understand that its central theme is likely to be the need for the profession to direct more of its energies, planning and resources towards care in the community, as opposed to care in hospitals or institutions. I fully support that.

I remind the hon. Gentleman and the House that our proposals for the reform of funding for care in the community will mean that local authorities—that includes the social services department of Leicestershire county council—will in future have resources transferred from central Government. The portion of income support which is the care element will go to the local authorities so that they can make the correct decisions about how to provide support for the elderly in their own homes. That includes occupational therapy services and the provision of a wide range of domiciliary services to enable elderly people to stay in their own homes. The local authority will have continued responsibility and enhanced resources to achieve the laudable aim of providing for disabled people who wish to remain in the community.

# Traffic (London)

11 am

**Sir Philip Goodhart** (Beckenham): I am grateful for this opportunity to raise the difficult problems of London traffic. Virtually all commuters and travellers in London agree that our transport system is in danger of seizing up. On Wednesday evening, parts of London ground to a halt. On that evening, the problems were accentuated by various public sector strkes, but many of us felt fear as well as frustration. We were fearful that what happened on Wednesday evening could become normal if nothing is done and the inexorable growth of traffic in central London continues.

It would be difficult to put a price tag on the irritation that I felt on Wednesday after missing an appointment with the American ambassador. It is also difficult to estimate the cost of the irritation that my commuter constituents feel as their journeys are delayed. However, we can estimate with some precision the amount that traffic congestion adds to the bills of some of the larger companies operating in London. For example, British Telecom has estimated that an improvment in traffic speed of just 1·4 mph inside the M25 circle would save the company £7·25 million. Its fuel savings would come close to £900,000 and the saving on drivers' time would account for more than £6 million.

It is ironic that British Telecom would benefit so greatly from a traffic speed-up because on many occasions its roadworks have slowed my journeys through the capital. Yesterday morning, I went to the AA's new road watch centre at Stanmore, where it can monitor delays and traffic hold-ups throughout a large part of the country. That centre will provide an increasingly valuable service to motorists. I noted at the centre that British Telecom was responsible for 11 of the almost 60 major roadworks in London yesterday.

On the desks of Transport Ministers are many plans for improving the transport infrastructure of London. I should like to pay tribute to the work of the former Secretary of State for Transport, my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), especially for the paper, "Transport in London", which he prepared and produced earlier this year. But building new railway lines, underground tunnels, light railways and roads takes time as well as hundreds of millions of pounds. While we wait for improvements in the infrastructure, it is vital to make the best use of the roads that we have.

There is general agreement that the basis of any plan to get London moving must be the unclogging of its traffic arteries. Some south London Members—I am one—including my hon. Friends the Members for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley), for Carshalton and Wallington (Mr. Forman), for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden), for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples), for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook), for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) and my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis), who is in his place and who thought up the title, have put forward the "Red Route Plan". It proposes that heavier fines and more traffic warden enforcement should be concentrated on the 300 miles of roads that make up our main arterial system in London. We propose that heavier fines of at least £75 for illegal parking should be levied on those red routes and that there should be five times the normal level of enforcement.

*[Sir Philip Goodhart]*

London's traffic warden force is about 500 under strength. There should be 2,000 traffic wardens and there are fewer than 1,500. The extra 500 wardens should be concentrated on those 300 miles of red routes. The red route concept of concentrated enforcement has powerful allies. It is backed by the AA, the CBI and the Institution of Civil Engineers. I cannot speak for the police, but I know that their thinking and our thinking is on the same lines. I hope that the red route proposals will soon be backed by the Government.

One of the roads that would obviously be earmarked as a red route is the south circular road, which has been heavily congested for as long as I can remember. Some years ago, the Department of Transport commissioned a comprehensive study of ways to relieve congestion on the south circular. Among the many proposals put forward were two plans for building alternative roads which would have cut through my constituency. Other south London constituencies are affected by similar proposals. If either of those new roads were built, it would cost hundreds of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money.

The drawing of broad brush strokes by the consultants on their planning maps has inadvertently blighted hundreds if not thousands of homes in Beckenham. I do not think that either of those routes will ever be built, and there is no need for them. Once again, I beg the Department of Transport to make an early announcement about that. When I recently drove six miles along the south circular on a Friday afternoon I saw 143 vehicles illegally parked and there was not one traffic warden to be seen. It would be absurd to spend hundreds of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money to duplicate a road that is so often used as an illegal parking lot.

Apart from greater control of illegal parking, we propose the establishment of a more powerful London traffic management unit within the Department of Transport. We certainly do not want to create a new "son of GLC". We think that the proper place for this unit is within the Department of Transport. Once again, the proposal is backed by the AA and the CBI, although the Institution of Civil Engineers has rather more grandiose plans.

Part of the job of the London traffic management unit would be to ensure that artificial obstructions are not created on our roads. I am in favour of reducing the speed of traffic in residential areas and I am glad that the Department of Transport has made it easier to install road humps. However, I note that a number of councils, notably Hammersmith and Fulham, are going further and closing off side roads so that more and more traffic is forced to use the main trunk roads. I regret to say that Kensington and Chelsea council has recently gone even further and deliberately reduced the width of Kensington high street to one lane at one point, thus creating additional traffic jams on a road which already carries 10 major bus routes, quite apart from the admirable new hoppa buses, the Green Line coach services and the Heathrow buses. That act of traffic vandalism has, absurdly, been approved by the existing London traffic management unit of the Department of Transport, which surely could not have understood what it was doing. We need a traffic management unit with a remit to keep London's traffic moving, rather than creating artificial traffic jams.

One vital role to be played by the traffic management unit would be overseeing the roadworks in central London. The Horn report on roadworks control highlighted the lack of planning of roadworks not only in London but throughout the country. No part of the red route system should be dug up until the work plan has been approved by the traffic management unit. On the new red route, continuous working should be the goal, with a great deal of work being done at night. Spending £10 million per year for 10 years on subsidising quicker roadworks in central London would do more to help London's buses, lorries, taxis and cars than spending £100 million on a new road in Bromley or Barnes.

I hope that a London traffic management unit will also be given a key role in setting a parking policy in central London. In the immediate future, that will provide the best means to control the use of private cars in the central area. I admit that I usually drive to the Palace of Westminster rather than using public transport, because I can be sure of finding a place in our admirable underground car park. It was once said that the House of Commons was the best club in Europe. I doubt whether that is still so, but it certainly provides the best car park in London.

If we are to limit the number of cars in central London, firm central control must be kept on parking policy. At the moment, the responsibility for parking is untidily split between the London boroughs, the police and the Department of Transport. Once an effective London traffic management unit has been established, the lead role in establishing a sensible parking policy for central London must pass to the Department of Transport. I also hope that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, and my right hon. Friend the new Secretary of State for Transport—whom we wish well—will combine their forces to persuade my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer that money raised by parking fines should be used to recruit and maintain an effective warden force.

**Mr. John Bowis** (Battersea): I agree with everything that my hon. Friend has said, but should not enforcement of the regulations be transferred to the boroughs, so that it is carried out sensitively and with local knowledge?

**Sir Philip Goodhart:** There is a strong case for transferring such responsibility to the boroughs in outer London, but inner London parking policy is so important that it should be the responsibility of the Department of Transport.

London's roads are dangerous. I pay tribute to the former Minister for Roads and Traffic, my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley)—who has now gone to Northern Ireland, the part of the United Kingdom with the worst road safety record of all. Even in the early 1970s, when terrorism was at its worst, the road toll in Northern Ireland far exceeded the toll from terrorism, so there will be much for my hon. Friend to do. In the past three years, he has done a great deal to publicise the cause of road safety.

I am sure that all of us have been moved by the story of Don Kell, the pensioner who was shot while having a go at bank robbers. Mrs. Kell, who saw part of the incident from a distance, thought that she was watching the result of a traffic accident. That is understandable, because last year 488 Londoners were killed in traffic accidents, while 146 died as a result of criminal violence. In other words, motorists are responsible for three times as many deaths in London as criminals. However, the situation is improving. Thirty years ago, 765 people were killed on London's roads—277 more than died last year.

In part, this improvement may be caused by the congestion that we deplore. A car that can travel at only 2 mph will do less damage than a car travelling at 40 mph, if it hits someone. The main causes of the dramatic fall in the number of deaths on London roads, however, have been the drink-driving legislation and the seat belt legislation passed in recent years. The best opportunity that we have to reduce the appalling toll on London's roads would come from passing a new Road Traffic Bill based on the many and sensible recommendations in the North report. Those recommendations will make it much easier for the police to enforce speed limits, and speed is a major killer on our roads.

What is needed from the Government? We need higher parking penalties on our red roads and another 500 traffic wardens, to be concentrated on the red routes. They should be left to the control of the Metropolitan police in inner London, however, and on the main routes, so that there is central direction on parking policy. We need the establishment of a high-powered London traffic management unit with powers to override obstacles placed by some London boroughs and to exercise proper management of roadworks. We need legislation on the Horn report on roadworks and on the North report on traffic law. These steps will not solve our traffic problems but they will provide a desperately needed measure of relief for the travellers of London and people generally.

11.20 am

**The Minister of State, Department of Transport (Mr. Michael Portillo):** I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) most warmly on initiating this Adjournment debate and giving us the opportunity to discuss many matters. He has given a great deal of thought to the subject matter of the debate and the shopping list with which he ended his speech was a clear sign of the way in which he has organised his thinking. He has set the agenda for us to think carefully about the issues to which he has referred, and I pay tribute to him for what he has done.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham was fulsome in his tributes, and I thank him for that. He referred especially to my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), with whom it was a great privilege to work for a year. My right hon. Friend was extremely concerned about all the matters that my hon. Friend has raised, and perhaps especially about the London assessment studies. He understood that, necessary though these studies are, they create tensions and problems in the consituencies of hon. Members on both sides of the House. My right hon. Friend wished to bring the studies to a conclusion as rapidly as possible so as to end some of the uncertainty and the blight. We expect to receive the consultants' reports in the late summer. There will then be a period for public comment before we decide which, if any, of the consultants' ideas should be taken forward. We have said already that we shall not support schemes which do more harm than good.

The assessment studies have the potential for making a major contribution to improving the quality of life in London. I should emphasise that they are not aimed at providing short cuts for motorists through London. Instead, their purpose is to relieve environmental problems and to reduce congestion and casualty rates. I can assure my hon. Friend that there will be no unnecessary road building. Our aim is to ensure that motor vehicles serve the needs of London and do not rule its infrastructure. My right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West was keen to try to rule out options which could not be carried forward as soon as possible, and I have every reason to believe that my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson), the new Secretary of State, will see things in much the same terms.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham was also fulsome in his tributes to my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley), who was for many years the Under-Secretary of State for Transport with responsibilities for roads, and I agree that he did tremendous work, especially on road safety.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham was keen to hear that we were to bring forward legislation to implement the North report recommendations. He will understand the problems in committing myself on that. We welcomed the recommendations, and legislation will be brought forward as soon as parliamentary time can be found.

My hon. Friend referred to the events of Wednesday evening, in which I was caught up. I do not know whether that statement provides limited consolation for my hon. Friend. It gives me the opportunity to say that the efforts made by the public to get to work in London during the recent difficulties have been magnificent and are to be applauded. I think that my hon. Friend was witnessing the symptoms of those great efforts. I do not think that there is any distance between the two of us in recognising that time wasted in traffic has a value and that time spent in that way reduces the quality of life for people in London. For both those reasons, we need to do what we can to improve traffic speeds through London.

The thrust of my hon. Friend's remarks was that we can look to build new roads and new railways, but that we must also make good use of what we have already. I could not agree with him more. Perhaps he will be patient with me for a few moments while I sketch the background in terms of some of the big projects that we have in mind. I shall put my remarks in the context of our general approach. My hon. Friend will know from the document on transport in London to which he referred that there are five main elements to our approach. These are, first, to provide through-road traffic with good alternative routes around London and, wherever possible, to avoid the central area. Secondly, we seek to make the best possible use of existing roads throughout London, especially those on the strategic London road network. Thirdly, we wish to ensure that London is linked properly to national and international transport networks. Fourthly, we wish to tackle the worst places and causes of congestion and improve conditions in areas where transport problems are especially severe. That is where the London assessment studies come in. Fifthly, we wish to promote safe, efficient and effective public transport services, including those which will meet the demand for rail services to, from and within central London.

*[Mr. Michael Portillo]*

We recognise that different transport modes are particularly suited to different purposes. We recognise, for example, that rail and underground transport are the main means of radial movement into central London, and that the underground system, buses, taxis and walking are the main means of travel in the inner and central areas. We are aware that cars dominate in the outer areas. Our approach is being implemented urgently and large sums are being invested. Our approach is further described in the document on strategic planning guidance for London, which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environmemt will be publishing this afternoon.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham knows that public transport is my particular concern. British Rail and the London Underground are undertaking major investment programmes to improve the quality of their services and to increase capacity. British Rail is planning to invest more than £1 billion on Network SouthEast in the next five years, the bulk of it on higher capacity and more comfortable and efficient rolling stock. I know that my hon. Friend has a constituency interest in that. London Regional Transport will be investing more than £400 million. Its investment programme includes a wide range of measures to ease congestion at stations and on trains. The Docklands light railway is being enormously upgraded in an attempt to keep pace with development and to provide higher capacity.

We are improving London's trunk roads to take traffic around central London. There are 38 major schemes planned or under construction, with works costing more than £1 billion. Priority is being given to improving orbital movement around the North Circular road and improved access to Docklands and east London. We are aiming also to realise the potential capacity of the present network by removing the worst pinch points and providing environmental relief in inner London and improved links to the M25, the Channel tunnel and Heathrow. My hon. Friend will know of the study on the M25 that was produced yesterday. We shall have to consider the consultants' recommendations extremely carefully.

**Mr. Neil Thorne** (Ilford, South): In 1973, for good or ill, the Greater London council abandoned the South Circular road. By the time that it was taken on by the Government in 1974, no attempt had been made to provide for the additional traffic that would clearly need to use the M25. The M25 was originally designed to cater for the estimated amount of traffic on the assumption that a proper South Circular road had been constructed. In the absence of such a road, were not the then Labour Government extremely irresponsible in not providing a much better and larger M25 to take account of the fact that the South Circular road had not been provided?

**Mr. Portillo:** My hon. Friend has a much better understanding of these matters than I have. If he is suggesting that the Labour Government were irresponsible, I would find that easy to believe. I am happy to agree with my hon. Friend.

One of the problems with the M25 was convincing inspectors at public inquiries that a road of that capacity was needed. There were instances when inspectors were most reluctant to grant planning permission for a six-lane motorway. They thought that a four-lane motorway would do. I mention that because our perceptions have changed enormously. It is difficult to remember now that there was not then the expectation of continued economic growth of the kind that we have seen throughout the 1980s. There was no shortage of people assuring the Government that economic growth was impossible. Yet they now claim to be the people who saw so clearly that more roads were needed. However, my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) leads me to digress.

The majority of roads in London are borough roads, and we are supporting an increasing number of borough road schemes with transport supplementary grant from the Department of Transport. Schemes receiving our support include town centre improvement and bypass schemes which help the movement of traffic and create a safer, more pleasant environment for pedestrians, and schemes which provide better industrial access.

We believe that safer and smoother traffic flows will result from effective parking controls, the extension of advanced and responsive traffic light control systems and the development of in-car route guidance and driver information systems. All those are receiving high priority. My hon. Friend will know of the Road Traffic (Driver Licensing Information Systems) Act 1989, which makes it possible to introduce an Autoguide. That is an example of using the latest developments in technology to help ease traffic congestion. The United Kingdom Transport and Road Research Laboratory has estimated that in London, Autoguide could cut average journey times by about 10 per cent. and mileage by about 6 per cent. The Department is about to enter into negotiations with GEC on a licence for a large scale Autoguide pilot scheme in the London area. We expect the private sector to finance the development and operation of the system. The pilot scheme could be in operation by the early 1990s and the Department of Transport will monitor the results. If the pilot scheme is successful, a full commercial scheme could be available to the public by the early to mid-1990s. The development of the Radio data system by the BBC could also be important as it has the potential to relay specific traffic messages to people through their car radios, giving information on traffic conditions. The information will be fast, reliable and local rather than nationwide. That could be of considerable significance in combating unpredictable congestion caused by accidents or by burst water mains.

We are constantly looking for new ideas for practical and more radical solutions to London's traffic problems. In that context, I should like to thank my hon. Friends for their constructive proposals for improving the management of traffic in London by means of a "red routes" system for London roads. The proposals for a network of priority routes have received considerable support and certainly merit the most careful consideration. I confirm to my hon. Friend that we are giving them urgent and serious attention. I should perhaps explain that a network of priority routes already exists in London, although not in the form that my hon. Friend envisages. This is the strategic London road network, which consists of 550 miles of trunk and borough roads forming the most important routes in London. Although it comprises only 7 per cent. of London's roads, it carries 35 per cent. of London's traffic, including more than half its bus traffic and 45 per cent. of its freight traffic. Its importance is emphasised in the traffic management guidance that my right hon. Friend has issued to the London boroughs. This guidance seeks a coherent approach to the management of traffic on the network and encourages improved safety and smoother traffic flows through improved junction controls and strict control of waiting and parking.

It will not surprise my hon. Friend to hear that there are bound to be some potential difficulties with parts of what he and other hon. Friends have suggested. The idea of a London traffic management unit is interesting, but we would not wish to create more bureaucracy where that could be avoided. We believe that the concept of strategic priority routes is a good one, however, so we are giving careful thought to how to overcome the potential bureaucratic pitfalls.

I can give my hon. Friend more immediate encouragement on his call for the greater co-ordination of street works. This matter will be addressed in the legislative changes that we are proposing for the reform of the Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950. Under our proposals, highway authorities will be given a power to designate as "traffic sensitive" streets where works are likely to cause severe disruption and to prescribe hours of working. In addition, the authorities will be under a duty to co-ordinate excavations with a view to minimising disruption and undesirable combinations of excavations. That duty will apply to utility services' excavations, the highway authorities' own works and works carried out under licence by others, such as builders. The proposed computerised street works register should also be a valuable aid to co-ordinating works. It is envisaged that all utilities and highway authorities will be linked to the register, which will provide a cheaper and faster system for notification of works than the present system of paper notices. I am sure that all that will be welcome.

I have acquired considerable experience in Docklands of seeking to co-ordinate the activities of all the various undertakings and public bodies which have the power to dig up our roads and the potential to cause disruption. I am mindful of the importance of co-ordination, because I understand that there is nothing more frustrating to the motorist than to be held up because of the poor co-ordination and management of these activities.

I hope that my hon. Friend will be reassured that the Government welcome his work on how to deal with traffic in London. The Government's mind is certainly not closed to considering constructive proposals such as those that my hon. Friend has put forward. We need to place substantial emphasis on the ways in which the existing road network can be fully utilised. To a large extent, that may be the product of new technology through radio data systems, better signing and better information, but the proposals that my hon. Friend has put forward deserve the fullest consideration.

My hon. Friend's proposals have broad implications for the respective roles of the Secretary of State, the London boroughs and the Metropolitan police. The proposals therefore need very careful study and I am in no position to announce any conclusions today. Nevertheless, my hon. Friends have given us much food for thought, and, typically, have shown their deep concern to improve the quality of life in London. I take this opportunity to thank my hon. Friend for raising the subject, to wish him a very happy summer break and safe motoring. May his way be ever free of jams throughout the summer period.

## Rural Development (Borders)

11.37 am

**Mr. Archy Kirkwood** (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Let me take the House away from the dusty highways and byways of the traffic problems in central London to a wonderland north of the border—to my constituency, where we nevertheless have problems of our own. I would not wish London's congestion problems on anywhere, but we have different problems, and I am grateful for the opportunity to raise them in the House. I hope that I have not detained the Minister too late and kept him from his holidays. In any case, if he were flying from Gatwick he would have transport problems, which I hope to avoid when I go on holiday later next week.

I seek to raise the matter of rural development in my constituency. I should like to make one or two general points, but the main thrust of my speech today is that there is a need to develop an overall coherent strategy for rural planning in south-east and south-west Scotland. Over the past 10 years, rural areas have been neglected. They have not been in the forefront of the minds of Government policymakers. The needs of rural areas are different, but they are nonetheless just as great and deserve just as much attention as the needs of places in inner London suffering from traffic congestion.

I accept that, in the past, the neglect of rural policy making has been defensible to some extent. In the past 20 years, a large amount of agricultural support was guaranteed from the Exchequer and, subsequently, from European Community funds. I know that the Minister has a deep interest in matters relating to the countryside and I pay credit to him for that. All of us with experience of rural areas recognise that agriculture has been an effective mechanism to allow resources devoted from the Exchequer or the EC to trickle down through the many support and ancillary industries. Although agriculture has never provided any local luxury as far as I have been able to discover, it has been the floor of local economies in rural areas.

In the past, therefore, the needs of those rural areas have not been as great. By and large, the Ministry of Agriculture, supported by the Scottish Development Agency and the local authorities, has managed to support a tolerable standard of living in our landward areas. I do not believe that that is necessarily so now, and it will not be the case automatically in the future. The Minister will appreciate that there have been substantial changes in the type of EC farm support and on the quantity of money that we can expect from support mechanisms aimed at maintaining agricultural life in the future. The Government must recognise that.

We know that, now, the Commission has plans that are much more concerned to support income via diversification and other schemes than to subsidise primary farm produce as in the past. That significant change will have a substantial impact on the countryside. The Minister will also appreciate that, increasingly, our countryside is being fought over by competing conservation and development interests. The casualties tend to be local people. Young local people, for example, trying to enter the local housing market for the first time are unable to compete with incoming commuters. The shift inwards to the towns from villages and peripheral valleys is accelerating at an alarming rate in my area. Such problems are not unique to

*[Mr. Archy Kirkwood]*

the Borders, but there are special circumstances in south-east and south-west Scotland. In the Borders, in particular, we have a very narrow range of employment opportunities provided by the existing economic base. That narrow range, taken together with the changes to agricultural funding, means that the future could be bleak for the Borders.

A great deal of effort has gone into supporting and stimulating social and economic activity to provide jobs and housing for people in the inner cities. I do not criticise that, as it is necessary and such Government work as has been undertaken is welcome. A great deal of work has gone into stimulating economic and social activity to provide jobs and other facilities for those who live in the Highlands and Islands Development Board area. I do not want to criticise the excellent development work undertaken by that board, but nothing has been done in south-east or south-west Scotland and that situation cannot be allowed to continue any longer. Those areas, that are outside the remit of the HIDB and outside the central industrial belt, are areas whose time has come for some attention.

In the Borders, textiles, together with farming, forestry, fishing and tourism will continue to be the main elements in the local economic mix. If Lord Plumb's recent statements are to be believed—he should know, as a former President of the European Parliament—the EC expects to save some £2·8 billion on agriculture in the next four years. My constituents want to know how much of that saving will be devoted to other developments outside agriculture in the rural areas.

In the next two or three years, the multi-fibre arrangement will be renegotiated in Europe. That will largely determine the continued future viability of a large section of the local textile industry—45 per cent. of employment in Hawick in my constituency is directly or indirectly derived from that industry. Those workers believe that they are under a potential threat from a renegotiated or an abandoned multi-fibre arrangement.

My hon. Friend the Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) is present. He would agree with me that the fishing industry provides a substantial proportion of jobs in our constituencies, in towns such as Eyemouth in Berwickshire. Quota restrictions, the lack of any sensible long-term policy for restructuring the fleet, and high interest rates are putting the catching sector under severe short-term and middle-term financial strain. Worse than that, the onshore processing industry in my area is suffering great financial difficulties and possible closure because of the lack of raw material being landed by the fleets as a result of restrictions on total allowable catches and the quotas.

Forestry is also passing through a troubled period. Of my constituency, 15 per cent. is already dedicated to afforestation and, increasingly, contractors are being used who do not follow the old-style practices of the Forestry Commission. That change is causing problems and distress, because such forests are replacing viable farming, particularly sheep units, in some of the remote valleys of my constituency.

Tourism is underdeveloped because of the lack of resources available to local authorities and to private contractors to renovate and to keep in good repair the buildings and environment of some of the local border towns. In the Borders, the inescapable signs of potential financial distress are there for all to see. The emergent feeling is that the economic base is extremely fragile, and that is a cause of concern. I have reached the inescapable conclusion that the Government must now develop a coherent policy to enable some of the deep-seated structural problems to be tackled. There is no shortage of ideas or methods for tackling them. The precondition of everything is for the Government to recognise the need for a coherent strategy to approach some of those problems.

I believe that the Borders should be designated a rural development area—I have put that argument at great length in the past. Since 1983, when I was elected, I have been arguing that case on the basis that the funding need not be enormous sums from the Exchequer. I believe that modest amounts of central Government finance could unlock and seed-fund development in the Borders. Such investment would repay handsome dividends at every level.

During the past few years, we in the Borders have been discriminated against by a series of Government decisions that have excluded the region from any access to external funding sources. That is now causing us increasing problems, and our region is at a consistent disadvantage in comparison with others, such as Tayside, west Scotland and the central industrial belt. This is also prejudicial to us compared with some rural areas south of the border, which have been earmarked for rural development assistance status.

The Government withdrew assisted area status from the region in August 1982, so that the Border area was no longer eligible for EEC regional development funds. That was a considerable blow, and we still feel its force. In April 1985, the Borders lost priority status for European social fund assistance, thereby limiting the finance available for, for example, vocational training. Recently, the Commission has reviewed the structural funds provided under the European regional development fund, the social fund and FEOGA—the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund—and brought them together under five objectives.

In May 1987, the Borders regional council made an urgent plea to the Scottish Office to set up a rural development fund in the region. The request was considered, but no action was taken, so we lost by default. The area gets no help through urban aid. Lynwood in Hawick has been designated for urban aid, which it certainly needs. However, I believe that the Government could make a case for urban aid to be a substantial contributor in more than just one street.

Our battle with the Scottish Office has recently focused on the question whether the Borders should be included in, or excluded from, the list of areas that are to receive help under the Commission's five new objectives. I am aware that there is an opportunity under objective 3 to get money for the region for vocational training for the long-term unemployed, although it is a restricted category. The potential exists also to help people between 18 and 25 under objective 4. The Government must understand that it is essential that we have access to objective 5b funds. I understand that the areas eligible for those funds are regularly reviewed and that the Government argued the case for the inclusion of the Borders. Although we were refused last time, I hope that the Government will give a fair wind to everything that the regional authority and others are doing in the Borders to sustain their case so that we are eligible next time for objective 5b funds.

There are a number of different ways in which a rural development agency or rural development fund could underpin the economy of the Borders. A number of obvious things could be done on the economic development front. On the rural housing front, there is a crying need for housing associations agencies and local authorities to stimulate much more activity. On the transport and community project fronts, there are many proposed methods of making progress that could be adopted if they were co-ordinated by a local planning authority that had access to rural development fund money. A rural development agency could select from a shopping list of issues that need attention.

I should like to consider some specific matters of urgent concern in the Borders. I hope that the Minister will comment on the status of the Borders in terms of the crucial matter of objective 5b eligibility. I hope also that he will say something about the progress made on the application by the Eyemouth harbour trustees for the expansion of Eyemouth harbour. The fishing industry is in a state of flux. I have referred to the short-term difficulties which are causing some distress in the area. Unemployment in the Eyemouth area is marginally higher than the Scottish national average. The fishing industry is important in providing jobs. If the industry is not underpinned in the long-term, the employment prospects will be bleak.

Much work has gone into putting together the expansion plan for Eyemouth harbour. This work has brought together, uniquely, the regional authority, the Scottish Development Agency and the trustees, and the proposal has the support of everyone with any part to play in the economic life of the Borders. We are 100 per cent. behind it. A substantial sum is involved, but the trustees will make a major contribution. However, the local feeling is that the Government are going slightly cold on the application. What is the Government's view on the proposed expansion of Eyemouth harbour?

Although this matter does not come within the departmental responsibilities of the Minister, I hope that Scottish Office Ministers will take a keen and continuing interest in the multi-fibre arrangement negotiations, because the textile industry is important to the employment base in Roxburghshire. I understand that, in the current Uruguay round of talks on the general agreement on tariffs and trade, the Government are prepared to accept some linkage between expanded access by developing countries to our markets if we can get liberalisation of our export trade in some other parts of the world.

My local textile industry is prepared to contemplate that kind of protection, as opposed to continuation of the MFA, only if it gets cast-iron guarantees that, if it yields its markets to the textile industries in developing countries, in return other countries must yield when we try to sell our goods in the developing markets of the middle east and far east. The Scottish Office must play a role in the negotiations.

I am worried about the stance taken by the European Commission in terms of its mandate for Ministers in the GATT talks. This gives away too much too soon. The guarantees in the recently published document on this matter are not sufficient to satisfy my local textile industry that its interests will be protected. It is important to the textile industry and to my constituency that the Government should put up a strenuous fight to get either cast-iron guarantees under GATT or a renegotiated MFA that protects the local industry. It is not that I favour protectionism, but we want to establish a system of fair trade whereby we have the same opportunities to make inroads into export markets in developing countries as they have into ours.

Another major anxiety facing the Borders is the maintenance of our road network. I know that the Minister is about to give birth to a policy review of trunk roads south of Edinburgh; it is expected at the end of this month or early next. He will recognise the importance of that study to the Borders region. I should like an assurance from him that the regional authority will be fully consulted and be given every opportunity to make its views known before administrative or ministerial decisions are taken.

As for subsidiary and minor roads, the Minister will know that, in the process of extracting timber from the forests, an inordinate amount of damage can be done to rural side roads. Formerly, the local authority had access to European assistance to make good the damage, but that is no longer so, and the result is a high cost. I know that the Department has made some concessions in terms of environmental improvement schemes and has managed to channel extra capital allocations in the direction of the regional council. Will that level of funding continue and increase?

We in the Borders are prepared to give the new Government initiative on Scottish Enterprise a fair wind —I understand that an agency is due to be set up in the Borders. Local people are prepared to give it their best shot and try to make it a vehicle of development, both under the amalgamated SDA and under the new powers that Scottish Homes has. It presents an opportunity to use the new framework of Scottish Enterprise to help to develop the Borders in future.

I hope that the Government will look carefully at the DRAW initiative which ended in 1987—a system which developed rural area workshops. The initiative was a great success, but unfortunately funding was withdrawn in 1987, so it produced no continuing benefits. The PRIDE scheme unfortunately had a poor response, but both short-lived projects contained the germ of an idea which could in future provide great benefits for the region—if it is given a little finance to speed it on its way.

I know that the local authority is worried about the provision of green field industrial sites on which to put up factories for incoming industry. Much puzzlement followed the Secretary of State's recent decision on the planning application for the Appletree Hall site in Hawick. Against the background of the problems that I have explained—the narrow base of manufacturing industry in the Borders—the local authority thought that it had identified a place that was ripe for development as a major green field site for incoming industry.

After a local inquiry, the Secretary of State saw fit to refuse a compulsory purchase provision for the local authority, which left it with an area earmarked for development under its local plan but with no major greenfield site within the precincts of Hawick or other major Borders towns. That has stymied many of the authority's best efforts to provide locations for incoming industry and, on the face of it, it looks like the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing. I hope that if the

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local authority identifies sites which it perceives as right for development in future, the Government will look more sympathetically on its applications.

There is also scope for town centre regeneration. Many outstanding buildings in the Border towns—in Kelso, Jedburgh, Chirnside and Hawick—are not being used to the full. Redevelopment is expensive and difficult and it is hard for the local authority to persuade private owners of these buildings to undertake large-scale redevelopment when it has no inducements or incentives to offer them. A small amount of money through a rural development fund or agency could give the local authority something with which to go to private owners or commercial businesses in key areas such as Kelso square and Jedburgh market square so that some of these buildings can be tastefully redeveloped. The local authority would like to do that, but the planning authority is restrained by the financial limits placed on it by central Government.

A rural development fund or agency could also co-ordinate trade and industrial promotions. The Minister knows that "Fashion 88", a project mounted in conjunction with the local authority and the chamber of commerce in the Borders last year, was a considerable success. It had a triumphant impact, and many internationally known designers attended. Its consequences are only now beginning to flow through the system, and many valuable economic and commercial contacts were made during the time that it lasted. I congratulate everyone involved in it and I hope that it will be repeated in the future. With good will and the right people doing the right things at the right time, local authorities have a great deal of scope to engage in industrial and trade promotions such as "Fashion 88".

Environmental improvements organised by the SDA in the recent past have been a conspicuous success in many Borders towns and have brought in their train economic development which would not have taken place under other circumstances. There is much scope for rural development agencies in the hands of local authorities or similar bodies to make considerable improvements to the Borders. The list of possibilities is inexhaustible, and the potential is great.

A quarter of the population of the borders live outwith settlements of more than 500 people. Even since I was elected in 1983, and certainly in the past last few decades, I have noticed a difference as I travel up the Craik and the Borthwick valleys, or up to Westruther or Longformacus. Rural areas have been suffering from the fragmentation of Government policy and from the competing interests of pressure groups. The local authority has a role to play in this too. I congratulate Borders regional council, which is a progressive and forward-looking body, doing the best it can subject to central Government restraints.

Other areas, such as the Highlands and Islands, which has its development board, and England and Wales, which have a rural development commission, are in a better position than we are to look after their interests. I know that COSLA is working through the rural affairs committee, and I know that a rural development programme is in place in Berwickshire, and that the local rural area development opportunities study will provide valuable ideas. But we have been here before: we have done pilot projects and examined ideas, and we know what needs to be done, but we enjoy no coherent assistance from central Government. In the past we have been able to live with that, relying on the continued prosperity of agriculture to support our rural area. I do not believe that we can do that with any confidence indefinitely into the future. I warn the Government that, if they do not take steps in that direction, I shall return year after year to the House to argue the case until Ministers see some sense and develop a rational, coherent and over-arching strategy for rural development, not just in the Borders, but throughout the United Kingdom.

12.9 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton):** I congratulate the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on his comprehensive and good speech. I will provide a slightly more optimistic note than he revealed in his speech. I have good news for the hon. Member, and for the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace). The House of Commons Library has revealed that the unemployment rates in their constituencies are among the lowest in Scotland. Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale has the lowest level of unemployment, followed by Orkney and Shetland, which is followed by Roxburgh and Berwickshire. The two Borders constituencies are in the top three and that is a very encouraging sign for the future.

I want to elaborate on the point made by the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire about the comprehensive strategy. I am very sympathetic to his theme of revitalising the villages. I should stress that building on local government initiatives is something which the Scottish Office will be pursuing in consultation with the development agencies and other interested bodies in the months to come. The hon. Member is aware that there is evidence of activity on that front within his constituency.

The Scottish Development Agency is working with local authorities and the local communities in the villages of Creetown and Newcastleton to implement projects to improve the environment and regenerate the local economies. In Newcastleton, the agency has undertaken a scheme in partnership with a local traders' group to renovate the frontages of retail premises and to improve external display signs. The agency has also supported the promotional activities of the traders' group and similar initiatives are progressing in Creetown. The agency is also currently involved in a study of the Berwickshire area which aims to identify ways of stimulating the development of the rural economy.

I visited Roxburgh and Berwickshire district council last year and last Friday I visited Tweeddale and Ettrick and Lauderdale with the right hon. Member who represents that constituency. I should stress that Scottish Homes will complete a rural housing strategy by mid-1990 and it has special teams set up to look specifically at the needs of housing in rural areas. After visiting Ettrick and Lauderdale, representations were passed to Scottish Homes that there should be more Housing Association activity there. I take the point raised by the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire about town centre regeneration, and improvement grants have an important part to play in that.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire on covering this subject, which he pursues with commendable vigour on behalf of his constituents. In a period when there are many changes under way and in prospect for Scotland as a whole, it is entirely appropriate that we should take this opportunity of considering how these affect developments in the Borders.

The hon. Gentleman was right to call attention to some of the problems of rural communities. I do not wish to underestimate those for a moment, but I would suggest that they should be kept in proper perspective. Rural areas of Scotland, including the Borders, have performed relatively better in terms of population growth and employment than other parts of Scotland in recent years. Over the period 1971 to 1987, when the overall population of Scotland fell by 2·4 per cent., the population of the Borders rose by 4·3 per cent. I know that the increase in the Borders reflects in part a rise in the numbers in the retirement age groups, but that in itself is surely a tribute to the fact that many people find the Borders an attractive place to live and are no doubt making their own contribution to the life of the local communities in which they have settled.

The Borders, too, have been relatively insulated from the radical changes which have affected the rest of the Scottish economy in recent years. This is largely due to the fact that the region's manufacturing base is founded on distinctive local industries—particularly wool, textiles and knitwear—rather than on the traditional heavy manufacturing industries which are now in decline. That is not, of course, to say that the local manufacturing sector has not had to work equally hard to keep up with the process of change. Indeed, it is a tribute to the effort and initiative of the local industrial community that these industries on which the Borders have depended for generations are still continuing to show their strength and resilience in an increasingly competitive world. This is, of course, largely due to the readiness with which Borders industries have adapted to technological change, and have sought to harness the new technologies to the task of remaining competitive. In that respect they have set an example which Scottish industry as a whole would do well to follow.

The strength of the Borders economy is well reflected in the latest economic indicators. Next to Grampian, unemployment in the Borders is the lowest in mainland Scotland. Since January 1987, the numbers unemployed have fallen by almost 2,000—or 46 per cent.—and the current regional rate of unemployment is 3·6 per cent. below the Scottish average, which itself is at its lowest for over eight years. Clearly, therefore, the region's economic base is sound, despite the problems which may persist in particular communities. At the same time, it is very much in the region's interest to broaden its industrial base so far as possible, and I welcome the efforts which are being made to diversify into new industries such as electronics. Important as the traditional industries continue to be, I believe it is through such diversification that the region's economy—like that of Scotland as a whole—can look forward to an increasingly assured future.

Any debate on rural development must take into account the impact of agriculture. It underpins the economic and social well-being of all our rural areas, not only through direct employment but in related industries. In Scottish terms, agriculture contributes around £1·3 billion a year to Scotland's national output.

At a general level, agriculture, which is of the considerable importance to the Borders, is having to face up to change as we continue to reform the common agricultural policy. Change is never easy, but farmers themselves recognise that the process must continue if the long-term future of our agriculture is to be secured. The days are gone when commodities could be produced without regard to what the markets could absorb or the cost of production. Such inefficiencies did not benefit the farmer, the consumer, or the taxpayer. We have paid a high price for over-production encouraged by the common agricultural policy—£11·5 billion is spent every year on storage and disposal. Action was, and continues to be, necessary to tackle these problems.

In this context, we welcome the recent agreement on the reform of the sheepmeat regime because it removes uncertainty and will create, by 1993, a level playing field for our producers so that they can compete in Europe on equal terms. I am confident that the sheep industry in the Borders, with its natural advantages and long tradition of experience and efficiency, will be able to capitalise on the emerging opportunities in these European markets and that it can prosper under the new sheepmeat regime of the 1990s.

In recognition of the need to seek out opportunities beyond traditional agriculture, the Government have pursued a number of measures designed to provide farmers with the opportunity to develop alternative sources of income. The range of possibility for diversification is wide indeed—for example, adding value to conventional farm produce, developing leisure, craft or tourism-related initiatives. It has to be recognised that diversification will not suit everyone, and each farmer has to consider carefully his own circumstances and make his commercial judgments accordingly.

There are other possibilities. The set-aside scheme, which provides for payments to farmers who take land out of production, will help to curb surplus production, reduce dependence on cereal and oilseed production, and provide land for alternative uses such as farm woodland or non-farming enterprise.

We also have the environmentally sensitive areas scheme, which encourages environment-friendly farming. Farmers who enter this scheme in the Whitlaw and Eildon ESA can receive payments based on the amount and type of land on the farm. The scheme thus provides an additional source of income for farmers and also has the potential to generate demand for traditional skills such as dyking or hedge work.

Those changes will not undermine the continuing importance of traditional agricultural production in the Borders. The mixed nature of agriculture in the Borders means that there is no particular reliance on any one crop or agricultural sector, and this year promises to be a better one for Borders' farmers. The mild open winter, excellent lambing conditions and buoyant sheep and cattle prices have all contributed to a promising outlook. The good early summer weather resulted in good quality cuts and yields of hay and silage and although the lack of rain has affected summer grazing, crops are standing well and harvesting conditions look good. With the dairy sector also benefiting, the position of farmers in the Borders this year looks sound. However, the extent to which farmers can bolster their income and security through alternative forms of self-financing activities has to be encouraged. The Government continue to make available significant support to agriculture in itself, but are also providing additional opportunities to promote new developments.

*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]*

I should answer a few of the hon. Gentleman's questions. I share his disappointment that the European Commission has not included the Borders region in its initial list of rural areas eligible for objective 5b of the structural funds. The Goverment felt that the Borders had a good case in terms of the criteria for objective 5b, and put the case to the Commission as forcefully as it could. But funds for objective 5b are at present limited, and in Scotland only the Highlands and Islands and Western Dumfries and Galloway were selected at this stage. We shall continue to press for the inclusion of the Borders region in any subsequent list, although it is not possible at present to predict when the Commission will consider further areas. I should, however, like to make it clear to the hon. Gentleman that the case remains on the table in Brussels.

The hon. Gentleman has referred to Eyemouth harbour. I am well aware of the importance of Eyemouth harbour not only to the local fishing industry but to the wider community which suffers from higher than average unemployment. The scale and cost of the proposed development has, however, acted as a deterrent and the proposals have had to be examined carefully. We are certainly not cold on the application.

It has been suggested to the Eyemouth harbour trust and to Borders regional council that they should consider whether a less ambitious scheme would be possible and then discuss any proposals they may have with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland.

No formal approach has been made to the Scottish Development Agency for assistance towards the costs of any redevelopment of Eyemouth harbour. The agency will, of course, give all due consideration to any proposal which may be forthcoming.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned trunk roads. As he recognised, an additional allocation was given to the Borders and Dumfries regions. In regard to routes south of Edinburgh, a consultation paper will be published on the study report's findings fairly soon, and we will be particularly interested to hear the views of the hon. Gentleman and the Borders regional council on the best way forward in the light of the representations that he made today.

We also recognise the importance of tourism in the Borders. Tourists obviously purchase a wide range of goods and services from the local community, and, in doing so, help to support the rural community in the broadest sense possible. This year we gave the Scottish tourist board £1 million extra. That should be of considerable benefit in helping to expand tourism. I realise that the Scottish tourist board does an excellent job for tourism in the area and recognises that there remains considerable potential for improving the area as a visitor destination, and development activity in the area has been at a fairly low level recently.

There are undoubtedly gaps in what is on offer. I understand that several exciting proposals are emerging, including major golf complexes, and that is encouraging news. Government agencies exist to help local authorities and the private sector, and the STB is well aware of the area's needs. The board's current development strategy is to assist the creation and improvement of visitor attractions. Accommodation projects are of considerably less importance, but the STB will consider applications where there are local shortages, and that strategy fits in well with the particular requirements of the Borders.

The hon. Gentleman has argued in the past for a range of powers for the Borders comparable to those available to the HIDB. I appreciate his wish to see the maximum stimulus being available to Borders development, but we must bear in mind the fact that the HIDB was created by a set of unique circumstances in the United Kingdom. The HIDB's area presents problems of remoteness and economic difficulty which call for very special solutions. I do not think that the hon. Gentleman would argue that the economic problems of the Borders match those of the Highlands and Islands, or that they justify the same distinctive approach. As I have said, the SDA has an extremely wide range of powers which it is already using to good effect, and its economic development projects bring benefits across the whole range of community life. On the social development side, there is much that can be done both by local authorities, central Government and the voluntary organisations.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** I understand what the Minister says —I have been at pains to endorse and recognise what work has been done—but the burden of my remarks is that there is no overall coherence to the plans. There is no overall strategy. If there were a rural development agency that could work with the local authority it would be much easier to co-ordinate all the various approaches, but they could be much more effective if there were some coherence and an overall strategy.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** It is important that that should take place in the housing sector. That is why the rural housing strategy of Scottish Homes will be important. Scottish Homes will work closely with the SDA, but I stress that the entire range of the agency's services is available in rural areas. The agency can provide factory buildings for sale or let; it can offer a range of advice on such matters as marketing and finance; and it can provide finance in the form of loans or equity to help new businesses and to enable existing companies to develop and expand.

I note what the hon. Gentleman said about the programme for rural initiatives and developments. It is designed to stimulate private sector involvement in projects suited to the rural economy. PRIDE has already proved its worth in stimulating a range of developments in rural areas, and last year alone an agency commitment of just over £150,000 succeeded in attracting private sector investment of over £1 million.

The Government remain firmly committed to the work of the agency. The advent of Scottish Enterprise will enhance the value of that work and give it a whole new dimension. I believe that the agency's work in the Borders and other rural areas will provide Scottish Enterprise and its local enterprise companies with a firm base on which to build for the future.

The hon. Gentleman wanted me to say a word about the textile industry. The Borders textile industry continues to play an important role in the economy of the region and provides an important source of quality employment. Certain sections of the industry are experiencing difficulties because of factors such as external economic conditions and changing fashion trends. The industry as a whole is in a healthy state. I have every confidence in those in the industry to react positively to the market changes that lie ahead.

The multi-fibre arrangement is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. The Government are committed in the current round of the GATT multilateral trade negotiations to look for a way of reintegrating the textile industry into GATT, but the Government are equally clear that that needs to be done on the basis of strengthened GATT rules to ensure that there is fairer international trade, and are pressing developing countries, particularly the more advanced, to open their markets to United Kingdom exports. That would create new opportunities for the textile industry in Scotland. I do not underestimate the employment provided by the textile industry.

We have taken two steps on the natural environment that will interest the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire. First, Lord Sanderson has assumed a special responsibility for co-ordinating Scottish Office rural policies. I attribute much significance to his new responsibility, and I have no doubt that he will carry out his duties extremely successfully.

The second initiative is the Government's announcement of proposals for reorganising the agencies responsible for nature conservation and countryside matters in Great Britain. That will provide an opportunity to achieve the right organisational structure for conservation and the countryside in Scotland.

I assure the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire that the Government are firmly committed to the welfare of rural communities. We have already given firm proof of our commitment to the various measures of assistance that I have outlined. The aim of all the measures must be to stimulate rural communities to work out their future for themselves. The spirit of enterprise is no less active in rural communities than throughout the rest of society. Given the necessary encouragement, those communities will rise to the challenge and seize the opportunities that are available.

Many of our rural communities in the Borders and throughout Scotland are as vigorous as they have been for many years. It will be the Government's aim to promote the welfare of those communities, so that rural Scotland can continue to play its part in a strong and vibrant Scottish economy.

I thank the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire for giving us an opportunity to discuss these matters today.

# Lebanon

12.30 pm

**Mr. Julian Brazier** (Canterbury): I am grateful for the opportunity to have this Adjournment debate on Lebanon. The public view is of a country filled with warring factions all as bad as one another, but I believe that that is not so and that, although no one faction or side is wholly blameless, we can make some sense of Lebanon, and it is in the West's interest, as well as being its duty, to do so.

I applaud the comments made by the then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar) in the last Adjournment debate on 16 May, when he said:

> "In the last analysis, it must be our aim to enable the Lebanese people themselves to find ways of restoring peace to their country without foreign interference."—[*Official Report*, 16 May 1989; Vol. 153, c. 297.]

I understand that that view was endorsed by the EEC Twelve in their last statement on the subject.

One of the wisest foreign policy decisions taken by the Government since they took office was to sever diplomatic relations with Syria. Terrorism was the main reason, especially the Syrian attempt to blow up an El Al airliner from Heathrow airport. Few regimes in the world are so obnoxious that we are unable to have diplomatic relations with them. Syria is one of them and it is Syria which now occupies three quarters of Lebanon. Against that bald fact, we must evaluate the options facing, and the decisions taken by, General Aoun.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Lebanon was peaceful, prosperous and, above all, tolerant—conditions which, sadly, are rather rare in the middle east. Its constitution was based on conventional groups—a system despised in the West with its ordinary democratic system. One must ask, however, how many other Arab countries have an independent judiciary, the rule of law and the protection of minority groups. Until the early 1970s, all these things prevailed in Lebanon. Indeed, it was a haven for persecuted groups. It is my thesis that Lebanon has been the victim of multiple external aggression.

When the Jordanians expelled the Palestinians to Syria, the Syrians rapidly sent them on to Lebanon, having given them some extra weapons. The Lebanese generously, but I am afraid unwisely, took them in. They were given land for their camps, much of it from Lebanese religious orders. The camps became centres for lawlessness, and armed bands roamed the countryside causing trouble, murdering, raping and looting. Inevitably, there was retribution by the local population against those lawless groups, and a number of unpleasant attacks were made on the Palestinian camps. Those attacks were far more widely publicised in the western press, however, than the horrific incidents that provoked them.

A further factor was internal, but it was generated from the outside. The Shi'ites, who had always been a minority among the Moslems in Lebanon, and who are among the poorest people in the country, tended to live around those camps. They bore the brunt of the Palestinian onslaught. Expelled from their villages and greatly impoverished they fell prey to the agents of the Ayatollah. Out of the increasingly unhappy morass the feared Hezbollah—the so-called party of God—emerged. That turned on the local Christian community and, to a lesser extent, on the Sunnis,

*[Mr. Julian Brazier]*

driving many of them from their villages. Eye witness reports, mainly from the French and British visitors, talk of murder, torture, public executions carried out by chainsaw and other methods, and desecration of churches, not least by sacrificing animals on the altar.

Inevitably, the villagers fled to the cities, principally the Christian end of Beirut, where they armed themselves and have since been identified by much of the western media as Christian Fascist militia. I have no doubt that they, too, have committed atrocities.

Another aggressor is Israel. Its counter attacks against the Palestinian camps were, like every other outside interference in Lebanon, unhelpful to the Lebanese people, many of whom were killed in crossfire. Israel has now withdrawn to a small strip at the bottom of the country. In fairness to Israel, it must be said that conditions in that southern strip are much better than in the three quarters of the country controlled by Syria.

The final outside factor, and by far the most important, has been Syria. That country is so obnoxious that we cannot have diplomatic relations with it. It controls three quarters of the unhappy state of Lebanon. The Syrians were invited in in 1976 by the disgraced Christian president, Sulaiman Franjiya, and elements of his Government. They were sponsored by the Arab League, I believe in good faith. However, the units—that is almost too grand a word because they were little more than military delegations—from other Arab League countries rapidly came under attack from guerilla groups, some of which even at that stage were sponsored by Syria, and withdrew leaving the Syrians in sole charge.

Since then, Syria has carried out a reign of terror in the three quarters of Lebanon that it controls. Its artillery bombards the country, not just the remaining so-called Christian enclave where the city of Dorã, its commercial centre, was flattened earlier this year, but, reports say, areas within the Syrian-controlled territory where artillery provides a useful adjunct to the secret police in imposing Syrian rule.

I do not intend to adopt a position on Yasser Arafat or the Palestine Liberation Organisation. However, he was independent of Syria. Since the Syrians expelled him by armed force, all the Palestinian groups, to a greater or lesser extent, are under Syrian control and rely upon the Syrians for the safety of their leaders and for their supply of weapons. Equally, the Hezbollah, originally set up by the Ayatollah, enjoys its supply of weapons principally from the Syrians. The same applies to the Druze and to the two major renegade Christian groupings which operate in the Syrian area.

It is worth observing that in the unhappy Syrian-controlled zone, the drugs trade, which was always an important part of Assad's foreign policy and his principal supplier of foreign exchange, is flourishing based in the Beka'a valley.

North of Beirut is the so-called Christian enclave—25 per cent. of the country controlled by General Aoun. I say "so-called"—I have said it several times—because General Aoun was appointed by the outgoing president. The constitution says that if the deputies cannot meet and agree on a president, the outgoing president should appoint a Christian figure—all the offices are allocated to different conventional groups—who should act as leader. At that point the Christian and Sunni deputies had said that they were unwilling to meet in the puppet process set up by the Syrians under their armed control. Therefore, the outgoing president rightfully appointed General Aoun as an interim successor.

General Aoun has found increasing numbers of people from other faiths in his enclave, in particular many Sunnis and a significant proportion of Druze who do not accept the leadership of Walid Jumblatt and are sheltering from the Syrian rule of terror. The West is reproaching General Aoun because he believes that the only way in which to prevent the Syrians from taking the last remaining part of his country is by meeting their force with force. The West has counselled him several times that that will lead to the extinction by armed force of the remainder of his enclave. The West may well be right, but it is difficult to see any alternative for Aoun—there is no evidence from any analysis of Syrian foreign policy that I have seen to suggest that the Syrians will negotiate with anyone except at the end of a gun.

I want to ask my hon. Friend the Minister a number of questions. As I gave him very short notice, I shall understand if he wishes to reply to some of them in writing. Can he confirm that we severed diplomatic relations with Syria because of its active involvement in worldwide terrorism, not merely as a result of one terrorist incident? Are the Syrians continuing to sponsor international terrorism and to neglect even the most basic niceties of international law? In particular, is it true, as has been widely claimed, that the Syrians are believed to have been behind the Lockerbie bombing?

Is it true that the Syrian move into Lebanon was sponsored—in good faith—by the Arab League, but that the Arab League proved unable to retain its grip on the Syrians and had to pull out the non-Syrian troops in the face of aggression from various groups? Is it true that the various terrorist groups and militias outside the so-called Christian enclave and the Israeli-dominated southern strip all now depend to a greater or lesser extent on the Syrians for their weapon supplies—including the group who seized Terry Waite, wherever that unfortunate man may be now?

Is it true that those who have spoken out against Syria have been executed or assassinated? Is it true that the recent tragic death of the Sunnite Mufti Sheikh Hassan Khalid—to whom my hon. Friend referred in a speech in May—had commented through a spokesman only days before that the recent shelling of Moslem west Beirut had been carried out by Syrian regular forces and not by guerrillas? Furthermore, is it true that that murder took place only hours after Sheikh Khalid had refused an invitation to Damascus to explain his spokesman's comments? Is it true that 247 mm mortar shells were fired in that incident in west Beirut? Those are enormous shells, and there is no conceivable chance that any group other than the Syrian regular army could have fired weaponry of that kind.

Is it true that the reign of terror has extended to foreigners—for example, French journalist and academic Michael Seurat, tortured to death by the Syrians for putting out an anti-Syrian line? Is it true that in Syrian-occupied territory people are held for years without trial, torture is rife and the drug trade continues from the Beka'a valley, and has been steadily expanded? Is it true that 100,000 Moslems have fled into the so-called Christian enclave and recognise General Aoun as it leader, and that 30 per cent. of his troops are now Sunmis? In particular, is it true that two Moslem brigades of the Lebanese army have moved over into his area in the past few weeks and are now fighting on his side, despite the terrible threat that that poses to their families, many of whom are still in the Syrian area? Is it true that the Syrian navy is illegally blockading the two Christian ports of Beirut and Byblos, and that people are starving as a result?

Finally, is it true that it is believed to have been the Syrian regular army that reduced Dōra to rubble earlier in the year, and that last night 5,000 shells were fired at the Christian stretch of the coastline, with casualties still being assessed?

That is a lot of questions. Let me end by making four quick points. First, I firmly believe that the Government are right not to recognise Syria—it cannot be trusted and negotiations are possible only from a position of strength. Secondly, the key to Lebanon's problems lies in the withdrawal of external forces, both Syrian and Israeli. I understand that there was another Israeli incursion last night in which a Hezbollah leader was seized. Thirdly, the Arab League means well, but there is not the slightest evidence from anything that one can look at in the past in Lebanon to show that the league could deliver anything that it tried to set up. It has acted in good faith in the past and that is how it is acting now, but it cannot bring pressure to bear on Syria because Syria does not recognise diplomatic pressure. Fourthly, the West must ensure that the remaining free enclave in Lebanon is not snuffed out.

**Mr. John Bowis** (Battersea): I support my hon. Friend and echo his questions to the Minister. He has rightly said that we are talking about a country which in the past was a noble example of how communities could live together in a significant form of democracy. Perhaps when the Minister is responding to the debate and outlining British policy on this part of the world he will bear in mind that although we would like to see Britain act even handedly towards the Lebanon and its communities, that even-handedness cannot override the need for humanitarian aid. As my hon. Friend has said, even-handedness cannot apply to Syria. We must not fail to take into account General Aoun's attempts to stop the drug trade which is so polluting the international scene and, not least, affecting people in Britain. We should not discourage France from taking the lead in an area where, traditionally, it had a role and influence.

**Mr. Brazier:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that intervention.

My fourth conclusion was that we must not allow Lebanon's remaining free enclave to be snuffed out. I agree with my hon. Friend that the French are the appropriate people to take the lead in this matter. The Lebanon is a Francophone country. I am no great sycophant towards France and I share the Prime Minister's views on the French revolution, but France has great ties of blood and culture with Lebanon and understands it much better than we do. We should support France in any initiative, which should include lifting the illegal Syrian blockade of the Christian ports and ensuring that General Aoun has the weapons that he needs. Those are the only ways in which the Syrians will be brought to meaningful negotiations.

12.47 pm

**The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave):** I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) for once again giving the House an opportunity to consider the tragic situation in Lebanon. He made certain underlying assumptions with which we can all associate ourselves. In the old days, which now seem far off although they ocurred not many years ago, Lebanon was one of the most attractive countries in the middle east and its different communities had a unique system of mutual toleration. My officials do not need to be reminded of that because the majority of them learned their Arabic in the now sadly defunct Middle East College for Arabic Studies. Because of that many of them know the old Lebanon extremely well and remember what it was like. Since that time the country has descended steadily into anarchy and horror. I suppose that, apart from the huge scale of events in Cambodia, some of the most frightful atrocites since the second world war have taken place in the territory of the Lebanon.

The situation is bleak. I am happy to have been given this opportunity by my hon. Friend to try to answer some of his questions and to place on record the Government's position. We do not think that the situation can now be easily resolved because of what I might call the polarisation between the West and the East on one side or the other. My hon. Friend showed that he is well acquainted with Lebanon's complex history and he will understand that we must reserve our position about who among the many players have contributed to the disaster. As a Government in western Europe and as a permanent member of the Security Council, we must try to take such steps as we can to return events to a process that might lead to peace and a practical solution.

Although I know very well from those to whom I have talked about these matters, both inside and outside Government, that it is almost impossible to speak about the Lebanon, if one knows it well, without passion and a passionate partianship, it is the Government's duty to try to put that aside and to take such steps as we can that we objectively believe will lead to progress. To take two names at random, if one put into the same room Patrick Seale and my good friend Professor Roger Scruton, one would find on each side a passionate partisanship and a great deal of knowledge, but a passing of ships in the night in their analysis of who should be blamed for what.

My less emotional task—although it is still emotional to have to stand back—is to analyse and advise on what we should now be doing to ensure progress. It is clear that in the Christian enclave some of the traditions of the old Lebanon are still alive. It is clear that all Lebanese, except those who directly profit from the anarchy, want peace. My hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury spoke of drug dealers, and others who thrive on the anarchy that has been created. Those who are involved in terrorism sometimes dress up as a political cause things that are closely related to the making of money. Some have profited by attachment, one way or another, to one or other of the external forces which have arrived in Lebanon —the Syrians, the Israelis and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Therefore, there are those who, sadly, have a vested interest in the maintenance of the horror. Apart

*[Mr. William Waldegrave]*

from those, I agree with my hon. Friend that ordinary Lebanese from any community—Shi'ites, Sunnis, Christians—long for the departure of the external forces.

My hon. Friend is right to speak as he did about General Aoun, for his most bitter opponent would not doubt his patriotism or his honesty of purpose, and he is supported in his enclave by both Moslems and Christians. We have to weigh our words when we talk because they have some reverberation. My hon. Friend said that the words of a French minister might have more reverberation than ours, but we are permament members of the Security Council and we have long experience of, and influence in, the area. Therefore, when we are speaking as Ministers, it behoves us to judge what we say. I make no criticism of my hon. Friend because it is legitimate for him to see what he has seen and say what he has said on the basis of his own experience and research.

I have a slightly different responsibility. My anxiety is this. If the British Government were to commit themselves to a line of policy that made it look as though we were ready to intervene, whether militarily or in any other way, which we are not and cannot be, to rescue a Christian enclave under invasion, we might ourselves have caused those in the Christian enclave, and General Aoun, to misjudge the extent to which the conflict would be internationalised, and the interventions that would result. Above all, we must recognise the history of external interventions in the Lebanon recently. It is not now 1958, when American marines landed. In that near post-colonial time, order could be re-established relatively easily. That world has passed. No American aircraft carrier or battleship can restore order in the Lebanon. No arriving French or British soldiers with bases in the region and with friends and Governments willing to act with them throughout the middle east, as was still the case in 1958, could impose a solution from outside.

**Mr. Brazier:** I suggested that we should restore the rule of international law in international waters by clearing the blockade. That is something that we have done recently. The West has done it collectively in part of the Gulf where a much larger scale conflict was taking place until last year.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** It is true that our own ships and those which carried our flag, along with American ships and those which sought the protection of the American flag, did enable the complement of British and, ultimately more important in the scale of events, American naval forces to continue their passage to and fro in the Gulf. There is a long history of blockades in the Levant. In recent years, too, the Israelis have intervened on many occasions to stop ships. They have searched ships widely if they believed that that was necessary for their security. We deplore blockades, and my hon. Friend is right to say that on many occasions international law is being flouted. I must not give any signal to those who might then take action which might end in even worse tragedy that there is any immediate prospect of the Royal Navy or, as far as I know, the American navy, coming to the aid of those who are seeking to bring supplies or weapons into the Lebanon. I must make it clear that we do not think that it is possible for sheer straightforward military action to drive the Syrians out. We want the Syrians to go. We believe that the Lebanese should be allowed—they have the right—to seek their own future without intervention. We want the Israelis to go. We deeply regret the intervention of Iranian proxies, which only complicates the situation further. We do not think that anything will be gained by Iraqi intervention, which often follows the mirror image of Syrian intervention. If the Lebanon becomes the playground or the battleground, by proxy, of all these external forces, there is no hope.

We must analyse what is the best way forward. We believe that those Arab countries which have great power, both financial and otherwise, over many of the key players, must take the responsibility in this new world in which we can no longer look to the disposition of events by external super-power agreement or ex-colonial power agreement. It must be for the regional powers to take responsibility themselves. We are doing what we can to back the Arab League interventions, and they are extremely important. Nothing that we would want to do should be seen as undermining the action that the Committee of Three is trying to take to achieve, first, and above all, a ceasefire. My hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury was quite right when he said that the shelling in the past few days has been intense and some of the worst in the whole period from both sides, and there have been many casualties on both sides.

Secondly, there is a need to find a forum somewhere, perhaps outside the Lebanon, where people can talk and begin to put together what is bound to be necessary—a new constitutional settlement. Many on the Christian side recognise that. My hon. Friend is aware of the demographic changes that have taken place since the original settlement. There will be a need, I am sure, in future for constitutional change. As that change is discussed, in parallel with it must come pressures above all from the Arab world, and from those who have direct influence on Syria, such as the Soviet Union. We have talked about these matters to the Soviet Union. Pressure must come for the Syrians to withdraw, but not by using the excuse of the Israelis. We on our part should bring pressure on the Israelis to withdraw. That is not certain of success, but it is the only hope of a way forward.

My hon. Friend urges us to analyse our policy again. We do not overestimate our influence, but I shall respond to his request by making sure that we do not for a moment take our eyes off the Lebanon. If we can make any practical intervention to carry forward the process towards peace, we shall make it, with the one proviso that we must be careful not to encourage a belief that only a military solution is possible.

# Entry Visa Requirements

1 pm

**Mr. Peter Hardy** (Wentworth): The two cases involving my constituents that I shall present in the debate justify my extremely serious concern or anger and illustrate remarkable or serious official inadequacy. I regret that the Government seem willing to be entirely disdainful of the constituency responsibilities and involvements of hon. Members. That cause for regret is clearly demonstrated by these cases, which persuaded me that I should delay my return home. I was drawn to Yorkshire before the weather broke, so the Minister will understand I did not enter this debate lightly, but the cases are sufficiently serious to justify my detention here today.

My attention was drawn to the outrageous experience of Mrs. Janette Caglar more than a year ago. The Minister will be aware of the enormous volume of correspondence which has flowed between my desk and his office. Mrs. Caglar lives in Wath upon Dearn in my constituency. She met her husband, Mr. Ondir Caglar of Izmir, some time ago. They married on 18 February last year, and Mr and Mrs Caglar sought to live together in Britain. That determined young lady had made sure that there were jobs and accommodation for them. Mr. Caglar's entry was refused, and their marriage was dismissed as one of convenience. That view has been maintained since they married in February 1988. It was still maintained when Mrs. Caglar became pregnant several months after the marriage and when their baby daughter was born on 20 July. The Home Office appear to disregard such biological demonstrations quite happily.

The baby girl was born in Yorkshire, while Mr. Caglar remains in Turkey. They are separated by more than 1,000 miles and Mr. Caglar, had to learn the news of the birth of his daughter by telephone from his mother-in-law in Wath upon Dearn. My constituent has been saddened and enormously distressed by her experience. She has also been caused indescribable frustration and anguish. At one time, she spent hour after hour trying to speak to the relevant office of the Home Office without being able to get through. While the official view may be that that does not happen, many Members of Parliament must be aware that British citizens and taxpayers frequently find it difficult to get through to public offices. It becomes particularly distressing when a constituent feels that Government Departments are insulated from human contact, especially when individuals feel anxious or despairing.

Mrs. Caglar decided to return to Britain to have her baby and to be with her mother in Wath upon Dearn. She hoped that the visit would be possible and that she could be accompanied by her husband; after all, she was to have her first baby. I felt that it was reasonable for Mrs. Caglar to want her husband to be with her in those circumstances. I contacted a Home Office official, who appeared to be extremely helpful. He thought that such a visit was possible and asked me if I could help by telling the Home Office on what date and at which airport Mr. Caglar would be arriving as a visitor. I immediately obtained that information from Mrs. Caglar's family, passed it on, only then to receive a message from the Home Office that a mistake had been made and that Mr. Caglar could not come in. The Home Office then knew, however, on what date he proposed to come and at what airport he would arrive. That was a distasteful and irritating experience. Perhaps a genuine mistake had been made, but it justified further consideration, but none was forthcoming.

On behalf of her husband, Mrs. Caglar then launched an appeal. The time passed and the hearing was set for May. Mrs. Caglar went to the hearing full of hope, but she was distressed and her hopes were dashed when, as soon as the hearing began, the Home Office representative asked for an adjournment to have more time for the investigation. More time—when months and months had elapsed since the case started, and months and months had elapsed since I first made representations to the Minister. That was a cruel blow to my constituent, and I shared her anger and frustration.

That young couple continue to live apart and they maintain contact by letter and telephone as they did during their courtship, when Mr. Caglar learned English in order to maintain communication with his future wife. Perhaps the Home Office feels entitled to be awkward as I believe that the Home Office suspects that one of Mr. Caglar's brothers may have acted a little improperly in the past. I know little about that, but I do not see how Mr. Caglar can be held responsible for the actions of a brother who is a good deal older than him and with whom he has little or no contact. It is not consistent with my regard for justice that a man should be punished for the offences of his brother. The Home Office should not pursue such an attitude.

The second case concerns Miss Tannanum Nawaz—I hope that my pronunciation is reasonably accurate. Miss Tannanum Nawaz is the neice of Mr. Tareen Farouk, a respected resident of Swinton in my constituency. He is a successful, well regarded, intelligent and responsible business man. His wife, a local lady, is employed in a position of considerable trust, and both are of excellent character.

Mr. Tareen has lived in England for a long time, but he had a sister in Pakistan with whom he enjoyed an extremely close relationship. Mr. Tareen was particularly attached to his sister and to her daughter, his niece, Miss Nawaz. Mr. and Mrs. Tareen regularly visited his sister and their niece in Pakistan.

Sadly, Mr. Tareen's sister died, and he immediately visited Pakistan once again. The purpose of that visit was, partly, to spend some time with his niece, but also to help her to arrange to come to Britain for a holiday. Miss Nawaz is due to be married in a few months' time and the Minister will understand that in that situation, the planned holiday must have taken place before the marriage.

Miss Nawaz has a job and has arranged to take leave for the holiday and to return to her job once that holiday is over. Mr. Tareen is an intelligent, honourable and successful man. He went with his niece to the appropriate office in Pakistan to seek to arrange her entry to Britain. He had to pay a fee. The interview was not completed, so Mr. Tareen had to return the next day and pay a second fee. The Minister knows that I find that surprising. Miss Nawaz sought to provide the information that was requested at the two interviews and was asked how much money she had and would be bringing with her for her holiday. She said that she had $3,000. Mr. Tareen, who as I said is an experienced and honourable man, tells me that he believes that that is the reason for the application being rejected.

I suppose that they were in a catch-22 situation: if she had nothing, clearly she could not be accepted; as she was

*[Mr. Peter Hardy]*

bringing a reasonably substantial sum, the officials suspected that it was her intention to stay. As I pointed out, the family is not impoverished. It is not the poorest in the land. Miss Nawaz was coming for a holiday before her marriage. She would have intended going shopping with her uncle and aunt. I believe that no regard was given to the circumstances of that case.

Miss Nawaz inherited her mother's property. No doubt, she would have enjoyed being with her uncle and aunt in my constituency. I know that the uncle and aunt were greatly looking forward to having their beloved niece visit before she entered matrimony which, as the Minister knows, is a relatively binding and substantial arrangement for Pakistani ladies.

Mr. and Mrs. Tareen fear that their beloved niece will never be able to visit them. I think that they have cause for bitterness at their treatment. They see the approaching solemnisation of Miss Nawaz's marriage as obviously cause for rejoicing but also cause for permanent regret, in that it could mean a disruption of the close relationship which they have enjoyed and which has always been strengthened by the frequent holidays that Mr. and Mrs. Tareen have been able to spend.

I find the whole experience of my constituents utterly unacceptable, partly because it seems to assume that responsible people like Mr. and Mrs. Tareen should have their record and character brought under little better than nasty suspicion. The Home Office disregarded the realities. If the Minister searches the record, he will know that I gave my assurance in the case of Miss Nawaz. I have given my confirmation as to the character of Mrs. Caglar, who lives in the same small town in which I live.

The Minister might also recall that, some years ago, I gave an assurance to the Home Office in a case where one constituent asked me to assist when a friend of his family was coming on holiday and had been detained at Heathrow. He gave me a clear assurance that the purpose of the visit was a holiday. The Home Office accepted my assurance and let that young man go to my area. A few days later, my constituent contacted me and said, "We have got over the first hurdle, Mr. Hardy. Now we want to arrange for him to stay." I said, "Your word may be worthless, but mine is not." I informed the Home Office that my assurance was then qualified and that I had no objection to the law taking its course. That is the view that most hon. Members would take, yet there seems to be no appreciation in the Home Office that hon. Members value their word. That word seems to be regarded as worthless or scarcely worth recognising. That case is on the record, although I have not taken the trouble to look up the necessary reference and date.

Mr. Tareen knows that I took that action. He knows that if Miss Nawaz should break her word to her employers who have given her leave of absence, disregard the marriage contract into which she has entered and seek to stay permanently in my constituency, I could not possibly accept that such a change of arrangement was possible. I would be the first to inform the Home Office that the assurances which I had given had been broken. I have no doubt that Mr. Tareen would want to keep his word, as I would want to keep mine. I regret that this ridiculous affair has taken place.

I know that the Minister says that the rules are important and that he can intervene only in the most exceptional circumstances. The two cases that I have presented are exceptional. If the Minister thinks that they justify inaction, we do not need a Minister—all we need is a computer terminal regurgitating interpretations of the regulations, with the Minister passing on to Members of Parliament whatever it suggests. The Minister has his job to exercise a degree of discretion and to insist that Home Office officials—they are paid handsomely by the taxpayer —answer the telephone. His job is to ensure that, when someone appeals against a decision, and a lot of time has elapsed since the case was presented, Home Office officials do not go to the tribunal to ask for an adjournment for more time.

I have written to the Home Office time and time again about these two cases, and they should have received rather more consideration. We have no racial tension in my constituency. The younger members of a political party with which the Minister is familiar attempted to bring in a racist headmaster from Bradford to stir things up, but fortunately that went off like a damp squib. In the Rotherham area, partly because of the good will and common sense of the people, and partly because of the work of the community relations structure, the local authority and the police, we have avoided racial tension. I do not want it to develop, but the official suspicions and niggardliness evidenced in this case were scarcely helpful.

I shall not say much more; I look forward to hearing the Minister's views. It would be nice if, when I get home this afternoon—or evening, if the traffic is as bad as I fear it may be—I could call on Mr. and Mrs. Tareen, and on Mrs. Caglar and her new baby, and tell them that common sense and compassion have not entirely disappeared from the establishment in Britain.

1.18 pm

**The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. Tim Renton):** I have listened carefully to the points raised by the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) and I fully understand that, with the parliamentary recess an hour or two away, he would rather spend today enjoying the sunshine in his home or constituency than coming to the House to make these points. I take his point that the reason why he applied for an Adjournment debate was the seriousness that he attaches to these two cases.

As the hon. Gentleman will appreciate, the issues that he has raised involve matters which are also the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, because he and his Department are responsible for the operation of the entry clearance system in overseas posts. These matters are also the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Lord Chancellor, as it is he, as well as the Home Office, who has administrative responsibility for the immigration appellate authorities.

I realise that the large increase in the number of appeals lodged with the immigration appeal system has led to an increased backlog of cases in the appellate system. In our office, that has placed extra demands on available resources and has led, to my regret, to an increase in the preparation time for appeals explanatory statements. We are now considering urgently with the Lord Chancellor's Department and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office what steps need to be taken to arrest the increasing backlog of appeals and subsequently to maintain that backlog at an acceptable level. Some resources have already been provided for additional appeal hearing rooms and for listing more heavily in the present rooms. I hope in the months ahead that that will have some success in reducing the backlog.

I say that against a background which I am sure the hon. Member for Wentworth understands. The two cases that he raises involve decisions to refuse entry clearance, against which Parliament has provided a right of appeal to an independent adjudicator. The system of independent adjudicators—and above them an independent appellate tribunal—has been in place for a number of years. Adjudicators are now appointed by the Lord Chancellor, which ensures that they are wholly independent of the Home Office. They are present to act as an independent check on the decisions reached by the immigration service, entry clearance officers or the Home Office.

Against that background, I ask the hon. Gentleman to accept the independence of the appellate system. It has an important role to play, which has often been ratified by Parliament. I must direct to that system both the cases that the hon. Gentleman has mentioned today.

Mr. Caglar has appealed against a decision taken by the entry clearance officer in Istanbul to refuse him entry clearance for settlement in the United Kingdom. I understand that the appeal is now listed for hearing in Leeds on 3 October. Despite the hon. Gentleman's strong plea to me in his closing remarks, it would be wrong in principle for me to make any comment today on the substance of a case, or to go into the immigration history or details of Mr. Caglar's appeal, when the case has yet to be considered by the adjudicator. If I did that, it might prejudice the fair hearing of the appeal.

**Mr. Hardy:** My constituent, Mrs. Caglar, attended the hearing in May when she was eight months pregnant after being separated from her husband for a long time. The officials immediately asked for an adjournment to provide time for an investigation. That was not a reasonable experience for my constituent. Why was she not told that she would face an official request for an adjournment as soon as she arrived at the hearing? Would the Minister care to imagine a lady in his family who was eight months pregnant being forced to go through such an ordeal?

**Mr. Renton:** I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has raised that point with me again. I have been told clearly —and I have checked this with my officials while the hon. Gentleman was speaking—that the adjournment was granted at the hearing on 12 May at the request of both parties, not just at the request of the Home Office. Documentary evidence of certain points in the entry clearance officer's statement had not been produced and the adjournment was requested by both parties. The documents required were produced as quickly as possible and the appeal was listed for 11 July, but had to be adjourned again because Mrs. Caglar was then expecting her baby. As I have just said, it is now listed for hearing in Leeds on 3 October.

With regard to the complaints about the difficulties experienced by Mrs. Caglar in contacting the immigration department by telephone, to which the hon. Gentleman referred, I fully recognise that, in the early part of 1988, the level of service provided by the telephone inquiry bureau at the headquarters in Lunar house in Croydon was not acceptable. However, I assure the hon. Gentleman that many measures have since been taken to improve the efficiency of the telephone inquiry bureau. I will visit Lunar house next Thursday and will visit the telephone inquiry bureau to check on the progress. A fully satisfactory quality of service is now provided. If the hon. Gentleman would like to visit Lunar house after the holidays, I would welcome him there and he can reassure himself about the better quality of service provided for his constituents and others.

Referring to the case of Miss Nawaz, she applied for entry clearance as a visitor in Karachi on 9 April 1989. That application was refused after interview because the entry clearance officer was not satisfied as to her intention to leave the United Kingdom at the end of her visit. I stress to the hon. Gentleman that the first interview on 9 April was complete in itself. The decision to make a second application the following day was, I am sure, entirely her own. It was not required by the entry clearance officer. The second application was also refused after a further interview. Miss Nawaz was then notified of her right of appeal against both decisions. The proper way for persons who are dissatified with decisions of the entry clearance officer to seek to have their cases resolved is through the appeals system estabished for that purpose, as I have said. Although I have listened to the points made by the hon. Gentleman on behalf of Miss Nawaz, I have to say that, in my judgment, these matters should be raised on appeal.

Despite the hon. Gentleman's eloquence and passion, I have heard nothing today which persuades me that the most exceptional circumstances exist which would justify my intervening in either case.

In the remaining few minutes, I shall outline the background of hon. Members' representations and the new guidelines against which I have made my remarks.

The guidelines for representations by right hon. and hon. Members in immigration cases make it clear that Ministers will not normally intervene to take the initial decision on an application, to pre-empt consideration of a disputed decision by the independent appellate authorities, or to reverse a decision where the appeal process has been exhausted and no new and compelling evidence has become available. The revised guidelines came into effect on 3 January. Following circulation in draft form, they were debated in the House. The final version reflects points that were made by hon. Members during that debate. Experience of the operation of the revised guidelines over the past six months has proved beyond doubt that they are fair and reasonable and, despite Labour Members' original doubts, are working well in practice.

The hon. Gentleman said that they remove the necessity for a Minister and that all that a Minister is doing is getting reactions from a computer. However, I make the contrary point: that they have put hon. Members in direct touch with immigration officers and chief immigration officers at ports and airports for the discussion of special circumstances. There is great advantage to both sides in that—certainly there is to the immigration service and to hon. Members in being able to go directly over the special circumstances of cases with those members of the immigration service who are charged with taking a decision. If it is felt that there are special circumstances that the immigration service has not properly taken into account, there is always discretion to go back to the Minister. I have not yet been turned wholly into a computer, even though, at times, I might like to be.

**Mr. Hardy:** On the Minister's last point, my contact with the authorities led them to find out on what date and at what airport Mr. Caglar planned to accompany his pregnant wife.

The Minister will appreciate that, if Miss Nawaz is to visit her uncle and aunt in my constituency before her marriage, there is some urgency. Would he, in his ministerial role, have the capacity or the inclination to ask for the timetable of delay to be reduced so that, if Miss Nawaz is to be able to come into this country, permission can be given before the date of her planned and impending marriage?

**Mr. Renton:** I assure the hon. Gentleman that I will certainly pass on that comment directly to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. The decision about who is interviewed and in what order of priority lies with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which is responsible for entry clearance officers.

I am informed that three months have passed since Miss Nawaz made her second application. Since then, she has made no application at all. We tried to check that point before the debate—I do not think that we have received final information, but that is my impression. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will persuade her to take the necessary steps as soon as possible in Karachi.

I have listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman today. I stress to him that the various steps that we have taken over the past two years have speeded up the treatment of the many thousands of immigration cases that come before us every year, but the Labour party has always voted against them. I hope that the hon. Member for Wentworth, given his seniority in the Labour party, will persuade it in the next Session to vote for future changes that will further speed up the process.

The hon. Gentleman should suggest to his constituents that the right course for them is to pursue their case through the appeals system as endorsed by Parliament.

## Turkish Minority (Bulgaria)

1.30 pm

**Mr. David Atkinson** (Bournemouth, East): I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to refer to what is currently happening in Bulgaria and to report to the House on my recent visit there.

As I speak, hundreds of cars and trucks are lining up at the Bulgarian frontier with Turkey at Kapitan-Andreevo, containing members of entire families with about as much as can be transported, including, as I saw for myself last week, the kitchen sink. They leave behind their homes, jobs, livestock, other property and the country of their birth. They are all Bulgarian citizens. Their parents and grandparents, and their relations before them, were all born in Bulgaria, which is their home.

Currently, they are leaving Bulgaria and are unlikely to return. The reason, quite simply, is that they have had enough. They consider that their rights have been denied, and, for the first time, they have been given passports and can obtain exit visas. Most of them are leaving for good.

Those people are the so-called Bulgarian ethnic Turks. The authorities prefer to call them Bulgarian Moslems, which they are, but so are the Pomaks, who are not of Turkish origin but are Slavonic. These Bulgarians regard their identity as Turkish, which is what they are; one has only to meet them to see that. They are the remnants of those Turkish families who settled in the Balkans over the centuries of the Turkish occupation. I was to hear the phrase "Five centuries of Turkish yoke" repeatedly and with so much venom—understandably so, in view of the history. One has only to recall the Bulgarian atrocities of the last century, the Bashi Bazooks, and Gladstone's campaign to raise British public opinion on behalf of persecuted Bulgarian Christians, in which he called for the Turks to depart "bag and baggage".

The tragedy today is that, contrary to the spirit of Helsinki, the Balkan wars are still being fought by propaganda and repression. As a consequence, we are witnessing the largest movement of people since the second world war.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) said on the "Today" programme from Turkey, 185,000 Bulgarian Turks have crossed the border to date, 3,000 are crossing every day and over 250,000 applications for exit visas have been made to date. It is obvious that that is only the beginning.

From what I saw and heard during my visit, the majority of the Bulgarian Turkish population, which numbers about 1 million—10 per cent. of the total population—want to leave and are planning to do so.

Apart from the human tragedy that that represents and the humanitarian issues involved—such as the division of families, the parting with friends, neighbours and colleagues at work, many of whom are Bulgarian Christians, and the emptying of communities, it is also resulting in growing problems for the Bugarian economy because of the unexpected loss of manpower.

It is resulting in major problems for Turkey, which is accepting the burden of providing for those people on their arrival there—in effect, as refugees rather than as tourists, as the Bulgarians would have it, although many of them have relatives somewhere in the country.

Surely few of those people can want to leave their country, homes and friends in that way. Does Bulgaria want to lose so many of its citizens? It says not. Surely Turkey can do without more refugees at a time when it is facing considerable economic problems of its own and is trying to provide for tens of thousands of Kurdish refugees from Iraq.

I believe that this tragedy was avoidable. Despite all the rhetoric and propaganda from both sides, it stems principally from the Bulgarian Government's policy to assimilate. I appreciate that they describe that as a process of national consolidation. However, they want to assimilate, integrate and regulate the ethnic Turkish population at the expense of its identity, culture and way of life. To the Turks, that represents their self-respect, indeed their very soul.

I first became alerted to the problem when it was brought to the attention of the Council of Europe committee for relations with non-member countries in March 1985, three months after the Bulgarian Government embarked on their assimilation policy. Every Bulgarian without a Slavonic name was required to sign a legal document to change it. Bulgaria maintains that that was a voluntary requirement, but from what was reported then and what I heard last week, I am convinced that it was carried out with threats and force. Henceforth, Mehmet, Ahmet, Ali and Hussein were to be called Mikhail, Ivan, Angel, Stojan and so on. That applied not only to the living Moslem population but to the dead. Names on tombstones have been erased and, as I saw, from 1985 only the initials of a Moslem name were allowed to appear.

Without a Bulgarian name, opportunities for employment, travel and a normal way of life would be impossible. Turks were not allowed to speak to each other in their own language in public. To do so would risk police beatings, fines, arrest and internal exile for those who persisted.

All Bulgarian radio broadcasts in Turkish ceased in January 1985, as did the publication of Turkish language newspapers in Bulgaria and the printing of Turkish books. Turkish community schools had long since been merged with Slavonic schools and the Turkish language was dropped as an optional subject in 1974. The wearing of traditional Turkish clothes such as the shalvar—baggy trousers—was penalised. Automatic telephone calls to Turkey could not be made and letters addressed to Turkish names were not delivered.

Perhaps the most insulting of all to many Moslems were the obstacles placed in the way of professing their religion. They effectively prevented them from performing marriages, funerals and circumcision in accordance with their Islamic rights and traditions. There are reports of mosques being closed, cemeteries being bulldozed and Moslem intellectuals and teachers of religion being imprisoned or even killed.

All that was contrary to the international commitments, treaties and protocols into which Bulgaria has entered concerning the rights of minorities. These include the original treaty of Berlin of 1878, which re-established the independent Bulgarian state, the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, the Helsinki Final Act, the numerous bilateral treaties with Turkey and, not least, its own constitution. Article 35 of that constitution forbids such discrimination on the grounds of religion and ethnicity, and article 45 entitles ethnic minorities to be educated in their own language.

It is not surprising that the implementation of such a policy met with opposition and resulted in violence. Reuters reported that 40 people were killed in the first month—December 1984—including 10 Bulgarian soldiers. Although the international press was not allowed to visit the areas concerned, foreign embassies reported eyewitness accounts of villages being surrounded by tanks while people were rounded up to exchange their personal documents for those bearing their new Slavonic name. Those who resisted and tried to escape were shot. Prominent Turkish community leaders who objected were held at the Belene island prison camp.

In response to all that, I was appointed the Council of Europe's rapporteur and in my report, which was unanimously adopted by the parliamentary assembly in September 1985, I called for an end to such a repressive policy and the violation of minority rights. We also called for a fact-finding visit, but the Bulgarian authorities did not respond. Instead, they continued their policy and there was no way out. No Bulgarian ethnic Turk was allowed an exit visa and none was allowed to emigrate. However, by now, the rest of the world was waking up to what was happening.

The events were raised by the United Kingdom in 1985 at the Ottawa meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. In March 1986, Amnesty International reported over 100 names of ethnic Turks killed in Bulgaria. Then, in December 1986, a Bulgarian weightlifter Naum Shalamanov, sought political asylum in Ankara. Better to be a garbage collector in Turkey than a national hero in Bulgaria, he said. At the Seoul Olympics last year, he won a gold medal under his previous Turkish name, Naim Sulemanoglu.

The Norwegian Helsinki committee reported on the position in 1987. The United Nations special rapporteur, Dr. Ribbiero, reported to the United Nations human rights commission in February 1988, and we raised the issue again at the Vienna review conference. Last year, the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs heard Mr. Georg Schepfass submit:

> "the West has some responsibility to look very carefully at what Bulgaria has been doing to its Turkish minority."

Last October, the Council of Europe repeated its call for an end to the persecution of ethnic Turks and the elimination of Moslem identity in Bulgaria, and embarked on a new report, with a further request to be allowed to send a fact-finding team. Only when it was realised that the report would be debated by the parliamentary assembly in May did the Bulgarian authorities at last agree to such a visit, which postponed the debate and which took place earlier this month.

Our visit could not have been more timely. In advance of the CSCE human rights conference in Paris in May and June, Bulgaria announced that, in accordance with its Vienna obligations, it would allow passports to be available to its citizens and exit visas to be provided for all those who wished to leave, with the freedom to return. That, of course, was what the Bulgarian Turks had been waiting for, and the exodus began. It also gave Bulgaria the opportunity to expel those whom it did not want anyway, and the first 1,000 or so passports went to them, with a 48-hour notice to get out of the country. They were the first to arrive in Austria, Sweden, Yugoslavia and Turkey.

Our fact-finding team consisted of an Austrian liberal, a Spanish Socialist and myself, with our committee's secretary and our own interpreter. We had insisted that we should be allowed to go wherever we wished, and to meet and talk to whomever we wanted. During our week in

*[Mr. David Atkinson]*

Bulgaria we had meetings with Ministers, parliamentarians, human rights campaigners, university professors and students, representatives of all the religions, and national, provincial and local government officials. We found all that very useful, and it helped us to understand the position better, particularly from the Bulgarian point of view.

Our task, however, was to establish to our own satisfaction whether basic human rights were being denied to the Bulgarian's ethnic Turkish population, and, if so, whether that was the principal reason for the current exodus. I believe that we achieved that aim, and that is what I believe we shall conclude, without any shadow of doubt.

In the two areas where the majority of these people live, the Loudogorce and Kirdzhali regions, we were able to establish genuine and spontaneous dialogue with ethnic Turks who were keen to share their views and experiences with us—although, as several said, they would be observed, reported, questioned, arrested, beaten and given 14 days' hard labour for doing so. There is no doubt that they consider themselves Bulgarian citizens who are Turks; nor is there any doubt that the denial of their religious and ethnic rights is the principal reason for their discontent and their departure. Asked if they would return, few expected to do so; asked whether they would leave if their old names were allowed to be restored, most said that they would stay. They confirmed that many had been forced to change their names at gunpoint, that fathers had been gaoled for circumcising their sons and that they would be fined for speaking Turkish in public.

It is also clear that renewed unrest, hunger strikes, demonstrations and violence broke out in many places on 20 and 21 May—perhaps to coincide with the forthcoming Paris CSCE conference—and that there were several deaths and many injuries at the hands of the militia. I shall never forget our arrival at one of the places—Dzebel, in the south—where there had been much violence. Everyone stood around in silence and apprehension, waiting for something. They were waiting for our arrival, of which they had been informed by the media. It was like "High Noon" in a Western town. The atmosphere was electric. At first no one wanted to talk to us, then everyone did, until the police moved them on.

In our discussions with Bulgarian officials, we found a total failure—or perhaps it was a refusal—to appreciate this situation. They blamed Turkish propaganda for inciting hysteria and provoking the exodus. They cited pan-Turkism as the motive, and warned of Islamic fundamentalism.

They are quite certain that these people will return, as they are entitled to do, because they will not find that the grass is greener in Turkey where, it was suggested, they will not be allowed to restore their original names.

I do not know the truth of that. It may be that the Voice of Turkey has gone over the top in encouraging resistance to exploitation and in offering a haven to all. Perhaps many will return to Bulgaria as some have, we were told, already done. We were not satisfied with the meetings which had been officially arranged for us with local muftis who run the mosques. Their denials of the restrictions did not always match the evidence or satisfy our questioning.

In conclusion, while I cannot anticipate the recommendations which our Committee will wish to make to the Council of Europe in September, it must be right to appeal once again to the Bulgarian Government to alter their policy of enforced name changing and to end all those petty restrictions against the expression of Turkish identity and Moslem religious practice. That is an essential step, which at a stroke could reduce, perhaps even reverse, the present exodus, and which could perhaps form the basis of a new attitude to Bulgaria's ethnic Turks that truly recognises their cultural identity and respects rights that are equal, civil, and human. It would also do much to restore Bulgaria's dreadful image abroad, which is rivalled only by that of its neighbour Romania and which is the principal obstacle to establishing better relations with the rest of Europe, including many of its own allies.

Today, it is totally out of the question for the Council of Europe to contemplate offering Bulgaria the special guest status that Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union have accepted and about which my hon. Friends the Members for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill), for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) and other hon. Members spoke in yesterday's debate on the Consolidated Fund.

At the end of the day, these problems will only finally be resolved bilaterally between the Bulgarian Government and the Turkish Government, both of whom have their own explanations as to why their 1988 protocol has failed to establish the process of dialogue that is essential. Common sense must prevail sooner or later, and as a good will gesture the Turkish Government should end the propaganda element of its Voice of Turkey radio broadcasts, to which Bulgaria takes understandable exception.

Finally, we in Europe should make available our good offices, backed up by aid to both Governments, to ensure the peaceful resettlement of the refugees in Turkey or their return to their Bulgarian homes, depending on which they want to do. The Council of Europe has immense experience in human rights and in the problems of refugees. I know that my hon. Friend the Minister will ensure that the Government will give their support to what we shall recommend to bring this latest Balkan tragedy to an end.

1.47 pm

**The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave):** My hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) draws attention to a great series of tragedies. He is right to say that the movements of population now taking place are perhaps the greatest such movements in Europe since the second world war. The scale of events is great. His speech was sensible and generous. It was sensible in urging the Turks to take such steps as they can that will not exacerbate the situation, and to make some gestures. I applaud my hon. Friend for that suggestion.

As in all such situations, it is easy to become as wholly partisan that problems are exaggerated. My hon. Friend has not done so and I pay tribute to him for that. He was generous in recording correctly the series of strong protests that the Government have made on these issues, and he gave an account of some of them. I think that it would be fair to say that we took the lead in the Paris conference on the human dimension of the CSCE in the matter. Earlier this week, during her visit to Turkey, my right hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) went to see what was happening.

My hon. Friend, with a proper sense of history, reminded us of the irony that this of all Houses of Parliament should be raising this matter, when we responded with such passion and generosity under the leadership of the then Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, to similar atrocities being carried out at that time to the Bulgarians. It is fair to remind the Bulgarians that our concern for human rights is not new, and is pursued impartially. There is no question of a vendetta against Bulgaria or anything like that. We are concerned about the events and the people.

The last time that I made a protest was to the Bulgarian ambassador on 1 June. As my hon. Friend knows, on 14 June, my right hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey issued a statement calling on the Bulgarian Government to allow the Turkish minority to live where they wish, free of harassment. My hon. Friend gives a full account of his long-standing involvement in this. It is no exaggeration to say that, among western European politicians, he has been one of the leaders in drawing attention to this issue.

The scale of the movement of people makes it clear that the fears and pressures on the Turkish minority population in Bulgaria are not the result of events over a few weeks or months. The name-changing programme began in 1984-85, and when the full-scale assimilation programme described by my hon. Friend was put into full swing, that made matters much worse. We have emphasised again and again to the Bulgarian Government that they should reverse that policy. It has no chance of success and will produce nothing but conflict and unfairness. The pressures probably go even further back, and the right, now given under the CSCE process, to a passport has merely given a hope of escape to many who have suffered pressure for many years.

However, as my hon. Friend said, if this policy were reversed, many people might chose to stay in the areas in which they have had their livelihoods and families and in which their fathers have lived. My hon. Friend was right to draw attention to the name-changing point and to emphasise that even a symbolic gesture against that might do a great deal by itself to change the flow.

Bulgaria recognises the immense damage that what is happening has caused to her economy. She is in dire economic straits, particularly in agriculture, because she has lost so many of her best farming people. Others are being desperately drafted in to try to deal with the harvest. Because she is suffering from an exodus, it is in her own interests to try to resolve the matter fairly.

On 21 June, we invoked the first stage of the human dimension mechanism, the new mechanism established by the Vienna conference under the Helsinki process. This is a formal request for information, and the Bulgarian Government have provided some information. However, I am sorry to say that that does not seem to have had any effect on the practices about which we are complaining. The situation can be resolved only by negotiation. We have been calling constantly on the Bulgarian authorities to negotiate agreements, where they are needed, with their Turkish counterparts. These agreements should lead to an orderly and proper departure for those who want to leave —that is their right—with their property and the right of return, should they wish to, should be safeguarded.

What is most important is that we should secure guarantees that the human rights of those who wish to stay are properly observed in Bulgaria. Therefore, we look to an early conclusion of negotiations between the Turks and the Bulgarians. Recent steps that looked at one time as if they were leading to high-level talks have broken down again. There are rumours that the Soviet Union has been seeking to act as a mediator, and we should not exclude anybody who seeks, with good will, to try to mediate in this situation.

I told my hon. Friend that I would give him some account of my right hon. Friend's visit, which confirms much of what he said. When speaking in public after visiting the crossing point at Kapi Kule, she said that what she saw was heartbreaking. She saw families split as they were crossing. She saw families divorced from their possessions before they crossed. In the chaos and disorder afterwards, she saw desperate families seeking to be reunited with other family members and property. She said that it reminded her of the pictures in her generation—the generation of my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) and my generation, let alone the generation of my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell)—of the massed forced migrations of the second world war. Those were tragic pictures. She said that leaving families had been forced to give up their house keys and car keys, with rather obvious implications. She returned from her visit reinforced in her belief that what is happening is a human tragedy on a great scale.

Bearing in mind what my right hon. Friend had seen, she asked me to pay a tribute to the Turkish Red Crescent organisation. My right hon. Friend has travelled widely as a representative of the Government in Africa and elsewhere. She has seen similar situations in other parts of the world but she added that she had never seen better organised refugee camps and reception arrangements than those which the Turkish Red Crescent were arranging. The British Government were able to give some small financial help to this work, with a donation of £300,000 to the Turkish Red Crescent.

I would add a footnote. I urge the Turkish Government once again to give the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, access to the Kurdish refugees, which they have not done so far. We would be happy to contribute financially to that problem, too. There are certain ironies, but perhaps this is not the appropriate time to draw attention to them. Something of the same policies of assimilation, pressure and use of langauge, for example, impinge on the Kurds at the other end of Turkey.

We are dealing with the Turkish tragedy, however, and that must not be disguised. There is no excuse for it. Perhaps we have the right also to remind the Turkish Government not to fall into the same traps themselves in their treatment of the Kurdish minority. Above all, we ask them to let the UNHCR have access to the camps so that the funds which are available in the western world—£8·5 million is on offer from western European countries—can flow to deal with another desperate situation.

I appreciate that the debate is about the Bulgarian situation, and I do not wish to detract from the deep concern of the British Government and of Parliament. I believe that the British people who have studied the events and accounts that have appeared in the British press feel a deep concern for what is happening. Surely it is not too

*[Mr. William Waldegrave]*

late for Bulgaria to see that its economy will be damaged and that its reputation among its friends and in the wider world is being severely damaged.

It is not too late for a foolish and wrong policy to be reversed. In many instances, people will seek to return, and will probably be willing to respond to gestures of the sort that my hon. Friend has described. In the end, that is surely the best way forward. We know from wider afield —the Soviet Union is perhaps the greatest example of all —that the most thorough-going persecutions and suppressions of people's ethnic identity do not work.

Although Stalin moved millions of people, suppressed religions and killed thousands or millions of people, as the Russians now admit, yet when a more liberal regime appeared in the welcome form of Mr. Gorbachev, it became clear that those ethnic feelings were still alive throughout the great Soviet empire. It is quite beyond the capacity of the Bulgarian Government to suppress the culture and the traditions of their Turkish minority. This doomed and futile enterprise, which has caused so much harm to Bulgaria and to the people involved in it, should be abandoned and a more sensitive policy of proper treatment of a minority population should at once be undertaken.

# Low Pay

2 pm

**Mrs. Alice Mahon** (Halifax): Low pay is not inevitable, it is not necessary and it is in no way a vital component for a successful economy. If it were, Bangladesh would be way ahead of West Germany in the league of economically successful nations. The Government's persistent view that wages at the lower end of the labour market are being held above their true market level, thereby pricing workers out of jobs, is simply not true. The Government's obsession with deregulating the labour market to bring wages down has incurred clear costs in economic and human terms. For workers it has caused low morale, poor living standards, insecurity, poor health and inadequate housing. According to the Low Pay Unit, which uses Government statistics, the Government are achieving some success in depressing wages, as the relative earnings of the low paid were 4 per cent. lower in 1988 than in 1986 when figures were first collected.

Firms caught up in the downward spiral of relying solely on low wages to increase profit have proved it to be a disastrous policy. Those firms often have a very high turnover in staff and their contribution to training and research is virtually nil. Low-wage competition produces uncertainty for individual firms, destabilises the business environment and destroys economic prospects for the future. It has a knock-on effect in the local economy as low-paid workers cannot buy goods produced by other workers and tend to rely more heavily on local authority services. Although low-paid workers pay a disproportionately high share of their wages in taxes, if they pay taxes at all, their taxes represent very small sums, so there is also a loss to the Exchequer.

In 1982 the Government rescinded the fair wages resolution, which instructed Departments to require contractors engaged on Government contracts to pay wages and observe hours and conditions no less favourable than those established for the trade or industry in the district. In 1985 the Government wanted to abolish the wages councils altogether, but because an election was on the horizon they settled for seriously weakening the wages councils by amending their powers and taking away protection for young people under 21. Wages councils were also no longer allowed to set minimum holiday entitlements for the workers in the industries they covered.

The Government engage in doublespeak when they talk about the market finding its own level and claim to be a non-interventionist Government, when in fact they intervene on a massive scale with family credit, which clearly subsidises inefficient and mean employers. The other side of the coin, which is even more negative, is that it is the least popular benefit. Low take-up is endemic, mainly because of the stigma attached to claiming it. People on low pay do not want to be seen to rely on Government handouts and would much prefer to earn a decent living wage.

The Government, in their push to abolish wages councils, have consistently refused to produce any real evidence. The only evidence that they have cited in maintaining the link between low earnings and employment growth was the Treasury model, in its paper, "The Relationship between Employment and Wages". That was referred to in the 1985 consultative document on wages councils. In that document Treasury officials admitted in relation to the fixed model that

> "the simulation results depend critically on a system of adjustments which is entirely arbitrary and has no empirical basis"

Even the *Financial Times*, which is usually reasonably sympathetic to the Government, said in its edition of 13 May 1985:

> "The Government have frequently given real wage increases as one of the causes of high unemployment and argued that lower pay was needed to price people back into jobs. However, the figures show that real take-home pay of the poorest single workers fell by nearly 6 per cent. in the three years to April 1982. A period during which unemployment was rising most rapidly."

Paradoxically, despite pinpointing real wage rises as a significant barrier to employment, the Government recognised in the consultative document accompanying the White Paper, "Employment for the 1990s", that since 1986

> "the rates of youth unemployment has declined dramatically"—

at the same time as young people's earnings have—

> "continued to rise".

It seems that the Government cannot make up their mind.

During the 1980s the Government have also set out to render the wages inspectorate impotent by cutting the numbers of inspectors from 120 in 1985 to just 71 today. That means that there are 106 fewer inspectors in post than in 1979.

In June another excellent report was produced by the Low Pay Unit entitled, "Undervalued, Underpaid and Undercut", and saying that

> "The numbers of firms found to be committing the criminal offence of minimum wage underpayment has leapt by 26 per cent. in the past year."

The chances of prosecuting for that criminal act are small as only 51 of the 89,000 firms caught between 1979 and 1988 were prosecuted. More than 88,000 were never taken to court. That shows that the Government are ambivalent about their commitment to law and order.

The Government's commitment to fining firms which underpay is a joke because they do not have enough inspectors at the Department of Employment. The Government now send out a postal questionnaire to smaller firms. The 1988 consultative document on the abolition of the wages councils was the last to be published by the Government and it is a slim and inaccurate document. On page 7 the Government say:

> "If the reply indicates that there may be an underpayment, or if no reply is received, an inspection visit is carried out. Where the reply shows that no workers are underpaid, no visit is made, except for a 5 per cent. sample selected for a visit to monitor the validity of the postal inquiry method."

That is not good enough given that the law-breaking firms owe their combined work force a total of £1·3 billion. How many small firms have filled in the postal questionnaire in each year since its introduction?

In 1985 the Confederation of British Industry voted by three to one in favour of retaining the wages councils. Then, as now, almost every response ranging from trade unions to churches was hostile to the abolition of the councils. As I have already said, a general election was on the horizon and the Government ran away.

The 1988 consultative document on the abolition of the wages councils uses many of the same arguments about workers pricing themselves out of jobs with one or two new ones thrown in for good measure. A firm in Calderdale, FKI Babcock, employs many low-paid workers. Recently, one of FKI Babcock's home workers visited me at my surgery. Home workers who work for that company are given kits of electronic components to assemble. They were arbitrarily told that the price of assembling those kits was to be halved, in the interests of efficiency. The woman who visited showed me written evidence. She had previously been paid £71 for assembling a kit—low pay, but that is the norm for home working —but in future she is to be paid £38. Meanwhile, Tony Gartland, the managing director of FKI Babcock, is to earn £773,000 this year, because he has just given himself a 250 per cent. increase in salary and bonuses. The company's pre-tax profits have risen by 122 per cent. to £108 million.

I ask the Minister to look at the massive increase in profits in the hotel and catering sector during the 1980s. The consultative document implies that wages councils were keeping wages higher than the market could afford. Greedy directors are a far bigger problem than low-paid workers. Those captains of industry—the good and the worthy—who are giving themselves huge pay increases and who have failed to invest in training and research, are being put in charge of training enterprise councils. Tony Gartland is one of the good and the worthy. He will be in charge of one of the TECs in my constituency—that is an absolute scandal.

On page 5 of the consultative document, the Government argue that 55 per cent. of workers covered by wages councils work for organisations that have established collective bargaining. It is sheer brass neck for the Government to try to treat unions sympathetically to win an argument when for years they have tried to smash the unions and any form of collective bargaining. The Government's arguments are fatally flawed. They have difficulty in following to a logical conclusion their thought processes in the document.

Because of high unemployment, the Government's union-smashing policies and some undemocratic laws, the number of workers covered by principal national agreements has fallen by 30 per cent., from 8·5 million workers in 1979 to only 5·9 million now. The Government admit in their document that two thirds of the 2·5 million workers who are still covered by wages councils work part time. The majority are women and those who work in the hotel and catering sector account for 39 per cent. Those groups have the smallest trade union membership in any industry. Women and part-time workers tend not to join unions and are discouraged from doing so. Hotels and catering services are notorious for not having unionised workplaces. Small firms often employ on a casual basis. It is a fiction that national agreements and trade unions can protect those vulnerable groups of workers.

I hope that the Minister will give evidence to support the statement on page 5 of the consultative document that

> "since young people ceased to be covered by wages councils in 1986 their earnings have not plummeted but have continued to rise. At the same time the rate of youth unemployment has declined."

I come from a low-paid area in Halifax, a town which has the dubious honour of being the low pay capital of west Yorkshire, which is the lowest paid area in the country. The West Yorkshire Low Pay Unit has asked the Minister to carry out some research. It has sent me examples of

*[Mrs. Alice Mahon]*

what has been happening to young people since the abolition of the protection provided for them. The Low Pay Unit referred to the following job:

> "A receptionist offered £2 per hour to work shifts—morning, afternoons and evenings—in a busy town centre hotel. Duties involve checking guests in and out, cash handling, using a busy switchboard and a computer; reception experience required; age 17 to 20."

If the wages council had still covered young workers, a 17-year-old could have expected the princely sum of £1·60 in a licensed hotel. However, a worker aged 18 or over would have been entitled to a minimum rate of £2·12 an hour. They are not paid shift allowances and their conditions have got much worse because this vital protection has been removed.

The report also highlighted the case of a 19-year-old working in a fruit and vegetable shop. On 26 April 1988 he was earning £1.85 an hour. If still covered by the retail food wages council, his hourly rate would have been £2.33. A 16-year-old working all day Saturday in a supermarket was being paid 50p an hour on 29 April 1988. If still covered by the retail food wages council his hourly rate would have been £1.47. Those are disgraceful rates of pay by any standards—even compared with pay under the wages councils, which never set high rates of pay. Such salaries now are virtually criminal.

The Government omit to mention that the number of school leavers has fallen. There will be more than a million fewer 16 to 19-year-olds in 1993 than there were in 1983. And we have got used to the Government not mentioning changes in the way in which unemployment is calculated, particularly by excluding those on schemes.

If, as seems likely, the Government go ahead with their proposals to abolish the wages councils—the only minimum protection for 2.5 million of the lowest paid workers in the country—despite widespread opposition from employers, unions and other organisations, we shall be the only EC state with no legally enforceable wage protection and we shall be in breach of the universal declaration of human rights, the European charter and the treaty of Rome, which called for member states to

> "promote improved working conditions and an improved standard of living for workers".

United Kingdom wage rates are already relatively low compared with high-pay, high-productivity countries such as Germany and France. It is unlikely that other member states will stand by and allow the United Kingdom to engineer competitive advantage by wage cutting. They do not want the Third world society that would emerge from such a battle. I imagine that there will be great pressure on the Government to acquiesce in the European social charter.

I am sure that the Minister will say that most employers favour abolition of wages councils, but a large number of important employers—some of them the Government's paymasters—are not convinced about abolition.

I still have another 10 minutes and I could easily go on for that long, but I shall conclude by quoting from the Low Pay Unit's recent press release which contained a report on the responses to the Government's paper. The Government say that they have received almost 400 responses to their proposal to scrap the wages councils. The Low Pay Unit survey comments that

> "none of the responses from the churches, charities voluntary organisations and trade unions favoured abolition. Amongst the 24 employers' organisations who sent their responses to the Unit, those in favour of retaining the minimum wage system outnumbered those in favour of scrapping it by two-to-one. Those opposing Government plans included the CBI, the Institute of Personnel Management and the British Institute of Management . . . Employers are concerned that people should not be subject to exploitation and that the social security system should not be used to subsidise low wages."

There is also a belief that wages councils improve industrial relations and a scepticism about the Government's claim that the abolition of the wages councils will lead to the creation of more jobs. It is worth quoting one or two of the various employers' organisations. The British Independent Grocers Federation disagreed fundamentally with the Government's assertion that wages councils were a barrier to employment growth, saying that

> "there is no evidence in the Consultation-Document, or elsewhere for that matter, to support that contention."

The National Federation of Fish Friers made a statement worthy of any trade union:

> "It is our view that if a business has to rely on cheap labour to be successful and profitable there is something wrong with the management."

I have already quoted the British Institute of Management, which also said that

> "to suggest that the social security system should be the support structure for low-earners, at a time when the so-called poverty trap remains unresolved is unhelpful to managers seeking to encourage people into legitimate employment at realistic wages".

In a debate the other evening on social security regulations, the Minister refused to give an undertaking that those who are now forced under the new regulations to take work for which they believe that they are not suitable or trained, would not be forced to go to an employer who paid illegal wages. That is disgraceful.

The Government will get away with whatever they can. Their real purpose in abolishing the wages councils is to allow even lower wages than at present. I carried out a little research among employers. I had asked the Minister a question about employers, but it was like extracting teeth; it proved very difficult to get straight answers from the Department.

Among the responses from 68 employers' organisations, almost half were opposed to abolition of the wages councils. Some of those who supported the abolition of the wages councils felt that the weakening of the wages councils in 1986, which they opposed, was the main reason for them to support abolition now. Clearly some employers favour abolition because that would allow them to exploit their workers even further.

I had some wonderful quotes from employers. To its shame, the National Federation of Self Employed and Small Businesses said:

> "The removal of Wages Councils would mean that the most deserving groups of employees would be able to start pricing themselves into jobs and that new and more flexible contractual arrangements could be introduced into the service industries."

The British Retailers Association referred to "inflationary minimum rates". As we are talking about £2 an hour, that is a clear sign that in an area with high unemployment some employers intend to get away with poverty wages and highly exploitive conditions of employment.

Wages council rates leave a great deal to be desired. However, in the absence of any legislation giving people the right to a minimum income, they must be maintained to prevent wholesale exploitation. The vast majority of those responding to the Government's consultative document took that view. I hope that the Minister will convey to the Government the fact that there is real opposition to the plans to abolish the wages councils. I ask the Government to drop their proposals and instead to strengthen the wages councils so as to provide real protection for the lowest paid, who deserve nothing less.

2.23 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Patrick Nicholls):** The hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) graced our deliberations today with a speech showing her usual and characteristic charm and generosity of spirit. In the very few moments that she has been kind enough to leave to me I shall do my best to answer at least some of the points that she has raised. I will deal with the wages councils, but, due to lack of time, I shall not be able to deal, as I had intended, with the general argument about low pay.

A point that is consistently ignored in these debates is that the economic and social situation today is vastly different from that in 1909 when the wages councils system was introduced. Average pay is far higher and hours worked per week some 10 to 15 fewer. The country also benefits from a comprehensive system of social security protection for those both in and out of work.

It is significant also that two thirds of wages councils workers are paid above the minimum and that the majority of wages councils workers work part-time, many of them contributing a second income to the family.

Councils now cover about 10 per cent. of the work force. The system is extensive only in retailing, hotel and catering and clothing manufacture and some other very small industries. It is not comprehensive in coverage. It is riddled throughout with anomalies—laundries are covered, but not laundrettes; and the sale of cooked meats is covered, but raw meat is not.

As the House will recall, the wages council system was reformed and simplified by the Wages Act 1986. The Government were acting in accordance with the wishes of the majority of employer bodies. In addition to reducing councils' powers and removing under-21s from regulation, the legislation attempted to clarify the councils' role as setting minimum rates, not going rates, by requiring them to consider the employment effects of their decisions in areas where workers are generally paid below the national average for their trade or occupation.

In the first year of operation, the average increase imposed by the councils on the previous lowest rate was 8·6 per cent. In the second year, the outcome was an average increase of 6·3 per cent. and settlements in the third year have averaged 6·5 per cent. Earlier this month, at the start of the fourth year, the council for licensed hotels and restaurants has proposed increasing its minimum rate by almost 10 per cent.

Settlements of that order of magnitude hardly suggest that the councils have operated with regard to their clarified remit. Moreover, a substantial proportion of workers covered by councils—probably as many as a third—continue to be paid on the minimum rate. Such clustering of pay levels around a particular figure is evidence that council minimums continue to be above the levels required to fill jobs.

The hon. Lady asked for evidence to be produced that the effect of wages councils was adverse employment implications. She said that she was unaware of evidence to that effect. I am bound to say that the evidence that the hon. Lady sought was in my written reply to a parliamentary question from her earlier this week. That answer stated:

> "A large body of evidence exists on the implications for pay and jobs of the abolition of wages councils. This includes studies undertaken or commissioned by the Department".

I went on to say that the studies had been listed in various parliamentary answers, and I even set them out to help the hon. Lady in her deliberations. I went on to say:

> "Virtually all of the research work on this subject conducted in the 1980s and known to the Department supports the view that removing statutory minimum wage provisions can be expected to have beneficial effects on employment."—[*Official Report*, 21 July 1989; Vol. 157, c. *390*.]

That is the evidence that the hon. Lady said did not exist.

Much of what the hon. Lady said was consistent, but, as often happens with the hon. Lady's contributions in the House and in Committee, it was consistently wrong. I will try to deal with two of the grosser fallacies. She tried to make some spurious capital out of referring to the prosecutions that had been mounted by the wages inspectorate over the years, and she referred to questionnaires. On prosecutions, the hon. Lady's attitude is that all things under Conservative Governments are wicked and all things under Labour Governments are good. That is a view of history that probably would not disgrace Noddy in Toyland. If the hon. Lady wants to conduct the debate in that way, and experience shows that she does, there is a slightly better ratio of prosecutions to underpaying employers under this Government than under the Labour Government. The hon. Lady referred to questionnaires—again, more evidence of her Ladybird economics—as a dreadful thing, apparently drawn up by the wicked Tory Government. I have to tell the hon. Lady—she can giggle her way through this if she will—that those questionnaires were introduced by a Labour Government.

**Mrs. Mahon:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Nicholls:** No, I will not give way. The hon. Lady has had more than her fair share of the time available.

She should look at the response to the questionnaires. Ninety-five per cent. of them were completed accurately, and if they were not, there was a follow-up and a full inspection.

**Mrs. Mahon:** What about inspector numbers?

**Mr. Nicholls:** The hon. Lady chirrups from a sedentary position, "What about inspector numbers?" From her extensive research into the matter, she must surely be aware that the operation of the wages councils was substantially clarified in 1986. It was made a great deal easier, and the regulations were made a great deal simpler. I do not expect the hon. Lady to approve that—that would be asking too much. It meant that the work of the wages inspectors could actually be concentrated on carrying out a much narrower remit. To suggest that there was any loss of enforcement, where it was still necessary under the law, was quite wrong. The hon. Lady cannot grasp, no matter how many times Ministers try to get it across to her, that she is concerned only about low pay. In the real world, the issue for many of our constituents is not low pay but no job. The hon. Lady cannot understand or countenance that for many people the first step back into the labour

*[Mr. Nicholls]*

market is a low-paid job which leads on to something better. A low-paid job for a person who has been out of work means a better passport in the labour market. That is the reality, but the hon. Lady is a complete stranger to reality.

*It being half past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.*

## Child Abuse

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

2.30 pm

**Mr. Michael Stern** (Bristol, North-West): In relating the tragic events surrounding the last four months of the life of the Rev. Terry Barr, who was vicar of Avonmouth, I must stress that I am not seeking to use parliamentary time to attempt to prove the innocence of a close friend. Nor am I seeking to show that the actions locally of the police, social services or local hospitals are to be questioned. My purpose in raising the debate is that I believe that many of the events that led, almost inevitably, to his death carry implications for national policy. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will consider that national policy to prevent the recurrence of such events.

Terry Barr had been the vicar of two parishes successively in my constituency for as long as I have been its Member of Parliament. In addition to his family of five children, his concern and care for children had been a feature of his life. For up to 20 years he had successfully fostered children, who were placed largely by the county of Avon for short or long periods. At no time during those 20 years had there been anything but praise from the county council for the love and care that he gave to his extended family. I visited the family on numerous occasions and always left with an impression of happy chaos.

Just before Easter this year, a third foster child, aged 15, joined the family, which included two foster children aged nine and seven. Like so many foster children, the boy had had a chequered past. He had been suspected of involvement in the making of pornographic videos and of procuring young children for that purpose. The boy was placed by the county with the Barr family, in what may have been regarded as a last attempt to provide him with some form of stable family background.

Within a week, on the Thursday before Easter, he had run away and had made what appeared to all the authorities concerned to be perfectly believable accusations of sexual abuse by Terry Barr of the children in his care. What followed had all the inevitability of a Greek tragedy.

The remaining children were questioned extensively by the police and, in view of the urgency inevitably involved, under what in retrospect must be seen as inadequate conditions. Terry was charged and bailed on condition that he never slept at home. At least in the early stages of the case he was not permitted to remain in a room with his children without another adult being present. His children were made wards of court and the two foster children were removed.

The case dragged on and was eventually sent to the Crown court, during which time Terry was being forced to live in a seamen's hostel opposite the vicarage where his family lived, without the moral support on which he was increasingly coming to rely from them.

Early in July, he penned three copies of a note to his bishop, to his solicitor and to myself. He said:

> "If I could have come home to the love and care of my family, I might have been able to continue. I cannot spend another night on my own."

After writing that note, he attempted suicide. He spent two or three nights in the district general hospital, was transferred to the specialist supervised unit for potential suicides run by the district health authority and succeeded in committing suicide within a couple of days of his arrival. The case was still months away from any resolution of his guilt or innocence.

Inevitably, the fury of local reaction in the community he served has turned on the actions of the local organisations which played a direct part in the events I have described. The police were first on the scene and asked to interview the two younger foster children and one of the Barr's sons. In the confusion of being informed that her husband was suspected of being a child molester and never having been in a police station before, Mrs. Barr declined to sit in on the interview. As a result, the police, quite properly under existing practice, asked a member of the social services department to do so. In the absence of any friend of the family at the first interview it is perhaps inevitable that the boy who was interviewed and his two brothers, who were interviewed later in the presence of Mrs. Barr, all formed the impression that the interview had consisted of their being bullied and accused of lying. I repeat that because no outside friend of the family was present and there is no evidence of any impropriety on the part of the police or the social worker. The police have made it clear in a letter to me that

> "one of their primary objectives is to safeguard and protect the interests of any children who may be involved".

I have no doubt that they did that. The question to which I shall return is the fact that the police apparently have no duty to give equal consideration to the interests of the family.

As social services departments are inevitably at the forefront of cases involving suspected child sexual abuse, the Government have rightly issued—and I believe re-issued—guidelines to local authorities. The latest guidelines that were issued only last week have laid down detailed rules on the manner in which all agencies working within the area of child protection should undertake an investigation when an allegation of child sexual abuse has been made. I have no doubt that the regulations were followed in scrupulous detail by officers of the social services department. However, the fact that they were so followed meant, in the words of the director of social services, that

> "they were left with no alternative but to ensure that the Reverend Barr was separated from children."

The duty of social services is seen as relating solely to the children and not to either parent. It could be argued that because no allegation of sexual impropriety towards his own children had been made, the existing regulations forced social services even to be selective as to the children they had to protect. The result was that Terry Barr spent the last few weeks of his life believing that if he had put a foot wrong with the social services department, not only the children he had been fostering but his own children could be taken from him. After all, seen from his point of view, there had already been an attempt by the police and social services in the interviews to which I have referred to persuade his children to provide evidence against him.

In general, handling of the case by the local media has been responsible and there have been few—I regret that there have been any—of the predictable lurid headlines. Nevertheless, some concern remains that no protection is given to the defendant on being named in such cases. I have already raised this matter with the appropriate Minister at the Department of Health who has correctly pointed out that it is in the public interest to know whether a person has been accused of a serious crime. My concern in this case is that, whereas the anonymity of the defendant would have been available to the court under section 39 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 in order to protect any child involved in the proceedings—that was not necessary here since the children involved had already been removed from the Barr home—no such anonymity is available to protect the Barr children. Fortunately, in both the schools the children attend they were offered the strongest possible support. However, that might not have been the case.

My final area of concern relates to the period that Terry spent in hospital after his first suicide attempt. It is accepted that no level of care, however constant or stringent, can prevent suicide on the part of any human being who is determined enough.

What I think should concern the House is that there appears to be no intervening legal step between the full rigours of sectioning under the Mental Health Act 1988—which would have made Terry Barr a compulsory in-patient, and which would almost certainly not have been granted by the courts in this case—and the status of voluntary patient, in which he was free to come and go and to evade supervision as much as he wished. It was through a gap in the law that he was able to commit suicide, and I ask my hon. Friend and his colleagues to consider whether that gap is too wide.

I believe that there are two strands to the story. The first concerns whether, in our efforts as a society to protect the innocent victim of child abuse, we have gone so far down the road of considering only the interests of the abused child that we have entirely forgotten the potential interests of others involved in the case—not just the victim's family but the family of the defendant, and even the defendant himself. There was no official help, advice or care for Terry; help came only from his family, his bishop and his friends.

The second strand is this. It is a principle of our form of justice that any defendant is treated as innocent until proven guilty. While that principle applies in the case of an accusation of child sexual abuse, the way in which it is applied under current law and practice makes it indistinguishable from an assumption of guilt. If Terry Barr was innocent of the charges laid against him, the way in which we as a society handle such charges makes our legal system responsible for the destruction of his family, and for leading him to a point at which death seemed the best course.

If we as a society have given such untrammelled power to the child accuser, how do we now protect ourselves against the misuse of that power? Is not our purpose in Parliament to prevent rules from operating in such a way as to pick up a potentially innocent man and destroy him?

2.42 pm

**The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. Tim Renton):** We must all be grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern) for bringing to our attention these sad issues concerning the existing law and practice on child abuse. I need not rehearse the facts of this tragic case, as my hon. Friend has already given them eloquently and movingly; let me simply say how sorry I was to hear of the sad events surrounding Mr. Barr's death, which was obviously the unhappiest possible outcome for all concerned.

*[Mr. Tim Renton]*

I should like to make some general observations, particularly from the point of view of the Home Office. An allegation of child abuse is a grave matter; its consequences for the accused, even if he is acquitted, can be appalling. I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree, however, that in the interests of the children the authorities cannot baulk at investigating and bringing proceedings when evidence warrants it.

In this case the police investigated carefully, involving the social services department as they did so. They decided that charges should be brought, and the Crown prosecution service agreed that the evidence and the public interest justified prosecution. The magistrates court imposed and sustained bail conditions, removing Mr. Barr from the family home. Those decisions were made and scrutinised carefully by responsible bodies.

Government's role is clearly to ensure that the general arrangements for investigating child abuse are as adequate and as fair as we can possibly make them. The investigation of allegations of child abuse is inevitably a difficult and sensitive process; important decisions must be reached which will have a profound effect on all concerned, whether it is decided to prosecute the suspect, to remove the child from its home or to give the family special help and support. The whole process of investigation and decision-making can be traumatic for the child and for its family, as the events in Cleveland clearly show, and as many of us know from constituency experience.

In some areas the police, social and medical services and voluntary agencies such as the NSPCC, have worked hard together for some years to try to ensure that they respond quickly and sensitively to allegations of child abuse. We have built on their experience in drawing up a guidance circular for chief officers of police about the investigation of child sexual abuse and we issued that in July last year. The circular, which also takes account of the recommendations of the Cleveland inquiry report, was prepared in consultation with the Department of Health and members of the social services, medical and legal professions and the forensic science service.

The essence of the guidance—my hon. Friend touched on this in his speech—is that police forces and social services should work together in investigating cases of suggested child sexual abuse and should use specially trained joint investigating teams. The aim of this approach is to combine investigation of the facts with therapy. We think that professionals can benefit from each other's expertise. It is most important that the child is given the opportunity to tell his or her story to sympathetic listeners who have gained the child's trust. In turn, the child is spared the ordeal of having to repeat that story again and again in front of others because we recommend that interviews should be recorded on video tape. There is no undue pressure to provide evidence that can be used in court. The interests of the child rather than the aims of a particular professional organisation come first.

My hon. Friend spoke about respecting the rights of parents. None the less it is right that we should always put the child's interests first. Working together in joint investigations is a new and difficult skill which requires special training. Many hon. Members will agree with that. We have agreed with the police and representatives of social services guidance on the organisation and content of general training, and hope to issue that guidance next month.

Obviously, close liaison with the local medical services is also essential. Our circular urges chief officers of police to work with them. It is important that there should be sufficient doctors who are skilled both in examining children for sexual abuse and in the presentation of forensic evidence. To that end we have asked the forensic science service to help the police organise joint training for police surgeons and other doctors and interested professionals. I am glad to tell my hon. Friend that the response to our circular has been positive and we believe there is now a genuine recognition of the need to work together.

What about cases which come to court, and the question of anonymity of defendants? The fundamental principle of our criminal justice system is that justice is done openly and in public. As my hon. Friend knows, only in exceptional circumstances will a trial take place in private or the court order that an accused or witness should not be identified in the press. Justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done. That is a truism that remains true. Publicity helps to safeguard the integrity of the justice that is dispensed, and it is in the public interest to know whether a person has been accused of a serious crime, just as it is in the public interest to know whether there is subsequently an acquittal.

I certainly understand the distress that can follow from being accused of a crime, even if the accused person is subsequently acquitted. This is particularly so for sexual offences. However, I do not think that it would be right in principle to provide anonymity for all persons accused of crime, nor do I think that it would be acceptable to Parliament or to the public. It is true that defendants in rape cases for a period enjoyed anonymity. The argument that because the woman should have anonymity—in order not to deter her from reporting a rape—so should the man, was always misconceived, and at our instigation Parliament removed the anonymity of defendants by last year's Criminal Justice Act. A rape defendant can be named, like any other defendant.

My hon. Friend suggested, and I fully understand his feelings in suggesting this, particularly in relation to this case, that the duty of social services is seen as relating solely to the children and not to either parent. Guidance issued to directors of social services in response to the Cleveland inquiry report stressed that although social services departments must give first and highest priority to protecting the child, they also have responsibilities in relation to the child's parents and other family members. They also have a particular responsibility to consider whether it is in the child's best interests to keep the family together. I understand that in this case the social services department tried to achieve that but that the Reverend Barr, on his solicitor's advice, declined to co-operate with the social services department, and when he was charged by the police the social services department decided that it must act to protect the child, and initiated wardship proceedings.

As to my hon. Friend's point about the need to protect the Barr children, I fully understand that there is no general provision to protect the anonymity of the defendant's children if they are not involved in the proceedings, which is at the heart of the point that he was making. The general rule is that defendants can be named, and this may inevitably lead to the identification of their children. Children of a person accused of rape, murder or armed robbery may suffer when the accused is publicly identified. However, there would not appear to be any justification for singling out for special attention the children of those accused of the sexual abuse of other children.

My hon. Friend said that the press coverage in this case had been moderate or reasonably well balanced and I am delighted to hear that. It is important that we should strike a balance between the freedom of the press to report matters of legitimate public interest and the need to protect justice from interference. I think that the law already strikes this balance through the Contempt of Court Act 1981. It provides that any publication that creates a substantial risk of seriously impeding or prejudicing the course of justice in active proceedings is in contempt of court, regardless of whether there was an intent to interfere with the course of justice. The 1981 Act serves to deter the media from irresponsible reporting of cases and, if such reporting occurs, provides suitable penalties.

We would all agree that, far from being easy, these are difficult matters. We have to consider the interests of those accused but not convicted of crime, but we must also consider the need to protect children against those who abuse them. We must have regard to the traditional openness of British justice, which we all greatly and rightly value. I am sure that my ministerial colleagues in the Department of Health will take note of the points affecting them that my hon. Friend has raised, and in particular his point about the possible gap in the Mental Health Acts between the rigours of the compulsory inpatient and the voluntary outpatient.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for bringing these matters to the attention of the House and I am only sorry that it was against the background of such a tragic case.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at seven minutes to Three o'clock, till Tuesday 17 October, pursuant to the Resolution of the House [27 July].*

# Written Answers to Questions

*Monday 17 July 1989*

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Fermanagh (Ministerial Visits)

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last visited either Newtownbutler or Rosslea Royal Ulster Constabulary stations in south-east Fermanagh; and what was the cost of the security operation thus entailed.

**Mr. Tom King:** I have not visited Newtownbutler, but I visited Rosslea RUC station in December 1985. In the last 12 months I have visited three RUC stations in the same area and the nearby army headquarters at Lisnaskea. Information on the costs is not held in the form requested.

### Criminal Injury Compensation Order

**Mr. McCusker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how often the discretion given by article 8(4) of the Northern Ireland Criminal Injury Compensation Order has been exercised in favour of a person denied compensation as a result of article 6(3) of the order.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** Three times.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Teachers

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many incentive posts for teachers are currently available; what is the financial remuneration for each grade; what were the comparable figures three years ago; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Butcher:** The value and estimated number of incentive allowances in ordinary schools in October 1987 (the first year) and September 1988 are set out in the table:

| | *October 1987* | | *September 1988* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Value (£)* | *Number* | [1]*Value (£)* | *Number* |
| A | 501 | 25,000 | 858 | 43,000 |
| B | 1,002 | 69,000 | 1,284 | 59,600 |
| C | 2,001 | — | 2,568 | 9,300 |
| D | 3,000 | 28,500 | 3,426 | 27,000 |
| E | 4,200 | 6,500 | 4,710 | 9,000 |
| Total | | 129,000 | | 174,600 |

[1] From 1 April 1989.

There will be an further 27,500 As, 2,500 Bs, 1,500 Cs and 500 Ds from this September as a result of the recommendations of the interim advisory committee and plans already in the pipeline.

### Language Schools

**Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has received representations from local authorities seeking the statutory control of language schools.

**Mr. Jackson:** My right hon. Friend has received no such representations.

### Learning Difficulties

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will consider giving moderate learning difficulty and severe learning difficulty schools discretion over putting *(a)* French or *(b)* any other foreign language in their curriculum;

(2) if he will detail those elements of the national curriculum that are applicable to the moderate learning difficulty and severe learning difficulty special schools;

(3) if moderate learning difficulty and severe learning difficulty schools can work to their own curriculum so as to dispense with the national curriculum;

(4) if moderate learning difficulty and severe learning difficulty schools can modify the whole of the national curriculum.

**Mr. Butcher:** All maintained schools, including all maintained special schools, must meet the national curriculum requirements in full, including the requirement to teach a modern foreign language to all registered pupils in the third key stage (age 12 to14). We do not intend to except any category of school from this requirement. Children of all abilities, including children with moderate or severe learning difficulties, can benefit from the breadth and balance of the national curriculum. Within each national curriculum subject area, attainment targets and programmes of study are being developed to meet the needs of children of different abilities and maturities. For pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) under the 1981 Act, provision may be made, on an individual basis, to modify or disapply as necessary any or all of the elements of the national curriculum. The national curriculum does not come into force for pupils with statements of SEN until 1 August 1990.

### Student Unions

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will make a statement on the progress of his Department's review of student union membership;

(2) when he expects the results of his Department's review of student unions will be announced; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jackson:** We hope shortly to publish the factual analysis of the Department's survey of student unions.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has received concerning his Department's review of student unions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jackson:** I refer to my replies to the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) on 12 April 1989 at column *526,* to my hon. Friend and to my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington and Chelsea (Mr. Fishburn), both on 6 June 1989 at column *15.* We have since received a further

19 letters concerned mainly with the National Union of Students, of which 15 were critical of present arrangements for membership and funding.

### Single Market

**Mr. Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans his Department is making to mark the arrival of the open market of 1 January 1993 with educational exchanges or other events.

**Mr. Jackson:** The Department is co-operating within the European Community in the development and implementation of appropriate programmes. In addition we have successful and expanding bilateral educational exchange and other programmes with our European partners.

### Community Charge

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his latest estimate of *(a)* young people of 19 years of age or more attending schools, *(b)* young people of 19 years of age or more attending sixth form colleges and *(c)* young people of 19 years of age or more attending colleges specified in the Personal Community Charge (Students) Regulations 1989 where they are studying for GCE A-levels or other courses which are taught in schools or sixth form colleges; and if he will make a statement of the effect of liability for poll tax and entitlement to the student 80 per cent. non-means-tested relief on the educational choices of young people.

**Mr. Jackson:** In January 1988 the number of pupils aged 19 and over attending maintained and non-maintained schools (excluding sixth form colleges) in England was 2,078; attending sixth form colleges was 692. The number of full-time students aged 19 enrolled on GCE or GCSE courses lasting 18 weeks or more on 1 November 1987 (the latest date for which figures are available) was approximately 4,000.

School pupils aged over 18 will be liable for the full community charge, but the great majority of them will be eligible for an 80 per cent. rebate on the basis of their low incomes and resources. Full-time students will be liable to pay only 20 per cent. of the community charge. For most 19-year-olds in full-time education there will therefore be no difference in the amount paid in community charge, whether the education is undertaken in schools, sixth form colleges or colleges of further and higher education.

### Student Loans

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he proposes to introduce a top-up student loan scheme for current undergraduate student nurses in 1990-91.

**Mr. Jackson:** Future arrangements for the support of undergraduates studying nursing are under consideration in the context of Project 2000.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### George Belitsky

**Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Russian authorities about their continued failure to grant an exit visa to George Belitsky of Moscow.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We have underlined our concern about George Belitsky to the Soviet authorities on numerous occasions over the past year—most recently during the Paris human rights conference in June. The Russians continue to refuse to grant a visa on security grounds which we find wholly unconvincing. We shall continue to press the case.

### Mark Berenfeld

**Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Russian authorities about their continued failure to grant exit visas to Mark Berenfeld and his family who first applied for a visa in 1977.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We made representations to the Soviet authorities about the Berenfeld family shortly before Mr. Gorbachev's visit in April, and were told that the family would be given permission to leave. We shall raise the case again with the Soviet authorities if visas are not issued shortly.

### Ester and Simon Tsirelson

**Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Russian authorities about their continued failure to grant exit visas to Ester and Simon Tsirelson of Leningrad who first applied for an exit visa in 1979.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We have pressed the Soviet authorities about the Tsirelson case on numerous occasions during the past year—most recently at the Paris CSCE human rights conference in June. They now claim that the case is under re-consideration. We shall continue to make representations until the family is allowed to leave.

### Entry Clearance

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give the current waiting times both actual and estimated, and the numbers awaiting interview abroad for the following queues: *(a)* persons with a claim to the right of abode, dependent relatives over 70 years, special compassionate cases, *(b)* all spouses and all children under 18, *(c)* fiancées applying for the first time and *(d)* re-applicants for the following posts: (i) New Delhi, (ii) Bombay, (iii) Dhaka, (iv) Islamabad, (v) Karachi, (vi) Nairobi and (vii) Dar Es-Salaam.

**Mr. Eggar:** As at 31 May 1989 waiting times (in months) to first interview at posts in the Indian sub-continent were as follows:

| | | *Waiting times in months* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Post* | *Queue* | *Actual* | *Estimated* |
| New Delhi | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| | 4 | 8 | 9 |
| Bombay | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| | 2 | 6 | 6 |
| | 3 | 9 | 9 |
| | 4 | 10 | 10 |
| Dhaka | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| | 2 | 6 | 6 |
| | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| | 4 | 22 | 22 |
| Islamabad | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| | 2 | 10 | 10 |
| | 3 | 16 | 16 |
| | 4 | 22 | 22 |
| Karachi | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| | 4 | 6 | 6 |

Settlement queues are organised as follows:

Q1 Persons with a claim to the right of abode, dependent relatives over 70 years, special compassionate cases.

Q2 All spouses, and all children under 18 years.

Q3 Fiancé(e)s and others applying for the first time for settlement.

Q4 Re-applicants.

Posts in Nairobi and Dar Es-Salaam do not operate a queue system along the lines of Indian subcontinent posts. Current waiting times to first interview for all types of settlement applications are:

| | *Weeks* |
|---|---|
| Dar Es-Salaam | 5 |
| Nairobi | 4 |

## Raoul Wallenberg

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will ask the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to make a new statement about the alleged death of Mr. Raoul Wallenberg; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The leader of the Soviet delegation at the recent human rights conference in Paris acknowledged that Raoul Wallenberg had been a "noble person" and had been murdered "by dark forces". We do not, of course, consider this a satisfactory explanation and will continue to press for the full story. But it may at least be a step nearer to the truth.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received concerning the case of Mr. Raoul Wallenberg; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We receive a number of representations which reflect concern in this country that the fate of Raoul Wallenberg remains unknown. In an era of glasnost the Soviet Union does itself a disservice by failing to resolve widespread concern about this heroic figure.

## Single Market

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans his Department is making to mark the arrival of the open market of 1 January 1993 with exchanges, exhibitions, or other events.

**Mrs. Chalker:** The next United Kingdom presidency of the EC falls in the second half of 1992, coinciding with the end of the period leading up to completion of the single market. We are considering how best to mark the occasion.

## Bulgaria

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has concerning the extent of the enforced exodus of ethnic Turks from Bulgaria.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We understand that over 130,000 members of Bulgaria's Turkish minority have fled to Turkey since mid-May. It seems that the first wave, perhaps numbering several thousand, were deported but that the vast majority of later arrivals left Bulgaria voluntarily, albeit as a result of long-term harassment.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Bulgarian authorities concerning human rights abuses perpetrated against ethnic Turks.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs protested to the Bulgarian ambassador on 1 June about his Government's policy towards the Turkish minority. We have also taken the matter up in Sofia, and our delegation to the Paris conference on the "human dimension" of the CSCE raised it on numerous occasions.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received concerning human rights abuses perpetrated against ethnic Turks by the Bulgarian authorities.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We receive frequent representations about human rights violations affecting Bulgaria's Turkish minority. We have long had a policy of taking all appropriate opportunities of expressing our concern to the Bulgarian authorities, both bilaterally and in multilateral fora.

## Immigration

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give for the different parts of the Indian subcontinent the latest information he has on the length of time from application for entry clearance to first interview for those now being interviewed, and the expected time for those applying now for *(a)* fiancés, *(b)* husbands, *(c)* wives and *(d)* dependent children.

**Mr. Eggar:** As at 31 May 1989 waiting times (in months) for first interview at posts in the Indian subcontinent were as follows:

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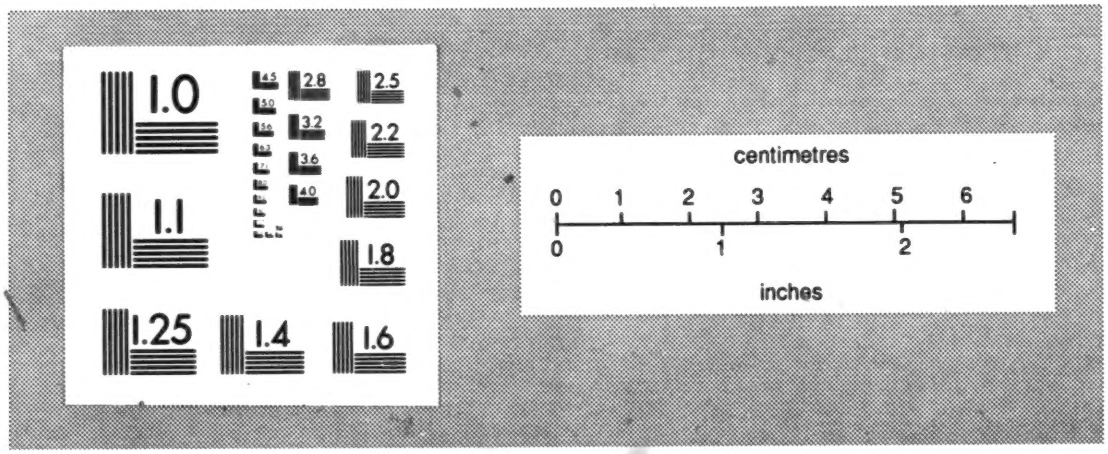

| | *Wives and children with right of abode (Q1)* | | *Other, husbands, wives and dependant children (Q2)* | | *Fiancé(e)s (Q3)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *(a)* | *(e)* | *(a)* | *(e)* | *(a)* | *(e)* |
| Bombay | 2 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 9 |
| Delhi | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Dhaka | 3 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Islamabad | 3 | 3 | 10 | 10 | 16 | 16 |
| Karachi | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

*(a)* Actual time those interviewed in May 1989 waited.
*(e)* Estimated time to interview for applications lodged in May.

There are no queues in Calcutta and Madras.

## Human Rights

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in Bangladesh.

**Mr. Eggar:** We have made a number of representations about human rights to the Bangladesh authorities over the past five years but the precise information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in the Bahamas;

(2) how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in Botswana;

(3) how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in Guam.

**Mr. Eggar:** None.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in Bulgaria.

**Mr. Eggar:** We have made a number of representations about human rights in Bulgaria to their authorities over the last five years, but the precise information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## PLO (Gift)

**Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will instruct Her Majesty's ambassador in Riyadh to protest to the Saudi Arabian authorities about their gift of six million US dollars to the Palestine Liberation Organisation on 4 July to finance violence on the West Bank; and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** No. The decisions of the Casablanca summit show that Saudi Arabia supports the PLO's efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement in the middle east.

**Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, during the Minister of State's recent meeting with Bassam Abu Sharif, the Minister raised the statement in call No. 42 issued by the Palestine Liberation Organisation on 3 July, that 16 July should be designated as petrol bomb day, with the stepping up of petrol bomb attacks against West Bank settlers or the Israeli defence forces, and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** No. The PLO is well aware of our view, which I repeated to Bassam Abu Sharif, that the intifada should be pursued with the utmost restraint.

## Italy (Consular Assistance)

**Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs why the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar), has transferred to the Department of Social Security the recent letter to him from the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton regarding consular assistance in Italy for N. A., a constituent of the hon. Member, who was dismissed from his employment by Halliburton Manufacturing and Services Ltd. while still in hospital; and whether he will now discuss the case with the Italian ambassador, following his Excellency's letter to the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton dated 8 June, a copy of which has been sent to him.

**Mr. Eggar:** The letter referred to covered social security payments in Italy, a matter which is properly for the Department of Social Security. That Department is currently in correspondence with the Italian authorities. It would therefore be inappropriate for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to discuss the case with the Italian ambassador.

## Forward Programmes (EC)

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when Her Majesty's Government receives copies of the European Communities Commission's annual forward programme, three month forward programme and draft documents of forthcoming legislation; and if he will ensure that these are provided as soon as possible to the relevant parliamentary Committees.

**Mrs. Chalker:** Copies of the Commission's annual work programme for 1989 were placed in the Library of the House earlier this year. We understand that the Commission would be prepared for its three-month forward programmes, which are supplied to the European Parliament for planning purposes, to be passed to national Parliaments. All Commission proposals for draft legislation submitted to the Council of Ministers are deposited in the House, normally within 48 hours of receipt in London.

### Chemical Weapons

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his policy towards the development within Third world countries of chemical industries with a capacity to make chemical weapons; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We are in no way opposed to the development of chemical industries for peaceful purposes. We are, however, concerned that chemical industries, wherever they are located, should not contribute to the production of chemical weapons. Pending the achievement of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons which would include verification that chemical weapon agents were not being produced in industry, we and a number of other chemical producing countries have imposed controls on the export of those chemicals which are key precursors for chemical weapons. We have urged other producing countries to follow suit.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### Lomé IV

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the overall state of Lomé IV negotiations.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** The Lomé IV negotiations are making satisfactory progress and should be concluded by the end of the year. The next ACP-EC ministerial negotiating meeting is in Luxembourg on 10-12 October. I am participating in another round of discussions with my Community colleagues on 17 July.

### ACP Countries

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the top five imports in both the European Economic Community in general and Great Britain from the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** The top five European Community imports from ACP states in 1987 were oil (4·26 billion ecu), coffee (1·61 billion ecu), cocoa (1·35 billion ecu), copper (0·55 billion ecu) and wood (0·55 billion ecu). (*Source:* European Commission "Principle EC imports from ACP states 1983-87"; 1987 exchange rate £1 = 1·41 ecu).

Comparable figures for individual member states are not published by the Commission and the information requested for United Kingdom imports is not readily available from United Kingdom statistics.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on studies comparing the shock and gradualist approach of disbursing aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** I have no information about such studies.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current quota on the European market under the terms of the sugar protocol to the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Under the sugar protocol to the Lomé convention, the European Community undertakes for an indefinite period to purchase and import each year at guaranteed prices 1·3 million tonnes (white sugar equivalent) of cane sugar from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. This total is divided into national quotas among the ACP signatories.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current rate of exports from the African, Caribbean and Pacific to *(a)* the European Economic Community and *(b)* Great Britain.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** In 1987 total ACP exports to the European Community were 16·37 billion ecu (*Source:* European Commission "Principle EC imports from ACP states 1983-87"); and to the United Kingdom 2·37 billion ecu (*Source:* Eurostat Monthly External Trade Statistics) (1987 exchange rate: £1 = 1·41 ecu).

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the declaration made on 5 June in Brussels to ban all traffic of toxic waste to African, Caribbean and Pacific countries has been upheld.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** At the ACP-EC ministerial negotiating meeting on 3-5 June, the European Community indicated that it was willing in principle to agree to an ACP request that the Community should ban the export of toxic waste to the ACP. Negotiations are continuing on the means of implementing such a ban.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the request from Mr. Seydina Oumar Sy, the Senegalese trade minister, on behalf of his African, Caribbean and Pacific colleagues, for the European Community to put extra money into the Lomé arrangement for structural adjustment has been met.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** European Community member states have not yet discussed the level of resources to be provided under the next Lomé convention.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which rules have been eased in regard to African, Caribbean and Pacific industrial products entering the European Community duty free, as promised by Mr. Manuel Martin, the European Community development Commissioner.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** In the current renegotiation of the Lomé convention the Commission has proposed a number of improvements to the rules of origin. We support these concessions. The Council is considering its position on the Commission proposals. This will then be put to the ACP in the next round of the negotiations. The objective is agreement by the end of December.

### European Investment Bank

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current rate of additional Lomé aid provided by the European Investment bank.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Under the third Lomé convention the European Investment bank agreed to make loans from its own resources of up to 1,100 million ecu (about £750 million). Commitments up to 30 June 1989 totalled some 490 million ecu (about £330 million).

### Sysmin

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current state of the Sysmin facility.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** The third Lomé convention includes an allocation of 415 million ecu (about £280 million) for the Sysmin facility. Commitments up to 30 June 1989 totalled some 65 million ecu (about £44 million).

## ENVIRONMENT

### Radon

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) *Official Report*, 28 June, column *955*, if he will publish the statistical evidence for radon emissions in Cornwall making it 80 times more dangerous to live there than in Copeland.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The average radiation dose per person from radon in Cornwall is 6·3 millisieverts per year. This is about 80 times the annual average dose of below 0·08 millisieverts for Copeland from the discharges at Sellafield. For further information I refer the hon. Member to the 1988 "Review of Radiation Exposure of the UK Population" published by the National Radiological Protection Board. I am arranging for copies to be placed in the Library of the House.

### Dioxines

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) *Official Report*, 28 June, column *955*, he will identify by title and date of publication the report on dioxins to which he referred.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The title of the report is "Dioxins in the Environment", Pollution Paper No. 27 (ISBN 0 11 752229 5) published by HMSO on 22 June. Copies are in the Library.

### Urban Development Corporations

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to the answer given to the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) *Official Report*, 23 February, column *704*, concerning declaration of interest by chairs and members of urban development corporations, he will state any exception to the normal requirements of chairs set out therein; and if he will make it his policy to publish, on request of any hon. or right hon. Member, for any urban development corporation, the occasions when members of corporations have written to the relevant chair, together with the circumstances and action taken on each occasion.

**Mr. Trippier:** We have made no exceptions to the normal requirements concerning declarations of interest. Chairmen and members are given full advice on this matter and their conditions are set out in their terms of appointment. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State would not wish to publish correspondence between members and their chairmen on such matters.

### Pollution, River Dart

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many outlets empty raw sewage into the Dart between Totnes and Dartmouth; how many of these outlets treat sewage in any way; and if he will make a statement on the quality of water currently in the Dart.

**Mr. Howard:** There are three major discharges of sewage into the Dart estuary: the Dartmouth combined outfall which discharges macerated sewage, the Coronation park outfall at Dartmouth which discharges crude sewage and the Totnes sewage treatment works which discharges treated sewage. Smaller sewage treatment works at Dittisham, Galmpton and Stoke Gabriel discharge treated sewage. There are another 80 or so very small and intermittent private discharges from houses or farms which discharge crude sewage directly into the estuary.

The most recent river quality survey assessments showed that both the estuary and the river were of the highest quality (class A and class 1A respectively), except for a small stretch between Totnes weir and Riverford bridge which was class 1B. In recent weeks an algae bloom has developed in the estuary which has temporarily reduced the quality. Such blooms are a natural phenomenon in the early summer months.

### Community Charge

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to ensure that no person pays more than one community charge in respect of second homes which are used by only one person.

**Mr. Gummer:** My right hon. Friend has no plans to do so.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to monitoring the impact of the arrangements for standard community charges on second homes on the effectiveness of the community charge in relating payment to services provided.

**Mr. Gummer:** The impact of the standard community charge on owners of second homes will vary with the personal circumstances of owners, and with both the levels of community charge determined and the multipliers chosen by local authorities. We shall keep these matters under review in the usual way.

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the liability to poll tax of *(a)* young people at school, *(b)* young people in sixth form colleges specified in the Personal Community Charge (Students) Regulations 1989; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ridley:** I assume that the hon. Gentleman is referring to the community charge.

My Department discussed the definition of full-time students with representatives of local authorities and educational establishments before preparing these regulations. Young people who remain in full-time secondary education beyond their 18th birthday are exempt from the community charge for as long as their parents are entitled to claim child benefit on their behalf.

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table showing the effects of the ring-fencing of housing revenue accounts on the level of community charge, using the illustrative 1988-89 figures, for each charging authority.

**Mr. Gummer** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* As I have previously told the hon. Member, our practice is to publish only figures based on current responsibilities and expenditure patterns. There will be a number of changes in local government responsibilities from April 1990. It would not be appropriate to single out one particular change nor to attempt to predict the effect at the local level of one or more changes while details remain to be settled.

### Shopping Centres, Manchester

**Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to make a decision on the eight large out-of-town retail shopping centres around Manchester.

**Mr. Howard:** Consideration of these proposals is well advanced; I hope to make announcements about them very soon.

### Pollution Control

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money is to be made available to the National Rivers Authority for the establishment of a computer system for pollution control.

**Mr. Ridley:** The National Rivers Authority is at present considering its long-term requirements for information technology, including computer systems for pollution control. These, and their expenditure implications, will be considered in the context of discussions on the NRA's corporate plan. In the meantime, the schemes of transfer under schedule 2 of the Water Act 1989 will provide the NRA with the resources and equipment it needs to carry out its statutory responsibilities for pollution control and other matters.

### Water

**Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy on the disclosure of information by water public limited companies in the event of the privatisation of the existing water authorities; and what changes are proposed to the policies governing the information water authorities currently have to make available to the public.

**Mr. Howard** *[holding answer 12 July 1989]:* The Water Act 1989 and the proposed conditions of appointment of water and sewerage undertakers under the 1989 Act, contain a wide range of requirements for making information available to the public, either directly or through the Secretary of State, the National Rivers Authority, or the Director General. For example, water undertakers will be required for the first time to publish information about the quality of water supplied for domestic purposes, both regularly and in response to individual requests for information. The National Rivers Authority will be required to maintain a public register including matters such as details of analyses of samples of effluent discharged by sewerage undertakers into controlled waters.

The Director General's register, which will also be a public document, will contain all key matters concerning appointments, and include information such as undertakings under section 20(5)(b) relating to compliance programmes. Under section 34, the Secretary of State may arrange for the publication of information connected with the carrying out of water and sewerage functions as may appear to be in the public interest to publish. And the Director General's annual report which must be laid before Parliament, will contain a general survey of developments within the scope of his functions. These information requirements, in addition to those applicable to registered limited companies, will replace those applicable to the water authorities as public sector bodies. They greatly extend and improve the availability of published information.

**Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make it his policy that full information should be accessible to the public in respect of statutory water companies to at least the same extent as any ordinary public limited company.

**Mr. Howard** *[holding answer 12 July 1989]:* Under the Water Act 1989 statutory water companies would on the transfer date be appointed as water undertakers for their present areas of supply and the information requirements of that Act, which exceed those for an ordinary public limited company, will apply.

### Uniform Business Rate

**Mr. Neil Hamilton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to publish the synopsis of the actual business property revaluations, as carried out by the Inland Revenue in preparation for the introduction of the uniform business rate; and whether he will send a copy to the hon. Member for Tatton.

**Mr. Gummer** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]:* Under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 the valuation officer is required to deposit draft rating lists by 31 December 1989. It is unlikely that the lists will be ready much before that date. I placed in the Library on 15 February the summary of a sample survey by the Inland Revenue of the effects of the uniform business rate and the revaluation. I shall send the hon. Member a copy.

### Land Reclamation, Leigh

**Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total cost in each year of the work, to each contributing body, of the Higher Folds, Leigh, land reclamation scheme.

**Mr. Trippier:** The total cost of the Higher Folds, Leigh land reclamation scheme was £2·4 million. The Department of the Environment paid derelict land grant on this scheme as follows:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1976-77 | 31,184 |
| 1977-78 | 395,767 |
| 1978-79 | 721,534 |

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 226,803 |
| 1980-81 | 202,152 |
| 1981-82 | 181,898 |
| 1982-83 | 134,743 |
| 1983-84 | 62,713 |
| 1984-85 | 47,750 |
| 1985-86 | 1,739 |

The balance was met by the Greater Manchester council. Information on the cost to it in each year of the work is not readily available.

### Merseyside Development Corporation

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the Merseyside development corporation; what representations he has received about the construction of a power station within the Merseyside development corporation's planning area; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** I have regular discussions with the chairman of the Merseyside development corporation and recently I met the MDC board to discuss its corporate plan for the next three years. A proposal for the construction of a power station was considered by the Merseyside development corporation earlier this year, alongside other development options for the preferred site. I was informed of the issues under discussion by the MDC and other interested parties. It was for the MDC to decide the development strategy for the site, and it resolved to pursue a mixed-use strategy. Private developers are now drawing up proposals for consideration by the MDC.

## TRANSPORT

### Network SouthEast (Stock and Equipment)

**Mr. Speed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what investment proposals by British Rail he has approved for new passenger stock and equipment on the Network SouthEast lines to Tonbridge, Ashford and Dover.

**Mr. Portillo:** My right hon. Friend has received no recent investment proposals from British Rail about these lines. Network SouthEast's services will benefit from the resignalling works between Chislehurst and Dover, part of the major programme of investment which the Government have approved in principle, to allow Channel tunnel rail services to begin operating in 1993. Network SouthEast is planning to replace rolling stock on outer suburban services in Kent with new networker trains in the mid-1990s. I look forward to receiving British Rail's investment proposals for the new stock when they have been finalised.

### Railways (Vacancies)

**Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will call for a report from the chairman of British Rail of the total of unfilled vacancies for each region of the rail network.

**Mr. Portillo:** These details are management matters for the British Railways board.

### Underground Ticket Gates

**Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects London Regional Transport to publish the independent review of the safety of the Underground ticket gates.

**Mr. Portillo:** LRT has published the report today. Copies are being placed in the Library of the House together with copies of LRT's response. The report is a comprehensive, independent assessment by consulting engineers, Mott MacDonald, of the safety of the new automatic ticket gates being introduced on the London Underground.

The report concludes that the gate system is basically suited to the safe operation of the Underground. The consultants confirm that in general the gates provide better evacuation routes than the traditional barrier line by providing more exit aisles. The gates were not found to impede access for the emergency services or to present a fire or electrical hazard. Compared with totally open stations the consultants consider that the gates contribute to safety by providing a method of exercising crowd control.

Sixty detailed recommendations are made. The recommendations cover modifications to the design, installation and layout of the gate equipment and improvements to the maintenance, operations and staff training arrangements. Where extra gates are considered necessary at particular stations to cope with the growing number of passengers, appropriate recommendations have been made. The railway inspectorate and the London fire brigade have been consulted about the findings.

London Underground has agreed to implement all the recommendations with the exception of one temporary measure for which an alternative arrangement is proposed to achieve the same objective.

The majority of recommendations will be implemented within 12 months. LRT reports that 18 of the recommendations have already been completed or work put in hand. The estimated cost of complying with all the recommendations is estimated by LRT to be between £5 million to £10 million.

### Motor Fishing Vessel Inspire

**Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he is taking to examine why his Department's report on the foundering of motor fishing vessel Inspire on 5 September 1988 does not mention that a mayday call to the coastguard was made at about 3 pm on 5 September and not acted upon; whether he will institute a further inquiry to establish the true facts, circumstances and cause of the loss, taking account of all the information made available at last week's inquest; whether he will consider if any disciplinary action is appropriate; if he will examine the effect of the delay on the fate of the fishermen and whether any recompense to their families is appropriate as a result; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** The Department's report does mention the call which was sent. Paragraph 6.8 of the report says:

"When he"

(Mr. Skinner, the sole survivor)

"knew the boat was sinking he sent a distress signal over the VHF but had no time to give a position as the boat turned over upside down. This call evoked no response."

The Department's inquiries included examination of why this was so, and found that no call recognisable as a distress call from the Inspire was received by Her Majesty's Coastguard. No delay was found in search and rescue once the alarm was raised, and I note that at the inquest the coroner said

> "The Coastguard acted with promptness and efficiency. No question of disciplinary action or of recompense because of delay therefore arises."

The inspector carried out a most thorough investigation into the casualty, and I am satisfied with his conclusions as to its cause. There is no intention of ordering any further inquiry.

### River Terminal (Liverpool)

**Mr. David Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects a decision to be made by the European Commission on the proposal by the port of Liverpool to construct a river terminal for Irish sea traffic; when the application was lodged; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Portillo:** The port's application for a grant from the European regional development fund was lodged with the Commission on 1 December 1988. I have no information as to when the Commission will reach a decision.

### Motorway Service Areas

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals there are to *(a)* provide additional motorway service areas and *(b)* extend existing motorway service areas; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Government's strategic programme for the provision of new motorway service areas (MSAs) is as follows:

M4 Reading area
M11 Birchanger J8
M18 Hatfield J4-5
M20 Hollingbourne J8; Westenhanger J11
M25 Thurrock J30-31; Clacket Lane J5-6; Iver J15-16
M27 Meon J9-10
M40 Ardley; Barn Hill; Stokenchurch area
M42 Tamworth J10; Solihull area
M54 Telford J4
M56 Hapsford J14
Birmingham Northern Relief Road

Completion of the new MSAs depends on success in obtaining planning clearance and acquiring the land.

In addition, we are considering the possibilities of MSAs to serve the proposed Blackburn southern bypass and the proposed Birmingham western orbital.

All these MSAs are to be developed by competitive tender, enabling the private sector to play a full and active part and in conformity with Government policy which I reaffirmed in this House on 17 March at columns 372-73.

The increase in the road building programme announced in the "Roads for Prosperity" White Paper, coupled with the new national road traffic forecasts which are shortly to be published in full, will require additional provision of MSAs, including:

new MSAs for new motorways;
modifications to some of the proposals in the existing programme, to accommodate motorway widening and increased traffic;
modification of existing MSAs, to accommodate motorway widening and increased traffic; and
expansion of facilities at MSAs on unwidened motorways to cope with increased traffic.

Assessment on these lines is under way but will take some time to complete.

In addition, we continue to assess plans by operators of existing MSAs for extensions to their facilities or sites.

### Passenger Ferries (Sewage)

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the total number of passenger ferries operating from the United Kingdom; how many have sewage treatment plants; and what constraints exist over the discharge of raw and treated sewerage in the Channel and other confined water.

**Mr. Portillo:** Annex IV of the international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships 1973-78, which deals with sewage, would prohibit the discharge of all untreated sewage into the sea within four miles from land and place stringent conditions on discharges beyond that distance. It has yet to come into force. Although there is no present obligation on shipowners, it is believed that about half the United Kingdom-registered class II ferries are fitted with sewage treatment plants and most of the others with sewage holding tanks.

### Dockland Light Railway

**Sir Hugh Rossi:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the implications for the ozone layer of the use of halon gas in equipment to protect from fire hazard the new tunnel being built to Bank underground station for the Dockland light railway.

**Mr. Portillo** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* Halon fire fighting equipment has been provided at a small number of strategic locations on the Docklands light railway where, if a fire occurred, there would be significant direct risk to life.

Questions concerning the ozone layer are for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, but the impact on the ozone layer of intermittent use of halons in this particular example would be negligible.

### Channel Tunnel

**Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has held with British Rail regarding the environmental considerations of the route and design of the new railway that it is proposing to construct in Kent and south-east London; what assessment he has made of whether the present plans are the best design proposals in engineering and environmental terms and the most suitable for both British Rail and the people of London; what steps were taken to ensure that a full and proper period of consultation took place between British Rail and local communities; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* Before agreeing to the introduction by BR of a private Bill the Department will need to be satisfied that all the relevant environmental concerns have been considered by BR. Ultimately, however, it will be for Parliament to decide whether BR's proposals are acceptable.

## Driving Tests (Manchester)

**Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many driving test examiners were employed at each driving test centre in Greater Manchester in 1979 and 1988.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The average number of examiners in post, in 1985 and 1988, for each driving test centre in Greater Manchester are listed in the table. Earlier figures are not available.

| *Centre* | *1985 Examiners* | *1988 Examiners* |
|---|---|---|
| Hyde | 4 | 4 |
| Sale | 4 | 5 |
| Withington | 2 | 4 |
| Reddish | 6 | 6 |
| Bolton | 7 | 9 |
| Bury | 6 | 6 |
| Rochdale | 5 | 6 |
| Didsbury | 5 | 3 |
| Failsworth | 6 | 8 |
| Whalley Range | 6 | 6 |
| Cheetham | 7 | 7 |
| Wilmslow | 3 | 3 |
| Wigan | 6 | 7 |
| Total | 67 | 74 |

**Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how often driving test examiners have been seconded to other areas from each test centre in Greater Manchester *(a)* during 1988 and *(b)* in the current year to date.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The table shows the amount of time examiners from test centres in Greater Manchester spent on temporary postings outside the area.

| *Centre* | *1988 Man/Weeks* | *1989 (first 6 months) Man/Weeks* |
|---|---|---|
| Hyde | 0 | 0 |
| Sale | 0 | 0 |
| Withington | 4 | 4 |
| Reddish | 8 | 8 |
| Bolton | 32 | 12 |
| Bury | 12 | 16 |
| Rochdale | 8 | 20 |
| Didsbury | 0 | 0 |
| Failsworth | 20 | 20 |
| Whalley Range | 8 | 0 |
| Cheetham | 12 | 8 |
| Wilmslow | 4 | 4 |
| Wigan | 8 | 8 |
| Total | 116 | 100 |

**Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport under what circumstances his Department's driving examiners are seconded to other areas from north-west examination centres.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Driving examiners are temporarily posted from centres with lower than average waiting times to those with longer waiting times in order to maintain, as far as possible, an even balance.

**Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current waiting time in weeks for a motor vehicle driving test at each of the driving test centres in Greater Manchester.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Current waiting times for an L test at each of the test centres in Greater Manchester are:

| *Centre* | *14 July 1989 Waiting Times* |
|---|---|
| Hyde | 13 |
| Sale | 5 |
| Withington | 8 |
| Reddish | 8 |
| Bolton | 10 |
| Bury | 8 |
| Rochdale | 8 |
| Didsbury | 13 |
| Failsworth | 8 |
| Whalley Range | 14 |
| Cheetham | 11 |
| Wilmslow | 10 |
| Wigan | 9 |

**Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the number of motor vehicle driving test cancellations in the current year at each of the test centres in Greater Manchester, due to staff absence.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Unexpected staff sickness led to the following short-notice L test cancellations:

| *Centre* | *1989 (up to 30 June) Cancellations* |
|---|---|
| Hyde | 31 |
| Sale | 2 |
| Withington | 13 |
| Reddish | 66 |
| Bolton | 16 |
| Bury | 13 |
| Rochdale | 33 |
| Didsbury | 17 |
| Failsworth | 25 |
| Whalley Range | 12 |
| Cheetham | 49 |
| Wilmslow | 11 |
| Wigan | 23 |

## Minibus Permit

**Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport why his Department's south-eastern traffic area office has refused to issue a permit under section 19 of the Transport Act 1985 to Miss Annette Gerry of Victoria House, 71 Victoria road, Polegate, East Sussex, in respect of Ford Transit minibus registration number LYL 244K owned by Victoria house rest home.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Decisions on the granting of minibus permits are a matter for the Traffic Commissioner who is the independent licensing authority in these matters. The south-eastern traffic area office has sought legal advice on this case and will be writing shortly to the hon. Member.

# TRADE AND INDUSTRY

## Post Offices

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, for County Durham, he will list those Crown post offices *(a)* closed and *(b)* downgraded to sub-office status in the last five years; and if he will list those proposed for either outcome in the future.

**Mr. Forth:** These are operational questions for the Post Office board. However, I understand that it proposes to convert Seaham, Houghton-le-Spring and Crook crown offices into sub-offices in October this year. No crown offices have been either closed or converted in County Durham during the last five years.

**Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has received a request from the chairman and chief executive [illegible] the Post Office to relieve him from the duty to collect mail in the London borough of Brent.

**Mr. Forth:** I have received no such request.

**Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the operation of the Post Office's monopoly on the collection of mail from sub-post offices in the London borough of Brent.

**Mr. Forth:** The Post Office's monopoly is a privilege that applies in the whole of the United Kingdom. Its day-to-day operations are a matter of the Post Office itself.

**Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met the chairman and chief executive of the Post Office; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Forth:** The Chancellor of the Duchy meets the chairman of the Post Office regularly, and last did so on June 27. A range of matters of current interest was discussed.

### Brewing Industry

**Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met representatives of the six major brewers; and what was discussed.

**Mr. Maude:** The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry met representatives of the six national brewers on 6 July. These were private discussions. He announced decisions on 10 July.

### Beer (MMC Report)

**Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he is now able to announce his response to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the supply of beer.

**Mr. Maude:** My right hon. Friend announced our response to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the supply of beer in the House on 10 July.

### School Children (Injuries)

**Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many minor injuries to children at school were reported over the period 1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987 and 1 April 1987 to 31 March 1988 broken down by local education authority and whether nursery, primary or secondary school.

**Mr. Forth:** The information is not available in the form requested. However the most recent estimate from my Department's leisure accident surveillance of children treated in hospitals in England and Wales as a result of accidents in schools or nurseries (or during school sports) totalled 115,000 between May and October 1987, of which 95 per cent. of cases were minor injuries not requiring in-patient treatment.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Mr. Graham Gaskin

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Prime Minister what remedies Her Majesty's Government will provide to Mr. Graham Gaskin whose case was upheld in the European Court of Human Rights.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government will be paying the sums awarded by the court.

### Armilla Patrol

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** To ask the Prime Minister if she proposes that a medal be issued commemorating the Royal Navy's outstanding service in helping to keep open the sea lanes into and out of the Persian Gulf and through the straights of Hormuz; and if she will bear in mind the desirability of retaining in the annals of the Royal Navy the name of the Armilla patrol.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker) on 25 May. The Armilla patrol continues to serve in the Gulf with dedication and professionalism. The service that the Royal Navy has performed and continues to perform will not be forgotten; the term Armilla patrol will always be synonymous with a difficult and, at times, hazardous task carried out with exemplary efficiency, in the best traditions of the Royal Navy and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

### European Court of Justice (Decisions)

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the numbers of decisions of the European Court of Justice which have not been implemented by member states; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** No. However, it is for the Commission to decide whether a member state has failed to comply with a judgment and if necessary the Commission will take further action. The United Kingdom record on implementation is very good.

### Junior Ministers

**Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will ensure that junior Ministers do not use titles for which there is no statutory or constitutional justification and which are liable to be confused with the Secretary of State or other ministerial head of the Government Department concerned.

**The Prime Minister:** My authorisation is required for courtesy titles conferred on Ministers below Cabinet rank.

### Gifts

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she has received any gifts made from Nile crocodile skin products during her visits overseas.

**The Prime Minister:** I have nothing further to add to the reply that I gave the hon. Member on 10 July at column *356*.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Prime Minister how long it takes for her to reply to letters from hon. Members; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** I receive an enormous number of letters each week from Members of Parliament and others. It is not possible for me to deal with all these letters personally and I must accordingly refer most of them to the Minister and the Department with the responsibility for the policy in question. All correspondence is dealt with as quickly as possible.

### Private Office

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list all the current members of her private office showing how long each has been on her staff and their civil service grading and salary.

**The Prime Minister** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]:* The information is as follows:

| | *Length of Service* | *Grade* | *Salary Per Annum £* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Principal Private Secretary | 7 months | G3 | 40,900 |
| Private Secretary | 5 years 4 months | G3 | 40,900 |
| Private Secretary | 1 year 7 months | G5 | 31,602 |
| Private Secretary | 1 year 1 month | G5 | 28,170 |
| Private Secretary | 1 month | G7 | 18,141 |
| Diary Secretary | 4 months | Special Adviser (p/t) | 10,927 |
| Assistant Private Secretary | 16 years 2 months | Assistant One | 17,861 |
| Assistant Private Secretary | Joined 17 July 1989 | SEO | 17,861 |
| Secretary for Appointments | 7 years 4 months | G5 | 32,826 |

Salaries exclude London Weighting and allowance and are those payable as at 1 July 1989.

### Bed-and-Breakfast Accommodation

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make an official visit to premises providing bed-and-breakfast accommodation for the homeless.

**The Prime Minister** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]:* I have at present no plans to do so.

### Hospitals (Official Visits)

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Prime Minister what is her present policy regarding the making of official visits to hospitals where victims of major disasters are receiving medical treatment.

**The Prime Minister** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave him on 13 January at column *764*.

## HEALTH

### Oral Tobacco Products

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if it is his intention to include all products which contain nicotine, including Stubits and Stoppers, in his proposed ban on oral tobacco products.

**Mr. Mellor:** No. The Government's proposal is to ban the supply of oral snuff dipping products consisting wholly or mainly of tobacco in fine cut, ground or particulate form. We have not yet decided whether to proceed with a ban. Preparations marketed for smoking replacement purposes that consist of tobacco extracts containing nicotine in a non-tobacco base would not be covered. There are regulations under existing Acts governing the supply of nicotine-containing products generally.

### Medical and Dental Staff

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the percentage increase in medical and dental staff whole-time equivalents in *(a)* the Mersey region and *(b)* England, between September 1978 and the latest available date.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information requested is set out in the table:

*Hospital and community health service medical and dental staff*[1] *in Mersey Regional Health Authority and England, percentage change, 30 September 1978-87*

| | *Wholetime equivalent (per cent. increase)* |
|---|---|
| Mersey RHA | 14·1 |
| England | 14·9 |

[1] Figures include Permanent Paid, Honorary and Locum staff. 1987 Locum figures include Agency Locums which were collected separately for the first time.

### Water Contamination (North Cornwall)

**Mr. Neale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the independent health panel investigating possible long-term health effects of the water contamination incident in July 1988 at Lowermoor treatment works, north Cornwall will publish its report before Parliament rises for the summer recess.

**Mr. Freeman:** I understand that the report of the independent Lowermoor incident health advisory group to the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly district health authority is to be published on 20 July in Truro. Ministers will be giving careful consideration to the report and any recommendations that might be made by the group.

## Medical Services (Durham)

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the revenue generated from private patients at hospitals in the Durham area in 1989; and what were the comparable figures for each of the last 10 years at 1989 prices.

**Mr. Mellor:** The available information is given in the table:

*Income from private patients: Durham health authority*

| | *£ (at 1988-89 prices)* |
|---|---|
| 1982-83 | 6,158 |
| 1983-84 | 31,773 |
| 1984-85 | 34,230 |
| 1985-86 | 41,405 |
| 1986-87 | 49,912 |
| [1]1987-88 | 53,776 |

[1] Latest year available.

*Notes:*

1. The figures used are derived from the annual accounts of the health authority and have been expressed at 1988-89 prices by the use of the gross domestic product deflator.

2. The Durham health authority was established on 1 April 1982. Prior to that date the authority's predecessor health district formed part of an area health authority and district-based figures were not collected centrally.

## Home Helps (Durham)

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on the estimated total number of hours received by clients of the home-help service of Durham county council for the years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not collect this information centrally. Information about the number of hours received by elderly clients from home helps is collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and published in "Personal Social Service Statistics—Actuals" for each financial year. The latest publication available is for 1987-88. Copies are available in the Library.

## Cottage Hospitals

**Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what role his Department envisages for cottage hospitals over the next five years; whether he estimates that their number will diminish; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The pattern of hospital services locally is for health authority decision, taking into account the needs of all the communities they serve and available resources. In future district health authorities are likely to wish to place contracts with those cottage hospitals which are able to provide a good quality and cost-effective service.

## Drugs (Definition)

**Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether any document has replaced or updated the 1967 report on the "Definition of Drugs (Borderline Substances)" by the standing joint committee on the classification of proprietary preparations in particular paragraph 4 and appendix A on a guidance to general practitioners on prescribing preparations normally regarded as foods but regarded as drugs when used in the treatment of the diseases therein listed; and what is the status of the 1967 report.

**Mr. Mellor:** The standing joint committee on the classification of proprietary preparation was replaced by the advisory committee on borderline substances in 1971. The report on the definition of drugs (borderline substances), which was produced by the standing joint committee, has been superseded by the recommendations of the advisory committee on borderline substances. These recommendations are revised periodically and are published in the "Drug Tariff", the "British National Formulary" and the "Monthly Index of Medical Specialties" (MIMS).

The role of the advisory committee on borderline substances is to provide the Secretary of State and general practitioners with expert independent medical advice on the classification of borderline substances, and on whether they should be prescribed by general practitioners at NHS expense. In reaching its judgment on any particular product the committee's sole criterion is whether it has a therapeutic use in the treatment of disease in the community. This criterion was published on 25 February 1988 at column 302-03 in my predecessor's reply to a question from my hon. Friend the member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley).

## GP List Sizes

**Mr. Bright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the average size of a general practitioner's list in Luton in May 1979; and what it is now.

**Mr. Mellor:** Figures are available only for 1 October each year by family practitioner committee (FPC) areas. Luton is served by Bedfordshire FPC. At 1 October 1979 the average list size of unrestricted principals in Bedfordshire FPC was 2,585. At 12 October 1987 (the latest available figure) the number had decreased to 2,052.

## Committee on Safety of Medicines

**Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will publish a list of the financial and other links between the members of the Committee on Safety of Medicines and the pharmaceutical industry.

**Mr. Mellor:** Information on members' links with the pharmaceutical industry was published with the 1987 annual report of the Medicines Commission and Medicines Act committees. A copy is in the Library. The 1988 report, which will contain additional information, will be published shortly.

## Medicines Control Division

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff were employed by the medicines control division of the Department in each year since 1979; and at what grades and locations.

**Mr. Mellor:** I regret that information is not available in the form requested. The table gives numbers of staff in post as at 31 March of each year since 1986. This includes staff of the British Pharmacopoeia Commission.

| | Staff in post 1986 | Staff in post 1987 | Staff in post 1988 | Staff in post 1989 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 3/U.S | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 3/SPMO | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 4/CPHO | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 5/AS | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Grade 6/S/PRIN | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 7/PRIN | 7 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| SEO | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| HEO | 16 | 21 | 19 | 19 |
| EO | 26 | 34 | 30 | 32 |
| AO | 53 | 55 | 54·5 | 58·5 |
| AA | 29 | 32 | 32 | 32 |
| S/PES | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| PES | 20 | 20 | 17 | 13 |
| Typist | — | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Data Processor | — | 1 | — | — |
| S/Paper Keeper | — | — | — | 1 |
| Paper Keeper | — | — | — | 3 |
| Messenger | — | — | — | 2 |
| Principal M.O. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Senior M.O. | 14 | 13 | 15 | 12·5 |
| M.O. | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| P.S.O. | — | — | — | 2 |
| S.S.O. | — | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| H.S.O. | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| A.S.O. | 3 | 2·5 | 4 | 3 |
| S.O. | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| DCPO | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| SPHO | 6 | 6 | 8 | 8 |
| PPHO | 22 | 22 | 25 | 30 |
| PHO1 | 31 | 31 | 24 | 23 |
| PHO2 | 7 | 1 | — | — |
| HPTO | — | 5·5 | 3 | 7·5 |
| Laboratory Attendant | 1·5 | 1·5 | 1·5 | 1·5 |
| Total | 260·5 | 286·5 | 272 | 286 |
| Total Administration Staff | 159 | 184 | 172·5 | 180·5 |
| Total Professional Staff | 101·5 | 102·5 | 99·5 | 105·5 |

From 1979 to 1985 the following table shows the total number of staff in post and the numbers of administrative and professional staff.

*Staff in post at 31 March*

| | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrative Staff | 120 | 120 | 117 | 134 | 128 | 142 | 145 |
| Professional Staff | 94 | 95 | 98 | 95 | 93·5 | 107·5 | 117·5 |
| Totals | 214 | 215 | 215 | 229 | 221·5 | 249·5 | 262·5 |

As to location the Medicines Control Agency, formerly the Medicines division, has been located at Market towers since 1980; previously they were at Finsbury square. The bulk of the staff are located at Market towers. The remainder are located at the BPC laboratory at Canons park and medicines inspectors at the following locations: Chester, Hitchin, York, East Grinstead, Chelmsford and Lymington.

## Pharmaceutical Price Regulation

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will state the total sales of medicines under the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme to general practitioners and National Health Service hospitals in each year since 1979.

**Mr. Mellor:** Total United Kingdom sales for major companies operating under the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme (PPRS) have been as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 775 |
| 1980 | 884 |
| 1981 | 1,083 |
| 1982 | 1,269 |
| 1983 | 1,386 |
| 1984 | 1,483 |
| 1985 | 1,510 |
| 1986 | 1,569 |
| 1987 | 1,611 |

The figures are sales of PPRS medicines made by companies required to submit full financial information under the scheme, and are the total of sales made in each company's financial year which ended in the year stated. They will include some sales not made to the NHS, where these are incidental to NHS sales; separate information on sales to hospitals and the family practitioner service is not available, nor is information for later periods.

Sales made under the PPRS were affected by the introduction of the selected list scheme in April 1985, and by the exclusion of generics from the PPRS in October 1986.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the minimum allowable profit on capital employed under the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme in each year since 1979 and the average level of profit under the scheme in each year.

**Mr. Mellor:** Under the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme each company has a profit target which it can expect to retain if achieved. There is no "minimum allowable profit" under the scheme. For the years in question, the lower end of the range of target returns was:

| | *Per cent.* |
|---|---|
| To 31 March 1984 | 17 |
| From 1 April 1984 | 15 |
| From 1 October 1986 | 16 |
| From 1 October 1987 | 17 |

Average levels of profit achieved are not published.

## Drugs Licences

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the numbers of new drugs licensed under the Medicines Act in each year since 1979 and the numbers of drugs whose licence was withdrawn in each year.

**Mr. Mellor:** The figures for the years prior to 1982 are not available in a comparable form. The figures for the period 1982-88 are as follows:

| | *Product licences granted* | *Product licences for medicinal products containing a new active substance*[1] | *Licences withdrawn*[2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1982 | 934 | 49 | 1,003 |
| 1983 | 783 | 26 | 1,531 |
| 1984 | 641 | 9 | 1,513 |
| 1985 | 649 | 19 | 721 |
| 1986 | 738 | 36 | 920 |
| 1987 | 641 | 41 | 1,204 |
| 1988 | 557 | 47 | 1,268 |

[1] Differences from year to year in the number of licences for products containing a new active substance must be treated with caution since (a) the year in which particular licences were granted may be dependent on a variety of factors and (b) the number of licences granted may depend on the number of dosage forms needed for the particular products.

[2] The licences withdrawn column covers both product licences and product licences of right. The numbers include licences withdrawn because of revocation by the licensing authority and because of decisions by applicants to withdraw, not to renew or, in the case of product licence of right holders, not to pursue applications for full product licences.

## Anthrax Vaccine

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he proposes to review the 1968 Medicines Order in order to facilitate the importation of anthrax vaccine; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have no plans to do so. We already hold a current produce licence for anthrax vaccine under the provisions of the Medicines Act 1968. Stocks of the vaccine are readily available for use and this country is the only one to our knowledge with a routine programme of vaccination of humans at particular risk of anthrax.

## Chiropodists

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received about the registration of chiropodists; how many practising chiropodists are *(a)* unregistered and *(b)* registered; and what checks are made on unregistered chiropodists working in private homes for the aged and other institutions outside the National Health Service.

**Mr. Mellor:** Over the last 12 months my right hon. and learned Frie[illegible] received a number of letters on this matter from members of the public and hon. Members writing on behalf of their constituents.

I understand that the Council for the Professions Allied to Medicine, which maintains the state register, does not hold details of chiropodists practising in the profession. Information on unregistered practitioners is not held centrally. It is for the registration authorities for homes to decide how they carry out their registration inspection duties for this aspect of a home, as with many other aspects of a home.

## District Health Executive

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he intends to appoint senior nurses as executive directors on the proposed district health executive body.

**Mr. Mellor:** There will be nothing to prevent the appointment of a senior nurse as an executive member. However, this will be a matter for the chairman and non-executive members of the authority, acting with the general manager.

## NHS Reform

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his estimate of the full public cost of his meeting with managers of hospital units which have expressed an interest in self-governing status held in Leeds on Tuesday 11 July.

**Mr. Mellor:** About £8,000, excluding individuals' travelling and other costs.

## Dr. A. J. Davis

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Ealing, North to the Minister of State on the subject of Dr. A. J. Davis, dated 21 April, 17 May and 29 June; and if he will make a statement on the reasons for the delay.

**Mr. Freeman:** A reply to my hon. Friend's letter of 21 April has now been despatched. I apologise for the delay. We have had a lot of correspondence on the subject of the GP's contract. The Department can find no trace of receipt of the letters dated 17 May and 29 June.

## Cervical Smears

**Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what categories of women do not require cervical smears; and what method is proposed to ensure that they are not tested unnecessarily.

**Mr. Mellor:** Our guidance to health authorities states that

> "all women aged 20 to 64 should be invited for screening . . . unless their GP has indicated that they should be excluded". (Circular HC(88)1 paragraph 3.)

A GP may decide to exclude from the screening programme those women who have had a total hysterectomy (which implies that the cervix has been removed along with the rest of the uterus) and those who have had their cervix amputated as part of a prolapse repair. Besides women who are dying of cervical cancer there are also those in terminal stages of other illnesses such as cancers elsewhere in their body or neurological disorders.

## Smoking (Pregnancy)

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many babies were born *(a)* still born and *(b)* premature as a result of smoking by the mother during pregnancy in 1987 and 1988;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the total number of *(a)* still births, and *(b)* premature births by weeks of gestation, where the mother smoked during pregnancy in 1987 and 1988.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not hold this information. Not all premature and still births in mothers who smoke can readily be attributed to maternal smoking.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information his Department has on the medical effects of smoking on the health of an unborn child; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health has found that smoking during pregnancy is a cause of low birthweight and increased perinatal mortality. The committee reported that the mean reduction in birthweight between maternal smokers and non-smokers ranges between 150 g and 250 g, and that perinatal mortality for maternal smokers is increased by about 28 per cent. Both the reduction in birthweight and the increase in perinatal mortality increase with the average number of cigarettes smoked. The committee also found that there is an association between exposure to other people's tobacco smoke and low birthweight although its interpretaton is unclear.

The Government continue their efforts to persuade all smokers, including pregnant woman, to give up the habit. The Health Education Authority's pregnancy book, which is given to every woman who is pregnant for the first time, advises women not to smoke during pregnancy. The teenage anti-smoking campaign, to be launched later this year, will discourage teenagers, especially girls, from taking up smoking. This campaign, aimed at the pre-childbearing years, should contribute to reducing smoking during pregnancy.

## AIDS

**Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what was the cumulative total of people diagnosed with AIDS until 31 March 1988; and how many of these had been diagnosed in the 12 months prior to that date; in each regional health authority in England and Wales;

(2) what was the cumulative total of people diagnosed with AIDS until 31 March; and how many of these had been diagnosed within the previous 12 months; in each regional health authority in England and Wales.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 12 July 1989]:* The cumulative totals of people diagnosed with AIDS until 31 March 1988 and 31 March 1989 are shown in the first table for each regional health authority in England and Wales. The table also sets out the numbers for the 12 months before the specified dates. Inevitably, some cases may not be reported to and accepted by CDSC within the same time period as that in which they are diagnosed, and the second table shows numbers diagnosed, reported to and accepted by CDSC within the specified times.

*Table 1*
*AIDS cases diagnosed*

| | *1 April 1987–31 March 1988* | *Cumulative to 31 March 1988* | *1 April 1988–31 March 1989* | *Cumulative to 31 March 1989* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *England* | | | | |
| Northern | 10 | 39 | 10 | 49 |
| Yorkshire | 15 | 36 | 17 | 53 |
| Trent | 11 | 28 | 13 | 41 |
| East Anglia | 5 | 19 | 7 | 26 |
| North West Thames | 241 | 691 | 185 | 876 |
| North East Thames | 111 | 296 | 116 | 412 |
| South East Thames | 56 | 139 | 93 | 232 |
| South West Thames | 33 | 61 | 13 | 74 |
| Wessex | 18 | 39 | 10 | 49 |
| Oxford | 14 | 30 | 17 | 47 |
| South Western | 11 | 29 | 14 | 43 |
| West Midlands | 9 | 29 | 12 | 41 |
| Mersey | 10 | 24 | 8 | 32 |
| North Western | 23 | 58 | 26 | 84 |
| *Wales* | 8 | 24 | 12 | 36 |

*Table 2*
*AIDS cases reported and accepted*

| | *1 April 1987–31 March 1988* | *Cumulative to 31 March 1988* | *1 April 1988–31 March 1989* | *Cumulative to 31 March 1989* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *England* | | | | |
| Northern | 15 | 36 | 13 | 49 |
| Yorkshire | 15 | 24 | 29 | 53 |
| Trent | 14 | 26 | 15 | 41 |
| East Anglia | 14 | 19 | 7 | 26 |
| North West Thames | 283 | 621 | 255 | 876 |
| North East Thames | 131 | 267 | 145 | 412 |
| South East Thames | 59 | 125 | 107 | 232 |
| South West Thames | 37 | 53 | 21 | 74 |
| Wessex | 16 | 32 | 17 | 49 |
| Oxford | 19 | 25 | 22 | 47 |
| South Western | 15 | 25 | 18 | 43 |
| West Midlands | 10 | 24 | 17 | 41 |

| | *1 April 1987–31 March 1988* | *Cumulative to 31 March 1988* | *1 April 1988–31 March 1989* | *Cumulative to 31 March 1989* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mersey | 8 | 17 | 15 | 32 |
| North Western | 21 | 52 | 32 | 84 |
| *Wales* | 9 | 20 | 16 | 36 |

### National Health Service Staff (Meetings)

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list date and venue of the consultation meetings he is having in the regions with senior National Health Service staff.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will specify for each region *(a)* the date, *(b)* the time and *(c)* the venue of his meeting with managers about the National Health Service White Paper.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]:* We have frequent meetings with senior staff on all aspects of the National Health Service. Assuming that the hon. Member is referring to the current series of meetings on self-governing hospitals, with invited staff at all levels, the information requested is:

*27 June:*
The Grand Hotel, Birmingham

*29 June:*
East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham

*4 July:*
The Old Assembly Rooms, Newcastle

*6 July:*
New Century Hall and Banqueting Suite, Manchester

*11 July:*
The Queen's hotel, Leeds

*13 July:*
The Hotel Russell, London WC1

*18 July:*
Ramada Inn West London, London SW6

*20 July:*
The Holiday Inn, Bristol

### Medical Ethics

**Sir Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to who is responsible for laying down and enforcing the ethics of the medical profession.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]:* The General Medical Council is responsible, under part 5 of the Medical Act 1983, for advising members of the medical profession on standards of professional conduct and medical ethics. It is also responsible for disciplining doctors whose disregard of such guidance is held to constitute gross professional misconduct.

## WALES

### Sheltered Accommodation

12. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy on the provision of sheltered accommodation for the elderly and handicapped.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The Government attach high priority to the provision of all types of special needs housing. It is for local authorities and housing associations in conjunction with Housing for Wales to assess housing needs in their areas.

### South Glamorgan Health Authority

13. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consultations he carried out before arriving at a decision on the 10-year strategic hospital plan of the South Glamorgan health authority.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** None. The strategic plan is the responsibility of South Glamorgan health authority which carried out extensive consultation on it. This culminated in the public being allowed a one-month period to submit comments on the plan to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

### Sewage Outfalls

14. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a further statement on the Welsh water authority's proposed one mile raw sewage outfall off the Welsh coast near Swansea.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** This is a matter for Welsh Water. I understand that design and engineering studies are still to be completed.

### Financial Services Industry

15. **Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the development of the financial services industry in Wales.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** The financial services industry in Wales is developing very strongly. Employment in the sector has increased to more than 70,000 and is accelerating fast. Many inquiries are being dealt with at the present time.

### Welsh Committee for Economic and Industrial Affairs

16. **Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met the Welsh Committee for Economic and Industrial Affairs; and what was discussed.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** I met representatives of the Welsh Committee for Economic and Industrial Affairs on Monday 19 June to discuss its report on "Finance for Business in Wales".

### Special Education, Clwyd

17. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has had from Clywd county council on the provision of special education.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Neither my right hon. Friend nor I has received any recent representations directly from

Clwyd county council on provision of special education, but the Welsh Office Education Department has had various discussions with council officials about various aspects of the Education Reform Act, including its implications for special education.

## Computeraid Ltd.

18. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has on the initiatives that Computeraid Limited, based at the Swansea university college innovation centre, have taken in the field of computer training courses.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The Department has received information about Computeraid Ltd. in connection with a project that it has proposed for inclusion in the European social fund element of the proposed integrated development operation for industial south Wales. I understand that they offer a useful training service in computer systems to small businesses.

## Health Authorities

19. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what subjects he intends to discuss when he next meets chairpersons of Welsh health authorities.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** I next plan to meet health authority chairmen in the autumn. An agenda is yet to be agreed.

## Primary Schools (Expenditure)

20. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was spent per pupil in primary schools in Wales in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what was the comparable figure for 1978-79, at constant prices.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** At constant prices, 1987-88 expenditure per pupil in nursery and primary schools was £1,004, compared with £785 in 1978-79 for pupils in primary schools only, which is an increase of 27·9 per cent.

## Labour Statistics

21. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many male *(a)* employees and *(b)* self-employed and female (i) full and (ii) part-time were in employment in Wales in June 1979 and the latest date for which figures are available.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** In June 1979 there were 618,000 male employees in employment, 98,000 self-employed males, 250,000 full-time and 165,000 part-time females in employment and 26,000 self-employed females. The latest available data are for March 1989, the details being 483,000; 110,000; 213,000; 187,000 and 40,000 respectively. During this period there were substantial increases in the numbers of those in training and higher education.

26. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unadjusted figures for unemployment in *(a)* Newport, *(b)* Gwent and *(c)* Wales; and if he will give the equivalent figures for 1979 on the most nearly comparable basis.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** On 8 June 1989, the number of unemployed claimants in the Newport district, Gwent and Wales were 5,078, 15,477 and 92,804 respectively. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a basis that enables a valid comparison to be made.

## River Pollution

22. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many representations he has received asking him to ensure that the National River Authority will be fully empowered to prosecute all polluters of Welsh rivers.

**[illegible] Wyn Roberts:** Among the many representations I received about provisions of the Water Act the number of those relating specifically to the National River Authority's powers of prosecution was not recorded separately.

## Wales Trades Union Congress

23. **Sir Anthony Meyer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he plans to have with the Wales Trades Union Congress about industrial development and job opportunities.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** I am always ready to meet the Wales TUC to discuss such issues.

## National Health Service

24. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many representations he has had to date in favour of the Government's White Paper on the National Health Service.

25. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many representations the Welsh Office has received on the Government's Health Service review.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the reply of 19 June to the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers), *Official Report*, Vol. 155, columns 9-10.

## Cancer Services

27. **Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to publish the comprehensive study of cancer services for north Wales patients initiated by the Welsh Office and commenced in September 1988; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** I cannot announce the publication date of the study being undertaken by Deloitte, Haskins and Sells at the request of the Welsh Office as it is only now nearing completion. When the report is to hand it will be studied closely by the Department in consulation with the relevant health authorities and other interested parties.

## Small Businesses

28. **Mr. Alun Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he is taking to encourage the establishment and development of small businesses in Wales.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** My Department continues to encourage small businesses in Wales through implementing national policies such as deregulation and by schemes such as the gateway network and enterprise Wales which facilitate access to high-quality advice, information and other forms of assistance. We have also continued to support enterprise agencies which, in Wales, have received assistance of over £9·7 million from my Department, the Welsh Development Agency and the Development Board for Rural Wales.

### Hill Land Compensatory Payments

29. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the latest situation regarding the European Community's review of hill land compensatory payments.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Discussions on the Commission's proposals are at an early stage. We shall seek to ensure that any changes to the existing arrangements do not discriminate against the interests of the United Kingdom.

### Public Libraries

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make an allocation of £13,500 for the next three years to extend and to improve the public library service in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, North (Mr. Jones) on 9 February 1989 by my right hon. Friend, *Official Report*, Vol. 146, columns *761-63*.

### Listeria

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the reported outbreaks of listeria in Wales; and what further action he intends to take.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Sampling by local authority environmental health officers of patés in two south Wales districts between 11 May and 26 June 1989 showed that some samples of paté were contaminated with high counts of listeria monocytogenes. Listeria is widely distributed in the environment and some exposure to this organism is unavoidable. Only rarely does this give rise to illness and indeed at any one time as many as one in 20 people may carry this bacteria in their guts without any ill-effects.

In accordance with routine procedures advice was given, during the course of the sampling, to the supermarkets concerned by the environmental health officers about the storage and handling of paté, and arrangements were made for sampling of the implicated paté at the point of entry into the United Kingdom by the port health authorities at Dover and along the distribution networks within the United Kingdom, and the EC and Belgian authorities were alerted.

On 3 July, my Department received the results of this exercise from the public health laboratory service (PHLS). My officials had discussions with officers of the PHLS and the relevant environmental health officers and with officials of the Department of Health. Arrangements were put in hand for a nationwide survey of all types of paté on sale in the United Kingdom, and the EC and Belgian authorities were alerted.

In the light of further evidence received by the Department of Health from one of the importers the public was alerted on 12 July that certain vulnerable groups should for the time being avoid eating paté.

In addition, my chief medical officer has written to all doctors in Wales advising that paté should be included in the list of foodstuffs previously notified to them on 21 February 1989 as being a potential hazard to specified vulnerable groups.

### Varicose Vein Operations

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the numbers waiting for varicose vein operations in each Welsh health district and the average waiting time for such operations in each district.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Information on the numbers currently waiting for varicose vein operations is not available centrally.

Available information on waiting times for patients admitted from the waiting list for such operations in 1988 is shown in the table:

| | *Median waiting time (days)*[1] |
|---|---|
| Clwyd | 119 |
| East Dyfed | 52 |
| Pembrokeshire | 173 |
| Gwent | 119 |
| Gwynedd | 80 |
| Mid Glamorgan | 47 |
| Powys | 41 |
| South Glamorgan | 119 |
| West Glamorgan | 166 |

[1] Estimates are based on clinical information provided by hospitals, which in some cases is incomplete.

### In-Service Teacher Training

**Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if, pursuant to his answers to the hon. Member for Bridgend of 11 July, he will list the amounts requested by each local education authority under each heading in the table.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Local education authorities were notified in Welsh Office circular 33/88 of the indicative expenditure in respect of which they could expect to receive grant support under the scheme in 1989-90. The circular asked the LEAs to provide details of their proposed expenditure on in-service teacher training in 1989-90 before the final allocations, as shown in my reply of 11 July, were announced in the formal Welsh Office allocation letter of 27 January 1989. Details of each LEA's proposed expenditure under each category are shown in the table. Authorities are free to spend more on in-service teacher training than the amounts specified as eligible for specific grant under the scheme.

*LEA's proposed expenditure 1989-90*

| *NP areas* | *Clwyd*<br>£ | *Dyfed*<br>£ | *Gwent*<br>£ | *Gwynedd*<br>£ | *Mid. Glamorgan*<br>£ | *Powys*<br>£ | *South Glamorgan*<br>£ | *West Glamorgan*<br>£ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *a. Schoolteachers* | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Management | 147,060 | 80,000 | 90,210 | 106,290 | 119,890 | 126,100 | 103,570 | 71,000 |
| 2. Nat. Curr. Ass. and Man. | 234,260 | 200,000 | 180,580 | 95,530 | 289,990 | 264,660 | 318,080 | 145,000 |
| 3. Nat. Curr. Content | 444,300 | 300,000 | 248,780 | 166,910 | 380,630 | 217,160 | 537,670 | 200,000 |
| 4. RE | 23,800 | 10,000 | 9,670 | 5,150 | 12,890 | 10,500 | 11,600 | 8,000 |
| 5. Under Fives | 10,150 | 12,000 | 12,750 | 6,210 | 23,200 | 10,500 | 12,020 | 10,000 |
| 6. Sp Needs Hearing | 33,000 | 7,000 | 11,000 | — | 34,000 | — | 12,000 | 13,000 |
| 7. Sp Needs Sight | 5,000 | 7,000 | 7,800 | 2,000 | 20,000 | 20,500 | 3,000 | 15,000 |
| 8. Sp Needs Sld | 6,000 | — | 50,000 | 5,000 | 13,000 | 20,500 | 15,000 | 20,000 |
| 9. Sp Needs DES Teach | 11,450 | 15,000 | 12,570 | 6,700 | 16,750 | 20,500 | 23,480 | 15,000 |
| 10. New Technology | 141,450 | 35,000 | 45,570 | 129,552 | 60,560 | 110,400 | 157,190 | 100,000 |
| 11. Welsh | 87,000 | 30,000 | 26,400 | 68,300 | 59,900 | 38,900 | 41,750 | 95,000 |
| *b. FE Teachers* | | | | | | | | |
| 12. AFE | 52,430 | 13,000 | 73,500 | 19,110 | 162,680 | — | 117,800 | 61,740 |
| 13. Management | 42,790 | 20,000 | 24,400 | 20,970 | 25,430 | 63,200 | 37,930 | 27,000 |
| 14. Updating Etc. | 50,070 | 21,000 | 32,200 | 11,830 | 33,560 | 74,140 | 50,670 | 40,000 |
| 15. Sp Ed Needs | 5,580 | 4,000 | 980 | 2,200 | 6,230 | 5,300 | 4,390 | 10,000 |
| *c. Other* | | | | | | | | |
| 16. Drugs | 38,950 | 15,000 | 15,320 | 25,543 | 20,550 | 28,430 | 28,440 | 15,000 |
| 17. Youth and Community | 24,594 | 10,000 | 10,640 | 38,500 | 14,280 | 30,500 | 19,240 | 10,300 |
| 18. Ed Psychs | 7,000 | — | — | — | 16,000 | — | — | 65,000 |
| Total | 1,364,884 | 779,000 | 852,370 | 709,795 | 1,309,540 | 1,041,290 | 1,493,830 | 921,040 |
| Local priorities | 1,072,600 | 1,121,000 | 1,178,000 | 685,332 | 1,480,000 | 80,971 | 692,500 | 841,290 |

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Benefits

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) further to his reply to the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) *Official Report,* 22 February, column *679,* if he will reformulate the figures, in order to show the amounts of support received in 1978-79 and 1988-89 by the following categories *(a)* support for all children (family allowance/child benefit/child tax allowances), *(b)* support restricted to lone-parents (one-parent benefit, additional personal allowance, supplementary benefit/income support, housing benefit, and family income supplement/family credit paid to lone parents), *(c)* child additions paid with national insurance benefits, *(d)* child additions paid with supplementary benefit/income support for two-parent families and *(e)* family income supplement/family credit paid to two-parent families;

(2) further to the holding answer to the hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham dated 3 May, when he proposes to answer the question for priority written answer which appeared as No. 10 on the Order Paper for that day.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The latest available information is set out in the table. It is inappropriate to use this information to make direct comparisons between levels and changes in expenditure for lone parents and couples with children because the original estimates excluded income support and housing benefit for couples with children and therefore did not include increased expenditure resulting from higher unemployment. Total estimates of expenditure on unemployed couples with children are not readily available. Child additions did not form part of the original estimate given on 22 February and have therefore been excluded.

*£ million*

| *Categories* | *1978-79 cash* | *1978-79 real* | *1988-89 cash/real* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Support for all children* | | | |
| Child Benefit | 1,776 | 3,872 | 4,522 |
| Child Tax Allowance | 515 | 1,123 | — |
| *Family Income Supplement/ Family Credit paid to two-parent families* | 14 | 31 | 242 |
| *Support for Lone Parents* | | | |
| One Parent Benefit | 22 | 48 | 174 |
| Additional Personal Tax Allowance | 60 | 131 | 165 |
| Supplementary Benefit/ Income Support | 465 | 1,019 | 1,850 |
| Housing Benefit | 25 | 55 | 740 |
| Family Income Supplement/ Family Credit | 10 | 22 | 180 |

*Expenditures*

The expenditure estimates of family support shown in the table are consistent with those given in Table 15.8 of the 1989 Expenditure Plans. These do not include expenditure on housing benefit and income support for couples with children. Estimates of this expenditure for 1988-89 will become available when the 1988 annual statistical enquiry is published.

**Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the total spending on social security benefits in 1979 at today's prices; and what is the present total spending.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** On current plans social security spending will be £51·1 billion in 1989-90, an increase in real terms of 34 per cent. over the figure in 1978-79, which at today's prices was £38 billion.

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing the numbers of people who have been transferred from unemployment to sickness benefit over the last three years.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** An estimate of the number of claims for sickness and invalidity benefit which followed a claim for unemployment benefit in the last three years for which figures are available is shown in the table.

*Claims for sickness benefit/invalidity benefit following claims for unemployment benefit*

| *Year ending* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 2 April 1988 | 236,000 |
| 4 April 1987 | 220,000 |
| 5 April 1986 | 203,000 |

### Pensioners

**Mr. Andrew Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the number of *(a)* single pensioners and *(b)* pensioner couples who will receive an increase in housing benefit when applicable amounts are increased in October 1989 of the same or less than the reduction in benefit which they experienced in April 1988.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I regret that the information requested could not be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost.

### Employment Training (Allowances)

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the number of claimants who are receiving *(a)* invalidity benefit, *(b)* severe disability allowance, *(c)* mobility allowance and *(d)* attendance allowance who are on employment training schemes; and what are the equivalent numbers in each standard region.

**Mr. Scott:** I regret that the information is not available.

### Disability

**Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he plans to publish the final report from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys surveys of disability.

**Mr. Scott:** The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) has today published the sixth report on the findings of the surveys of disability carried out in Great Britain between 1985 and 1988. The report covers all the remaining aspects of circumstances of disabled children not included in reports 3 and 5, which were published earlier this year. It provides information on a wide range of topics, including the use of services, equipment and adaptations, mobility, transport and education. For those in private households the effect of disability on the family is examined, and for those in communal establishments the social activities and some financial aspects are described.

The large quantity of detailed and complex information contained in the report has been provided by the families of disabled children or by members of staff for those in communal establishments. It therefore reflects the perceptions and knowledge of those people on the activities and experiences of disabled children, including the type of services they receive and the disability equipment they use.

This report is the sixth and final in a series published by the OPCS since September 1988. Its publication marks the point at which both the Government and organisations of and for disabled people can begin to look at the survey findings in the round. We hope that the report will generate comment not only on its own results but on the survey findings as a whole.

### Hostels

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he intends to establish a permanent central fund for hostel residents previously dependent on board and lodgings payments.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** No. From October 1989, existing claimants will have any shortfall between their new and old levels of benefit made good by special transitional payments of income support for as long as they continue to live in the same hostel. To help hostel finances, a shortfall between the level of hostel charge met by housing benefit and that formerly met by income support will continue to be met until April 1991. From that date, the money made available by the October benefit change will be redirected to existing hostel funding sources. It is not a function of the social security system to fund hostels but claimants will be able to obtain help with accommodation costs through housing benefit.

### Community Charge

**Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what consideration he has given to the effect on the confidential relationship between officers of his Department and claimants of the provision of information to community charge registration officers as set out in his answer to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) of 26 June, *Official Report*, column *306*.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The confidentiality of the relationship between benefit claimants and officers of the Department is treated with the utmost seriousness. It may be breached only in carefully circumscribed circumstances such as those to which the hon. Member refers which are specifically provided for in legislation.

### National Insurance

**Mrs. Beckett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the most recent estimate of the cost to the national insurance fund, in 1989-90, of minimum contributions to personal pension schemes; and by how much this exceeds the amount taken into account in the Government Actuary's estimate of net contributions to the fund in his report on the draft uprating order (Cm. 537).

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The most recent estimate of the revenue forgone by the national insurance fund in 1989-90 in respect of minimum contribution to personal pension schemes is £2,050 million. This exceeds the amount taken into account in the Government Actuary's estimate of net contribution to the fund by about £1,650 million.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Co-operative Development Agency

**Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he will be announcing his plans for the future of the Co-operative Development Agency.

**Mr. Cope:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) on 13 July, *Official Report*, columns *581-2*.

### Training and Enterprise Councils

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of the extent to which small firms will benefit from the establishment of the training and enterprise councils; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** Training and enterprise councils will be contractually responsible to the Government within their areas for three programmes currently run by the Training Agency area offices—the enterprise allowance scheme, business growth training and small firms counselling—and they will work with local enterprise agencies and others to ensure a coherent network of support for small firms.

### Training

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what community input he requires of the employment training scheme.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Employment training is a training programme. Activities of a broader community benefit are also carried out when these are compatible with providing training.

### TEC System

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for which TEC he has agreed to supply development funding.

**Mr. Cope:** On 12 July, I announced development funding for 19 training and enterprise councils. They are listed in the table.

*List of TEC areas that have been approved for development funding as at 12 July*

*South East:*
Essex
Hampshire
Hertfordshire
Isle of Wight
Milton Keynes

*South West:*
Devon and Cornwall
Dorset

*West Midlands:*
Birmingham
North West Midlands
Walsall

*Yorkshire and Humberside:*
Calderdale and Kirklees
Sheffield

*North West:*
Cumbria
East Lancashire
Oldham
Rochdale
South East Cheshire

*Northern:*
Teesside
Tyneside

### Disablement Resettlement Service

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of the staff of the disablement resettlement service are currently registered as disabled.

**Mr. Lee:** The percentage of staff of the disablement resettlement service who are registered as disabled is currently 7·2 per cent.

### Part-time Employment

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the latest figures for the growth of part-time employment in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales.

**Mr. Lee:** Information on part-time employment for sub-national areas is available only in respect of female employees in employment and participants on work-related Government training programmes (who are counted as in part-time employment). Estimates are not available for male employees in employment, nor for the self-employed. The information available on the growth in part-time employment between March 1988 and March 1989—the latest date for which figures are available—is as follows:

*Changes between March 1988 and March 1989*

| | *Female part-time employees in employment* | | *All work-related Government training programmes* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Changes thousand* | *Per cent.* | *Changes thousand* | *Per cent.* |
| England | 99 | 2·7 | 77 | 28·4 |
| Scotland | 5 | 1·4 | 17 | 42·0 |
| Wales | 4 | 2·2 | 10 | 49·5 |

### Skill Shortages

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he expects to publish his Department's survey of skill shortages and the impact of 1992.

**Mr. Cope:** The Department has commissioned the Institute of Manpower Studies to carry out a study of the approach to a European-wide labour market being adopted by a group of major multinational employers. The date of publications will be decided when the work is completed.

### Lorry Drivers (Pay)

**Mr. Mudd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average weekly gross pay for a British lorry driver holding heavy goods vehicle 1 classification.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The average gross weekly earnings of male drivers of heavy goods vehicles (over 3 tonnes) in Great Britain was estimated to be £216·9 in April 1988, the latest date for which information is available. This figure relates to full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose earnings were not affected by absence.

### Injuries (Pupils)

**Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many fatalities were reported caused by injuries to pupils at school for the years 1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987 and 1 April 1987 to 31 March 1988; and what were the causes of those fatalities.

**Mr. Nicholls:** In the year beginning 1 April 1986, four fatal injuries to pupils at schools were reported to the enforcing authorities. In the following year, five fatal injuries were reported. Details of the causes of those fatalities are given in the table.

Fatal injuries to pupils at schools[1]
Reported to the enforcing authorities[2]

*1986-87*

—blow to the head during a game of rugby.
—wall collapsed during high winds.
—fall from two storeys through an open window.
—slipping on a concrete slab.

*1987-88*

—septicaemia after fracture caused by a fall.
—choking on a pen top.
—collapse following an exercise on a trampoline.
—accident involving a reversing delivery van (two fatalities).

[1] Nursery, primary and secondary education level schools.

[2] Reported to HSE's factory and agricultural inspectorates, the relevant enforcing authorities for the education sector, under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985.

**Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many inspectors there are to inspect schools for the purposes of health and safety; how many inspections of schools were carried out in the years 1 March 1986 to 31 March 1987 and 1 April 1987 to 31 March 1988; how many prosecutions followed these inspections; and how many enforcement notices followed the prosecutions.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Inspectors based in the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE's) area offices have a range of inspection responsibilities and no inspectors are employed solely on the inspection of schools.

A total of 679 inspections of schools were carried out between 1 April 1986 and 31 March 1987 and 940 between 1 April 1987 and 31 March 1988.

The table shows the number of prosecutions taken by HSE against the education sector, which includes all educational establishments and the number of enforcement notices issued in 1986-87 and 1987-88:

| *Year* | *Number of prosecutions* | *Number of notices issued* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987 | 4 | 24 |
| 1 April 1987 to 31 March 1988 | 6 | 28 |

It is not possible to identify, without incurring disproportionate cost, how many prosecutions were taken following inspections or how many notices were issued following prosecutions.

**Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give a breakdown of major injury figures to children at school for the different local authority areas for the years 1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987 and 1 April 1987 to 31 March 1988 together with the pupil-injury ratio for each authority.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Information in the form requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the national total for major injuries to pupils at school in the year 1 April 1987 to 31 March 1988.

**Mr. Nicholls:** In the year beginning 1 April 1987, 7,684 major injuries to pupils in nursery, primary and secondary education schools were reported to the enforcing authorities under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985.

### Earnings

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the maximum and minimum hourly basic rates of pay, recorded by the Leeds office of the Manpower Services Commission, from advertised posts in the private and voluntary sector, for the following posts *(a)* charge care staff, *(b)* senior care staff, *(c)* care staff, *(d)* cooks, *(e)* general assistants, *(f)* washing up staff, *(g)* housekeepers, *(h)* laundry assistants and *(i)* therapists.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The maximum and minimum hourly rates of pay for posts in the private sector advertised at Leeds jobcentre at the latest available date (13 July) are as follows:

| *Post* | *Minimum rate £* | *Maximum rate £* |
|---|---|---|
| Care staff | 2·20 | 2·80 |
| Cooks | 2·00 | 2·80 |
| General assistant | 1·93 | 2·70 |
| Washing-up staff | 1·93 | 2·70 |
| Laundry staff | 1·93 | 2·70 |

There were no vacancies advertised for other occupations requested or for the voluntary sector.

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what regulations apply to residential homes in the private-voluntary sector concerning hourly basic rates paid to staff.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Wages council statutory minimum wage regulations under the 1986 Wages Act cover licensed residential establishments, but nursing and residential homes for the elderly and infirm are excluded.

### Employment Training

**Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has about the number of ET placements in the west midlands region.

**Mr. Nicholls:** We estimate that more than 17,000 people on employment training in the west midlands region are on placements with employers or projects on any one day.

### Secondary Picketing

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of public opinion regarding the Government's reform of the law on secondary picketing; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Government's reform of industrial relations and trade union law since 1979, including measures to limit the scope for particularly unacceptable forms of industrial action, has been popular with employers, union members and the public alike. The law must, of course, be kept under review to ensure that the legal framework reflects the needs of our economy and society now and for the immediate future.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Stamp Duty (Scotland)

**Mr. Dewar:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money has been received by the stamp office in Scotland each year for the past five years in respect of domestic conveyancing.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Information available does not distinguish receipts from conveyances of residential property in Scotland. The yields from stamp duty collected by the stamp office in Scotland in respect of all conveyances-on-sale of property are as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 18·9 |
| 1985-86 | 20·3 |
| 1986-87 | 24·4 |
| 1987-88 | 30·1 |
| 1988-89 | 44·9 |

In addition, amounts of less than £1 million have been received each year in respect of voluntary conveyances.

### Earned Income

**Sir Dudley Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many individuals in the United Kingdom had an earned income of £50,000 or more per annum at the last analysis;

(2) how many individuals in the United Kingdom have an annual earned income of *(a)* over £500,000 per year, *(b)* £300,000 per year, *(c)* £200,000 per year and *(d)* £100,000 given the most up-to-date Inland Revenue figures.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The latest data cover 1986-87, when it is estimated that about 78,000 individuals had earned income of over £50,000 and about 15,000 had earned income of over £100,000. It is difficult to make reliable estimates at higher levels of earned income, but there were probably not more than about 3,000 individuals with earned income exceeding £200,000.

### Premium Bonds

**Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many purchases of premium bonds, in each of the last three years for which figures are available, were made in *(a)* amounts of over £100 and *(b)* amounts of £100 or less.

**Mr. Lilley** *[pursuant to his reply, 12 July 1989, c. 518.:]* I regret that a digit was erroneously added to the value of the number of premium bonds sold in 1986-87 costing less than £100; the value of the 1,718,000 bonds sold should have been £33,821,000 rather than £331,821,000.

The amended table is as follows:

| *Financial year* | *£100 or more* | | *Under £100* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Number* | *Value £* | *Number* | *Value £* |
| 1986-87 | 380,000 | 182,621,000 | 1,718,000 | 33,821,000 |
| 1987-88 | 443,000 | 260,601,000 | 1,730,000 | 34,533,000 |
| 1988-89 | 457,000 | 273,171,000 | 1,742,000 | 36,122,000 |

### Inland Revenue (Costs)

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the cost to the Inland Revenue per annum per annual account of administering *(a)* schedule E, *(b)* higher rate taxation and *(c)* schedule D.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 11 July 1989]:* The average unit cost per case for employees (taxed under schedule E) was £12·61 in 1988-89, and for the self-employed (taxed under schedule D) was £46·30. These average costs include the costs of dealing with higher rate tax and capital gains of employees and the self-employed respectively, and also of collecting national insurance contributions. Separate unit costs for taxpayers liable to higher rate tax, who may be taxed under schedule E or schedule D, are not available. Further details of Revenue unit costs are given in the Inland Revenue's recently published "1988 Management Plan".

### Private Currencies

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has received any representations on the effect of privatised competing currencies on inflation.

**Mr. Lilley:** My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations on this subject.

### Personal Debt

**Sir Russell Johnston:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to reply to the letter sent to him by the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber on 17 February, about which a reminder was sent on 20 June, on the problem of personal debt.

**Mr. Lilley:** I replied to the hon. Member's letter on 10 July.

### Privatisation

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer is he will list, in respect of previous privatisations, the timetable for the advertisement and publication of full prospectuses.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* The publication dates for the full prospectuses in respect of privatisations and secondary share sales since British Telecom are set out in the table:

| | *Offer price announced ("impact day")* | *Prospectus published* | *Application lists opened and closed* |
|---|---|---|---|
| British Telecom | 16 November 1984 | 20 November 1984 | 28 November 1984 |
| British Aerospace | 1 May 1985 | 4 May 1985 | 10 May 1985 |
| Britoil | 30 July 1985 | 1 August 1985 | 8 August 1985 |
| Cable and Wireless | 3 December 1985 | 5 December 1985 | 11 December 1985 |
| British Gas | 21 November 1986 | 25 November 1986 | 3 December 1986 |
| British Airways | 27 January 1987 | 30 January 1987 | 6 February 1987 |
| BAA | 8 July 1987 | 10 July 1987 | 16 July 1987 |
| Rolls-Royce | 27 April 1987 | 30 April 1987 | 7 May 1987 |
| BP | 15 October 1987 | 20 October 1987 | 28 October 1987 |
| British Steel | 23 November 1988 | 25 November 1988 | 2 December 1988 |

### Inflation

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he intends to seek to remove his obligation under the Industry Act to provide an inflation forecast.

**Mr. Lilley:** No.

### Debt Repayment

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on ways in which the International Monetary Fund and World Bank responds to emergency situations such as earthquakes destroying oil pipelines with consequent effect on debt repayment.

**Mr. Lilley:** Both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are able to respond to unexpected exogenous shocks to mitigate the effects on a member's economy. For example, the International Monetary Fund counteracted the adverse effect on Ecuador's balance of payments, mainly resulting from damage caused to an oil pipeline by an earthquake, by disbursing SDR 42·7 million in the form of a contingency financing facility. The World Bank approved an $80 million emergency petroleum reconstruction project loan at the same time.

### Banks (Information Disclosure)

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce legislation concerning the handling of references and the disclosure of information to credit reference agencies by banks about customers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lilley:** The activities of credit reference agencies are regulated by the Consumer Credit Act and the Data Protection Act. The report of the review committee on banking services law published in February 1989 considered, among many other matters, disclosure of information by banks to credit reference agencies. I will be making a statement on the Government's response to this report in due course.

### Government Staff

**Dr. Marek:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the numbers of staff in post for all individual Government Departments for each year from 1979 onwards.

**Mr. Brooke:** The numbers of staff in post for the years 1979 to 1988 are to be found in copies of the annual publication "Civil Service Statistics" which have been placed in the House of Commons Library. The numbers for 1 April 1989 by Department have not been published yet, but are to be found in "QSR Analysis", a copy of which has been sent to the House of Commons Library (statistical unit).

### Currencies

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to allow European Community currencies to be treated as legal tender in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Lilley:** No. However since the abolition of exchange controls British residents are free to accept payment in any currency they wish.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Food Act 1984

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many prosecutions have been instigated under *(a)* section 1 of the Food Act 1984 and *(b)* section 2 of the Food Act 1984 for each year since 1984; how many of these prosecutions were successful; and what was the maximum penalty levied.

**Mr. Ryder:** Information on prosecutions under separate sections of the Food Act 1984 is not collected centrally. However, information is available on prosecutions, convictions and the number fined the maximum penalty for offences committed under the Food Act 1984 as follows:

*Offenders prosecuted and convicted under the Food Act 1984*[1]
*England and Wales*

| | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Prosecutions | 844 | 901 | 1,050 | 1,078 |
| Convictions | 748 | 793 | 909 | 930 |
| Number fined (maximum £2,000) | — | 2 | — | 1 |

[1] Sections 1, 2, 6, 29, 48 and 103.

### Eggs

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will review *(a)* the compensation paid to the egg industry and *(b)* other grants, in the light of recent concern about the quality of eggs.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** No. The recent, much publicised, problems with egg quality appear to have arisen mainly because of poor stock control at certain retail outlets.

### National Fruit Collection

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether, pursuant to his answer of 28 June, *Official Report*, column *466*, he has now completed his consideration of arrangements to be made in the event that Brogdale is closed; and what guardianship he proposes for the national fruit collection.

**Mr. Ryder:** We have not yet completed our consideration of the arrangements to be made for the national fruit collection in the event that Brogdale is closed, and I have nothing to add to the reply given to the hon. Member on 28 June.

### Head Meat

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to his reply to the hon. Member for South Shields of 11 July, if he will specify what tissues and organs are included in the category of head meat; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** Under the Meat Products and Spreadable Fish Products Regulations 1984 "head meat" means muscle meat (ie cheek) and associated fatty tissue.

### Anthrax

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will list the abattoirs in England which have been receiving meat from the Clwyd and Devon farms which have an outbreak of anthrax; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will list the number and type of animals infected by anthrax in Devon in the current year; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will make a statement on the source of anthrax contamination in Devon;

(4) what action he is taking on the farm in Devon which currently has an outbreak of anthrax; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** There is no current outbreak of anthrax in Devon. A single case occurred in January involving the death of one cow. Despite thorough epidemiological investigation the source of infection was not identified. Restrictions were lifted on 10 January.

No abattoirs in England have received animals from the farm in Clwyd while movement restrictions under the Anthrax Order 1938 have been in force.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will review the 1938 Anthrax Order with a view to including the disposal of potentially infected slurry; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** No. The Anthrax Order 1938 already includes provision for the disinfection or disposal of dung likely to spread disease.

### Pesticide Safety Division

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last visited the data evaluation unit of the pesticide safety division at Harpenden.

**Mr. Ryder:** My noble Friend, The Baroness Trumpington, who is the Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for pesticides, last visited the data evaluation unit in April 1988.

## ENERGY

### Refining Capacity

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the latest available estimate of the United Kingdom's refining capacity for the gasoline/fuel oil gap.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The United Kingdom's refining industry is meeting increased demand for unleaded petrol without any excess production of fuel oil.

### Safe Integral Reactor

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what involvement his Department has in the development of the safe integral reactor; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Approval has been given to the UKAEA to use some of its pre-contract research funds to support its role as a member of the safe integral reactor (SIR) consortium which is at present bidding for funds from the United States Department of Energy. The UKAEA has joined the consortium as a commercial venture.

### Nuclear Power Stations

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether his Department has a list of sites suitable for future nuclear power stations.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The choice of sites for nuclear power stations is in the first instance, a matter for the electricity supply industry. I am therefore asking the chairman of the CEGB to write direct to the hon. Member.

Any proposal for such a station would, of course, be subject to obtaining the necessary consents and permissions.

### Electro-magnetic Fields

**Sir Russell Johnston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy which body will be responsible, after the privatisation of the electricity industry, for the current research in which the Central Electricity Generating Board is engaged on the possible health hazards associated with exposure to power frequency electro-magnetic fields from power lines and other sources.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** After privatisation, the part of the CEGB responsible for the transmission system will form the National Grid Company and will continue the programme of work already started to investigate the possible effects to human health of electro-magnetic fields emanating from power cables. In addition, independent research on the subject is also undertaken at a number of universities and hospitals.

Government are kept informed of these developments via officials in the Departments of Energy and Health, the Health and Safety Executive, and the National Radiological Protection Board.

### Halliburton Services

**Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether his Department has commissioned any work in the last five years from any of the subsidiaries of Halliburton Services, including Gearhart Geodata

Services Ltd., Gearharts Wireline Service Ltd., Brown and Root Ltd., Otis Engineering Corporation and Otis Pressure Control Ltd.; and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. Parkinson:** A review of Departmental records indicates that the Department has had two contracts in the last five years with the Halliburton Group subsidiary Brown and Root Vickers Technology Ltd.; in addition, the Department has had contracts with Wharton Williams Ltd., which became a subsidiary of the Halliburton Group in April 1989.

### Energy Saving

16. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what measures he is taking to ensure that by 1992 there is a substantial energy saving in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The programmes of the Energy Efficiency Office have already achieved savings of more than £0·5 billion per year. The EEO is now targeting its efforts on key areas of energy use and offering advice backed by technical support. In particular, we are emphasising the work of the regional energy efficiency officers in making direct contact with major energy users and offering the new best practice programme which will develop and disseminate well-researched information on energy use sector by sector. In addition the Secretary of State is leading a campaign to improve the efficiency of energy use in the public sector. I believe that this targeted approach will result in the work of the EEO being even more effective.

Our proposals for the electricity supply industry will also give further impetus to the promotion of energy efficiency, particularly through the responsibilities of the director general and his staff in the Office of Electricity Regulation.

In addition, amendments to the building regulations were laid before the House on 11 July. These will require improvements in insulation standards which should achieve a saving of 20 per cent. in heating requirements compared with existing regulations.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### Staffing (North of England)

57. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service who was the last grade 1 or grade 2 civil servant who worked in the north of England.

**Mr. Luce:** Many senior civil servants have had experience of working in all parts of the country, including the north. A range of posts in varying places increases the breadth of their knowledge and expertise and I value this.

### Civil Service Unions

60. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what recent discussions he has had with Civil Service unions.

**Mr. Luce:** I met members of the Council of Civil Service Unions on 27 June to discuss the future of the Civil Service Commission.

### European Single Market

61. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what steps the Civil Service is taking to prepare for the single market after 1992.

**Mr. Luce:** Government Departments have, for some time, been preparing for the single European market. My own Department has created a range of training and development opportunities to support their strategies.

### Training and Management Development

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what resources have been committed for 1989-90 to training and management development within the Civil Service.

**Mr. Luce:** The planning of expenditure on training and development is a matter for Departments. On the basis of past trends, I would expect the total investment in training for the non-industrial Civil Service in the current year to be about £330 million. In addition, £1 million of challenge funding is being made available centrally to Departments to encourage them to undertake more management training and development at senior levels.

## THE ARTS

### Funding

33. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what have been the increases in funding from public and private sources for the arts since January 1986.

**Mr. Luce:** Central Government expenditure on the arts has increased since 1985-86 by £152 million to £439 million in 1989-90. There are no comprehensive figures for private funding of arts activities but there are many good examples of private sector support for arts activities.

34. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what is the expenditure on the arts in the south of England for the financial year 1988-89.

**Mr. Luce:** In 1988-89, around £6 million of taxpayers' money was spent on the arts in the southern arts area, via the Arts Council and the Regional Arts Association. This does not include expenditure on the arts from local authorities and from the private sector.

40. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what fraction of Government expenditure is represented by spending for which he is responsible.

**Mr. Luce:** My Department's expenditure of £439 million in 1989-90 represents one third of 1 per cent. of total central Government spending.

47. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he plans to make a statement on future funding of the arts in 1990-91 and beyond.

**Mr. Luce:** In November 1987 I announced a new departure in arts funding with a three-year settlement for the years 1988-89 to 1990-91. In November 1988 I announced the rolling forward of this central Government programme to 1991-92. As is now customary, I would hope to be able to make a similar statement in respect of 1992-93 this autumn.

49. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he has assessed the scale of finance likely to be available for the arts in the north-west in the year 1990-91 and beyond.

**Mr. Luce:** The finance available to the arts in particular regions is determined by the Arts Council. Arts Council grants to regional arts associations have more than doubled since 1984-85. The level of grant to North West Arts in 1990-91 and beyond has yet to be determined.

**Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what discussions he has had with the Association of Metropolitan Authorities about future levels of arts funding in 1990-91 and beyond.

**Mr. Luce:** I met representatives of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities in April this year to discuss questions of arts policy and funding.

### Business in the Arts

35. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what progress is being made in the Business in the Arts scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce:** This venture by the Association of Business Sponsorship of the Arts is making good progress. The pilot scheme in the west midlands has been very useful, and has demonstrated the enthusiasm of the business community to share their skills with the arts. Negotiations are now under way to open a number of regional offices.

### Group Visits

36. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received from the Arts Council on the current level of school and other organised group visits to the theatre.

48. **Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what discussions he has had with the Arts Council about the number of *(a)* school and *(b)* other community group visits to performing arts venues.

**Mr. Luce:** On my behalf, the Arts Council is monitoring the number of visits that schools are making to theatres and other arts organisations.

45. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Minister for Arts what discussions he has had with the Association of County Councils on the number of visits by *(a)* school parties and *(b)* other community groups to performing arts events.

**Mr. Luce:** None, but, with the help of the Arts Council, I am monitoring the situation carefully.

### Arts Festivals

37. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Minister for the Arts how many arts festivals have been held in each of the last four years ended on 30 June.

**Mr. Luce:** This information is not held centrally, but the publication "Arts Festivals in Britain and Ireland" estimates that in 1985 there were 265 festivals in Great Britain with a professional input. This rose to 274 in 1986, rising again to 412 in 1987 and there was a further increase to 490 in 1988. This year it is estimated that there will be around 600 arts festivals.

### Private Donations

38. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what major donations from private sources have been made in the last 12 months.

**Mr. Luce:** I am extremely grateful to all benefactors of the arts. The list is as follows:

*Table showing major sponsorships of and donations to the arts in the last twelve months*

| *Organisation* | *Donor* | *Amount* | *Date of announcement* | *Purpose* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tate Gallery | Anonymous | US $6·5 million | 20 June 1988 | To set up American fund for Tate Gallery |
| National Gallery | Mr. Walter Annenberg, KBE | £2·85 million | 22 June 1988 | Restoration of impressionist and post-impressionist rooms |
| Victoria and Albert Museum | Mr. T. T. Tsui | £1·25 million | 20 June 1988 | To creat a new gallery of Chinese art and design |
| BAFTA | Shell (sponsorship) | £3 million | 12 July 1988 | Various projects |
| British Library | The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation of New York | US $1·5 million (over 5 years) | 20 October 1988 | 5 year programme of preservation of microfilming |
| Arts Council | Anonymous | £1 million | December 1988 | Foundation of new endowment fund for innovation and experiment |

### Midland Bank Arts Card

39. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the implications for arts funding of the Midland bank arts card scheme.

**Mr. Luce:** This is another excellent example of the way in which the arts world and the private sector can work together for the benefit of each other and the public at large. The Arts Council estimates that within two years of its launch, the arts card could raise between £400,000 and £500,000 for arts organisations.

### Regional Theatres

41. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on the level of financial support for studio theatres in regional repertory theatres.

**Mr. Luce:** Regional repertory theatres fund their studio theatres out of their overall revenue grant. Because there is no separate earmarking, information about the funding of studio theatres is not held centrally.

### Performing Arts

42. **Mrs. Golding:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what steps he is taking to promote the performing arts in *(a)* schools and *(b)* elsewhere.

**Mr. Luce:** With my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science, I have commissioned a booklet which includes examples of how the performing arts can stimulate pupils' imagination and widen the boundaries of classroom learning. It will be circulated free to all maintained schools. This is one of a number of initiatives that I have taken to ensure that the performing arts reach the widest possible audience.

### Training

43. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he has any plans to increase provision of training for practitioners in the arts; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce:** The Training Agency has recently undertaken a survey of training in the arts and is organising a conference for practitioners to consider its report. Following these initiatives, my officials will be discussing with the Arts Council what further steps may need to be taken to improve training provision.

### British Library

44. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what are the costs of *(a)* cataloguing and *(b)* storing a book at the British Library.

**Mr. Luce:** The British Library estimates the cost of cataloguing to be approximately £37 for a book acquired by legal deposit, and approximately £18 for a purchased book. The cost of storing a book in central London is approximately £1 per year.

### Expenditure (London Boroughs)

46. **Miss. Hoey:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on the future pattern of arts expenditure by London boroughs in 1990-91 and beyond.

**Mr. Luce:** The pattern of arts expenditure by London boroughs is not determined centrally.

### National Museums (Branches)

50. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Minister for the Arts how many of the national museums and galleries have established branches outside London.

**Mr. Luce:** Of the 10 London-based national museums and galleries five have established outstations outside the capital—the British museum (natural history), and Imperial war museum, the National portrait gallery, the Science museum and the Tate gallery. The Victoria and Albert museum is considering relocating part of its Indian collection to Bradford. Since 1986, the national museums and galleries on Merseyside have been supported from the arts programme.

I greatly welcome these developments which help to make our national collections more accessible to a wider public.

### European Single Market

51. Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Minister for the Arts what discussions he has had with the Arts Council on the impact of 1992 on the arts.

**Mr. Luce:** On 3 July I addressed representatives of some 26 arts bodies at a seminar entitled "Culture in Europe—Planning for 1992", arranged by the Office of Arts and Libraries, at which Arts Council representatives were present. The Arts Council is also holding a conference on this general theme on 14-16 March next year in Glasgow and my office is represented on the advisory committee for this event.

### Cultural Exchanges

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what plans his Department is making to mark the arrival of the open market of 1 January 1993 with cultural exchanges, exhibitions, performances or similar events.

**Mr. Luce:** None.

## SCOTLAND

### Finance Companies (Malpractice)

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many finance companies, licensed under the Financial Services Act, have had their licence withdrawn each year since 1988 for malpractice in Scotland.

**Mr. Maude:** I have been asked to reply.

The authorisation provisions of the Financial Services Act did not come into operation until 29 April 1988. A finance company will only require authorisation only if, in addition to offering credit, it is also carrying on investment business as defined in that Act. It is not possible without incurring disproportionate cost to identify from the records available how many of the persons who have had their authorisation revoked under the Act might be described as "finance companies", which is not a category recognised under the Financial Services Act. Nor is it possible without incurring disproportionate cost to identify from the records available those instances (whether involving finance companies or not) where authorisation was revoked because of misconduct which took place in Scotland.

The predecessor to the Financial Services Act was the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act 1958. A finance company required a licence under that Act only if, in addition to offering credit, it was also carrying on the business of dealing in securities. It is not possible from the records available to say how many licensed dealers who have had their principal's licences revoked under the Act might be described as "finance companies", which was not a category recognised under the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act. Nor is it possible without disproportionate cost to identify from the records available those instances (whether involving finance companies or not) where a principal's licence was revoked because of misconduct which took place in Scotland.

### Appointments

**Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the policy of his Department on filling posts in institutions funded by his Department by open competition.

**Mr. Rifkind:** Practice varies according to the particular circumstances of the institution and the appointment, and any relevant agreement that may have been entered into. A significant number of posts is filled by open competition.

### Food Safety

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will issue advice to local authorities to monitor potential health hazards in eggs; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Monitoring potential health hazards in the egg itself is not the most effective way of dealing with the problem. The answer is to introduce a comprehensive package of measures ranging from the testing of feedingstuffs at the manufacturing stage, through the testing of flocks, to the provision of advice on the handling and cooking of eggs and poultrymeat in catering establishments and in the home. This is what we have done.

### Community Charge

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has had from parents of those serving in Her Majesty's forces abroad who have been informed that they will have to pay the poll tax while serving abroad; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** My right hon. and learned Friend has received only a few such representations. The question of whether service personnel serving abroad are liable to pay the personal community charge will depend on whether they are regarded as having their main residence in Scotland. This is a matter for community charges registration officers to decide in the light of the facts and circumstances relating to individual cases.

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many members of Her Majesty's forces, living and working abroad, have been registered for payment of the community charge in Scotland.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The registration of people for the personal community charge is a matter for community charges registration officers and the information requested is not held centrally.

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has had from members of Her Majesty's forces serving abroad complaining about the community charge levied on them.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** My right hon. and learned Friend has received very few such representations.

### Bus Services

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the names of all employee-owned bus companies in Scotland.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Grampian Regional Transport Ltd. was the subject of a management-employee buy out from Grampian regional council in January this year. Information on whether any other privately owned bus companies in Scotland are owned wholly or partly by employees is not readily available.

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the names of those organisations providing public bus transport who have made representations to him about the privatisation of bus services proposed in the Transport (Scotland) Bill; and if he will indicate those which *(a)* favoured and *(b)* disagreed with the Bill's proposals.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** In the period following the publication of the Transport (Scotland) Bill representations about the Government's proposals to privatise the Scottish Bus Group have been received from the following bodies involved in operating public bus transport services:

Luton and District Transport Ltd.
Stagecoach Holdings Ltd.

In addition, representations have been received from the managing directors of the northern, Strathtay and western Clydeside subsidiaries of the Scottish Bus Group and from the Clydeside employee buy-out committee. A representation was also received from Borders regional council. None of the representations received made specific reference to the provisions of the Bill.

### Legal Profession

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* those individuals and organisations which responded to the recent Green Paper, "The Legal Profession in Scotland".

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Ninety-two individuals and organisations responded to my right hon. and learned Friend's recent Consultation Paper "The Legal Profession in Scotland". These are listed as follows:

1. Aberdeen Bar Association
2. Allianz Legal Protection Insurance Co. Ltd.
3. Mr. H. Angus
4. Association of British Insurers
5. Association of First Division Civil Servants (Procurator Fiscal Branch)
6. Auditor of Court of Session
7. Mr. D. A. Ballingall
8. Bank of Scotland
9. Bird Semple Fyfe Ireland
10. Miss H. Buchan
11. Building Societies Association
12. Campaign for Community Legal Services
13. The Hon. Lord Caplan
14. CBI Scotland
15. Citizens Advice Scotland
16. Clydesdale Bank plc
17. Consumers Association
18. Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
19. Council of Scottish Courts Service Unions
20. Mr. L. R. Cox
21. The Hon. Lord Dervaird
22. Dunfermline Building Society
23. EBS Trustees
24. Edinburgh Solicitors Property Centre
25. Mrs. M. Ewing MP
26. Faculty of Advocates
27. Ferguson & Will
28. Mr. A. Fletcher QC
29. Glasgow Bar Association
30. Glasgow College
31. Halifax Building Society
32. Mr. J. B. D. Henderson
33. Institute of Bankers in Scotland
34. Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland
35. Mr. H. Irvine
36. Joint Standing Committee on Legal Education in Scotland
37. Keeper of the Registers of Scotland
38. Law Society of Scotland
39. Lay Observer for Scotland
40. Legal Defence Union
41. Legal Protection Group Ltd.
42. Miss D. M. Little

43. Lord President of the Court of Session
44. Mr. J. D. M. Macara
45. Mr. J. G. Macdonald
46. Mr. K. M. Maciver
47. Mr. C. H. MacLean
48. The Hon. Lord McCluskey
49. Mr. P. McCormack
50. Mr. W. H. McCort
51. McGrigor Donald
52. Mr. I. M. Martin
53. Murgitroyd & Company
54. Mr. T. A. M. Myles
55. National Association of Estate Agents, Scottish Working Party
56. Procurators Fiscal Society
57. Regional Sheriff Clerks
58. Dr. R. Rennie
59. Mr. A. Robb
60. Mr. G. M. Robertson
61. Ross Rogers & Co.
62. Royal Bank of Scotland plc
63. Royal Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow
64. Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
65. Scottish Consumer Council
66. Scottish Law Agents Society
67. Scottish Lawyers' European Group
68. Scottish Legal Aid Board
69. Scottish Legal Action Group
70. Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped
71. Scottish Solicitors Discipline Tribunal
72. Scottish Vocational Education Council
73. Scottish Young Lawyers Association
74. Sheriffs' Association
75. Sheriffs Principal
76. Society of Conservative Accountants
77. Society of Procurators and Solicitors of Angus
78. Society of Scottish Conservative Lawyers
79. Society of Sheriff Court Auditors
80. Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts of Scotland
81. Society of Writers to HM Signet
82. Mr. G. Stephen
83. Strathkelvin Association of Solicitors
84. Mr. R. Tur
85. University of Aberdeen, Faculty of Law
86. University of Edinburgh, Faculty of Law
87. University of Glasgow, Faculty of Law and Financial Studies
88. Mr. M. Upton
89. Professor D. M. Walker CBE QC
90. The Hon. Lord Weir
91. Mr. L. Wheatley
92. Miss J. White

## Waste Disposal

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many appeals against refusals of planning permission for private waste disposal sites he has upheld in the last six years.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Five.

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many green belt sites have been used for waste disposal sites in the last six years.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Six planning permissions have been given.

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will list all Scottish district councils' waste disposal sites;

(2) if he will list all the private waste disposal sites in Scotland;

(3) if he will list the privately owned incinerators for waste disposal in Scotland;

(4) if he will list the publicly owned incinerators for waste disposal in Scotland.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The district and islands councils as waste disposal authorities maintain public registers which provide up-to-date information on waste disposal activities in Scotland and enable the authorities to answer specific inquiries about particular activities.

There are about 263 district and islands council waste disposal sites and 516 private waste disposal sites in Scotland of which 65 council sites and 190 private sites have closed or are not active. Included in the total number of sites are eight publicly owned incinerators and 11 private incinerators.

A summary of the number of waste disposal sites, which include those with incinerators, by waste disposal authority is given in the following table.

| *Waste Disposal Authority* | *Number of Public Sites (Number of incinerators included* | *Number of Private Sites shown in brackets)* |
|---|---|---|
| Berwickshire DC | 1 | 2 |
| Ettrick and Lauderdale DC | 2 | 3 |
| Roxburgh DC | 3 | 0 |
| Tweeddale DC | 2 | 0 |
| Clackmannan DC | [1]2 | 8 |
| Falkirk DC | 4 | [2]27 |
| Stirling DC | 1 | 7 |
| Annandale and Eskdale DC | 3 | [1]4 |
| Nithsdale DC | 3 | 4 |
| Stewartry DC | 1 | 12 |
| Wigtown DC | 3 | 8 |
| Dunfermline DC | 7 | 19 |
| Kirkaldy DC | 4 | 18 |
| North East Fife DC | 5 | [1]10 |
| Aberdeen DC | [1]9 | 17 |
| Banff and Buchan DC | 21 | 13 |
| Gordon DC | 3 | 13 |
| Kincardine and Deeside DC | 5 | 11 |
| Moray DC | 11 | [1]5 |
| Badenoch and Strathspey DC | 3 | 0 |
| Caithness DC | 2 | 6 |
| Inverness DC | 2 | [1]2 |
| Lochaber DC | 5 | 5 |
| Nairn DC | 0 | 0 |
| Ross and Cromarty DC | 4 | 4 |
| Skye and Lochalsh DC | 3 | 0 |
| Sutherland DC | 10 | 0 |
| East Lothian DC | 4 | 13 |
| Edinburgh DC | 7 | 24 |
| Midlothian DC | 3 | 16 |
| West Midlothian DC | 6 | 26 |
| Argyll and Bute DC | 0 | 2 |
| Bearsden and Milngavie DC | 0 | 0 |
| Clydebank DC | 0 | 3 |
| Clydesdale DC | 6 | 4 |
| Cumbernauld and Kilsyth DC | 4 | 9 |
| Cumnock and Doon DC | 2 | 4 |
| Cunninghame DC | 13 | [1]18 |
| Dumbarton DC | 3 | 7 |
| East Kilbride DC | 3 | 6 |
| Eastwood DC | 0 | 6 |
| Glasgow DC | [2]13 | 36 |
| Hamilton DC | 4 | 9 |
| Inverclyde DC | 6 | 6 |
| Kilmarnock and Louden DC | 3 | 4 |
| Kyle and Carrick DC | 6 | 1 |
| Monklands DC | 3 | 10 |
| Motherwell DC | 1 | 15 |
| Renfrew DC | [1]6 | 29 |
| Strathkelvin DC | 3 | 16 |
| Angus DC | 2 | [1]16 |
| Dundee DC | [1]4 | 8 |
| Perth and Kinross DC | 9 | 21 |
| Orkney IC | [1]19 | [1]2 |
| Shetland IC | [1]4 | [2]7 |

| *Waste Disposal Authority* | *Number of Public Sites (Number of incinerators included shown in brackets)* | *Number of Private Sites* |
|---|---|---|
| Western Isles IC | 10 | 0 |
| | 263 | 516 |

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on how many applications there are relating to land which is at present in green belt areas for waste disposal sites.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** I have no information about the number of applications currently before planning authorities. My right hon. and learned Friend currently has five applications before him.

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on how many planning applications for waste disposal sites have been turned down by Scottish local authorities in the last six years.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** I do not have information on the number of applications that have been turned down by Scottish local authorities over the last six years. There have been 23 appeals against refusal of planning permission made to my right hon. and learned Friend since 1 July 1983 involving waste disposal sites.

### Employment Training

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all the voluntary sector community programme agents who decided not to enter the employment training scheme; and how many redundancies he estimates were created as a result.

**Mr. Lang:** Information on which former community programme agents did not transfer to employment training could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. It is not possible to provide an estimate of redundancies directly relating to community programme agents' decisions not to participate in employment training.

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all the voluntary sector training agents and training managers for employment training schemes in Scotland.

**Mr. Lang:** The information requested is as follows:

*Training Agent*

Centre for Training and Employment

*Training Managers*

Apex Trust
British Institute of Traffic Education Research
Centre for Training and Employment
Cobalt UK Ltd
Community and Business Training
Community Opportunities West Lothian Ltd
Community Service Volunteers
Craigmillar Festival Society
Dundee Cyrenians Wishart Centre Ltd
Dundee Survival Group
East End Management Agency
Employment Opportunities Trust
Epilepsy Association of Scotland
Gang Forth
Invalid Children Aid Nationwide
Mill Training Ltd
New Lanark Association Ltd
OSCC Training
Poldrait Community Development
Remploy Ltd
Scottish Association for Mental Health
Scottish Centres
Scottish Council for Spastics
Scottish Maritime Museum
Scottish Society for Mentally Handicapped
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Springboard Lanark Trust
St. Michaels Buckhaven Agency Ltd
The Wise Group
Training Crafts Ltd
Voluntary Association for Mental Welfare
Voluntary Service Aberdeen
Wester Hailes Management Agency
Workstart Ltd
YMCA

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those private sector companies providing employment training which were formed as a result of management buy-out when local authorities declined to participate in employment training schemes.

**Mr. Lang:** Nine organisations currently contracted for employment training are known to have been formed as a result of management buy-outs, but to identify these companies in this way would breach the confidentiality which exists between the Training Agency and all its providers.

### A77

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to announce a decision on the route of the A77 from Dumbreck to the Malletsheugh; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will announce his decision on the route of the A77 from Dumbreck to the Malletsheugh; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** My right hon. and learned Friend has the report of the public inquiry on the route of the A77 and is giving it careful consideration. He expects to announce his decision in the not too distant future.

### Cancer Screening

**Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps will be taken to ensure adequate levels of cervical cytology screening in areas of severe socio-economic deprivation.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Our policy is to make available a comprehensive cervical cancer screening service to all women in Scotland aged between 20 and 60. To this end most health boards have introduced fully computerised call and recall systems for cervical screening. The remainder will be doing so shortly. We also propose to introduce target payments to encourage general practitioners to achieve a high uptake rate of women for screening.

### WRVS

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to reply to the questions from the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden tabled for answer on 30 June relating to the Women's Royal Voluntary Service.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** I answered the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden on Friday 14 July at columns *664-65*.

### Scottish Tourist Board

**Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to appoint a woman to the board of the Scottish tourist board.

**Mr. Lang:** The published guidelines covering women in public appointments will continue to be followed in making future nominations to the board.

### Dornoch Firth (Bridge)

**Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current expected start date for construction of the road bridge crossing of the Dornoch firth; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The essential site preparation work on temporary jetty which started some time ago is near completion. The construction of structural elements of the bridge is estimated to start in mid-September subject to satisfactory performance of the trial pile.

**Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to receive the results of the soil investigations currently being undertaken to determine the design needs of the foundations of the road bridge over the Dornoch firth.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** To determine the design and construction method of the foundations of the road bridge over Dornoch firth, one final trial pile is required which is anticipated to start on 21 July and finish on 28 July. This completes the investigations.

### Ministerial Visits

**Mr. Harry Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what machinery exists in his Department to assist Ministers in ensuring that arrangements made for ministerial visits are separated for administrative and accounting purposes from arrangements made by Ministers acting in other capacities; what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that these conventions have been followed since June 1987; and what steps he is intending to take to ensure they are followed in the future.

**Mr. Rifkind** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]* My ministerial colleagues and I are well aware of the need to distinguish between those activities, including visits, which we undertake as Ministers and those which we undertake in other capacities. We take great care to ensure that the relevant conventions are observed, seeking the advice of the permanent secretary where necessary.

### Dental Education

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has instituted an inquiry into the leak of information to the media before publication of the report of his working party on dental provision in Scotland.

**Mr. Rifkind** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]*: It is not the usual practice to give information on such matters.

## DEFENCE

### Military Equipment (Theft)

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many prosecutions and convictions there have been for theft of military equipment owned by the Ministry of Defence in the last five years for which information is available.

**Mr. Neubert:** I regret that information is not maintained in the form requested.

### Women Aircrew

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards the employment of women as aircrew in the Royal Air Force; whether he intends to review that policy; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Neubert:** The matter has been under consideration for some time. I hope to make an announcement shortly.

### Army Recruitment

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many inquiries were received during an Army recruitment drive in Bradford earlier in the current year; how many people have been recruited; and in how many other places in west Yorkshire such recruitment drives have been held or are planned;

(2) what Army equipment was recently displayed in Bradford; on how many days the display was held; how many soldiers and of what rank attended; and what was the total cost of the display in Bradford.

**Mr. Neubert:** The event in Bradford was held on 12 and 13 June as part of the "Keep the Army in the Public Eye" scheme, the function of which is self-explanatory. It is not the purpose of this scheme to give careers counselling of the kind available at Army recruiting offices and no records are kept of inquirers. During the current financial year, three such events have taken place in west Yorkshire; no further events are planned.

The event in Bradford was run by the 4/7 Dragoon Guards and comprised one Chieftain main battle tank, one Scorpion light tank, one Fox armoured car, one Land Rover with trailer, 15 crewmen, ranging in rank from lieutenant to trooper, and a regimental band of 21 soldiers.

The additional costs of such events are quite small and relate primarily to accommodation and local travel. It is estimated that these amounted to less than £1,000 for the two days in question.

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if a rifle range in which the public are charged 20p a shot by Army personnel is a normal feature of Army recruitment drives; and what complaints he has received about such rifle ranges and the display of tanks and other equipment in Bradford and other parts of west Yorkshire.

**Mr. Neubert:** Air rifle ranges are a common feature of Army displays. The equipment is of non-military origin and a standard charge of 20p for five shots is made. I am not aware of any complaints having been received about rifle ranges or the display of tanks and other equipment in west Yorkshire.

## Birkbeck College

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what dates discussions took place between his Department and a journalist for *The Sunday Times* on the question of Birkbeck college work on matters relating to defence.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** On 30 June, 1 July, 4 July, 6 July and 7 July 1989.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contacts his Department has had with *The Mail on Sunday* on the question of the handling of matters relating to defence by Birkbeck college.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** *The Mail on Sunday* was in contact with officials at the Ministry of Defence on a number of occasions between 30 June and 7 July 1989.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions have taken place between officials in his Department and a journalist on *The Sunday Times* during the last month on aspects of security relating to work on defence matters being carried out by Birkbeck college.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Discussions between officials and *The Sunday Times* took place on a number of occasions from 30 June onwards concerning work on defence matters being carried out by Birkbeck college.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information was given by his Department to a journalist from *The Sunday Times* about an investigation by Her Majesty's Government into the handling and use of classified material by Birkbeck college.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** None.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what instructions were given to Professor Herriot of the occupational psychology department of Birkbeck college by his Department on the handling and return to his Department of papers relating to defence matters.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** There have been no specific instructions. Following the completion of work on an earlier phase of a research agreement placed with the occupational psychology department at Birkbeck college, it was agreed at a progress meeting in March 1989 that documents no longer required should be returned to the Ministry of Defence.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the story proposed to be published in *The Sunday Times* relating to Birkbeck college's handling of matters relating to defence was read over the phone to a person employed by his Department.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Officials in the limited time available on 30 June and 1 July did their best to be helpful to *The Sunday Times*. However, nothing that was said confirmed the assertions made in the subsequent press reports.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has withdrawn papers from Birkbeck college relating to defence matters on grounds of national security.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** No. I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave on 6 July to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill), column 265.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he is satisfied with the arrangements for the handling and use of classified matter on defence matters by persons who work at Birkbeck college.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** As no classified work is currently placed at Birkbeck college the question of the handling and use made of classified matter there does not arise.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will order an investigation into his Department's handling of press statements relating to the handling of matters relating to defence by Birkbeck college.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** No.

## HMS Valiant

**Mr. Terry Fields:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what provision for screening of submariners serving on Her Majesty's nuclear submarine Valiant was undertaken by his Department, following structural faults being discovered in that vessel during 1964, 1965 and 1966; if a full register of these submariners is still maintained; if follow-up medical examinations have followed; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The majority of the period in question represents the later stages of construction and the commissioning of HMS Valiant. There were few problems of any nature during this period. As part of her trials, extensive radiation surveys were carried out. The ship's company was subject to personal dosimetry, and the statutory radiation protection limits were enforced. All classified radiation workers will have had annual medical examinations for as long as they continued such work; further examinations would have been applicable only if overexposures had taken place.

Radiation exposure records are held, as required by law, on all nuclear submariners for this period who were subject to dosimetric assessment. Although the ship's company in question could be identified from naval records, radiation records are held on a personal basis.

## Joint Service Stocktaking Committee

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many military personnel are members of the joint service stocktaking committee.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** At present, one.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any funding is specifically allocated to the joint service stocktaking committee.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** No.

## Computer Science Staff

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current level of vacancies for specialist computer science staff in *(a)* the land systems controllerate, *(b)* the air systems controllerate and *(c)* the sea systems controllerate.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** *(a)* None; *(b)* none; *(c)* none.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current target requirement for specialist computer science staff in *(a)* the land systems controllerate, *(b)* the air systems controllerate and *(c)* the sea systems controllerate.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** *(a)* None; *(b)* none; *(c)* one.

### Procurement Executive

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the civilian staff target for the procurement executive in 1980 and in 1989.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The figures are 48,008 and 33,135 respectively.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total number of civilian staff employed in the procurement executive in 1980 and in 1989.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The figures are 46,966 and 32,084 respectively.

### Nuclear Submarines (Berthing)

**Mr. Alan Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what basis the 550-metre safety zone was deemed to be appropriate in relation to the berthing of nuclear-powered submarines; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The 550-metre zone is the distance at which automatic countermeasures should take place in the event of a submarine nuclear reactor accident. It derives from predictions of the probability and consequences of accidents which are based on our best and most up-to-date technical advice, and are carried out in accordance with the recommendations laid down by the International Commission for Radiological Protection. The 550-metre zone would be sufficient for the vast majority of potential reactor accidents, most of which would not in fact result in any radiological hazard to the public. We also plan, in conjunction with local authorities, against the even more remote possibility of an accident which would require countermeasures outside this area; in this event countermeasures would be advised on the basis of monitoring information.

### HMS Fearless

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the refit programme for HMS Fearless will be completed on schedule.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** It is currently expected that HMS Fearless will be completed to a revised schedule allowing for the emergent work identified since the refit began.

### Military Operations, South-West Scotland

**Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the extent, exact delineation and description of the land which is the subject of a 25-year licence for military operations in south-west Scotland; what are the exact terms and nature of the licence, the landowners with whom it has been agreed, and the nature and extent of the exercises proposed to be held there; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Neubert:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Combat Aircraft

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the changes to the balance between strike-attack, offensive support and air defence Royal Air Force combat aircraft resulting from a 15 per cent. reduction in the numbers of Royal Air Force aircraft that are not dual-capable.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The question of how aircraft reductions resulting from an agreement on conventional armed forces in Europe are taken will be decided in the context of the Alliance's overall requirements. It is too early to say what impact this may have on the Royal Air Force.

### Conventional Forces in Europe

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the cost of verifying an agreement to reduce conventional forces reached as a result of the conventional forces in Europe talks.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Verification will be a key element of any agreement to reduce conventional forces in Europe. The costs will depend on the measures finally agreed. Based on our experience of implementing the INF treaty and the Stockholm document, our provisional assessment is that the considerably more complex and extensive requirements of a conventional armed forces agreement will entail substantial costs.

### Maritime Forces

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he has had with his NATO counterparts concerning the possibility of arms control and disarmament negotiations on maritime forces.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has regular meetings with his NATO counterparts at which a wide range of arms control and disarmament-related matters are discussed.

### Stockholm Agreement

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the annual cost in 1987 and in 1988 of sending British military personnel on challenge inspections to Warsaw pact exercises under the auspices of the Stockholm agreement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The cost of sending British military personnel on challenge inspections under the terms of the Stockholm document was some £12,000 in 1987 and some £39,300 in 1988.

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the annual cost in 1987 and in 1988 of sending British military observers to Warsaw pact exercises under the auspices of the Stockholm agreement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The cost of sending British military observers to Warsaw pact exercises under the terms of the Stockholm document was some £2,400 in 1987 and some £2,100 in 1988.

### Service Accommodation

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of those regulations that define the different grades of service accommodation.

**Mr. Neubert:** I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of the guidance to be taken into account in the grading of service accommodation.

### WE177 Free Fall Bomb

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his reply of 29 June, *Official Report*, column *531*, to the hon. Member for Woolwich, (Mr. Cartwright), what is the number of procurement options for the possible replacement of the WE177 free fall bomb that are currently being studied.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Discussions are taking place with both the United States and French Governments. I cannot go into further detail at this stage.

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what expenditure has been incurred to date on the study of procurement options for the possible replacement of the WE177 free fall nuclear bomb.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** We are continuing to study a number of options for the replacement of the United Kingdom's free fall nuclear bomb. I am not prepared to comment in detail on those studies.

### RAF Upper Heyford

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what design work has been carried out for the United States Government at RAF Upper Heyford;

(2) what is the nature and purpose of all design work carried out at RAF Upper Heyford in the last two years.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 13 July 1989 at columns *589-90*. The additional information he seeks is not available in the form requested. However, the following design work has been carried out recently or is still being completed by the PSA on behalf of the United States air force at RAF Upper Heyford. The purpose of the design work is to improve the operational facilities or the amenities at RAF Upper Heyford.

Chemical Warfare protection, Squadron Operations facility
Munition Storage facility
Alterations to Vehicle maintenance shop
Combat readiness centre
Alterations to splinter protection barrier
Munitions inspection facility
Improvements to base security
Ammunition control centre
Equipment storage warehouse
Alterations to barrack blocks
Married quarters
Commissary
Replacement of water mains
Addition to flight simulator
Addition to engine shop
Addition to avionics shop
Fuel storage facility
Base civil engineering maintenance shop
Modifications to boiler plant

### Centre for General Research

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any plans to fund a new centre for general research into defence policy.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Yes. My Department invited proposals from universities, polytechnics and institutes for a centre for defence studies, to which we would contribute some resource support. A substantial number of such proposals is now being evaluated.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Alien Patients

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many patients were removed from the United Kingdom as alien patients as defined by section 86 of the Mental Health Act 1983 in each year since 1983.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Since 1983, two patients have been removed under this provision, both in 1987.

### Vehicles (Smoke Emission)

**Mr. Allan Roberts:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to enable police to issue vehicle rectification notices to any vehicle producing visible smoke.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** It is for chief officers of police to decide what offences should be dealt with under vehicle defect rectification schemes, which do not require statutory provision.

**Mr. Allan Roberts:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance is given to the police with regard to prosecuting the owners of smoking diesel vehicles.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** None. This is a matter for chief officers of police and the Crown prosecution service.

### Asylum Seekers

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers who arrived in the United Kingdom in the past year have been referred to *(a)* the refugee arrivals project and *(b)* voluntary agencies.

**Mr. Renton:** This information is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Kurdish asylum seekers have arrived in the United Kingdom since 1 January from *(a)* Turkey, *(b)* Iran and *(c)* Iraq.

**Mr. Renton:** The information is not available in the form requested. Records are kept according to nationality and not ethnic grouping.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the Kurdish asylum seekers who have arrived in the United Kingdom since 1 January have *(a)* voluntarily returned to Turkey, *(b)* voluntarily gone to another country, *(c)* been held in custody in the United Kingdom, *(d)* been released on temporary admission, *(e)* been granted asylum and *(f)* been granted exceptional leave to remain.

**Mr. Renton:** Information is not available in the form requested. Records are kept according to nationality and not ethnic grouping. However it is possible to say that, of those Turkish nationals who sought asylum on arrival, 132 have voluntarily sought to return to Turkey. By 10 July, 21 Turkish nationals who had applied for asylum after 1 May had been granted refugee status and a further 62 had been granted exceptional leave to remain.

Provisional statistics on decisions made in Turkish asylum cases in the first two quarters of 1989 will shortly be placed in the Library.

### Immigration Service (Interpreters)

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many interpreters were employed or available to the immigration service speaking *(a)* Turkish, and *(b)* Kurdish in (i) 1987, (ii) 1988 and (iii) 1989 to date; and what training and instruction is given to them.

**Mr. Renton:** There are no Turkish or Kurdish speaking interpreters in permanent employment with the immigration service. The casual interpreters whom the immigration service has on record are as follows:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(a)* | Turkish | (i) 1987—54 | (ii) 1988—79 | (iii) 1989—84 |
| *(b)* | Kurdish | (i) 1987— 2 | (ii) 1988— 4 | (iii) 1989— 7 |

Casual interpreters are in the main native Turkish/Kurdish speakers and are instructed to give a direct translation of questions put and answers given. In addition, a total of 54 immigration officers currently hold an allowance for the Turkish language having succeeded at the Home Civil Service departmental examination in Turkish.

### British Citizenship

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Mr. Mohammad B. Mahmoudzadeh and Mrs. Nassrin Zare Mahmoudzadeh, whose reference is M259130, applied for British citizenship; and when a decision is to be taken on their application.

**Mr. Renton:** Mr. Mahmoudzadeh and his wife applied for naturalisation on 21 October 1987. The usual inquiries are in train, but I regret that I am unable to forecast when a decision on the application might be reached.

### Royal Mail (Protection)

**Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on the current arrangements in the London borough of Brent for the protection of the royal mail; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Operational policing matters within the metropolis are the responsibility of the commissioner. I understand from the commissioner that his force works closely with the Post Office in seeking both to prevent and to solve crimes involving the carriage of the royal mail.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long it takes for a reply to a letter from hon. Members; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** The average time taken in my Department during the second quarter of 1989 to turn round letters to Ministers and to the secretary to the Immigration and Nationality board, the great majority of which were from hon. Members, was 44 days.

### Hong Kong Delegation

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he had meetings with the recent delegation from Hong Kong; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** No, but I saw the governor on 8 June.

### Sonny Makinwa (Funeral)

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will allow Clement and Clara Makinwa, ref. No. IMM/148/TN, temporary admission to the United Kingdom from Nigeria to attend the funeral of their father Sonny Makinwa.

**Mr. Renton:** The grant of temporary admission arises only if a passenger has arrived to seek leave to enter the United Kingdom, and there is no record of either Clement or Clara Makinwa having come to the United Kingdom. However, since we understand that a Clement Makinwa was refused a visa in Lagos on 15 June, I am arranging for details of the hon. Member's interests to be passed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

### Deportation

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what arrangements he has made to ensure that the exercise of the power of deportation by each immigration inspector is consistent and fair;

(2) what arrangements and guidelines he has made or given for immigration inspectors for the taking of deportation decisions including arrangements for the deferral of decisions where hon. Members have made representations or where there is an outstanding application for leave to remain;

(3) what arrangements he has made concerning the delegation of his functions in deportation decision-making to immigration officers at not less than inspector level; and whether the arrangements extend to representations by hon. Members on applications for variation of leave;

(4) what arrangements he has made to ensure the access of immigration officers and inspectors to Home Office files on prospective deportees, particularly out of normal working hours.

**Mr. Renton:** Every case involving a person liable to deportation has to be considered on its individual facts. Common instructions on the handling of cases where action may be taken under section 3(5)(a) of the Immigration Act 1971 are issued to members of the deportation section and members of the immigration service involved in enforcement work. As required by the immigration rules all the relevant factors, including outstanding applications and representations by Members of Parliament, have to be taken into account, whether by reference to Home Office files or some other effective means, including interview.

Representations by Members of Parliament, including requests for deferral of removal in deportation cases, will continue to be considered in accordance with the guidelines on the handling of representations by Members of Parliament in immigration cases.

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been recipients of notices of intention to deport *(a)* for working in breach of their conditions, differentiating between persons working in breach of (i) an employment prohibition and (ii) an employment restriction, and *(b)* for overstaying; and in each case for each of last six months for which records are available, what grade of official took such decisions and at which Home Office centres or ports they were based.

**Mr. Renton:** The available information, on a quarterly basis, relating to the numbers of notices of intention to deport issued under section 3(5)(a) of the Immigration Act 1971 for the period from 1 October 1988 to 31 March 1989 is as follows:

| | *October to December 1988* | | *January to March 1989* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Issued by:* | *Deportation section* | *Immigration service* | *Deportation section* | *Immigration service* |
| Overstaying | 228 | 282 | 165 | 443 |
| Working in breach | — | 205 | — | 259 |

Decisions to issue a notice of intention to deport under section 3(5)(a) are taken at HEO level in the deportation section and at inspector level in the immigration service. Information about the ports at which the inspectors were serving in each case and about the breakdown into those working in breach of an employment prohibition and an employment restriction is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department since the coming into force of the Immigration Act 1988, how many deportation decisions have been *(a)* taken and *(b)* authorised by (i) the deportation caseworking section of his Department, (ii) immigration officers and (iii) immigration inspectors; and in what proportion of cases detention has been authorised.

**Mr. Renton:** The statistics currently available are for the period from 1 July 1988 to 31 March 1988. In that period 2,009 notices of intention to deport under section 3(5)(a) of the Immigration Act 1971 were issued; 1,048 persons were detained, mostly for a short period pending resolution of their cases. A total of 568 were authorised by members of the deportation section and, since 1 August 1988, 1,441 by immigration inspectors. Immigration officers are not authorised to take these decisions.

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the delegation of his powers of decision making in deportation taking effect on 1 August 1988 was not published until 20 December 1988.

**Mr. Renton:** There is no requirement to publicise changes in administrative procedures and it was not at the time considered necessary in this case.

## Immigration

**Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his assessment of the maximum annual rate of immigration of persons of alien culture which is acceptable to the broad mass of the British people.

**Mr. Hurd:** We do not make such a calculation, but follow a policy of firm and fair immigration control based squarely on legislation and rules approved by Parliament. Such control is essential to tolerant and sound community relations.

## Drugs

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the initiatives he has taken to improve liaison and co-operation between United Kingdom police forces and Her Majesty's Customs anti-drugs units.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The relationship between the police and customs services is very good. In 1988, regional crime squad drug wings mounted over 40 joint operations with customs. The drugs intelligence steering group keeps under review the drugs enforcement strategy and the effectiveness of liaison between police and customs. The national drugs intelligence unit is manned by police and customs officers and provides an essential link between the two enforcement services.

**Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of British citizens with criminal records for the possession of cannabis.

**Mr. John Patten:** Records are not kept in this form. The number of persons found guilty, cautioned or dealt with by compounding for the unlawful possession of cannabis in each of the years 1977 to 1987 is published in table 2.3 of the Home Office statistical bulletin issue 25/88 "Statistics of the Misuse of Drugs, United Kingdom, 1987", a copy of which is in the Library.

## Prison Farms

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what crops are at present being grown at each prison farm in England and Wales.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Crops are grown at 28 prison farms in England and Wales, and make a major contribution to the dietary needs of the prison system. The main crops grown are:

(1) Potatoes
(2) Brassicas
(3) Onions, leeks, shallots
(4) Swedes, turnips
(5) Carrots
(6) Beetroot
(7) Lettuce
(8) Others (tomatoes, cucumber, peppers)

The allocation between farms for the current year is:

| *Prison to which farm attached* | *Crop type* |
|---|---|
| Camp Hill | 8 |
| Channings Wood | 7, 8 |
| East Sutton Park | 3, 7, 8 |
| Everthorpe | 1, 2, 3, 5 |
| Featherstone | 1, 2 |
| Ford | 2, 3, 7, 8 |
| Grendon | 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 |
| Guys Marsh | 2, 3, 7 |
| Hatfield | 1, 2, 6 |
| Haverigg | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 |
| Hewell Grange | 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 |
| Hollesley Bay | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 |
| Huntercombe | 3, 6 |
| Kirkham | 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 |
| Leyhill | 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 |
| Lindholme | 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 |
| Lowdham | 1, 2, 4 |
| Northallerton | 2, 4, 6, 8 |
| North Sea Camp | 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 |
| Onley | 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 |
| Oxford | 1, 2, 5 |

| *Prison to which farm attached* | *Crop type* |
|---|---|
| Portland | 4 |
| Standford Hill | 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 |
| Swinfen Hall | 1, 5 |
| Usk | 1, 2 |
| Verne | 1 |
| Werrington | 2, 3, 7 |
| Wymott | 2, 3 |

In addition, a number of other prison establishments have small areas of cropping, often in polythene tunnels or greenhouses, to make use of available land or inmate labour resources. Crops tend to be of market garden or salad varieties, for local use.

Non-dietary crops are currently being grown at six of the farms referred to—Featherstone, Gartree, Hatfield, Lindholme, Lowdham and North Sea Camp—as part of normal crop rotation. The produce (generally cereals) is used in animal feed.

Forage crops are grown at 18 farms to support the prison department's dairy herds.

## London Prisons (Education)

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the amount given by his Department towards the cost of running education services at each London prison.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The educational services in London prisons are provided by ILEA. The salaries of staff employed for this purpose are reimbursed to ILEA by the prison service. Estimated costs in the current financial year are as follows:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Brixton | 128,000 |
| Holloway | 316,000 |
| Pentonville | 215,000 |
| Wandsworth | 262,000 |
| Wormwood Scrubs | 198,000 |

# Written Answers to Questions

*Tuesday 18 July 1989*

## DEFENCE

### Armilla Patrol

**Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he proposes to make any changes in the Armilla patrol in the light of the continuing ceasefire in the Gulf.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The Armilla patrol will remain in the Gulf area for as long as there is a task to perform. Although there has been little progress towards a permanent peace settlement, there has been a considerable reduction in tension in the area over a period of some months. So long as this continues, we would in future expect normally to deploy only two frigates or destroyers to the region, although a third ship will continue to be suitably equipped and trained so that it can be deployed if there is any increase in threat. This will produce a welcome improvement in the availability of ships for other tasks.

## ENERGY

### Uranium

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy at what facilities the uranium imported from Namibia since 1979 for commercial purposes is currently located.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I understand that uranium imported from Namibia since 1979 for use in the British civil nuclear programme is currently located either at BNFL's processing facilities, or at the generating boards' power stations. All this uranium is subject to Euratom safeguards.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what estimates are available to him of the volume of radioactive tailings created and volume of radon gas released for the mining of each tonne of uranium used in the United Kingdom civil nuclear programme.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I have no such information. I am advised by the British civil uranium procurement directorate that all the countries from which we import uranium for civil use in the United Kingdom meet the internationally agreed guidelines established by the International Commission on Radiological Protection.

### Magnox Reactors

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will provide published data in the *Official Report*, giving *(a)* the total in kilogrammes of that amount of plutonium in all wastes on the Sellafield site resulting from the reprocessing of all Central Electricity Generating Board and South of Scotland electricity board Magnox spent fuel from 1979, *(b)* whether that figure is an actual or estimated one and *(c)* how much of the figure in *(a)* is included in the table giving the allocation of plutonium produced in Central Electricity Generating Board and South of Scotland electricity board Magnox reactors on 31 March 1987, *Official Report*, 24 July 1987, columns *517-18*.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 20 June 1989 at columns *92-93*. None of this plutonium is included in the table which refers to plutonium in irradiated fuel and separated plutonium.

## WALES

### Anthrax

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet the tenant of Singrett farm, Llay, to discuss with him the impact of the outbreak of anthrax upon his farm operations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** As officials of my Department and the state veterinary service are in constant touch with events at the farm, such a meeting would serve no useful purpose.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much money *(a)* has been made available and *(b)* has been given to the local authority to date to deal with the problem of anthrax in Clwyd; whether cash limits are imposed on money made available to the local authority for this purpose; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Government support to local authorities is provided principally through rate support grants, which are unhypothecated and are intended to support local authorities in providing services in general. The Anthrax Order 1938 places a clear duty on local authorities to dispose of potentially infected slurry at their expense. Prudent authorities will make provision for such contingencies within their budgets and should therefore be in a position to meet the costs of the anthrax outbreak to which the hon. Gentleman refers.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Sunday Trading

128. **Mrs. Wise:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued to local authorities in connection with the enforcement of the law relating to Sunday trading.

**Mr. Renton:** My right hon. Friend has not issued guidance to local authorities on this matter as there is no reason to suppose that they are not aware of their responsibilities under section 71 of the Shops Act 1950.

As my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General made clear in answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) on 17 April at column *26*, the fact that some cases have been referred to the European Court under article 177 of the treaty of Rome does not affect the duty of the local authorities to enforce the law. The court has yet to give its judgement on the first of these cases, but the Advocate General published his opinion on 29 June. This opinion, which is not binding on the court, indicated that the provisions of the Shops Act 1950 were not in breach of the treaty of Rome.

## Cycling Offences

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions took place in 1988 of people found cycling on footpaths.

**Mr. John Patten:** Information for 1988 is not yet available. In 1987 there were 540 persons prosecuted in England and Wales for cycling on a footpath.

## Prisoners (Food Allowance)

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the present weekly food allowance per inmate in prisons in England and Wales; and how the allowance is made up.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The weekly food allowance is determined by a range of dietary scales, which vary according to age and sex and also take into account religious and other beliefs. The weekly scales can be summarised as follows:

| *Food group* | *Weekly allowance* |
|---|---|
| Milk | 2,610-3,050 ml |
| Cheese | 110 g |
| Margarine | 350-450 g |
| Vegetable oils | 150-250 g |
| Eggs | 3 no |
| Meat and meat products | [1]1,420 g |
| Fish | [1]185 g |
| Fresh potatoes | 3,150-3,920 g |
| Fresh green vegetables | 680 g |
| Other fresh vegetables | 540-830 g |
| Processed vegetables | 210-270 g |
| Fresh fruit | [1]200 g |
| Processed fruit | 100 g |
| Sugars and preserves | 540-590 g |
| Bread | 1,425-2,300 g |
| Flour and other cereals | 840-1,155 g |
| Beverages: | |
| Tea | 60 g |
| Instant coffee | 5 g |

[1] Weekly cash allowances are provided for purchase of fresh meat, fish and fruit, to be spent at the discretion of the establishment; the weights quoted are therefore average figures. There is also a weekly cash allowance of 23p to 29p per inmate used at local discretion to extend the variety and palatability of meals.

## Bail (Foreigners)

**Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to introduce the withholding of passports of foreigners who are the subject of police bail pending further inquiries; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** My right hon. Friend has no such plans at present. Only the courts can impose conditions on the grant of bail.

## Bradford (Riots)

**Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of West Yorkshire as to the estimated cost of the police operations during the Muslim riots in Bradford over the weekend of 8-9 July; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the chief constable of West Yorkshire that the estimated additional cost of policing the disturbances in Bradford on 9 July is £6,870. This covers police overtime, subsistence and transport.

## Satellite Television

**Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he intends to make with regard to the ability of local authorities or bodies of a primarily political or religious nature to own a dominant holding in satellite television channels uplinked from the United Kingdom, primarily directed at the United Kingdom or intended for carriage on United Kingdom cable systems.

**Mr. Renton:** Paragraph 6.49 of the broadcasting White Paper (Cm. 517) proposed that local authorities and bodies whose objects are wholly or mainly of a religious or political nature should be disqualified from holding any ITC licence: this would include United Kingdom-based satellite channels licensable by the ITC.

## Construction Industry

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has had any meetings with the Building Employers Confederation to discuss the possible impact upon the construction industry of proposed changes to British summer time arrangements.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No, but responses are invited by 29 September to the Green Paper Cm. 722 published on 27 June.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the economic impact upon the construction industry of the proposed changes to British summer time arrangements.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I refer the hon. Member to paragraphs 78 to 80 of the Green Paper "Summer Time —A Consultation Document" Cm. 722.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received any representations from the construction industry concerning proposed changes to British summer time arrangements; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Written observations were received from a number of organisations concerned with the construction industry as part of the consultation, through Departments, on summer time and we have subsequently received a further representation from the president of the Building Employers' Confederation. The views submitted have been taken into account in the Green Paper "Summer Time—A Consultation Document" Cm. 722.

## Prisons (Physical Education)

**Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he accepts the recommendations of the Central Council of Physical Recreation in their review of physical education in Her Majesty's prison service; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** In September 1988 the CCPR undertook to examine the provision of physical education in five prison service establishments. It visited prisons at

Featherstone, Birmingham and Stafford and young offender institutions at Swinfen Hall and Hewell Grange. Its terms of reference were:

> "To determine the extent to which physical education programmes in the five selected establishments meet the perceived needs of their inmate population by taking into consideration:
>
> 1.1 The scale of physical education programmes currently provided for young and adult offenders in the five establishments in the agreed pilot scheme.
> 1.2 The problems encountered in programme delivery.
> 1.3 The integration of physical education programmes with other elements of each establishment's regime.
> 1.4 The quality of these physical education programmes compared with those in educational establishments, other institutions and in society at large.
> 1.5 To make recommendations."

The CCPR uses the experience gained from these five establishments as background to a very wide-ranging report with recommendations which affect not only the prison service but many other bodies and organisations with an interest in physical education and sporting and leisure activities. I am sure that the report will provide a stimulating basis for discussion between the many interests involved.

I share the CCPR's view that the physical education branch of the prison service makes an under-recognised contribution to sport and recreation in this country as well as providing a very valuable service to inmates. I welcome the specific proposals the CCPR has for improving this service and its recommendations will be taken into account as part of the ongoing commitment to improve the general standard of prison regimes.

### Carlisle Report

**Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will propose immediately an amendment to the existing law whereby persons convicted of crimes of violence who are released from imprisonment after serving a full sentence with remission are made subject to supervision as recommended in the Carlisle report.

**Mr. John Patten** *[holding answer 10 July 1989]:* We are actively considering the far-reaching changes in the arrangements for parole and remission in England and Wales recommended by the Carlisle committee. The committee's proposals include supervising on their release all prisoners with sentences of more than a year.

We are sympathetic to this part of the proposals which accord with Government policies, and, as part of our work on the Carlisle committee's report, we are thoroughly reviewing the way in which prisoners released on licence would be supervised. High and consistent standards of supervision would be essential but supervision cannot give an absolute guarantee that an offender will be prevented from committing further crime.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Value Added Tax

**Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what basis Customs and Excise assess liability for value added tax on the whole of an advertisement placed by a commercial company on behalf of a charitable organisation rather than on the value of that part of it that might be deemed to be promoting the company.

**Mr. Lilley** Liability for VAT is based on the nature of the agreement between the person making the supply and the person receiving it. If the person receiving the supply of advertising services is not a charity then there is no entitlement to VAT relief under the existing law.

### Earnings

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer why the Isle of Wight is omitted from "Regional Trends", No. 24 1989 edition in table 2.6 (i) average gross weekly earnings, male and female and (ii) gross domestic product 1984.

**Mr. Major:** Regional figures for both average earnings and gross domestic product are based on estimates from sample surveys. For the Isle of Wight and for some other areas in the United Kingdom the sample size is too small for the publication of reliable estimates.

### Northern Region (GDP)

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the gross domestic product per head for the northern region of the United Kingdom; and in which EEC regions the gross domestic product per head is lower than this figure.

**Mr. Major:** Gross domestic product per head at factor cost in the north is provisionally estimated to have been £5,389 in 1987. International comparisons of regional GDP per head by the statistical office of the European Communities are published on page 156 of "Regional Trends 24"; 1989 Edition. This shows the following regions to have had lower GDP per head than the north in 1986 (in descending order):

| *Region* | *Country* |
|---|---|
| Wales | United Kingdom |
| Noreste | Spain |
| Oost-Nederland | Netherlands |
| Region wallonne/Waals gewest | Belgium |
| Abruzzi-Molise | Italy |
| Madrid | Spain |
| Northern Ireland | United Kingdom |
| Este | Spain |
| Sardegna | Italy |
| Campania | Italy |
| Sicilia | Italy |
| Sud | Italy |
| Noroeste | Spain |
| Canarias | Spain |
| Ireland | Ireland |
| Centro | Spain |
| Kentriki Ellada | Greece |
| Sur | Spain |
| Voreia Ellada | Greece |
| Portugal | Portugal |
| Anatolika Kai notia nisia | Greece |

### Capital Goods Industries

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the return on capital employed and on trading assets of the capital goods industries less building materials, contracting and construction in 1959, 1968, 1973, 1978 1980 and his estimate for 1988 together with his forecast for 1989 and 1990.

**Mr. Major:** No official statistics exist in the form required. Neither is a forecast made of these numbers. The Bank of England has published data taken from large companies' accounts which shows the historic cost rate of return for a number of different industrial classifications. The latest data can be found on pages 548-49 of the "Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin" November 1988, volume 28 No. 4. A copy is available in the Library.

## Private Currencies

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he has any plans to discuss with the chairmen of the clearing banks the introduction of private currencies in the United Kingdom;

(2) if he will issue a consultation paper asking for comments on the introduction of private currencies in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Lilley:** My right hon. Friend has no such plans.

## Abbey National Shares

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate how many widows have been disqualified from the right to the allocation of free Abbey National shares as a consequence of the terms of section 116 of the Building Societies Act 1962; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* The building societies legislation does not lay down those to whom shares will be allocated or sold on a change to plc status. These are commercial decisions properly taken by the board of the organisation and the information sought is not currently available.

# TRANSPORT

## Dock Labour Scheme

121. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many dockers have applied for redundancy following the abolition of the dock labour scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** At 14 July, 1,678 former registered dock workers had been made redundant following the abolition of the dock labour scheme. That is about 18·5 per cent. of the number on the register when the scheme ended. Almost all of these redundancies were either voluntary or in respect of companies which had gone into liquidation or otherwise ceased trading.

## Street Lighting

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give, for the last five years for which figures are available, the amount of money spent by each county highways authority and highways authority on street lighting; and if he will state the percentage that money is of the total amount spent on roads, authority by authority.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Figures for capital spending by individual local authorities on street lighting could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Figures for current spending on street lighting by highways authorities in England (including the Department of Transport) are as follows:

| *Authorities* | *1983-84* | | *1984-85* | | *1985-86* | | *1986-87* | | *1987-88* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Street lighting £'000* | *Per cent. of road spend that is street lighting* | *Street lighting £'000* | *Per cent. of road spend that is street lighting* | *Street lighting £'000* | *Per cent. of road spend that is street lighting* | *Street lighting £'000* | *Per cent. of road spend that is street lighting* | *Street lighting £'000* | *Per cent. of road spend that is street lighting* |
| Greater London | 5,098 | 13 | 5,124 | 11 | 5,581 | 14 | — | — | — | — |
| Barking | 381 | 25 | 413 | 22 | 475 | 26 | 691 | 21 | 566 | — |
| Barnet | 503 | 13 | 655 | 11 | 523 | 14 | 647 | 10 | 701 | — |
| Bexley | 424 | 15 | 420 | 14 | 430 | 14 | 622 | 12 | 584 | — |
| Brent | 448 | 14 | 482 | 16 | 494 | 16 | 629 | 15 | 393 | — |
| Bromley | 522 | 11 | 537 | 11 | 657 | 13 | 905 | 11 | 712 | — |
| Camden | 652 | 21 | 890 | 17 | 538 | 17 | 705 | 16 | 746 | — |
| City of London | 424 | 16 | 409 | 13 | 418 | 13 | 360 | 11 | 381 | — |
| Croydon | 616 | 17 | 668 | 15 | 658 | 12 | 895 | 11 | 889 | — |
| Ealing | 519 | 14 | 468 | 12 | 670 | 14 | 792 | 13 | 559 | — |
| Enfield | 513 | 21 | 525 | 23 | 448 | 19 | 686 | 16 | 616 | — |
| Greenwich | 795 | 21 | 830 | 21 | 729 | 18 | 955 | 16 | 1,010 | — |
| Hackney | 512 | 20 | 981 | 24 | 827 | 18 | 958 | 13 | 705 | — |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 437 | 12 | 716 | 12 | 443 | 13 | 599 | 12 | 529 | — |
| Haringey | 347 | 18 | 391 | 15 | 404 | 16 | 488 | 15 | 517 | — |
| Harrow | 521 | 15 | 510 | 20 | 591 | 19 | 474 | 22 | 673 | — |
| Havering | 466 | 15 | 481 | 15 | 472 | 14 | 566 | 12 | 513 | — |
| Hillingdon | 415 | 18 | 432 | 17 | 471 | 19 | 637 | 11 | 674 | — |
| Hounslow | 311 | 16 | 338 | 17 | 379 | 18 | 493 | 17 | 521 | — |
| Islington | 357 | 23 | 374 | 24 | 338 | 9 | 449 | 9 | 544 | — |
| Kensington | 441 | 21 | 494 | 22 | 494 | 18 | 800 | 19 | 1,091 | — |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 316 | 20 | 250 | 14 | 301 | 17 | 412 | 15 | 393 | — |
| Lambeth | 630 | 25 | 504 | 17 | 660 | 23 | 882 | 22 | 934 | — |
| Lewisham | 552 | 12 | 604 | 16 | 652 | 15 | 803 | 16 | 762 | — |
| Merton | 349 | 19 | 449 | 20 | 167 | 14 | 618 | 22 | 660 | — |
| Newham | 559 | 17 | 604 | 17 | 603 | 17 | 981 | 20 | 1,038 | — |
| Redbridge | 572 | 17 | 569 | 16 | 649 | 16 | 785 | 17 | 831 | — |
| Richmond-upon-Thames | 400 | 16 | 412 | 16 | 425 | 18 | 543 | 14 | 574 | — |
| Southwark | 562 | 17 | 563 | 15 | 591 | 13 | 807 | 11 | 726 | — |
| Sutton | 346 | 16 | 359 | 14 | 371 | 13 | 444 | 11 | 344 | — |
| Tower Hamlets | 392 | 10 | 433 | 7 | 466 | 14 | 639 | 13 | 474 | — |
| Waltham Forest | 433 | 14 | 446 | 14 | 442 | 15 | 632 | 15 | 571 | — |
| Wandsworth | 611 | 15 | 371 | 13 | 370 | 12 | 502 | 11 | 515 | — |
| Westminster | 706 | 16 | 832 | 18 | 747 | 17 | 760 | 12 | 886 | — |
| London total | 21,134 | 16 | 22,534 | 14 | 22,486 | 15 | 22,160 | 14 | 21,631 | — |
| *Metropolitan counties* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Greater Manchester | 9,147 | 23 | 9,522 | 27 | 7,970 | 21 | — | — | — | — |
| Merseyside | 6,494 | 24 | 6,866 | 24 | 4,181 | 23 | — | — | — | — |
| South Yorkshire | 4,742 | 16 | 4,889 | 17 | 5,323 | 18 | — | — | — | — |
| Tyne and Wear | 5,442 | 26 | 5,701 | 24 | 5,542 | 19 | — | — | — | — |
| West Midlands | 7,998 | 17 | 8,304 | 18 | 8,143 | 17 | — | — | — | — |
| West Yorkshire | 6,499 | 18 | 6,770 | 18 | 7,136 | 17 | — | — | — | — |
| Total metropolitan counties | 40,322 | 20 | 42,051 | 21 | 38,295 | 19 | — | — | — | — |
| *Shire counties* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Avon | 2,765 | 18 | 2,759 | 18 | 2,770 | 17 | 2,944 | 17 | 3,125 | — |
| Bedfordshire | 990 | 12 | 1,047 | 10 | 1,043 | 10 | 1,204 | 12 | 1,273 | — |

| *Authorities* | *1983-84* | | *1984-85* | | *1985-86* | | *1986-87* | | *1987-88* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Street lighting £'000* | *Per cent. of road spend that is street lighting* | *Street lighting £'000* | *Per cent. of road spend that is street lighting* | *Street lighting £'000* | *Per cent. of road spend that is street lighting* | *Street lighting £'000* | *Per cent. of road spend that is street lighting* | *Street lighting £'000* | *Per cent. of road spend that is street lighting* |
| Berkshire | 1,532 | 18 | 1,429 | 12 | 1,474 | 12 | 1,647 | 11 | 1,622 | — |
| Buckinghamshire | 1,153 | 11 | 1,278 | 11 | 1,427 | 12 | 1,564 | 12 | 1,731 | — |
| Cambridgeshire | 1,170 | 10 | 1,128 | 10 | 1,226 | 10 | 1,372 | 10 | 1,484 | — |
| Cheshire | 2,538 | 16 | 2,695 | 17 | 2,837 | 17 | 2,903 | 17 | 3,138 | — |
| Cleveland | 1,618 | 16 | 1,935 | 18 | 1,950 | 16 | 1,996 | 16 | 2,399 | — |
| Cornwall | 978 | 8 | 999 | 8 | 1,152 | 8 | 997 | 7 | 1,054 | — |
| Cumbria | 1,015 | 8 | 1,108 | 9 | 764 | 7 | 1,286 | 8 | 1,258 | — |
| Derbyshire | 2,512 | 15 | 2,749 | 16 | 2,706 | 15 | 2,761 | 15 | 2,822 | — |
| Devon | 2,550 | 11 | 2,553 | 10 | 2,726 | 9 | 2,878 | 10 | 3,220 | — |
| Dorset | 2,131 | 18 | 2,131 | 18 | 1,893 | 14 | 1,937 | 14 | 2,189 | — |
| Durham | 2,081 | 16 | 2,196 | 17 | 2,420 | 18 | 2,512 | 18 | 2,658 | — |
| East Sussex | 1,416 | 14 | 1,562 | 14 | 1,530 | 12 | 1,542 | 12 | 1,492 | — |
| Essex | 3,155 | 13 | 3,391 | 14 | 3,576 | 13 | 3,791 | 13 | 4,003 | — |
| Gloucestershire | 716 | 8 | 797 | 8 | 1,274 | 11 | 1,280 | 9 | 1,054 | — |
| Hampshire | 2,925 | 13 | 3,299 | 15 | 3,287 | 13 | 2,967 | 12 | 3,166 | — |
| Hereford and Worcestershire | 1,095 | 10 | 1,175 | 10 | 1,280 | 10 | 1,354 | 10 | 1,462 | — |
| Hertfordshire | 2,390 | 15 | 893 | 17 | 2,474 | 15 | 2,638 | 14 | 2,536 | — |
| Humberside | 2,345 | 13 | 2,367 | 12 | 2,676 | 14 | 2,812 | 13 | 2,753 | — |
| Isle of Wight | 332 | 11 | 334 | 11 | 347 | 12 | 355 | 12 | 355 | — |
| Kent | 3,019 | 12 | 3,083 | 11 | 3,268 | 11 | 3,287 | 10 | 3,478 | — |
| Lancashire | 5,674 | 20 | 5,689 | 20 | 5,928 | 20 | 6,099 | 18 | 6,353 | — |
| Leicestershire | 2,061 | 13 | 2,074 | 12 | 2,200 | 13 | 2,185 | 12 | 2,312 | — |
| Lincolnshire | 1,001 | 6 | 1,194 | 8 | 1,186 | 7 | 1,233 | 7 | 1,255 | — |
| Norfolk | 1,227 | 9 | 1,344 | 10 | 1,311 | 9 | 1,342 | 9 | 1,563 | — |
| North Yorkshire | 1,262 | 6 | 1,315 | 7 | 1,328 | 6 | 1,319 | 6 | 1,355 | — |
| Northamptonshire | 1,174 | 14 | 1,228 | 14 | 1,272 | 15 | 1,504 | 15 | 1,474 | — |
| Northumberland | 969 | 11 | 1,047 | 11 | 994 | 11 | 1,017 | 11 | 1,141 | — |
| Nottinghamshire | 3,220 | 20 | 3,325 | 20 | 3,384 | 19 | 3,431 | 19 | 3,630 | — |
| Oxfordshire | 1,053 | 12 | 1,061 | 12 | 1,110 | 12 | 1,039 | 11 | 1,100 | — |
| Shropshire | 561 | 6 | 591 | 7 | 520 | 6 | 681 | 7 | 721 | — |
| Somerset | 748 | 7 | 721 | 6 | 758 | 6 | 830 | 6 | 883 | — |
| Staffordshire | 2,503 | 16 | 2,574 | 16 | 2,370 | 14 | 2,500 | 13 | 2,696 | — |
| Suffolk | 1,017 | 8 | 1,017 | 8 | 1,115 | 8 | 1,260 | 9 | 1,333 | — |
| Surrey | 2,311 | 14 | 2,424 | 13 | 2,528 | 13 | 2,746 | 15 | 2,984 | — |
| Warwickshire | 1,115 | 11 | 1,078 | 11 | 1,152 | 11 | 1,334 | 12 | 1,412 | — |
| West Sussex | 1,549 | 13 | 1,409 | 11 | 1,797 | 13 | 1,802 | 13 | 1,906 | — |
| Wiltshire | 962 | 10 | 1,028 | 10 | 1,028 | 9 | 1,095 | 8 | 1,158 | — |
| Total Shires | 68,832 | 13 | 70,026 | 13 | 74,083 | 12 | 77,444 | 12 | 81,548 | — |
| Total England | 130,288 | 15 | 134,611 | 15 | 134,865 | 14 | 145,178 | 14 | 150,582 | — |
| Department of Transport spending on national roads | 9,749 | 5 | 10,815 | 5 | 11,135 | 5 | 13,273 | 4 | 14,076 | 4 |

*Notes:* Local authority current expenditure on roads includes both structural and routine maintenance. Structural maintenance on national roads is classed as capital expenditure but for comparative purposes has been included in the figures for roads spending from which the above percentages have been calculated.

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list each authority which has submitted a bid for an allocation for improved street lighting in residential areas.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Of the 108 local highway authorities in England, 71 included bids for street lighting expenditure in their transport policies and programme submission for 1989-90. Although some of the planned work is likely to have been for the benefit of residential areas, very few authorities specified this.

## Channel Tunnel

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a further statement on the measures which are being taken to ensure that the essential infrastructure needed for the United Kingdom to take advantage of the commercial benefits arising from the Channel tunnel is in place when the tunnel opens in 1993.

**Mr. Portillo:** Plans for the necessary road and rail infrastructure are well advanced. The Government have given approval in principle for expenditure of over £600 million by British Rail. There are a number of major schemes in the road programme to provide good access to the tunnel and Channel ports.

## Polymer Modified Bitumens

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those county councils which specify polymer modified bitumens.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The information requested is not collected by the Department.

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the inability of United Kingdom contractors to compete after 1992 with the EEC through lack of expertise in polymer modified bitumens.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Major road building contractors in the United Kingdom have experience of working with modified bitumens of various types, including polymer modified bitumens similar to those used in other EEC countries. We have no reason to believe that these contractors will be unable to compete after 1992 through lack of expertise in the roadbuilding application of these materials.

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies he has carried out on polymer modified bitumens for United Kingdom roadbuilding.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Since 1973 a considerable number of studies have been carried out by the transport and road research laboratory into various types and aspects of the use of polymer modified bitumens for roadbuilding. The main results have been published in the following reports:

Laboratory Report 963 describes the use of sulphurs.

Laboratory Report 989, and Research Reports 92 and 122 describe the use of ethylene/vinyl acetate.

Laboratory Report 989 also describes the use of styrena/butadiene/styrene.

Laboratory Report 1101 describes the use of polyethylene.

Research Report 54 describes the use of a manganese modifier.

Research Report 57 describes the use of estylene/vinyl acetate, styrene/butadiene/styrene, and a number of proprietary materials.

## Road Schemes

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his replies to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill of 10 July, how much money has been allocated to Liverpool city council for road schemes in each of the last five years; and what information he has on how that money has been spent.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Liverpool city council became a highway authority in 1986. Transport supplementary grant paid in support of its accepted programme of highway improvements in the four years since then has been as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1986-87 | 2·702 |
| 1987-88 | 2·267 |
| 1988-89 | 1·235 |
| 1989-90 | 1·762 |

Expenditure details from Liverpool's 1988 transport policies and programme document are as follows:

*£ thousand*

| *Scheme* | *1986-87 actual outturn* | *1987-88 estimated outturn* | *1988-89 budgeted outturn* |
|---|---|---|---|
| A59 Hunter Street improvement | 3,230 | 2,443 | 1,634 |
| A580 Everton Valley improvement | 738 | 434 | 628 |
| Liverpool inner ring road | 523 | 9 | 167 |
| A561 Garston bypass | 122 | 0 | 416 |
| Access to Lime Street Station | 27 | 33 | 124 |
| A561 Park Road relief road | 0 | 0 | 300 |
| Minor works | 156 | 366 | 870 |

## Eastleigh Railway Workshop

**Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will direct the BR board to end unfair discrimination against Eastleigh railway workshop in the matter of bidding for contract work with British Rail;

(2) if he will direct the BR board to ensure that Eastleigh works is given the opportunity of bidding for contracts in order to maintain its work force, its range of skills and capital equipment;

(3) if, in the light of prices for white metal bearings work carried out by private companies, he will direct the BR board to transfer such work and other related work to the Eastleigh railway workshop.

**Mr. Portillo:** These are commercial and managerial matters for the Railways Board and British Rail Maintenance Limited, and it would not be appropriate for me to intervene.

**Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the savings that could be made for British Rail as the final customer if the Eastleigh works was allowed to bid on the open market for work.

**Mr. Portillo:** None. This is a commercial matter for the railways board.

**Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the work force at British Rail Eastleigh railway workshop concerning bidding for certain lines of railway engineering and maintenance work which it carried out before the privatisation of BREL.

**Mr. Portillo:** I have received no such representations.

## Rail Passengers (Accidents)

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents were caused to rail passengers leaning out of carriage windows, in the last year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Portillo:** In 1988, for which provisional figures are available, there were 18 such accidents, 14 of which involved only minor injuries, two serious injuries and two fatalities.

## Drink-driving

**Mr. Bright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road accident deaths in *(a)* England and *(b)* Bedfordshire have been associated with excess alcohol consumption since 1 January 1985.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The table shows the total number of fatalities in Bedfordshire and in England from 1 January 1985 to 31 December 1987 and for each of those years in accidents where at least one driver or rider failed a breath test. This is the most common measure of drink-related accidents. It is not possible to produce precise statistics of drink-related accidents because some drivers will have been too severely injured to be breath tested. The blood alcohol level of drivers who die within 12 hours of an accident are provided from coroner's reports. These are not always complete. They exclude those drivers who die after this period but within the 30-day rule for a road accident fatality. Such fatalities are not included in this table.

*Road fatalities in accidents where a driver or rider failed a breath test: 1985-87*

| | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bedfordshire | 6 | 4 | 3 | 13 |
| England | 290 | 261 | 262 | 813 |

## Railways (Subsidy)

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in rank order information available to him for each country within the European Economic Community on the percentage of Government subsidy to their national railway system.

**Mr. Portillo:** The most recent information available to the Department is given in the table, which is derived from the ninth Commission report on the transposed annual accounts of railway undertakings for 1985 [COM (88)739 final], a copy of which is in the Library of the House. There are substantial variations between countries in financial arrangements, including the writing off of debt and the systems for financial support.

| | *Subsidy*[1] |
|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 29 |
| West Germany | 31 |
| France | 32 |
| Irish Republic | 33 |
| Denmark | 36 |
| Netherlands | 46 |
| Belgium | 52 |
| Italy | 57 |
| Greece | 66 |
| Luxembourg | 73 |

[1] As percentage of operating costs.

*Note:* Figures for the United Kingdom are an amalgamation of subsidy paid to the British Railways Board and Northern Ireland Railways.

## Railways (Wages)

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in rank order information available to him for each country within the European Economic Community on *(a)* the basic wage, *(b)* working hours and *(c)* overtime rates for workers employed on the national railway system.

**Mr. Portillo:** No firm figures for other EC countries are available to the Department.

## Railways (Investment)

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has made an assessment of the commercial consequences for the German, French, Italian, and Spanish economies, relative to Britain's in 1992, due to the present investment in rail transport in those countries.

**Mr. Portillo:** No.

## Nuclear Fuel Transport

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what volumes of spent nuclear fuel have been transported through cities with populations greater than 300,000 in each year since 1979.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Department does not collect data of the kind requested. The movement of spent fuel is made in compliance with national and international regulations which require safety for both normal and accident conditions to be built into the container used for transport. Safety does not depend on the choice of route used, which is a matter for British Rail.

## Air Traffic

**Mr. Franks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, when he next meets the chairman of BAA, he will discuss the delays caused to domestic travellers at Heathrow terminal one (departures) resulting from unmanned security clearance points.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** No. How many such channels are provided, and how many of them are staffed at any given time, are entirely matters for the airport management.

**Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received advice from the Civil Aviation Authority in response to the commissions that he gave it last summer on airport capacity and air traffic distribution.

**Mr. Channon:** I have now received the authority's advice on air traffic distribution policy for airports serving the London area, and this has been published today as CAP 559. Copies have been placed in the Library. I shall now consider the authority's advice, and will make a statement in due course. The authority proposes to undertake further work before offering advice on long-term strategic issues.

## Tachograph Calibration Fees

**Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the fees chargeable by tachograph calibration centres will change in the current year.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** From 24 July 1989 the maximum fees for calibration will decrease from £32·21 to £28·11 (plus VAT). The fee for two-yearly inspections will increase from £13·82 to £17·93 (plus VAT). The changes follow a joint review of the time needed to calibrate a tachograph or carry out a two-yearly inspection.

## Street Works

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make available further financial assistance to Bradford council to enable private street works to be carried out where the procedure was not properly undertaken by the West Yorkshire metropolitan county council and where as a consequence works are outstanding; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** No. The cost of private street works is usually apportioned between the owner of properties fronting the street involved.

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress that has been made with the new legislation to replace the Public Street Works Act 1950, including the various codes of practice he is considering introducing under regulations; and what is the timetable for legislation.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Good progress has been made with proposals for primary legislation. Responses to our recent consultation paper were overwhelmingly in support of the majority of proposals. Good progress is also being made with the various codes of practice required to support new legislation through the hard work and co-operation of the highway authority associations and the utilities. A paper giving a fuller report on progress has been placed in the Library. A Bill will be introduced as soon as a suitable opportunity can be found.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will estimate how many cattle infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy have been slaughtered for human consumption during the past year.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** None.

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to his answer of 12 July, what assessment his Department has made of a statement by H. C. Grant, MD, FRCP, a neuropathologist writing in a recent London Food Commission magazine, a copy of which has been sent to him, stating that bovine spongiform encephalopathy can be transmitted to chimpanzees.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The reference probably relates to the transmission of other spongiform encephalopathies to chimpanzees, since bovine spongiform encephalopathy has not been transmitted to them.

### Forestry

**Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give the most recent figures available for new forestry planting in the private and public sectors in England and Wales.

**Mr. Ryder:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland gave to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) on 22 June 1989 at columns *205-6*.

### Agricultural Land and Investment

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, what was *(a)* the total agricultural investment and *(b)* the total amount of agricultural land in the south-eastern and northern-regions, in the last year for which figures were available.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The information for 1987 is as follows:

| | *Total agricultural investment £ million* | *Total agricultural area[1] '000 hectares* |
|---|---|---|
| South Eastern region | 95 | 1,727 |
| Northern region | 63 | 1,050 |

[1] At June

### Irradiated Food

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what methods other than irradiation of improving food hygiene his Department has investigated; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** My Department has considered every stage in the food production chain from the farm to the table and has introduced a comprehensive range of measures to protect all aspects of the safety of food. The bulk of these were listed by my hon. Friend the Member for Calder Valley (Mr. Thompson) in a reply to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) on 3 March 1989 at columns *373-74*.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has received any representations from the British Poultry Federation concerning the irradiation of foodstuffs; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** The British Poultry Federation has put forward a number of points about irradiation in the poultry sector, but these do not relate to the effectiveness of the process in killing salmonella, campylobacter and listeria in poultry products.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consultations he has had with representatives of the poultry industry concerning the irradiation of foodstuffs.

**Mr. Ryder:** Consultations are not appropriate with representatives of any particular product sector at this stage, but will take place when detailed proposals are being considered.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list all those sectors of the food industry which have made recent representations to him opposing the irradiation of foodstuffs.

**Mr. Ryder:** The only sector of the food industry from which I have recently received representations opposing the irradiation of foodstuffs are the interests covered by the British Poultry Federation. Other organisations have commented on aspects of this matter at an earlier stage.

### Nuvan

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields of 28 November, *Official Report,* column *99,* if he is now in a position to publish information on the human and environmental effects of Nuvan.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) on 11 July at column *455*.

### Co-responsibility Levy

**Mr. Ralph Howell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will state *(a)* the total amount paid by each member state of the EEC in cereals co-responsibility levy for each year since the co-responsibility levy has been operative and *(b)* the total tonnage of cereals produced in each member state of the EEC, showing in each case how much per tonne the co-responsibility levy represents.

**Mr. Ryder:** Information provided by the Commission of the European Communities on cereals co-responsibility levy payments and cereals production by member states is set out in the table. This information covers the first two years of the levy's operation. Details of payments for 1988-89 are not yet available. The following points should be noted:

1. The Commission's figures for levy payments in 1987-88 cover 13 months from 1 July 1987 to 31 July 1988 whereas those for 1986-87 cover 12 months. Both sets of production figures are for 12 months.

2. Small cereals farmers in Spain and Italy were exempt from paying the co-responsibility levy during the period to which the figures relate.

3. Levy collection in all member states in 1986-87 and all, except Italy and France, in 1987-88 was at the point of processing, sale into intervention or export from the Community. This meant that the levy was not necessarily collected in the country of origin of the grain.

4. In the 1987-88 season collection of the levy in Italy and France was changed to the point of first sale. This affected the amount of levy collected in a number of member states.

5. In a number of cases levy collected in 1986-87 does not appear in the Commission figures until 1987-88. Changes in the green rates further increase the levy payments recorded for 1987-88 in relation to 1986-87.

6. Under its accession arrangements Portugal does not yet collect cereals co-responsibility levy.

| | *(a)* | *(b)* | *(c)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Amount of co-responsibility levy collected in member states' national currency (million)* | *Production (million tonnes)* | *Levy in national currency per tonne (a) ÷ (b)* |
| *1986-87* | | | |
| Belgium | 816·6 BF | 2·3 | 355·0 |
| Denmark | 77·3 KR | 8·0 | 9·7 |
| Germany | 148·2 DM | 25·6 | 5·8 |
| Greece | 580·7 DRA | 5·3 | 109·6 |
| France | 565·0 FF | 50·1 | 11·3 |
| Ireland | 3·7 I£ | 1·8 | 2·1 |
| Italy | 52,467·3 LIT | 17·8 | 2,947·6 |
| Luxembourg | 14·3 LF | 0·05 | 286·0 |
| Netherlands | 38·9 FL | 1·3 | 29·9 |
| Spain | 3,548·8 PTA | 16·0 | 221·8 |
| United Kingdom | 39·4 £ | 24·5 | 1·6 |
| *1987-88* | | | |
| Belgium | 791·0 BF | 1·9 | — |
| Denmark | 117·8 KR | 7·3 | — |
| Germany | 171·0 DM | 23·8 | — |
| Greece | 1,705·9 DRA | 5·1 | — |
| France | 1,791·9 FF | 52·2 | — |
| Ireland | 5·1 I£ | 2·0 | — |
| Italy | 65,784·1 LIT | 17·4 | — |
| Luxembourg | 16·3 LF | 0·06 | — |
| Netherlands | 54·5 FL | 1·1 | — |
| Spain | 5,620·1 PTA | 19·8 | — |
| United Kingdom | 56·2 £ | 21·7 | — |

## Grain Stores

**Mr. Ralph Howell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give such details as are available to him of the stocks of grain in store at 30 June *(a)* in Britain, *(b)* in the European Community and *(c)* in the world, expressed in tonnes and days' supply.

**Mr. Ryder:** Current estimates of cereals in store in the United Kingdom and the European Community as a whole at the end of the 1988-89 marketing year on 30 June 1989 are as follows:

| | *Million tonnes* | *Days' supply* |
|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 3·5 | 65 |
| EC | 26·7 | 66 |

These figures are based on the Commission of the European Communities' balance sheet for cereals.

The International Wheat Council's estimate of world stocks of grain is an aggregate of national figures based on different definitions of marketing years and therefore dose not relate to a particular date. However, the Council's latest estimate for world stocks for the end of the 1988-89 crop year is 248 million tonnes or around 71 days' supply.

**Mr. Ralph Howell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many days' supply of grain are currently in store in the United Kingdom *(a)* in intervention storage and *(b)* in all storage.

**Mr. Ryder:** United Kingdom intervention stocks of wheat and barley at 30 June represented about 15 days' supply of grain. The end season stock of grain in all storage is estimated to represent about 65 days' supply which, with the 1989 harvest in progress, is likely to be more than sufficient to meet industry's short-term requirements.

## Intervention Stocks

**Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food by how much intervention stocks of butter, skimmed milk powder, beef, olive oil and cereals, have fallen in recent years *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* in the European Community.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The tables show current and peak levels of intervention stocks of butter, skimmed milk powder, beef, olive oil, and cereals, *(a)* in the United Kingdom, *(b)* in the European Community, and the percentage by which those stocks have fallen.

| *Commodity* | *Peak level* | *Current level* | *Per cent. reduction* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *(a)* United Kingdom Stocks (thousand tonnes) | | | |
| Butter | 269<br>August 1986 | 12<br>May 1989 | 96 |
| SMP | 220<br>October 1983 | 0<br>May 1989 | 100 |
| Beef | 86<br>December 1985 | 18<br>May 1989 | 79 |
| Olive oil | 0 | 0 | — |
| Total cereals | 6,013<br>November 1985 | 639<br>June 1989 | 89 |
| Durum | 0 | 0 | — |
| Wheat | 3,926<br>November 1985 | 25<br>June 1989 | 99 |
| Barley | 2,087<br>November 1985 | 614<br>June 1989 | 71 |
| Rye | 0 | 0 | — |
| *(b)* EC Stocks (thousand tonnes) | | | |
| Butter | 1,398<br>August 1986 | 45<br>May 1989 | 97 |

| *Commodity* | *Peak level* | *Current level* | *Per cent. reduction* |
|---|---|---|---|
| SMP | 1,063<br>September 1986 | 7<br>May 1989 | 99 |
| Beef | 711<br>September 1985 | 331<br>April 1989 | 53 |
| Olive oil | 417<br>September 1988 | 241<br>June 1989 | 42 |
| Total cereals | 18,193<br>October 1985 | 7,330<br>June 1989 | 60 |
| Durum | 2,348<br>July/August 1988 | 1,161<br>June 1989 | 51 |
| Wheat | 11,843<br>October 1985 | 2,253<br>June 1989 | 81 |
| Barley | 5,226<br>July 1986 | 2,857<br>June 1989 | 45 |
| Rye | 1,164<br>June/July 1987 | 1,059<br>June 1989 | 9 |

## Anthrax

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what controls he has over the importation of anthrax vaccine; whether he has prevented anthrax vaccine being imported into the United Kingdom during the current year; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** In order to maintain the safety, quality and efficacy of veterinary medicines, including vaccines, imports are subject to a product licence under the Medicines Act. No product licences have been sought or issued for imported anthrax vaccine.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he proposes to amend the Anthrax Order 1938 to permit compensation on slaughtering; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) on 14 July 1989 at column *667*.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the monitoring procedures for animals on farms when an outbreak of anthrax occurs; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Anthrax is an acute disease typified by sudden death. Monitoring of live animals present on a premises where anthrax has occurred and where restrictions are in force is generally carried out by the owner, who is advised by his private veterinary surgeon. The Anthrax Order of 1938 makes provision for non-suspect animals to be sent direct to a slaughterhouse provided the movement is made with the written permission of the local authority.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will give the quantities of anthrax vaccine he has had available for use in each of the last 12 months;

(2) if he will list the circumstances in which he will use anthrax vaccine; what controls he will impose on its production and use; and if he will make a statement;

(3) on what date his Department started to produce anthrax vaccine; when it will be ready for use; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what stocks of anthrax vaccine other than the stock produced by the Ministry are available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Anthrax vaccine is generally used by farmers to protect cattle that graze land contaminated in the past with anthrax spores. In rare circumstances it can be used to control an outbreak. The Government do not hold and have not held stocks of vaccine. Commercial production was discontinued in 1986, and commercial supplies of anthrax vaccine for animals have been unavailable since October 1988 when existing stocks became exhausted. We are investigating the possibility of alternative sources.

To deal with the outbreak of anthrax in Wales we are, as an extraordinary measure, making arrangements for an emergency supply of vaccine to be produced at my Department's veterinary laboratory. Production began on 10 July 1989 and it should be ready for use before the end of August, provided that no unexpected problems are encountered.

The production and supply of any medicinal product must satisfy the requirements of the Medicines Act 1968.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many *(a)* cows, *(b)* pigs and *(c)* sheep died in each year since 1982; and how many he expects will die in 1989.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The information requested in respect of anthrax is as follows:

|  | *(a)*<br>*Cattle* | *(b)*<br>*Pigs* | *(c)*<br>*Sheep* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1982 | 17 | 1 | — |
| 1983 | 13 | 1 | — |
| 1984 | 9 | — | — |
| 1985 | 6 | — | — |
| 1986 | 12 | — | 2 |
| 1987 | 6 | — | — |
| 1988 | 3 | — | — |
| 1989[1] | 1 | 14 | — |

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[1] To date.

It is not possible to predict how many more animals will die of anthrax during the rest of 1989.

## Seals

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what instructions he has given to the state veterinary service about monitoring the death of seals in the North sea; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** None. The Department of the Environment has primary responsibility for matters concerning the recent epidemic of disease in seals.

## Pollution

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he is taking to reduce the flow of nitrates and phosphates into the Thames, Humber, Tyne and Forth estuaries; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** As part of the Ministry's promotion of the code of good agricultural practice, ADAS advises farmers to follow practices designed to reduce the leaching of fertilisers, including nitrates and phosphates, into rivers and water sources.

## Post Mortems

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many *(a)* cows, *(b)* pigs and *(c)* sheep received post mortem inspections for each year since 1982; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Because of the risk of spreading disease, suspected cases of anthrax are not subject to full post-mortem examination. Initial diagnosis is carried out by microscopic examination of stained smears of blood or other tissue fluids. The numbers of animals investigated as suspect cases are set out in the table. These cannot be separately identified by species but the majority will have been for cattle.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1982 | 10,656 |
| 1983 | 13,215 |
| 1984 | 12,149 |
| 1985 | 15,101 |
| 1986 | 12,435 |
| 1987 | 12,122 |
| 1988 | 11,150 |
| 1989 (to date) | 3,813 |

## Sheep Variable Premium

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the highest amount payable under the sheep variable premiums scheme for an individual lamb, of maximum eligible weight, in the week of highest subsidy, during the marketing year 1988.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** A sum of £32·25154 would have been payable on a carcase of maximum eligible weight in the week commencing 22 February, which was the week of highest subsidy in 1988.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Council House Sales

**Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many *(a)* admission and *(b)* denial response notices were issued on the right to buy by local authorities by each region in England and England as a whole during *(a)* 1980-81, *(b)* 1981-82, *(c)* 1982-83, *(d)* 1983-84, *(e)* 1984-85, *(f)* 1985-86, *(g)* 1986-87, *(h)* 1987-88 and *(j)* 1988-89, for (i) full ownership and (ii) shared ownership;

(2) how many right-to-buy claims were received for full ownership of *(a)* houses and *(b)* flats by each region in England and England as a whole during (i) 1980-81, (ii) 1981-82, (iii) 1982-83, (iv) 1983-84, (v) 1984-85, (vi) 1985-86, (vii) 1986-87, (viii) 1987-88 and (ix) 1988-89;

(3) what was the number of completed disposals for refurbishment and resale, including those to be demolished, of local authority dwellings to private developers and housing associations by each region in England and for England as a whole during *(a)* 1980-81, *(b)* 1981-82, *(c)* 1982-83, *(d)* 1983-84, *(e)* 1984-85, *(f)* 1985-86, *(g)* 1986-87, *(h)* 1987-88 and *(i)* 1988-89;

(4) what was the number of completed disposals of council dwellings for shared ownership *(a)* built for sale, *(b)* improved for sale, *(c)* sold unimproved for improvement by purchaser, *(d)* to sitting tenants and *(e)* other sales, in each region in England and for England as a whole during (i) 1980-81, (ii) 1981-82, (iii) 1982-83, (iv) 1983-84, (v) 1984-85, (vi) 1985-86, (vii) 1986-87, (viii) 1987-88 and (ix) 1988-89;

(5) what was the number of completed disposals of council dwellings for full ownership *(a)* built for sale, *(b)* improved for sale, *(c)* sold unimproved for improvement by purchaser, *(d)* to sitting tenants and *(e)* other sales, in each region in England and for England as a whole during (i) 1980-81, (ii) 1981-82, (iii) 1982-83, (iv) 1983-84, (v) 1984-85, (vi) 1985-86, (vii) 1986-87, (viii) 1987-88 and (ix) 1988-89;

(6) what was the number of completed right-to-buy sales where the authority does not own the freehold of *(a)* houses and *(b)* flats by each region in England and for England as a whole during (i) 1980-81, (ii) 1981-82, (iii) 1982-83, (iv) 1983-84, (v) 1984-85, (vi) 1985-86, (vii) 1986-87, (viii) 1987-88 and (ix) 1988-89;

(7) what was the number of local authority mortgages on completed disposals of *(a)* full ownership and *(b)* shared ownership by each region in England and for England as a whole during (i) 1980-81, (ii) 1981-82, (iii) 1982-83, (iv) 1983-84, (v) 1984-85, (vi) 1985-86, (vii) 1986-87, (viii) 1987-88 and (ix) 1988-89;

(8) what was the selling price net of discounts of completed disposals *(a)* built for sale, *(b)* improved for sale, *(c)* sold unimproved for improvement by purchaser, *(d)* to sitting tenants and *(e)* other sales, for each region in England and for England as a whole during (i) 1980-81, (ii) 1981-82, (iii) 1982-83, (iv) 1983-84, (v) 1984-85, (vi) 1985-86, (vii) 1986-87, (viii) 1987-88 and (ix) 1988-89, for full ownership and shared ownership;

(9) what was the selling price of disposals net of discounts completed for each region in England and for England as a whole, during *(a)* 1980-81, *(b)* 1981-82, *(c)* 1982-83, *(d)* 1983-84, *(e)* 1984-85, *(f)* 1985-86, *(g)* 1986-87, *(h)* 1987-88 and *(i)* 1988-89;

(10) what was the total number of completed disposals for full ownership of *(a)* council houses and *(b)* flats by each region in England and for England as a whole during (i) 1980-81, (ii) 1981-82, (iii) 1982-83, (iv) 1983-84, (v) 1984-85, (vi) 1985-86, (vii) 1986-87, (viii) 1987-88 and (ix) 1988-89;

(11) what was the total value of discounts allowed on completed disposals by each region in England and for England as a whole during *(a)* 1980-81, *(b)* 1981-82, *(c)* 1982-83, *(d)* 1983-84, *(e)* 1984-85, *(f)* 1985-86, *(g)* 1986-87, *(h)* 1987-88 and *(i)* 1988-89;

(12) what was the value of mortgages for each region in England and for England as a whole during *(a)* 1980-81, *(b)* 1981-82, *(c)* 1982-83, *(d)* 1983-84, *(e)* 1984-85, *(f)* 1985-86, *(g)* 1986-87, *(h)* 1987-88 and *(i)* 1988-89.

**Mr. Trippier:** The available information has been placed in the Library.

**Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what was the number of admitted claims withdrawn under *(a)* right to full ownership and *(b)* right to shared ownership by each region in England and in England as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89;

(2) what was the number of completed disposals of local authority dwellings built and financed by private developers on local authority land by each region in

England and for England as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89, for (i) full ownership and (ii) shared ownership;

(3) what was the value of the capital receipts from *(a)* the sale or lease of land, *(b)* other assets except dwellings, *(c)* initial payments from sale of dwellings, *(d)* repayment of discount and *(e)* repayment of sums left outstanding, by each region in England and for England as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89;

(4) what were the gross payments by local authorities on *(a)* the aquisition and *(b)* improvement of dwellings for sale entering the improvement for sale scheme by each region in England and for England as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89;

(5) what were the gross payments by local authorities on *(a)* the aquisition of dwellings for sale and improvement by the purchaser, *(b)* other aquisitions and *(c)* improvement/conversion of other dwellings for sale, for each region in England and for England as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 10 July 1989]:* The available information has been placed in the Library.

**Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of completions of *(a)* house and *(b)* flat sales by local authorities, by each region in England and in England as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89, for (1) full ownership and (2) shared ownership.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 10 July 1989]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library of the House.

## Dredgings Dump Sites

**Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultation procedure is carried out for the licensing of dredgings dump sites in intertidal areas; which statutory and non-statutory authorities are consulted; whether licences are registered with the relevant local authorities; and at which stage landowners are likely to be affected by spoil disposal and are consulted.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have been asked to reply.

The disposal of dredgings at sea, including sites in intertidal areas, is regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under part II of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985.

In considering whether to establish a new marine disposal site the Ministry consults bodies understood to have an interest. These would include landowners, local authorities, the Crown Estates Commission, conservation bodies, including where relevant the Nature Conservancy Council, fisheries organisations, the Department of Transport, recreational and other local interests.

Where an application is made to use an existing disposal site in an area designated as a site of special scientific Interest, the Ministry also consults the Nature Conservancy Council.

Licences under part II of the Act are not registered with local authorities, but are available for inspection on a public register kept by the Ministry.

## New House Building

**Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the gross payments on new house building construction by each region in England and for England as a whole during *(a)* 1980-81, *(b)* 1981-82, *(c)* 1982-83, *(d)* 1983-84, *(e)* 1984-85, *(f)* 1985-86, *(g)* 1986-87, *(h)* 1987-88 and (i) 1988-89, for (i) housing revenue accounts rent and (ii) sales.

**Mr. Trippier:** The England figures are given in the table. Regional figures on a consistent basis with final adjusted England are not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

*Gross payments on new housebuilding*
*England £ million*

| | *For HRA rent* | *For sale* |
|---|---|---|
| 1980-81 | [1]965·2 | |
| 1981-82 | [1]719·8 | |
| 1982-83 | 685·2 | 14·6 |
| 1983-84 | 682·4 | 15·7 |
| 1984-85 | 729·5 | 22·4 |
| 1985-86 | 578·8 | 14·7 |
| 1986-87 | [2]457·5 | 24·0 |
| 1987-88 | [2]456·8 | 23·2 |
| [3]1988-89 | 505·0 | 23·0 |

[1] Separate figures of build for sale not available for 1980-81 and 1981-82.

[2] Include LA demolition of dwellings.

[3] Provisional

## Council Properties, Northamptonshire

**Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of council-owned properties in unlicensed occupation for each local authority in Northamptonshire at the latest convenient date.

**Mr. Trippier:** According to local authorities' housing investment programme returns (HIP1) there were no council dwellings in unlicensed occupation in Northamptonshire at April 1988. Returns for April 1989 are not yet available.

**Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of local authority-owned properties vacant at the most recent date for each local authority in Northamptonshire together with the number, by local authority vacant for *(a)* six months or more, *(b)* 12 months or more, *(c)* 24 months and *(d)* 36 months.

**Mr. Trippier:** Information for April 1988 was reported by local authorities in their annual housing investment programme returns (HIP1) and appears in columns A108, A118 and A128 of "HIP1 Items Print (1988)". A copy of this document is in the Library.

## Environmental Protection

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received arising from the meeting of African Environment Ministers, held in Nairobi between 11 and 13 May in the current year, concerning *(a)* United Kingdom developed environmental protection technologies and *(b)* proposals to dispose of United Kingdom toxic waste in Africa; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** No representations have been received by the Department of the Environment arising from this meeting of African Environment Ministers. Aid for the provision of environmental protection technologies is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Minister of Overseas Development. Any export of United Kingdom hazardous waste to Africa would be subject to the prior approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment under the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988. No such approvals have been granted.

### Building Research Establishment

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last visited the Building Research Establishment; and what was discussed.

**Mr. Trippier:** My right hon. Friend last visited the Building Research Establishment on 5 August 1987. On that occasion, he saw several of the establishment's research projects, and discussed progress in implementing the recommendations of the report by Lord Chilver and Sir Peter Harrop on the future role and operations of the BRE. Since then, he has announced that it is a candidate for executive agency status within his Department.

### Building Research Establishment

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to visit the Building Research Establishment in the near future to discuss research on low-energy housing and advanced insulation techniques; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** My right hon. Friend has no plans at present to visit the Building Research Establishment. The Building Research Establishment's research into the thermal performance of buildings and other aspects of thermal insulation contributed substantially to the proposed changes in building regulations which were announced on 11 July. The Building Research Establishment will be publishing guidance to assist designers and builders to meet the new regulations.

### Uranium

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what volumes of depleted uranium and uranium scrap have been monitored and licensed by *(a)* Her Majesty's pollution inspectorate and *(b)* the nuclear installations inspectorate at the British Nuclear Fuels sites at (i) Springfields, (ii) Capenhurst, (iii) Sellafield and (iv) Chapel Cross.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy on 27 June 1989 to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn), ***Official Report***, column *387*, which refers to civil depleted uranium and civil uranium to be recycled within the production process.

Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution is responsible jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for the authorisation of radioactive waste disposals, including uranium waste products, from nuclear sites under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960. Responsibility for the licensing of nuclear sites lies with the nuclear installations inspectorate under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965.

### Cowboy Builders

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what progress has been made on overcoming problems associated with cowboy builders following the publication of the Department's special working party report in 1987;

(2) whether he is considering legislation to deal with cowboy builders.

**Mr. Trippier:** There are no plans for legislation. The Government made clear in their response to the report of the "Beat the Cowboys" working party that the industry must take the lead in setting up an assessment and approval scheme for insurance-backed guarantees which will increase customer recognition of the reputable builder. The industry has not yet decided which body should undertake this task. Criteria for the assessment of guarantee schemes and a model "fair deal" contract for use in small building works are being developed by the Office of Fair Trading.

### Housing Action Trust (Southwark)

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how the tenancies of tenants of Southwark council in Gloucester grove and north Peckham estates will change in the event of a housing action trust being created in Southwark;

(2) whether the terms of the new tenancy agreements in any housing action trust established in Southwark will be subject to change by the housing action trust.

**Mr. Trippier:** If secure tenants of Southwark council transferred to a housing action trust, their existing tenancy agreements with the council would also be transferred without change to the trust and their status as secure tenants under the Housing Act 1985 would be unaffected. A trust, like the council, could vary only any non-statutory terms included in tenancy agreements. To do this, the trust would be required to follow the procedures in sections 102 and 103 of the Housing Act 1985.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the options of postal and personal voting will be available to all tenants in any ballot on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** The Electoral Reform Society has agreed to conduct housing action trust ballots. Under the terms of section 61(3)(a) of the Housing Act 1988 the society will be responsible for making the detailed ballot arrangements "in such manner as seems best to them".

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment in the event of a housing action trust being established in Southwark, what proportion of current rent arrears will be left *(a)* to Southwark council to recover and *(b)* made the responsibility of the housing action trust.

**Mr. Trippier:** We shall decide in due course how to treat outstanding rent arrears on property transferred to housing action trusts. In the meantime, the local authorities concerned remain responsible for the proper and efficient collection of rents that are due, for the benefit of all their tenants and rate or community charge payers. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government announced proposals on 26 June, *Official Report,* column *345,* for the financial management by local authorities of their rent arrears from 1 April 1990.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the minimum interval he will set between any votes to establish a housing action trust in Southwark in the event of a negative vote;

(2) what will be the outcome of conflicting results in any ballot on the establishment of a housing action trust in *(a)* the North Peckham estate and *(b)* the Gloucester Grove estate.

**Mr. Trippier:** It is premature to speculate on the outcome of any housing action trust ballots.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what powers any housing action trust created in Southwark will have to evict tenants.

**Mr. Trippier:** Any housing action trust set up in Southwark would have exactly the same powers as Southwark council to secure possession of dwellings occupied by tenants. The grounds for possession of dwellings let under secure tenancies are in schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps will be taken to ensure that the register of tenants eligible to vote in any ballot on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark has been compiled correctly.

**Mr. Trippier:** Section 61(2) of the Housing Act 1988 requires the Secretary of State to use his best endeavours to secure that notice of any proposal he is considering to designate an area as a housing action trust area is given to all tenants of houses in the area who are secure tenants or who are tenants of such description as may be prescribed by regulations. We shall seek the assistance of the local authority, using the powers available under section 90 as necessary, in carrying out our duty under section 61. I am sure that local authorities will want to co-operate in providing the necessary information so that all eligible tenants have a proper opportunity to express their views in a ballot.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the relationship between any housing action trust and those tenants who had exercised their right to buy in the event of a housing action trust being created in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** If a housing action trust were set up in Southwark the ownership of the freehold of properties whose owners had bought a long lease from the council would pass to the trust. The position of any owners who have bought the freehold of their homes would not change.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether rent levels will be set beneath the level of maximum housing benefit in any housing action trust established in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** Housing benefit will meet in full the housing costs of qualifying tenants; and local authorities will receive subsidy on housing benefit paid up to the level of market rents. Rents charged by housing action trusts will be linked, after improvements have been carried out, to council rents for similar properties in the area. Since we are not proposing that council rents should be set at market levels, the rents charged by any trust set up in Southwark should not be above the level at which housing benefit would be paid.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the tenancies of residents of Gloucester grove and north Peckham estates will be statutorily secure *(a)* during the duration of any housing action trust and *(b)* after the winding-up of any housing action trust.

**Mr. Trippier:** Secure tenants of Southwark council who transferred to a trust would become secure tenants of the trust. Once the trust had carried out improvements tenants might transfer back to the council and become secure tenants again. Alternatively they might opt to become assured tenants of a landlord, such as a housing association or co-operative, that is approved by the Housing Corporation and, therefore, subscribes to the principles in the tenants' guarantee.

## Travellers' Sites

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will use powers under the Caravan Sites Act 1968 to require Calderdale local authority to provide travellers' sites; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** I have no plans at present to direct the metropolitan borough of Calderdale to provide travellers' sites. I am aware of the need for gipsy accommodation in the area and my Department is encouraging the local authority to define the level of need and to implement an appropriate programme of provision.

## Ministerial Drivers (Earnings)

**Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the annual average earnings of ministerial drivers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ridley:** The average earnings of Government car service ministerial drivers in the year to 31 March 1989 was £15,500 inclusive of London weighting and overtime. The highest earnings were £25,000.

## Redundant Churches

**Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he is now in a position to announce details of the proposed review of the arrangements for preserving redundant Church of England churches.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The redundant churches fund has now been in existence for 20 years. During that time it has done an excellent job in preserving and caring for some 250 historic churches no longer in pastoral use. The fund is jointly financed by the Church Commissioners and the Department of the Environment. Over the years the costs, to Church and state, have increased steadily, with the state meeting an increasing proportion (now standing at 70 per cent.) of those costs.

In moving the consideration in Standing Committee on 8 February last of the draft Grants to the Redundant

Churches Fund Order 1988, I announced that we had decided, in consultation with the Church Commissioners, to review the fund's current arrangements and to consider whether they were still appropriate for present and likely future needs.

I am pleased to announce that Mr. Richard Wilding, former head of the Office of Arts and Libraries, has agreed to carry out a review of the current arrangements for the operation and financing of the redundant churches fund.

The review will be carried out for the Department and the Church Commissioners. Mr. Wilding will start work in September this year and aims to report to the Secretary of State and to the Church Commissioners by April 1990. He would welcome views and comments, which should be sent to him at the offices of the Church Commissioners, 1 Millbank, London SW1.

### Improvement for Sale Scheme

**Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how much was loaned to housing associations by local authorities for new house building *(a)* for shared ownership and *(b)* for others in each region in England and for England as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89;

(2) what was the value of the loans to housing associations by local authorities for the purchase of existing dwellings *(a)* under the improvement for sale scheme and *(b)* other sales schemes, by each region in England and for England as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 10 July 1989]:* The available information has been placed in the Library.

### Dwellings (Transfers)

**Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what was the number of dwellings transferred from existing stock under the improvement for sale scheme by each region in England and for England as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89;

(2) what was the value of the outstanding loan debt on local authority dwellings transferred from existing stock by each region in England and for England as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 10 July 1989]:* The available information is listed in the table. Regional and national estimates of outstanding loan debt on dwellings transferred under improvement for sale schemes are not available.

*Transfers under the improvement sale scheme: Dwellings transferred from existing stock*

| *Department of the Environment region* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northern | 43 | 44 | 149 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 12 | — | 39 |
| East Midlands | 777 | 85 | 50 |
| Eastern | 15 | — | 25 |
| London | — | — | — |
| South East | — | — | — |
| South West | 30 | — | 886 |
| West Midlands | 74 | — | — |
| North West[1] | 4 | 7 | 39 |
| ENGLAND | 955 | 136 | 1,188 |

[1] Includes Cumbria.

### Water Quality

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he has replied to the European Commission's request for clarification on the compatibility of the Government's plans for the privatisation of the water authorities and European Community directive on water quality, with particular regard to bodies responsible for monitoring compliance of drinking water;

(2) if he has replied to the European Commission's request for clarification on the compatibility of the Government's plans for the privatisation of the water authorities and European Community directive on water quality, with particular regard as to whether there will be an independent body monitoring the disposal of sewage sludge to agricultural land in accordance with directive 86/278/EEC;

(3) if he has replied to the European Commission's request for clarification on the compatibility of the Government's plans for the privatisation of the water authorities and European Community directive on water quality, with particular regard to those circumstances in which water undertakings may be permitted to continue to supply drinking water which does not conform with the parameters laid down in directive 80/778/EEC;

(4) if he has replied to the European Commission's request for clarification on the compatibility of the Government's plans for privatisation of the water authorities and European Community directive on water quality, with particular regard as to which pollution control functions of the National Rivers Authority are considered by the Government to be suitable for contracting out;

(5) if he has replied to the European Commission's request for clarification on the compatibility of the Government's plans for the privatisation of the water authorities and European Community directives on water quality with particular regard to whether the Government's relaxation of sewage works discharge consents prior to privatisation is consistent with article 2 of directive 76/464/EEC on dangerous substances.

**Mr. Ridley** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* Discussions have taken place with the European Commission on the drinking water quality provisions which are now incorporated in the Water Act 1989. I am not aware of any outstanding points on these provisions to be clarified with the Commission. A reply was sent to the Commission on 11 January 1989 clarifying the other points raised.

### Discharge Consents

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all those sewage works for which a relaxation of discharge consent has been granted at the latest available date for each water authority region.

**Mr. Ridley** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* A list of the sewage treatment works for which applications have been made by water authorities for time-limited discharge consents has been placed in the Library. These applications are being advertised. Representations received by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution in response to these advertisements will be fully considered in determining the applications. No time-limited consents have so far been issued.

### European Regional Development Fund

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment under what criteria the privatised water undertakers will be eligible for grants from the European regional development fund.

**Mr. Ridley** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply which my hon. and learned Friend the Minister for Water and Planning gave to the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) on 2 May, *Official Report,* column 57. The European Commission has agreed to continue to consider applications for aid from the European regional development fund in respect of investments in infrastructure by privatised water undertakers. We are in discussion with the Commission over its detailed requirements.

### Recycling

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will detail all the Government initiatives aimed at encouraging the recycling of glass and paper since 1981.

**Mr. Atkins** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* I have been asked to reply.

Since 1981 the Government have been involved in a number of initiatives aimed at encouraging the recycling of glass and paper, from both the collection and processing aspects.

In July 1986 a commitment conference was held at DTI on glass recycling at which central and local government, retailers and the glass industry made a commitment to double the number of bottle banks in the five years up to 1991. Good progress is being made towards reaching this target. Following the conference, the Department of Environment held a series of seminars in each region at which local authorities discussed the benefits of glass recycling. Ministers and officials from both DTI and DOE have attended several events to promote glass recycling, including the launch of bottle bank schemes.

In January 1987, my Department organised a waste paper recycling commitment conference (printings and writings) which led to the creation of a working group to consider the formulation of specifications which would lead to increased use of recycled fibre in the printings and writings sector, particularly continuous stationery, educational wove and photocopying paper. Specifications have been formulated in these first two areas; work is continuing in the latter.

Between May and August 1989, my Department is organising a series of seminars, "Wastepaper Into Newsprint—The Case for a National Wastepaper Collection Drive", aimed at averting a perceived future shortfall in the supply of waste newspapers used as a raw material in the production of newsprint in the United Kingdom.

The DTI is taking a lead in Government in trying to encourage other Departments to use recycled paper and has recently introduced a recycled letterhead for Ministers. The DTI is also encouraging the recycling of materials including glass and paper through the educational literature it has produced for schools. These actions are part of an integrated Government approach to encourage the recycling of all materials wherever it is economically viable to do so.

## SCOTLAND

### Employment Training

126. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he collects as a result of participation on employment training schemes; and if he will give a breakdown for Scotland.

**Mr. Lang:** The latest available information for Scotland collected in respect of employment training is shown in the tables.

*Table 1*
*Employment training—Scotland*
*Programme statistics*

| *Category* | *Latest information* | *Numbers* |
|---|---|---|
| Filled places at training managers | 30 June | 23,200 |
| Starts at training managers | 30 June | 41,600 |
| Referrals from Employment Service to training agents | 30 June | 127,200 |
| Action plans completed at training agents | 30 June | 59,800 |
| Contracted places as at | May | 34,900 |
| Estimated project placements as at | 30 June | 14,500 |
| Estimated employer placements as at | 30 June | 4,800 |
| Child care allowances during April | 28 April | 349 |

*Table 2*
*Employment training—Scotland*
*Trainee characteristics*

| *Category* | *Latest information* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| *Sex* | 30 April | |
| Male | | 72·0 |
| Female | | 28·0 |
| *Duration of unemployment* | 30 April | |
| 0- 5 months | | 13·0 |
| 6-12 months | | 35·0 |
| 13-23 months | | 15·0 |
| 24 months | | 37·0 |
| *Ethnic origin*[1] | 30 April | |
| 1 | | 95·0 |
| 2 | | <0·5 |
| 3 | | <0·5 |
| 4 | | <0·5 |
| 5 | | 3·0 |
| *People with disabilities*[2] | 31 March | 11·0 |

[1] Ethnic origin:
1 White.
2 Black/African/Caribbean.
3 Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi/Sri Lankan.
4 None of these.
5 I prefer not to say.

[2] Those trainees answering whether they had a long-term health problem or disability which affected the type of work they could do.

Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

### Training and Enterprise Councils

125. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the progress his Department is making for the development of TECs in Scotland.

124. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to ensure that existing training schemes in Scotland will not be prejudiced by the proposed training and enterprise councils system.

**Mr. Lang:** Our proposals for Scotland were set out in the Scottish enterprise White Paper. We will announce our final decisions shortly.

### Less Favoured Areas

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the reply of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to the hon. Member for Gloucestershire, West (Mr. Marland) on 21 June, *Official Report*, column *129*, about proposed extensions to the less favoured areas in the United Kingdom, when he expects to place the relevant maps for Scotland in the Library.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The maps showing the areas in Scotland proposed for inclusion in the less-favoured areas are now in the Library.

### Medical and Dental Practitioners

**Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will introduce measures to name general medical and dental practitioners who have been found to be in breach of their terms of service.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** We are examining the extent to which current practice in relation to publicising the outcome of service committee proceedings might be changed.

### Trees

**Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will instruct the Forestry Commission to ensure that the current reviews of pinewoods and broadleaves' policies are fully compatible; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** We shall continue to ensure that all aspects of our forestry policy, including those relating to broadleaves and pinewoods, are fully compatible.

### AIDS

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met representatives of the Prison Officers' Association to discuss the incidence of AIDS amongst the Scottish prison population; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** My right hon. and learned Friend last met the trade union side of the Scottish prison service, including representatives of the Scottish Prison Officers' Association, in December 1988. The incidence of AIDS amongst the Scottish prison population was not discussed. AIDS-related issues have been discussed regularly by officials with the trade union side, most recently at the annual meeting of the Whitley Council in May.

As regards figures for the incidence of AIDS amongst the Scottish prison population I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 5 July at column *206*.

### Speech Therapy

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to obtain and record centrally the schools in Scotland which are provided with speech therapy services.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Speech therapy may be provided in any school where there is need of it.

### Community Charge

**Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he intends to issue a guidance note to Scottish local authorities on the matter of joint and several liability as it relates to the poll tax in Scotland; and whether he has any plans to seek to amend the legislation to bring it into line with the situation in England and Wales as set out in practice note No. 16.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The statutory provisions which are relevant to joint and several liability in Scotland, contained in the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended, have broadly the same effect as those which will apply in England and Wales under the Local Government Finance Act 1988. My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to issue a guidance note on this subject.

**Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he intends to grant to local authorities in Scotland the discretion allowed to local authorities in England and Wales of setting different levels of multiplier on different classes of properties where the standard community charge applies.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I am currently considering a number of aspects of the standard community charge arrangements.

### Lay Observer for Scotland

**Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has any proposals to increase the resources available to the Lay Observer for Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The resources available to the Lay Observer for Scotland fall within my right hon. and learned Friend's current consideration of the responses he has received to the proposals in his consultation paper "The Legal Profession in Scotland", published on 13 March 1989, that the office of the Lay Observer for Scotland might be enhanced.

### Food Poisoning

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research projects on botulism, salmonella enteriditis, typhimurium and other food poisoning are at present carried out in Scotland; and where.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton** *[holding answer 3 July 1989]:* Research projects, of which I am aware, include the following:

| *Location* | *Nature* |
|---|---|
| MAFF, Torry Research Station, Aberdeen | Investigate the incidence and survival of clostridium bolulinum, listeria monocytogenes and other types of food bacteria and the survival of microbial toxins during cooking. |
| | To develop assays for the micro-biological examination of fish and shellfish products including clostridium botulinum, salmonella and listeria and to develop safety parameters. |
| | To identify the most effective ways of eliminating salmonella and other contamination from fish meal products. |
| | To detect and quantify toxins including scrombotoxin and devise means of increasing safety of processed fish products. |
| Communicable Diseases Unit, Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow | Case control study to test whether the consumption or handling of certain foods are risk factors in acquiring listeriosis. |
| Scottish Food Research Consortium, Hannah Research Institute, Ayr | Research into listeria monocytogenes and bacillus cereus in powdered milk. |
| Aberdeen University | Establish tests for listeria monocytogenes. |
| Glasgow Veterinary School | Development of salmonella typhimurium and salmonella enteritidis vaccines for hens and their unborn chickens. Also development of a test for identifying the presence of these infections in eggs. |
| | Investigation into the penetration of salmonella enteritidis through egg shells and its effect on egg quality. |
| Glasgow University | Investigation of the pathogenic mechanism, toxin production and serology of campylobacter species. |
| North of Scotland College of Agriculture, Aberdeen | Investigate sources of listeria in clamp and bale silage as a source of infection in the food chain. |
| | Improve detection of causative agent and for vaccine development identify, isolate and characterise antigens of listeria monocytogenes and to assess their effect on the virulence of the organism for sheep and mice. |
| West of Scotland College of Agriculture, Ayr | Investigate factors affecting the bacteriological quality of milk. |
| | Devise rapid method of detection of contamination in milk from major organisms causing mastitis. |
| | Investigate the microbiological contamination of poultry meat. |
| | Investigate lactic fermentation for preparation of sausage type products with poultry meat including the effect on salmonella species and other bacteria. |
| | Study experimental infection of birds with salmonella enteritidis phage type 4 with particular reference to egg infection. |
| | Investigate the factors affecting bacterial contamination of egg surfaces and bacterial penetration of the egg. |
| | Undertake pilot studies into novel methods of bacterial investigation of salmonella in eggs and improved methods of detecting antibodies in eggs. |
| Moredun Research Institute, Edinburgh | Undertake immunochemical analysis of listerial species cell surface antigens for detection purposes. |
| | Investigate the means by which listeria gains entry to the host and causes disease in sheep. |

## Crofting

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to complete his review into the crofter housing grant and loans scheme; and in what form his findings will be made public.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton** *[holding answer 11 July 1989]:* My right hon. and learned Friend hopes to complete the review of the size and nature of grants and loans for new croft houses and existing croft houses under the current scheme in time for revised rates to be introduced in 1990-91 and announced when the new rates come into force. A wider review of assistance to crofter housing within the context of the Government's overall housing policy is in hand. Work on this is, however, at an early stage and has not as yet progressed sufficiently to enable a view to be taken on the nature and timing of any announcement of the outcome of the review.

## Electoral Registers

**Mr. Dewar:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the numbers of electors on the electoral register for each constituency in Scotland for the latest three years for which figures are available.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I refer the hon. Member to table 1.4 in the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys "Series EL No.

16" for the numbers in 1989 and to table 1.4 in "Series EL No. 15" for those in 1988 and 1987. Copies of these publications are in the Library.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Liquor Sales

**Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his proposals to extend the permitted hours for off-licences and reduce the permitted hours for off-sales at other licensed premises and hotels.

**Mr. Needham:** The Government have no proposals to extend the permitted hours for off-licences, but have published proposals to ban all off-sales from any type of licensed premises after 9 pm. These proposals are aimed at putting all off-licences on a more even trading basis, as well as reducing the problems of late night drinking in public which have been the cause of widespread concern.

### Police National Computer

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many accesses were made to each category of the stolen and suspect vehicle index of the police national computer over the last year; and what has been the percentage growth in use of these categories over the year;

(2) how many accesses were made to each category of the wanted and missing persons index of the police national computer over the last year; and what has been the percentage growth in use of these categories over the year;

(3) how many accesses were made to each index of the police national computer over the last year; and whether he will include in these statistics an indication of the number of access requests that could search more than one index.

**Mr. Cope:** The Royal Ulster Constabulary does not have direct access to the police national computer but can indirectly obtain information from the computer by arrangement with police forces in Great Britain. Statistics are not maintained by the RUC on the numbers of enquiries made each year, but I understand from the Chief Constable that usage of this facility is infrequent.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Members' Allowances

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will announce the proposed increase in hon. Members' office cost allowance for 1989-90 to enable hon. Members to award their staff their annual increase in pay.

**Mr. Wakeham:** Negotiations over London weighting, which affect the pay of a senior personal secretary in the home Civil Service (to which the office cost allowance is linked) have recently been concluded. I hope that I shall shortly be in a position to promulgate the new rate of office cost allowance.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### Equal Opportunities

**Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what recent progress has been made in the Civil Service to achieve further equality of opportunity for women staff.

**Mr. Luce:** The proportion of women at middle and senior management levels in the Civil Service is increasing. At the beginning of 1988, women represented 5 per cent. of staff in the top three grades of the service compared with 4 per cent. at the beginning of 1987, 9 per cent. of staff at grade five level compared with 8 per cent. in 1987 and 37 per cent. at executive officer level compared with 34 per cent. in 1987. The Civil Service has also increased opportunities for part-time working and job sharing at all grade levels; is increasing the availability of childcare facilities; and improving career break provision. A report detailing progress during 1987-88 on the implementation of equal opportunity policies for women in the Civil Service is being published today. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of Parliament.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Immigration

**Mrs. Wise:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many husbands are awaiting interview for entry clearance in Islamabad; and what is the longest waiting time of those presently in the queue.

**Mr. Eggar:** As at 31 May, 1,400 husbands were awaiting interview in Islamabad either as first-time applicants or re-applicants. On present estimates, first-time applicants who applied in May can expect to wait 10 months for interview, re-applicants 22 months.

**Mrs. Wise:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the average waiting time for interview in Islamabad, for entry clearance to the United Kingdom as *(a)* a husband, *(b)* a fiancé, *(c)* a wife and *(d)* a fiancée.

**Mr. Eggar:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) on 17 July.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will state for each immigration post abroad *(a)* the current average time and *(b)* the current longest outstanding case time, for an appeal against refusal to enter and stay in the United Kingdom from (i) the appeal being submitted and (ii) the date of the hearing being notified to the appellant, to the appeal hearing taking place.

**Mr. Eggar:** Neither the immigration appellate authorities nor the Foreign and Commonwealth Office records information of this nature for each immigration post overseas. The length of time taken for an appeal to be listed for hearing varies, depending on a number of factors including the time taken by the parties to indicate their readiness to proceed. Once parties have so indicated, cases are set down for hearing between six to eight weeks in advance, unless either party requests an adjournment. The great majority of appeals received overseas are forwarded to the appellate authorities, with the accompanying explanatory statement, well within 90 days which we regard as an acceptable time scale for the preparation and despatch of explanatory statements. Individual cases may, however, take longer to process depending on what further inquiries the entry clearance officer needs to make in the light of the grounds for appeal.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Local Management of Schools

**Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what financial support he proposes for local education authorities for Government training for local management of schools in the 1989-90 and 1990-91 years; by what date he expects training for chairman and deputy chairman of training bodies in schools for local management of schools to be completed; when such training for governors should be completed; whether he plans to issue further advice to local education authorities as to the form such training should take; and what advice he proposes to issue in those cases where local education authorities fail either to produce adequate training for governors or at a sensible timetable for achieving this.

**Mr. Butcher:** In 1989-90 the Government are supporting under the education support grant programme expenditure of £4·9 million on governor training and £3 million on training support staff in schools, and, through the local education authority training grants programme, £10 million to provide management training for heads and senior staff in schools. For the year 1990-91 the expenditure supported is £5·1 million for governor training, £2 million for support staff training, and £8 million for headteacher training. Further support will be available in 1991-92. Local education authorities have a statutory duty to provide governors with such training as the local education authority considers necessary. It is for local education authorities to determine the nature and timetable of their training programmes. Local education authorities are required to state in their schemes for the local management of schools what arrangements they have made for support and training; the Department will be monitoring the use of education support grant funds and the level and quality of training provided.

### Graduates

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will state the number of graduates living in *(a)* Tyne and Wear, *(b)* County Durham, *(c)* Essex, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* Berkshire as (i) a percentage of that county's population and (ii) a percentage of the total number of United Kingdom graduates.

**Mr. Jackson:** The information is shown in the table. The figures for graduates are based on a 10 per cent. sample and could therefore be subject to sampling errors.

*Graduates: 1981*

| *County* | *Graduates* | *Per cent.*[1] | *Per cent.*[2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tyne and Wear | 31,320 | 2·8 | 1·5 |
| County Durham | 16,080 | 2·7 | 0·8 |
| Essex | 50,330 | 8·0 | 2·4 |
| Greater London | 361,220 | 5·5 | 17·1 |
| Berkshire | 36,430 | 5·4 | 1·7 |

[1] As a percentage of county populations.

[2] As a percentage of total number of United Kingdom graduates.

*Source:* 1981 Census.

### Hair Preparations (Fire Hazard)

**Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will issue guidance on the fire hazard in school science laboratories to pupils who use flammable hair preparations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Butcher:** Advice on this question has been issued in the Department's booklet "Safety in Science Laboratories" since 1973; this includes a recommendation that long hair should be restrained, especially when lacquered, because of the risk of its catching fire.

### Teacher Recruitment

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his estimate of how many qualified teachers the state education system presently has vacancies for.

**Mr. Butcher:** The Department collects data for vacant posts each January. Data for January 1989 showed vacancies in England for 5,540 teachers out of 363,200 posts: a little over 1·5 per cent.

### Physical Education

**Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what initiatives his Department has taken to increase the level of participation in school sports; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for the Environment commissioned jointly a report by the Sports Council to examine the provision of sport for young people, including school sport. This was published in August 1988 and the Government's response to the report's recommendations will be issued shortly. In addition, PE, which includes sport, is a foundation subject in the national curriculum. It will therefore form part of the curriculum for every pupil aged five to 16 in a maintained school.

**Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the number of unfilled physical education posts in schools as a percentage of the total number of physical education posts.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** In January 1989 the number of vacancies for full-time permanent teachers of physical education in maintained secondary schools in England represented 1·2 per cent. of physical education teachers in post. Many of these vacancies will have been filled on a temporary basis pending a permanent appointment.

**Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to establish a physical education working party for the national curriculum; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend announced in January 1989 that arrangements for considering the content of guidelines for physical education in the national curriculum would be set up in June 1990. It is hoped to bring the guidelines into effect from the autumn term 1992.

**Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether his Department is now able to provide figures for those taking a GCSE in physical education.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** In the summer session of 1988, there were 19,000 candidates in England for the GCSE examination in physical education.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Joblink 1000

123. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many Joblink 1000 programmes have been established by his Department.

**Mr. Forth:** One Joblink 1000 project has been established in the Wolverhampton task force area, but there are similar pilot projects in other task force areas, including Spitalfields and Middlesbrough. Task forces tailor projects to meet local needs; these pilot projects can be incorporated into main Government programmes, but are not programmes themselves.

### Single Market

122. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps the Government are taking to help employers prepare for the single market; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maude:** My Department's "Europe Open for Business" campaign provides a comprehensive range of information to help employers prepare for the single market, including detailed factsheets on the single market programme, a series of booklets on standards, a guide to influencing decisions in Brussels, and an action checklist for business. This information is regularly updated and extended. For example, on 20 June, my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry launched "an action guide for smaller firms" which has been distributed to over 200,000 smaller businesses. Further copies (as for all our material) can be obtained free of charge through our 24 hour telephone hotline 01-200 1992. In addition, practical help and advice for employers preparing for the single market is available through our enterprise initiative and the small firms service operated by the Employment Department's Training Agency, which also provides a range of help for employers on their training needs.

### Restrictive Trade Practices

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he anticipates announcing his conclusions of the review into restrictive trade practices policy.

**Mr. Maude:** The Government's conclusions on the review of restrictive trade practices (RTP) policy are being published today in a White Paper "Opening Markets: New Policy on Restrictive Trade Practices" (Cm. 727).

The Government strongly believe that open markets are the best guarantee of efficiency in the economy. By reducing interference in markets and strengthening competition between businesses, we have unlocked enterprise and effort, so clearing the way towards increased economic growth.

We are keen to ensure that competition is maintained and enhanced, and have therefore confirmed proposals to introduce significant new legislation to replace the RTP Act 1976. The planned legislation is also expected to incorporate the provisions of the Resale Prices Act 1976. It will focus on the economic effects of an agreement rather than the form which it takes and will also ensure that a substantial number of agreements, which are caught by the present law but which have no effect on competition in the relevant market, will no longer need to be scrutinised by the authorities.

These proposals, which were first put forward in a Green Paper in March 1988 ("Review of Restrictive Trade Practices Policy"; Cm. 331) have received strong support from a substantial majority of those who responded. They agree that the current Act is too formalistic and does too little to deter the formation of illegal cartels. The proposals will be incorporated into new legislation as soon as the parliamentary timetable permits.

The proposed legislation will incorporate a prohibition on agreements which prevent, restrict or distort competition. It will, however, be possible for businesses to gain exemption from the prohibition for agreements with economic or technical benefits which are shared with consumers. Guidance will be issued on the type of restriction which would not by itself bring an agreement within the prohibition. Some categories which would qualify individually for exemption will be exempted by means of a statutory instrument known as a block exemption to reduce both the costs of administering the law and its regulatory impact on firms. In this and other ways, the legislation will be closely aligned with the competition regime which operates under article 85 of the EEC treaty, with which many large and medium-sized businesses will already be familiar.

The Government consider that very few sectors of the economy should escape the new legislation. We believe firmly in the benefits of professional self-regulation and recognise the key role professional bodies have played and will continue to play in maintaining professional standards. This does not, however, mean that the professions should not need to comply with competition legislation. We have, therefore, decided that those rules of the professions which are not required by statute, or subject to the approval of a Minister, will be subject to the new RTP legislation in the normal way. The professional bodies will be free to determine their own rules, but will have to justify any anti-competitive effects of these under the new legislation. The relationship between professional rules in the legal profession in England and Wales, possible legislation in that area and the proposed RTP legislation will be clarified further in an announcement on legal services to be made by the Lord Chancellor shortly.

Applications for exemption from the prohibition will be considered by the Director General of Fair Trading (DGFT) whose conclusions will, if uncontested, become binding decisions. Where an objection is raised, the Government have decided that a final decision on the case should be made by an independent RTP tribunal to be established within the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. There will be rights of appeal beyond the tribunal to the High Court (Court of Session in Scotland).

The DGFT will have increased powers to investigate suspected agreements, similar to those which are currently exercised in the United Kingdom by the European Commission's competition staff with the assistance of the DGFT. Restrictive agreements that infringe the prohibition and have not received exemption will be void, and the parties to the agreement would be liable to civil penalties of up to 10 per cent. of their annual turnover or £250,000, whichever is the greater. These penalties would be imposed by the tribunal, or by the High Court if the proposed penalty exceeded £1 million. The court would also be able to impose penalties of up to £100,000 on directors and managers of companies who negotiate or operate prohibited agreements. In deciding to separate the powers in investigation and the imposition of fines in this way, the Government have taken account of concerns expressed by a number of those who responded to the RTP Green Paper.

Agreements between small firms will be covered by the legislation and could be investigated and found to be anti-competitive. But if the parties have a combined turnover of less than £5 million, they will not be subject to penalties, even though they have not applied for an exemption. This concession will not apply in the case of price-fixing agreements, including those involving resale price maintenance.

In addition to publishing the White Paper giving full details of the proposals, my Department has produced a simplified guide which is being distributed widely to the business community. Further copies of this will be available on request.

The Government believe that these proposals will ensure that blatant cartels, which in the past have gone undetected and unpunished, will be substantially eradicated. The resulting increase in competition will benefit the economy as a whole and consumers in particular.

### Film Industry

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the total extent of Government support for the film industry in Britain, in the last year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Atkins:** During 1988-89 direct Government support for the United Kingdom film industry amounted to £3·6 million, of which £2 million went to British Screen Finance Ltd. and £1·6 million to the National Film and Television school. In addition the Government provided more general support for training and for the British Film Institute and the Scottish Film Council.

### Media Ownership

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the concentration of media ownership.

**Mr. Maude:** We receive many representations on the concentration of media ownership both where it concerns ownership of a single medium and where cross-media ownership is the issue.

**Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what discussions his Department has had at a European Community level regarding media ownership in the Community becoming concentrated in the hands of a few individuals; and if he will take an initiative to establish a framework to control cross-media ownership on a European level.

**Mr. Newton:** Cross-media ownership at a European level is currently being considered in discussions on the proposed EC merger control regulation and by the Council of Europe.

### Estate Agents

**Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to introduce a requirement for estate agencies to maintain at least one partner or employee who has obtained relevant professional qualifications.

**Mr. Forth:** I have no plans to introduce such a requirement. The concern of the public with respect to estate agency is overwhelmingly about standards of ethics rather than competence. In my view the proposals for a code of practice with statutory support which I announced to the House on 21 June are the best way to raise standards.

### Eastbourne Water Company

**Mr. Gow:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether following information given to the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment by the hon. Member for Eastbourne in the House on 26 May, *Official Report*, columns 1291 and 1292, and to the Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs in a letter dated 6 July, there will be an investigation into the affairs of the Eastbourne Water Company under the provisions of the Financial Services Act 1986.

**Mr. Forth:** The information, which related to the Eastbourne water employees' share club, has been considered, but it is not sufficient to establish that the powers of investigation in section 105 of the Financial Services Act 1986 would be available in this case, or that adequate grounds exist for mounting an investigation.

### Beer

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he has any plans for introducing a technical definition for low alcohol and non-alcohol beers.

**Mr. Ryder:** I have been asked to reply.

Proposals to amend the Food Labelling Regulations 1984 by restricting the use of the term "low alcohol" to alcoholic drinks not exceeding 1·2 per cent. alcohol by volume (abv) were circulated to interested organisations for comment on 19 April 1989. Schedule 7 of the Food Labelling Regulations 1984 already restricts the use of the terms "alcohol free", "non-alcoholic" and "dealcoholised". The term "alcohol-free" is restricted to drinks with an alcoholic strength of not more than 0·05 per cent. abv; the term "non alcoholic" to non-alcoholic wine intended for communion or sacramental purposes and the term "dealcoholised" is restricted to drinks from which the alcohol has been extracted and which have an alcoholic strength of not more than 0·5 per cent. abv.

### Road Building (EEC)

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he will be making on behalf of United Kingdom contractors as a result of

United Kingdom county surveyors' refusal to take up polymer modified bitumens in marked contrast to other European Economic Community member states.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I have been asked to reply.

The Department will continue to liaise with both county surveyors and contractors on developments in the roadbuilding applications of polymer modified bitumens. We are keen to introduce into the Department's specification for highway works any relevant new material as quickly as it can be demonstrated that it gives both value for money and adequate long term performance. For example, we have undertaken to introduce manganes modified bitumens in rolled asphalt surfacing in mid-1990, subject to continuing satisfactory trials.

Many counties are already using some polymer modified bitumens. The degree of acceptance and use of these materials depends upon the ability of the supplier to assure the customer of their technical and cost effectiveness.

### Computers

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps he is taking to ensure open system standards allowing communication and common software between makes of computer.

**Mr. Newton:** The United Kingdom Government have long promoted the benefits of adopting international open systems standards. The Department currently has a three-year £17 million programme of support for development of open systems standards and to assist development of conformance test facilities in this country. A certification regime to facilitate implementation of those standards is also being pursued.

On 11 May, I launched a further three-year, £12 million programme for open systems technology transfer. This will increase awarenes of the benefits of using products which conform to open systems standards and stimulate the introduction of new products. Demonstrator projects will show the benefits of such products in real applications.

### Textiles

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will take action to ensure that the Textile Products (Indication of Fibre Content) Regulations are drawn to the attention of all carpet manufacturers in the United Kingdom to encourage conformity and avoidance of false labelling of carpets; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins:** In the light of the information currently available to me I do not consider any new initiative needs to be taken with United Kingdom manufacturers of carpets. The current principal regulations—the Textile Products (Indications of Fibre Content) Regulations 1986—were introduced in March 1986 and became legally binding on 29 May 1987. Wide publicity was given to these regulations, and to the explanatory guidelines "Fibre Content Labelling of Textiles", during 1986 by the British Carpet Manufacturers Association and by my Department. In enforcing these regulations, which apply to textile products generally, local authority trading standards departments undertake routine inspections and advisory visits at the point of manufacture. I have noted a recent report of the West Yorkshire trading standards service stating that none of the United Kingdom-manufactured carpet samples tested were found to have their wool content labelled incorrectly.

### Inspections

**Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list *(a)* all those agencies with powers delegated to them to carry out inspections and *(b)* the number of inspections carried out under those delegated powers for the years 1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987 and 1 April 1988 to 31 March 1989.

**Mr. Maude:** The only agency with powers delegated to it to carry out statutory investigations under legislation for which my Department is responsible is the Securities and Investments Board, which has powers to carry out investigations under sections 94 and 105 of the Financial Services Act. Both powers are exercisable concurrently with my Department. Delegation of the section 105 power came into effect on 19 May 1987 and delegation of section 94 power came into effect on 6 May 1988. The board's annual report for 1988-89, laid before Parliament on 6 June, records that 25 section 105 investigations were commenced in the period 1 April 1988 to 31 March 1989.

### Shipbuilding

**Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will place in the Library the documents relating to the understanding between his Department and the European Economic Community concerning the future of shipbuilding in Sunderland.

**Mr. Newton:** My Department has remained in touch with the European Commission since the notification of aid to British Shipbuilders was made last December. A paper covering those exchanges relevant to NESL is being prepared and will be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

### "British Business"

**Mr. Burt:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans for the future of his Department's weekly magazine, *British Business.*

**Mr. Newton:** My right hon. and noble Friend has decided that *British Business* magazine should cease publication in the autumn. Alternative arrangements are being made for the publication of essential regulatory information and similar announcements from the Department. Responsibility for all the economic statistical series for which the Department is at present responsible will shortly transfer to the Central Statistical Office, and I understand that the CSO is considering how to deal with the series which currently appear in *British Business.*

### Invest in Britain Bureau

**Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects to publish the annual report of the Invest in Britain bureau; and whether he has any plans further to improve the arrangements for attracting inward investment to the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Newton:** The Department's Invest in Britain bureau records in its annual report, published today, that foreign owned companies announced 330 direct investment projects into the United Kingdom during 1988.

Based on information provided by the companies themselves, it is estimated that these projects will create or safeguard over 44,000 jobs—a 21 per cent. increase over 1987. This was the fourth successive year in which the bureau recorded over 300 investment decisions. Once again the United Kingdom received over one third of all United States of America and Japanese investment into the EC. I am arranging for a copy of the report to be placed in the House of Commons Library.

This excellent performance reflects the strength of the United Kingdom economy and our success in creating a climate that encourages enterprise and initiative. But we must build on our success, and in particular take full advantage of the inward investment potential arising from the creation of the single European market.

The Invest in Britain bureau is the Government's principal inward investment agency and represents the United Kingdom as a whole. The bureau undertakes publicity abroad and responds to enquiries from potential inward investors in collaboration with the three territorial agencies representing Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the various regional organisations and local representative bodies in England. The territorial agencies and English regional organisations also undertake publicity abroad for their own areas and these arrangements will continue.

We have, however, decided to improve the promotion of England as a location for inward investment by setting up within my Department a new unit to co-ordinate publicity for England and to encourage greater co-operation between English regional organisations, in particular by organising collaborative market research and marketing initiatives. We have also decided to increase the resources of the Invest in Britain bureau to enable it to respond to increasing demand. The costs will be met in the current financial year from within existing provision.

### Palatine Graphic Arts Co. Ltd.

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the date, grant or assistance, and purpose of each application for financial assistance made by Palatine Graphic Arts Company Limited, Liverpool in each year from 1980 to date;

(2) pursuant to his reply of 4 July, *Official Report*, columns *110-12*, concerning Palatine Graphic Arts Company Limited, Liverpool, on which dates the six jobs created under the grant approved on 15 December 1986 became vacant.

**Mr. Atkins** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* The financial assistance made by the DTI to Palatine Graphic Arts Co. Ltd., Liverpool in each year from 1980 to date was as follows:

*Regional Development Grant I*
*For the provision of approved plant, machinery and building works*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1980 | Nil |
| 1981 | Nil |
| 1982 | 1,030 |
| 1983 | 636 |
| 1984 | 10,664 |
| 1985 | 21,146 |
| 1986 | 55,419 |
| 1987-89 | Nil |

*Regional Development Grant II*
*For the provision of assets and creation of jobs within approved projects*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1980-86 | Nil |
| 1987 | 26,840 |
| 1988 | 6,471 |
| 1989 | 75,000 |

*Regional Selective Assistance*
*For the purchase of new equipment and the creation or safeguarding of jobs*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1986 | 6,461 |

Six of the jobs which comprised part of an approved project under the regional development grant II scheme became vacant, five of these became vacant on 5 May 1988 and one on 5 June 1989. It should be noted that however the period of conditions relating to these six jobs expired on 27 June 1988.

### Unsolicited Telephone Calls

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will have discussions with the British Direct Marketing Association concerning the establishment of a register of consumers not wishing to receive unsolicited telephone calls.

**Mr. Atkins** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* No, this is a matter for the Director General of Telecommunications, who has, indeed, held discussions with the British Direct Marketing Association and other interested parties about the establishment of such a register.

### Chlorofluorocarbons

**Sir Hugh Rossi:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what discussions he is having with the manufacturers of refrigeration equipment for the clear labelling of the chlorofluorocarbon contents of their products in order to assist the public to make a choice in their purchases in furtherance of Government policy for the protection of the ozone layer.

**Mr. Atkins** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* As my hon. Friend will be aware, this Government's policy is to encourage all industries using chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons to reduce their use to the maximium extent. In addition it is open to manufacturers of their own volition to label their products with such details as my hon. Friend suggests subject to the provisions of the Trade Descriptions Act.

## HEALTH

### Cancer Screening

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Royal Marsden hospital consulted with his Department about mobile breast cancer-screening unit leaflet advertisement campaigns to women in New Malden in April and offering screening at a cost of £50; if his Department gave guidance to the Royal Marsden hospital about conducting such schemes; how many similar schemes are operating throughout England and Wales; and if he will make a statement on the operation of such schemes.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** My Department was made aware of the Royal Marsden hospital special health authority's private cancer screening service earlier this year. In May, the authority was advised that the principle of offering private cancer screening as a means of income generation was being considered by my Department and that a formal view on the scheme could not be given at that time. We shall shortly be informing health authorities of the types of screening procedures which should be excluded in future from income-generation schemes.

We are aware of a handful of other similar income-generation schemes in England. Any similar programmes in Wales are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

### Detained Patients

**Mr. Hayward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health who is responsible for providing clothing to persons transferred from the prison system to the care of the National Health Service under the provisions of the Mental Health Act 1983, as a detained patient.

**Mr. Freeman:** Prisoners transferred to the care of the National Health Service under the provisions of the Mental Health Act 1983 become patients. Such patients bring their private clothing with them from prison but health authorities are expected to provide clothing for those patients who are unable to provide it from their own resources and who are not obtaining it from any other source.

### Self-Governing Hospitals

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what salary and other remunerated pay Sheila Masters, the director of finance for the self-governing hospital units, receives; and on what kind of contract she is engaged.

**Mr. Mellor:** Sheila Masters is on a contractual appointment to the National Health Service management executive. The contract is with her employers, Peat Marwick McLintock, who pay her salary etc.

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what salary and performance-related pay Peter Griffiths, the head of the self-governing hospitals unit, receives; and on what kind of contract he is engaged.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Mr. Peter Griffiths is presently employed as general manager by South East Thames RHA on the normal terms and conditions of service for such appointments. He is made available to the NHS management executive by the RHA on a part-time basis. This arrangement will become full-time in September; the details are still under discussion.

### Benzodiazepines

**Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what adverse reports have been received by the Committee on Safety of Medicines about the effect of benzodiazepines on patients.

**Mr. Mellor:** To date the Committee on Safety of Medicines has received over 750 reports of adverse reactions which may be associated with benzodiazepines. These reports describe over 300 different kinds of reactions. A report of a suspected adverse drug reaction does not necessarily mean a causal relationship. The committee carefully monitors all issues of drug safety and where necessary issues advice by means of its bulletin "Current Problems" to doctors, dentists and pharmacists. In the case of benzodiazepines, "Current Problems" has drawn attention to various adverse reactions in February 1978 (No. 3), February 1981 (No. 5) and January 1988 (No. 21). Copies are in the Library.

**Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information his Department has as to the most widely accepted medical assessment of the average withdrawal period from benzodiazepines.

**Mr. Freeman:** The hon. Member may wish to refer to the Departmental publication "Guidelines of Good Clinical Practice in the Treatment of Drug misuse" which includes advice on withdrawal from benzodiazepines. A copy of this publication is in the Library.

**Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his estimate of how many children under the age of 16 years are addicted to benzodiazepines.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not have this information.

**Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will discuss with the leaders of the pharmaceutical industry the setting up of a compensation scheme for those people whose lives have been ruined or damaged by benzodiazepine addiction.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have no plans to do so.

**Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will take steps to reduce benzodiazepine prescriptions in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Government have made every effort to ensure that doctors are aware of the problems which can arise from prolonged treatment with benzodiazepines and to encourage good prescribing habits. We have no plans to introduce restrictions.

**Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department has sought to encourage the development of guidelines for the maximum recommended period for children under the age of 16 years to be prescribed benzodiazepines; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** No. It is up to doctors to prescribe the drugs properly in accordance with the guidance available to them.

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the price of benzodiazepines is the on cost by pharmacists.

**Mr. Mellor:** When pharmacists dispense a medicine, they are paid, in addition to the appropriate dispensing fee and container allowance, the basic price of the medicine, less a discount deduction, averaging 8·3 per cent. of the basic price, plus on cost of 5 per cent. of the basic price.

### Social Charter

**Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the Government support all the health provisions contained within the social charter.

**Mr. Freeman:** The preliminary draft Community charter of fundamental social rights refers to:

- the enjoyment by every worker of satisfactory health . . . conditions, more especially in his working environment;
- the provision for the elderly of medical assistance specifically suited to their needs and as wide an access as possible to that assistance;

Health and safety in the workplace is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment; in other respects, these requirements are met within the National Health Service.

### Patient Throughput, Mersey Region

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the patient throughput per available bed in the Mersey region in the latest available year.

**Mr. Freeman:** During 1987-88, the number of in-patient cases treated per available bed in Mersey regional health authority was 20·8.

### EC Social Security Regulations

**Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to make medical treatment in the European Community more widely available to British nationals after 1992 under the European Community social security regulations.

**Mr. Mellor:** No.

### NHS Staffing

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give for each special health authority, district health authority and regional health authority for England the numbers of *(a)* medical and dental staff, *(b)* nursing and midwifery staff, *(c)* administration and clerical staff, *(d)* ancillary staff, *(e)* others and *(f)* total employees, expressed (i) as total numbers and (ii) as whole-time equivalents for 30 December 1988.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not at present have information to this level of detail.

When September 1988 information becomes available a copy will be placed in the Library.

### Student Nurses

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many health authorities have not been able, or will not be able, to offer their student registered general nurses full-time jobs at the end of their training contracts in 1989.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not hold such information centrally.

### Supply Nurses

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many supply nurses are currently being used by Gateshead health authority;

(2) how many jobs are currently available in Gateshead health authority for qualified registered general nurses.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not hold this information centrally. The hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of Gateshead health authority for the information.

### Drug Dependency

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent in 1988, or the latest year for which figures are available to assist *(a)* hard drug addicts and *(b)* people dependent on benzodiazepines.

**Mr. Freeman:** In 1988-89, the Government allocated nearly £5·5 million to regional health authorities specifically for the development of drug misuse services, including services for those dependent on benzodiazepines. A further £4 million was to be used to help prevent the spread of HIV among drug users and from them to the wider population. The total sum allocated to regional health authorities for all drug services has been increased to almost £15 million in 1989-90.

The following grants were made in 1988-89 under the central drugs initiative to services specifically for those dependent on benzodiazepines:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| North East Council on Addictions | 21,144 |
| West Cumbria Mind (Copeland) | 14,117 |

In addition, over £2·5 million was allocated to 63 other projects some of which also provided a service for those dependent on benzodiazepines.

The Department also made a grant of £25,000 to the National Association of Mental Health (MIND) to produce a national directory of services for this group as well as public information material on benzodiazepines and a grant of £10,000 to Tranx(UK) Ltd.

### Opticians

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Southport of 4 July, *Official Report,* column *150,* why ophthalmic opticians receive a larger fee than ophthalmic medical practitioners for a National Health Service sight test; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The fee for ophthalmic opticians includes an allowance towards the overhead costs of running their practices. Ophthalmic medical practitioners on the other hand, usually work on a peripatetic basis. The overheads they incur are therefore that much lower and this is reflected in their fee.

### Eye Tests

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans to reduce the incentive for general practitioners to refer patients to National Health Service hospitals for eye tests; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not accept that general practitioners will seek to refer their patients to hospital for routine sight tests when a normal sight test by an ophthalmic optician would meet the patient's needs. It is also unlikely that the hospital eye service would accept such patients.

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he yet has sufficient statistical information available to assess how eye test charges have contributed to preventive health care.

**Mr. Mellor:** No. Information on the number of people receiving sight tests since 1 April is not yet available. We intend to carry out a survey into numbers when the market has had time to become more stable.

### Mr. Graham Gaskin

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes to social work practice, in particular a client's right to access to a file, he intends to make following the successful appeal of Mr. Graham Gaskin to the European Court of Human Rights.

**Mr. Mellor:** In the light of the court's judgment in this case, we are taking a careful look at the present general arrangements for social arrangements for social services clients to have access to their files to see whether any changes are needed.

### Infection Control

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many district control of infection officers have been employed in the National Health Service for the most recent year for which figures are available;

(2) what has been the cost to the National Health Service of employing district infection control officers for 1989;

(3) when the role of district control of infection officers was established within the National Health Service; and on what authority.

**Mr. Mellor:** We announced last July that we accepted the principle of a greater commitment to the public health advanced by the Chief Medical Officer's report on "Public Health in England" and that we would be taking a number of steps to carry forward its recommendations. These include issuing in December 1988 a circular to health authorities based on the report's conclusions about their responsibilities to improve the health of the population, including the prevention, surveillance and control of communicable disease. Health authorities have been asked to report by 31 December 1989 on the action that they have taken to implement the circular and to move towards management arrangements which assign executive responsibility for surveillance, prevention and control of communicable disease and infection, in their districts to a named medical practitioner of consultant status.

These consultants will be known as consultants in communicable disease control and will exercise comparable functions to those recommended for district control of infection officers whose appointment was recommended in "Public Health in England".

Further guidance was issued to health authorities in February 1988 on the role of consultants in communicable disease control and in June on procedures for their appointment.

It will not be possible to provide detailed figures on the number of such consultants appointed until health authority reports are received at the end of the year. The redeployment of consultant manpower resulting from their appointment is not expected to increase costs to the National Health Service.

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people acquired infection, other than through food poisoning, in National Health Service hospitals during 1988; how many died as result of those infections; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** The latest available data held centrally is for 1985, when the estimated number of cases of post-operative infection was 15,540. The number of deaths with underlying cause of post operative infection in 1988 was 15.

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list any independent organisations, other than the National Health Service, charged with monitoring and reporting infectious disease levels within the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The organisation charged with monitoring infectious disease levels throughout England and Wales is the Communicable Disease Surveillance centre of the Public Health Laboratory service which is part of the National Health Service. The centre produces a weekly communicable disease report and an annual report on infectious disease levels. The annual report is produced jointly wth the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Also within the National Health Service, registered medical practitioners are statutorily required to notify cases of certain infectious disease to local authority proper officers who are required statutorily to pass data on to other bodies including district health authorities and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. Serious outbreaks of disease and individual cases of particular diseases must also be reported to the chief medical officer.

### Abortion

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give the conceptions in 1987 which *(a)* led to maternities and *(b)* were terminated under the terms of the Abortion Act 1967, among residents of England and Wales aged under 16 years, 16 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years, 30 to 34 years, 35 to 39 years and 40 years and over.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested is given in the table. All pregnancies of women usually resident in England and Wales which led to a maternity or termination by abortion under the 1967 Act are included (and those which led to a spontaneous abortion are excluded). The figures are provisional.

*England and Wales*

| *Age of woman at conception* | *Number of conceptions in 1987* Total conceptions | *Conceptions leading to maternities* | *Conceptions terminated by abortion* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 850,400 | 689,452 | 160,948 |
| Under 16 | 9,135 | 4,185 | 4,950 |
| 16-19 | 114,017 | 76,355 | 37,662 |
| 20-24 | 261,876 | 211,444 | 50,432 |
| 25-29 | 264,646 | 233,178 | 31,468 |
| 30-34 | 139,041 | 120,131 | 18,910 |
| 35-39 | 50,787 | 38,186 | 12,601 |
| 40 and over | 10,898 | 5,973 | 4,925 |

*Note:* Data are provisional.

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give the numbers of conceptions in 1987 which *(a)* led to maternities and *(b)* were terminated under the terms of the Abortion Act 1967, among residents of England and Wales aged under 14 years, 14 years, 15 years, 16 years, 17 years, 18 years and 19 years, giving in each case the rate per 1,000 population in each age group.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested is given in the table. All pregnancies of women usually resident in England and Wales which led to a maternity or termination by abortion under the 1967 Act are included (and those which led to a spontaneous abortion are excluded). The figures are provisional.

*Numbers and rates of conceptions leading to maternities and abortions 1987*

*England and Wales*

| *Age of woman at conception* | *Number of conceptions in 1987* | | | *Conception rate per 1,000 woman in age group* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Total conceptions* | *Conceptions leading to maternities* | *Conceptions terminated by abortion* | *Total conceptions* | *Conceptions leading to maternities* | *Conceptions terminated by abortion* |
| Under 14[1] | 346 | 145 | 201 | 1·1 | 0·5 | 0·7 |
| 14 | 1,899 | 736 | 1,163 | 5·8 | 2·2 | 3·5 |
| 15 | 6,890 | 3,304 | 3,586 | 19·7 | 9·4 | 10·2 |
| 16 | 16,512 | 9,415 | 7,097 | 44·1 | 25·1 | 19·0 |
| 17 | 24,809 | 15,915 | 8,894 | 67·1 | 43·0 | 24·1 |
| 18 | 33,648 | 23,114 | 10,534 | 87·7 | 60·3 | 27·5 |
| 19 | 39,048 | 27,911 | 11,137 | 101·1 | 72·2 | 28·8 |

*Note:* Data are provisional.

[1] Rate per 1,000 women aged 13.

## Abortion

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many abortions were performed in 1988 on residents and non-residents at each of the following gestational ages; les than nine weeks, nine to 12 weeks, 13 to 16 weeks, 17 to 20 weeks, 21 to 24 weeks and 25 weeks and over on each of the following grounds: one with other, two alone, three with or without two, four alone, four with any other except one and five and six.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested is shown in the table:

*Abortions performed on residents and non-residents of England and Wales, 1988[1] by gestation period and statutory grounds*

| *Statutory grounds* | *Gestation period (weeks)* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Less than 9* | *9-12* | *13-16* | *17-20* | *21-24* | *25*[2] | *NS*[2] |
| 1 (with any other) | 99 | 314 | 41 | 20 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| 2 (alone) | 55,892 | 82,024 | 14,879 | 8,000 | 2,819 | 1 | 9 |
| 3 (with or without 2) | 5,138 | 10,609 | 1,560 | 500 | 94 | — | 1 |
| 4 (alone) | 83 | 191 | 210 | 566 | 147 | 18 | — |
| 4 (with an other except 1) | 158 | 270 | 55 | 56 | 21 | — | — |
| 5 or 6 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

[1] Provisional date.

[2] Not stated.

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many abortions were performed in 1988 on residents and non-residents at each of the following gestational ages: less than nine weeks, nine to 12 weeks, 13 to 16 weeks, 17 to 20 weeks, 21 to 24 weeks and 25 weeks and over, on women in each of the following age groups: under 15 years, 15 years, 16 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years, 30 to 34 years, 35 to 39 years, 40 to 44 years and 45 years and over.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information is shown in the table:

*Abortions performed on residents and non-residents of England and Wales, 1988[1] by gestation period and age of mother.*

| *Age* | *Gestation period (weeks)* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *less than 9* | *9-12* | *13-16* | *17-20* | *21-24* | *25+* | *NS*[2] |
| Less than 15 | 205 | 403 | 146 | 98 | 69 | — | — |
| 15 | 624 | 1,477 | 425 | 266 | 90 | — | 1 |
| 16-19 | 10,398 | 21,637 | 4,837 | 2,901 | 1,021 | 4 | 6 |
| 20-24 | 19,458 | 30,097 | 5,665 | 3,065 | 963 | 7 | 2 |
| 25-29 | 14,148 | 18,968 | 2,854 | 1,423 | 490 | 5 | 3 |
| 30-34 | 8,751 | 10,852 | 1,461 | 704 | 235 | 5 | — |
| 35-39 | 5,490 | 6,964 | 883 | 453 | 130 | 2 | — |
| 40-44 | 2,116 | 2,804 | 396 | 199 | 83 | — | — |
| 45+ | 178 | 204 | 41 | 33 | 9 | — | — |
| Not stated | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 | — | — | — |

[1] Provisional data.

[2] Not stated.

## Births

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give for each year for which the information is available the total numbers of live and still births in England and Wales which were jointly registered by parents who were not married to each other but lived at the same address.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested is shown in the table.

*Live and stillbirths, England and Wales, 1986 to 1988 jointly registered by parents who were not married but lived at the same address*

| | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Live births | 65,844 | 75,572 | 87,601 |
| Stillbirths | 331 | 387 | 393 |
| TOTAL | 66,175 | 75,959 | 87,994 |

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give the total numbers of live births and stillbirths in England and Wales in 1988, giving the numbers of each that were *(a)* legitimate, *(b)* jointly registered illegitimate and *(c)* solely registered illegitimate.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested in shown in the table.

| | *Legitimate* | *Jointly registered illegitimate* | *Solely registered illegitimate* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Live births | 516,225 | 123,408 | 53,944 |
| Stillbirths | 2,318 | 574 | 482 |
| TOTAL | 518,543 | 123,982 | 54,426 |

### Food Safety

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many outbreaks of food poisoning occurred following the consumption of food prepared in National Health Service hospitals during 1988; how many people were infected; of that total, how many fatalities occurred; which hospitals were involved; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** According to the Public Health Laboratory service, in 1988, 21 outbreaks of food poisoning or salmonellosis were reported in hospitals in England and Wales. Information is not available about how many of these outbreaks occurred following the consumption of food prepared or brought into NHS hospitals. Information on which hospitals were involved is not available centrally. At least 281 people are known to have been affected in these outbreaks. Four deaths were recorded, of which one was attributed to the infection associated with the outbreak.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what action he is proposing to take to ensure the wholesomeness of imported paté;

(2) whether he will now review all existing procedures relating to the quality control of imported foods.

**Mr. Mellor:** All imported foods are subject to the Imported Food Regulations 1984, which prohibit the importation of unfit food. Whenever food is found to be unfit, either on importation or subsequently in this country, action is taken to prevent its sale for human consumption, to advise the exporting country so that action may be taken to deal with contamination at source.

We are reviewing food legislation generally but we have no plans at present to change the procedures.

### Privatisation

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to privatise *(a)* the public health laboratory service and *(b)* the communicable disease surveillance centre; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** There are no such current plans.

### HIV Infection

**Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what evidence is required in order to satisfy his Department that on the balance of probabilities an HIV infection was acquired at work.

**Mr. Mellor:** Under the National Health Service (Injury Benefits) Regulations, cover is available to all National Health Service employees who contract a disease which is attributable to their employment. Each claim is considered on its merits and cases of HIV infection would be treated no differently.

The Department would look carefully at the circumstances surrounding each claim, taking note of the duties undertaken in the employment and the claimant's description of how he or she thought the disease was contracted. The Department's medical advisers would then consider this information against the ways in which the disease may be contracted. Where title was in doubt, expert medical opinion would be sought from a consultant specialising in the particular field of medicine as to whether it was more likely than not that the infection had been acquired in the course of National Health Service employment.

### Smoking

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice his Department gives to pregnant women about the adverse affects of smoking on the health of their unborn child; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave him on Monday 17 July.

### NHS Finance

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the health authorities that are running at a deficit after the first two months of the 1989-90 financial year.

**Mr. Freeman:** Cash limits are issued to health authorities on an annual basis and it is for each authority to plan its spending for the year within the sums available. Health authority cash limit spending is monitored by the Department on a regional basis and there is no evidence that any region will exceed its cash limit for the year.

### Bonus Schemes

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has received any representations about a possible conflict of interest as a result of performance-related bonus schemes.

**Mr. Mellor:** No.

### Infant Mortality

**Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish the Government's response to the Social Services Select Committee report on perinatal, neonatal and infant mortality; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Government's response was published today. It sets out details of a major new initiative on infant mortality. The infant mortality rate for England and Wales is at a new low and clinical advances and improved services mean more babies survive than ever before. There is no room for complacency however. Every effort must be made to secure further improvements and address issues such as geographical variations and the phenomenon of sudden infant death.

Service improvements will continue and the Government do not accept that these call for central earmarking of resources or attempts at central direction on the way services are provided locally. What is needed now is to find out more precisely why particular babies die and how as many as possible of these deaths can in future be prevented. This is the focus of the initiatives set out in the response. A central feature is the application of the principles of clinical audit set out in the White Paper "Working for Patients" through the development by the professions concerned of a confidential inquiry into at least a sample of stillbirths and infant deaths.

This central initiative is supplemented by measures designed to increase the National Health Services' capacity to undertake specialist paediatric pathological examinations and to establish, on a comprehensive basis, regional epidemiological surveys of stillbirths and neonatal deaths. In addition the Medical Research Council has agreed to carry out a major review of the present literature relating to sudden infant death syndrome and to advise on what further research is needed.

The Government believe that these initiatives will achieve the objectives, which it shares with the Select Committee—namely, continued improvement in the maternity services and health services for the newborn in the decades to come in order to reduce infant mortality to the lowest possible levels.

### Mental Institutions

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by health authority *(a)* the number of long-stay discharges from mental institutions in the past two years, *(b)* the number of re-settlements and *(c)* the decades in which these people were admitted and the age at discharge.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 12 July 1989]:* The information in the form requested is not available centrally. We have placed in the Library tables showing discharges, excluding transfers and deaths, from National Health Service mental handicap and mental illness hospitals and units in England, during 1985 and 1986, after a stay of one year or more. The discharges are shown by district health authority, decade of admission and age on discharge.

### NHS Policy Board

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proposals he has to include a nursing representative on the National Health Service Policy board.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* The members of the NHS Policy board have been appointed as individuals, not as representatives of sectional interests. We therefore have no plans to include a representative of any professional group, including nurses, on the policy board.

### Measles Vaccination

**Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many perfectly fit babies have been brain-damaged as a result of measles vaccination in each of the past 10 years.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is not available. That which is available is in the table.

*Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme: Awards made where measles vaccine or a vaccine containing a measles element was the claimed cause of severe disablement: 1979-89*

| *Year* | *Number of awards* |
|---|---|
| [1]1979-80 | 34 |
| 1981 | 2 |
| 1982 | 3 |
| 1983 | 4 |
| 1984 | 1 |
| 1985 | — |
| 1986 | — |
| 1987 | — |
| 1988 | — |
| [2]1989 | 1 |

[1] Separate figures not available.

[2] To 30 June.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Scotland

Q21. **Mr. Malins:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the constitutional position of Scotland.

**The Prime Minister:** Since January, I have received a number of letters about the constitutional arrangements in Scotland. Under this Government's policies, Scotland, within the union, has enjoyed a record standard of living and record social services.

### British Broadcasting Corporation

Q23. **Mr. Marland:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the role of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government have received a number of comments about the role of the British Broadcasting Corporation, in response to the White Paper on broadcasting.

### Dogs

Q27. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the control of dogs.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a number of representations. I welcome the stricter proposed powers of enforcement in the Dangerous Dogs Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake (Dame J. Fookes).

### Aerospace Industry

Q37. **Mr. Fishburn:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the aerospace industry.

**The Prime Minister:** I often receive representations about various aspects of the aerospace industry. It is one of Britain's major industries and the country can be proud of its success.

### Twechar, Monklands

Q62. **Mr. Tony Clarke:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to visit Twechar, in the Monklands, West constituency.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### Somerset

Q76. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she is planning to pay an official visit to Somerset.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### Social Charter

Q88. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister if the EEC Commission is now empowered to issue the social charter directives to the various Councils of Ministers in light of the majority vote at the recent meeting of the European Council at Madrid; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** The Commission of the European Communities has the right to put forward proposals to the Councils of Ministers in areas within its competence at any time. No decision was taken on the Commission's preliminary draft proposal for a Community charter of fundamental social rights at the Madrid meeting of the European Council. The conclusions of that meeting are a reflection of the views of all the heads of Government present, who noted that at the Social Affairs Council on 12 June, 11 delegations had accepted draft conclusions on a preliminary draft Community charter submitted by the Commission. The United Kingdom made clear that it was not prepared to accept those draft conclusions.

### OECD

Q100. **Mr. Goodlad:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received representations regarding the role of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

### Northern Ireland (Terrorism)

Q108. **Mr. Leigh:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding terrorism in Northern Ireland.

**The Prime Minister:** Since April this year the only representations I have received concerned the possible effects on the level of terrorist activity in south Fermanagh following the removal of a vehicle checkpoint.

### Water Privatisation

Q136. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Prime Minister what representations she has received over water privatisation.

**The Prime Minister:** I receive many representations about water privatisation, which represents the quickest and most cost-effective way of achieving even higher standards of water quality.

### Energy Efficiency

Q141. **Mr. Alexander:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding energy efficiency.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a number of recent representations on energy efficiency on which there is an excellent record; 26 per cent. more goods are produced now than in 1973 for a lower consumption of energy.

### Northern Ireland

Q148. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to pay an official visit to Northern Ireland.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### United Nations

Q163. **Sir Hugh Rossi:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the role of the United Nations.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received and continue to receive a number of representations from hon. Members and members of the public regarding the role of the United Nations. The United Nations performs many valuable tasks not least in overseeing Namibia's transfer to independence and in the United Nations Environment Programme to which the United Kingdom is now the world's second largest contributor.

### Motor Industry

Q169. **Mr. John Browne:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the British motor industry.

**The Prime Minister:** I have not received any recent representations. The industry has recovered strongly during the past decade. United Kingdom car production last year was at its highest since 1977 and Britain is increasingly seen as an attractive place for inward investment or joint venture in the motor industry.

### Mid Kent

Q171. **Mr. Rowe:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to make an official visit to mid Kent.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### Demographic Trends

Q181. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations she has received concerning demographic trends in the United Kingdom.

**The Prime Minister:** Representations have been received from time to time on a variety of subjects related to demographic trends in the United Kingdom; generally these related to specific topics, groups, or areas—for example, mortality, projections, the elderly—and are dealt with accordingly. The most recent comprehensive review by the Registrar General was the "Demographic Review —a report on population in Great Britain" published in 1987. In addition in OPCS quarterly journal "Population Trends" there is an annual review of the most recent trends; as well as the articles in each issue on particular topics.

### Oakenshaw

Q192. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to Oakenshaw.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### GATT

Q193. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding negotiations in the general agreement on tariffs and trade.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a number of representations on the GATT Uruguay round negotiations from foreign Governments and United Kingdom interests. The Government will continue to act against protectionism and to sustain the world open trading system.

### Debt

Q195. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Prime Minister what action she proposes to take to reduce the debt burden on the poorest countries.

**The Prime Minister:** After the initiatives of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, agreement was reached at the Toronto economic summit last year and subsequently implemented in the Paris club for concessional rescheduling of the debt of the poorest countries which are following approved adjustment programmes. The United Kingdom and other official creditors have reduced interest rates to prevent debt compounding. In addition, the United Kingdom has written off £1 billion of old aid loans, of which nearly £300 million were for sub-Saharan Africa, and all the United Kingdom's new aid to the poorest countries is now in grant form. The United Kingdom has also agreed to subsidise loans of up to about £750 million through a special IMF facility, the enhanced structural adjustment facility, of £4·5 billion to the poorest nations. That makes the United Kingdom the largest single contributor to the interest subsidy account. These are all substantial measures which the United Kingdom is taking to alleviate the debt burden on the poorest countries.

### WEU

Q196. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the role of the Western European Union.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

### Council of Europe

Q200. **Sir Anthony Grant:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the role of the Council of Europe.

**The Prime Minister:** I am not aware of any such representations.

### Chlorofluorocarbons

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will seek a meeting with the director of the Property Services Agency to establish the cost of replacing all refrigerators in Government departments and at Nos. 10 and 11 Downing street with refrigerators with reduced levels of chlorofluorocarbons.

**The Prime Minister:** No. Refrigerators do not release chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in normal use, but do when they are scrapped. To scrap them before the end of their useful life would therefore increase emissions of CFCs, not reduce them.

### Madrid Summit

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Prime Minister what matters with regard to environmental protection in the European Community countries were discussed at the recent European Community summit in Madrid.

**The Prime Minister:** The European Council welcomed the recent achievements of the Environment Council. Discussion also covered the problems of desertification, erosion and deforestation within the Community, the Community's responsibility in the face of global threats and the need to preserve tropical forests. A recent Commission proposal to establish a European environment agency was noted and referred to the Environment Council. For further details I refer the hon. Member to the full conclusions of the Council which have been placed in the Library of the House.

### Greenhouse Effect

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has had any recent meeting with the Chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board to discuss the greenhouse effect.

**The Prime Minister:** I met the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board on 26 April 1989.

### Engagements

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 July.

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 July.

**Mr. French:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 July.

**Mr. Stern:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 July.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 18 July.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. I also attended the ceremony to mark the arrival of His Highness the President of the United Arab Emirates. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I shall be attending a state banquet and Buckingham palace.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Land Registry

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the prospects of compulsory registration by Her Majesty's Land Registry by March 1990.

**The Attorney-General:** The Lord Chancellor has recently approved an order, the effect of which will be to extend the system of compulsory registration of title on sale of land to the whole of England and Wales by 1 December 1990.

### Petty Officer John Black

**Mr. Latham:** To ask the Attorney-General whether, pursuant to his letter to the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton dated 4 May, he will make a statement on the progress of his proposed application to the High Court under section 13 of the Coroners Act 1988 that the inquest into the death of the late Petty Officer John Black should be re-opened.

**The Attorney-General:** The Treasury Solicitor has prepared a draft application and accompanying affidavit in support. When approved by me the application will be entered in the Crown Office.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Unemployment Benefits

127. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much money has been paid in unemployment benefit to claimants in the Liverpool travel-to-work area during the past 10 years.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The information requested is as follows:

*Estimated amount of unemployment benefit paid to claimants in the Liverpool travel-to-work area*

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 20·5 |
| 1980-81 | 41·4 |
| 1981-82 | 55·7 |
| 1982-83 | 49·3 |
| 1983-84 | 48·7 |
| 1984-85 | 51·3 |
| 1985-86 | 61·4 |
| 1986-87 | 55·8 |
| 1987-88 | 47·0 |
| 1988-89 | 36·3 |

### Vaccine Damage (Compensation)

**Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many victims of vaccine damage have been paid compensation in each of the past 10 years.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The information requested is not available. The numbers of awards made under the vaccine damage payments scheme are as follows.

| *Year* | *Awards made* |
|---|---|
| 1980 | 255 |
| 1981 | 74 |
| 1982 | 43 |
| 1983 | 42 |
| 1984 | 29 |
| 1985 | 26 |
| 1986 | 15 |
| 1987 | 10 |
| 1988 | 4 |
| [1]1989 | 1 |

[1] To 30 June.

**Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any plans to amend the vaccine damage payments scheme in the light of the decision on vaccine and causation by Mr. Justice Loveday.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the right hon. Member for Stoke on Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) on 23 March at column *773*.

### Family Credit

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what number and proportion of family credit recipients pay income tax.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The latest information relates to the end of March 1989, when income tax was being deducted from earnings in 199,000 cases, being about 71 per cent. of all family credit cases.

### Child Benefit

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the net saving per annum of abolishing child benefit.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Precise savings would depend on assumptions made about the effects on other benefits and numbers claiming income-related benefits. In broad terms it is estimated the net savings would be somewhat over £3 billion at 1989-90 values.

### Social Fund

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will explain the reasons for the delay in publishing year end data for the social fund for the financial year 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The year end social fund data were subject to a number of accuracy checks. Data were published as soon as possible after completion of this action.

### Pensioners

**Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what is his estimate of the number of pensioners in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom who have paid insufficient contributions and who therefore do not receive the full basic national insurance retirement pension;

(2) what is his estimate of the number of pensioners in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom who have their basic national insurance retirement pension enhanced by increments from (i) deferring the date of their retirement, (ii) contributing to the graduated pension scheme, and (iii) contributing to SERPS.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd** *[holding answer 26 June 1989]:* As at 30 September 1988, 1,577,470 pensioners were in receipt of a basic national insurance retirement pension enhanced by increments earned by deferring the date of their retirement. 4,457,360 pensioners were in receipt of the basic state pension and graduated pension; 163,720 were in receipt of Graduated Pension only; 2,382,350 pensioners were in receipt of the basic state pension and SERPS; 9,130 were in receipt of SERPS only.

As at 30 September 1988, 810,050 pensioners were in receipt of less than the full basic national insurance retirement pension because of insufficient contributions.

*Note:* Information is available for Great Britain only.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Employment Training

10. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has about the number of ET placements in the north-west region.

**Mr. Nicholls:** We estimate that over 21,200 people on employment training in the north-west region are on placements with employers or projects on any one day.

18. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has about the number of ET placements in the northern region.

**Mr. Nicholls:** We estimate that over 17,700 people on employment training in the northern region are on placements with employers or projects on any one day.

56. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to review payments to trainees on Employment Training.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) on 20 June 1989 at column *113*.

74. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he collects as a result of participation on ET schemes; and if he will give a breakdown for the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

**Mr. Nicholls:** A range of information is collected to enable the Training Agency to manage employment training effectively. The main information about ET entrants and trainees in the Yorkshire and Humberside region is given in the tables.

*Employment Training—Northern region*
*Programme information*

| *Category* | *Latest information* | *Numbers* |
|---|---|---|
| Filled places at training managers | 30 June | 23,000 |
| Starts at training managers | 30 June | 36,600 |
| Referrals from Employment Service to training agents | 30 June | 77,300 |
| Action plans completed at training agents | 30 June | 47,200 |
| Contracted places as at | May | 28,500 |
| Estimated project placements as at | 30 June | 12,200 |
| Estimated employer placements as at | 30 June | 5,500 |
| Child care allowances during April | 28 April | 253 |

*Table 2*

*Employment Training—Yorkshire and Humberside region*
*Trainee characteristics April 1989*

| *Category* | *Latest information* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Sex | April | |
| Male | | 71 |
| Female | | 29 |
| Duration of Unemployment | April | |
| 0-5 months | | 25 |
| 6-12 months | | 33 |
| 13-23 months | | 11 |
| 24 months+ | | 30 |
| Ethnic Origin[1] | April | |
| 1 | | 89 |
| 2 | | 2 |
| 3 | | 4 |
| 4 | | 1 |
| 5 | | 3 |
| PWD[2] cumulative 5 September to 31 March | | 10 |

[1] Ethnic origin.
1 - White.
2 - Black/African/Caribbean.
3 - Indian/Pakistan/Bangladeshi/Sri Lankan.
4 - None of these.
5 - I prefer not to say.

[2] PWD - People with disabilities. Those trainees answering whether they had a long-term health problem or disability which affected the type of work they could do.

.. = less than 0·5 per cent.

Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

89. **Mr. Rowe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the progress of employment training.

**Mr. Nicholls:** There are 194,000 people currently in training throughout the country which is a tremendous achievement after only 10 months of operation.

90. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he collects as a result of participation on ET schemes; and if he will give a breakdown for the northern region.

**Mr. Nicholls:** A range of information is collected to enable the Training Agency to manage employment training effectively. The main information about ET entrants and trainees in the northern region is given in the tables.

*Table 1*

*Employment training—Northern region*
*Programme information*

| *Category* | *Latest information* | *Numbers* |
|---|---|---|
| Filled places at training managers | 30 June | 23,000 |
| Starts at training managers | 30 June | 36,600 |
| Referrals from Employment Service to training agents | 30 June | 77,300 |
| Action Plans completed at training agents | 30 June | 47,200 |
| Contracted places as at | May | 28,500 |
| Estimated project placements as at | 30 June | 12,200 |
| Estimated employer placements as at | 30 June | 5,500 |
| Child Care Allowances during April | 28 April | 253 |

*Employment training—Yorks and Humberside region*
*Trainee characteristics April 1989*

| *Category* | *Latest Information* | *Percentage age* |
|---|---|---|
| *Sex* | April | |
| Males | | 71 |
| Females | | 29 |
| *Duration of Unemployment* | April | |
| 0–5 months | | 25 |
| 6–12 months | | 33 |
| 13–23 months | | 11 |
| 24 months+ | | 30 |
| *Ethnic Origin*[1] | April | 89 |
| 1 | | 2 |

| *Category* | *Latest Information* | *Percentage age* |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | | 4 |
| 3 | | 4 |
| 4 | | 1 |
| 5 | | 3 |
| PWD[2] cumulative 5 September to 31 March | | 10 |

*Notes:*

[1] Ethnic origin
1—White
2—Black/African/Caribbean
3—Indian/Pakistan/Bangladeshi/Sri Lankan
4—None of these
5—I prefer not to say

[2] PWD—People with disabilities. Those trainees answering whether they had a long-term health problem or disability which affected the type of work they could do.

.. = less than 0·5 per cent.

Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

92. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the latest figures on the percentage of workers on employment training who have received the £200 bonus.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Information is not available about the number of people on Employment Training who have received a training bonus of £200.

## Employment Legislation

16. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of public opinion regarding the Government's reform of trade union legislation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** At each stage of the step-by-step reform of industrial relations and trade union legislation which the Government have pursued since 1979 we have submitted our proposals for public consultation, and we have been able to frame legislation in the knowledge that the measures will be welcomed by employers, employees and the public generally. Our election manifestos, which contained many of our proposals in this area, have also clearly gained widespread public support.

60. **Mr. Waller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he is considering any further reform of trade union legislation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Green Paper "Removing Barriers to Employment", published on 20 March, contains the Government's current proposals for the further reform of industrial relations and trade union law. In addition we will not hesitate to come forward with proposals for legislation to help prevent industrial action such as that recently experienced in certain public services, if appropriate.

## Visual Display Units

17. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proposals he has to ensure the health and safety of visual display unit operators.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Health and Safety Executive has published guidance on work with visual display units. We are currently discussing further proposals with our European partners.

## Youth Training Scheme

19. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many YTS places in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom had not been filled at the most recent available place.

**Mr. Cope:** At the end of May 1989 there were 13,800 unfilled YTS places in Scotland and 141,200 unfilled YTS places in Great Britain.

20. **Mr. Redwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which European country had the fastest fall in unemployment over the past two years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** Over the past two years the unemployment rate has fallen faster in the United Kingdom than in any other major European country, and is now lower than the European community average.

24. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many jobs have been created in the last five years in the United Kingdom, and in the other member states of the European Community; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** Employment estimates are not yet available for many EC countries after 1987. Over the five-year period from 1982 to 1987 the increase in employment in the United Kingdom was greater than in the rest of the European Community combined. The table shows the data for each EC country for 1982 to 1987.

*Civilian employment (thousands)*

| | *1982* | *1987* | *Change* | *Percentage change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 23,584 | 25,060 | 1,476 | 6·3 |
| Belgium | 3,578 | 3,621 | 43 | 1·2 |
| Denmark | 2,476 | 2,663 | 187 | 7·6 |
| Germany | 25,177 | 25,440 | 263 | 1·0 |
| Greece | 3,501 | 3,597 | 96 | 2·7 |
| Spain | 11,043 | 11,383 | 340 | 3·1 |
| France | 21,240 | 20,976 | −264 | −1·2 |
| Ireland | 1,131 | 1,067 | −64 | −5·7 |
| Italy | 20,297 | 20,584 | 287 | 1·4 |
| Luxembourg | 158 | 169 | 11 | 7·0 |
| Netherlands | 5,009 | 5,251 | 242 | 4·8 |
| Portugal | 3,959 | 4,169 | 210 | 5·3 |
| EC12-United Kingdom | 97,569 | 98,920 | 1,351 | 1·4 |

*Sources:* United Kingdom (ED) Rest of EC (Eurostat).

The Government have placed great stress on creating the right economic conditions in which enterprise can flourish and jobs can be created. Since 1980 the United Kingdom has had the fastest growing economy in western Europe and we are now in our eighth successive year of sustained growth. As a result of this, employment has increased greatly.

26. **Mr. Livingstone** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the level of unemployment in the London borough of Brent.

**Mr. Lee:** In June 1989 the number of unemployed claimants in the London borough of Brent was 8,815, a fall of 4,674 or 36·7 per cent. over the last 12 months. The comparison is slightly affected by the change of coverage in the count from September 1988 due to the changes in benefit regulations affecting young people under 18 years of age.

34. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the increase in the number of self-employed people in work since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

119. **Sir Bernard Braine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were self-employed in the United Kingdom in June 1979 and June 1989; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** Between June 1979 and March 1989, the latest date for which estimates are available, there was an increase of 1,173,000, or 62 per cent., in the number of self-employed people in the United Kingdom. It is estimated that over 3 million people are now self-employed. Self-employed people now represent 12 per cent. of the work force in employment.

35. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the increase or decrease in each standard planning region of *(a)* male employees, *(b)* female full-time employees and *(c)* female part-time employees since June 1979.

**Mr. Lee:** The available information is as follows:

*Changes March 1979 to March 1989 in the number of employees in employment by region*

| *Region* | *Males* *Change (thousands)* | *Percentage change* | *Females all* *Change (thousands)* | *Percentage change* | *Females full time* *Change (thousands)* | *Percentage change* | *Females part time* *Change (thousands)* | *Percentage change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| South East | −77 | −1·8 | 515 | 16·4 | 317 | 16·7 | 198 | 15·9 |
| East Anglia | 96 | 23·3 | 93 | 33·9 | 44 | 28·1 | 49 | 41·6 |
| South West | −34 | −3·7 | 105 | 16·2 | 62 | 16·9 | 43 | 15·3 |
| West Midlands | −135 | −10·1 | 74 | 8·2 | 28 | 5·3 | 46 | 12·5 |
| East Midlands | −27 | −2·9 | 90 | 14·2 | 38 | 10·3 | 52 | 19·7 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | −181 | −15·2 | 42 | 5·3 | −5 | −1·1 | 47 | 13·3 |
| North West | −338 | −21·9 | −21 | −1·9 | −62 | −9·3 | 41 | 8·8 |
| North | −118 | −16·1 | 21 | 4·2 | −20 | −6·9 | 41 | 20·5 |
| Wales | −129 | −21·0 | −3 | −·7 | −35 | −14·0 | 32 | 20·6 |
| Scotland | −176 | −14·7 | 40 | 4·6 | −31 | −5·6 | 71 | 22·5 |
| Northern Ireland | −41 | −13·7 | 9 | 4·1 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

n/a = not available

38. **Mr. Hayward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the United Kingdom's current youth unemployment rate; what is the figure of other European countries; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** The table shows unemployment rates prepared on a harmonised basis and seasonally adjusted, for those aged under 25 years, for April 1989 in the United Kingdom and other European countries as published by the statistical office of the European Communities. The youth unemployment rate in the United Kingdom is about half the European Communities average.

*Harmonised unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) for under 25 year olds, April 1989*

| *European country* | *Total percentage rate* |
|---|---|
| Spain | 36·6 |
| Italy | 32·0 |
| Greece[1] | 24·4 |
| Ireland | 22·3 |
| France | 21·5 |
| Belgium | 17·7 |
| Netherlands | 16·3 |
| Portugal[2] | 12·0 |
| Denmark | 9·8 |
| Germany | 5·2 |
| Luxembourg | 3·8 |
| United Kingdom | 9·2 |
| EC average | 18·0 |

[1] April 1987.

[2] March 1989.

41. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the number of people of working age in employment in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* other European countries.

**Mr. Lee:** The United Kingdom has a higher proportion of people of working age in employment than any other European Community country except Denmark. The latest available European Community figures are for 1987 when the United Kingdom had 68 per cent. of persons aged 15 to 64 in employment. Most other European Community countries had less than 60 per cent. of such persons employed. Denmark had 77 per cent. employed (Scandinavian countries outside the European Community had similar figures) and Germany and France had 61 per cent. and 59 per cent. respectively.

**Mr. Conway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment in how many parliamentary constituencies in the United Kingdom unemployment has fallen by over 50 per cent. since January 1986; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** Between January 1986 and June 1989 unemployment fell by 50 per cent. or more in 359 parliamentary constituencies in Great Britain. The comparison is affected by the change in compilation of the count in March 1986 to reduce over recording and changes in benefit regulations in September 1988 affecting young people under 18.

54. **Mr. Orme:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many and what percentage of claimants in Salford, East were classified as long-term unemployed in April; and what plans he has to reduce this number.

**Mr. Lee:** In April 1989 the number of unemployed claimants, in Salford, East who had been unemployed for over 12 months was 2,664 or 49 per cent. of the total unemployed. Employment training is specifically designed to give the longer-term unemployed the opportunity to acquire the skills they need to return to work.

62. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the change in the number of long-term unemployed people aged 24 to 45 years in the last two years.

**Mr. Lee:** Unemployment figures are not available for the requested age group. However, the number of unemployed claimants aged 25 to 44 years in the United Kingdom who had been unemployed for over 12 months fell by 134,515 or 45·6 per cent. in the two years to April 1989.

70. **Dr. Woodcock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what major Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country has the sharpest fall in the rate of unemployment over the past two years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** Over the past two years the unemployment rate has fallen faster in the United Kingdom than in any other major OECD country. The unemployment rate in the United Kingdom is now lower than the European Community average.

77. **Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the fall in the numbers of long-term unemployed in the north-west.

**Mr. Lee:** The number of unemployed claimants in the north-west who had been unemployed for over 12 months fell by 37,633 or 25·1 per cent. in the year to April 1989.

79. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the latest unemployment figure for the Rugby/Daventry travel-to-work area.

**Mr. Lee:** In June 1989 the number of unemployed claimants in the Rugby and Daventry travel-to-work area was 1,929.

81. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he has taken to reduce unemployment in the last year.

**Mr. Lee:** Nearly 3 million new jobs have been created over the last six years and there are now more people in work in this country than ever before in our history. The Government will continue to provide the right economic conditions to create new jobs and reduce unemployment further. In addition, an extensive range of employment and training measures are already in place to help unemployed people back into work.

85. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment by what amount unemployment in the parliamentary constituency of Bury, South has changed over the last six months for which figures are available.

**Mr. Lee:** In June 1989 the number of unemployed claimants in the Bury, South constituency was 2,352, a fall of 434 over the past six months.

94. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the current level of unemployment in Bexley; and what was the level three years ago.

**Mr. Lee:** In June 1989 there were 3,825 unemployed claimants in Bexley local authority area compared with 8,603 in June 1986, a fall of 4,778 or 55·5 per cent. over the last three years. The comparison is slightly affected by the change of coverage in the count from September 1988 due to the benefit regulations affecting those young people under 18.

104. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the latest total for the number of people registered as unemployed in the Basildon constituency and for the corresponding period in each of the last four years.

**Mr. Lee:** The table shows the number of unemployed claimants in Basildon parliamentary constituency for each June from 1985 to 1989. The figures are affected by the change in the compilation of the count in March 1986 to reduce over-recording and by the change of coverage from September 1988 resulting from changes in benefit regulations affecting people aged under 18 years. Direct comparisons cannot therefore be made.

*Unemployment in Basildon parliamentary constituency*

| *June* | *Number of unemployed claimants* |
|---|---|
| 1985 | 6,767 |
| 1986 | 6,448 |
| 1987 | 5,345 |
| 1988 | 3,701 |
| 1989 | 2,670 |

107. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are now unemployed in the north-west.

**Mr. Lee:** In June 1989 there were 256,764 unemployed claimants in the north-west.

110. **Mr. Dover:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current levels of unemployment in the United Kingdom and in the EEC.

**Mr. Lee:** Over the past two years the rate of unemployment has fallen faster in the United Kingdom than in any other major industrialised country, and is now lower than that of the majority of our European partners. The unemployment rate in the United Kingdom is also lower than the European Community average.

*International comparisons of Unemployment*
*Standardised unemployment rates[1]—Seasonally adjusted*

| | *Percentage rate* | *Latest month* |
|---|---|---|
| Spain | 17·7 | February |
| Ireland | [1](17·0) | May |
| Italy | [1](10·7) | May |
| France | 10·1 | April |
| Belgium | 9·5 | April |
| Netherlands | 9·4 | January |
| Greece | [1](7·4) | April 1987 |
| Denmark | [1](7·1) | May |
| United Kingdom | 6·6 | April |
| Germany | 5·5 | March |
| Portugal | 5·5 | November |
| Austria | [2](4·8) | February |
| Norway | 4·8 | February |
| Finland | 3·8 | April |
| Luxembourg | [1](1·8) | April |
| Sweden | 1·6 | April |
| EC average | [1](9·3) | May |

[1] For those EC countries for which no OECD standardised rates are available, similar harmonised rates compiled by the Statistical

Office of European Communities (EUROSTAT) are shown in brackets. These showed the United Kingdom rate at 6·8 per cent. in May compared with the EC average of 9·3 per cent.

[2] National definitions. Standardised rates not available for Austria.

117. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of the United Kingdom population is in employment; and what is the European average.

**Mr. Lee:** In 1987 nearly 45 per cent. of the total population of the United Kingdom were in employment, compared with an average of around 39 per cent. for Europe as a whole (excluding eastern Europe).

### HIV-positive Workers

21. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any evidence of discrimination in the workplace against persons who are HIV positive; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** There is little significant evidence available, but my right hon. Friend is concerned about any unjustified workplace discrimination. In most occupations there is no risk of infected persons passing HIV to others. There is no justification for employers to treat people who are HIV-positive differently from other employees or job applicants.

### Strikes

22. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has received any representations about strikes in the public sector; and if he will make a statement.

27. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has received any representations about unofficial strikes; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend has received many representations concerning the recent irresponsible and unnecessary industrial action in certain public sector services. The Government are considering what needs to be done to protect the public interest, and we will not hesitate to come forward with appropriate proposals for legislation if that proves necessary.

32. **Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many strike ballots have been held before proposed strikes in the last five years; how many resulted in a vote not to strike; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service is currently aware of some 1,023 ballots which took place between 26 September 1984 and 31 May 1989 of which 115 were against taking strike action.

33. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet the general secretary of the Trades Union Congress to discuss the current wave of strikes; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend has no current plans for such a meeting.

37. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to introduce legislation to stop unofficial strikes; and if he will make a statement.

44. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any proposals for the prohibition of strikes in essential transport services; and if he will make a statement.

58. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to introduce measures to curb the right of public sector workers in vital industries to undertake strike action.

72. **Mr. Sayeed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking to combat strikes in the public sector; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Recent industrial action in certain public sector services has been irresponsible and unnecessary. The Government are considering what needs to be done to protect the public interest, and we will not hesitate to come forward with appropriate proposals for legislation if that proves necessary.

48. **Mr. Franks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are employed in *(a)* the public sector and *(b)* the private sector; and how many working days were lost through strikes in each of 1988-89.

**Mr. Nicholls:** An article in "Economic Trends", December, page 119, set out the Central Statistical Office's estimates of the breakdown of employment in the public and private sectors in the United Kingdom at mid-1988 as 6,327,000 and 19,077,000 respectively. Revisions to employment data since the compilation of the article will be reflected in the next annual publication.

Working days lost through stoppages of work due to industrial disputes in the 12 months ending March 1989 were 1,561,000 in the public sector and 1,296,000 in the private sector.

A copy of "Economic Trends" is available in the Library.

65. **Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many working days were lost through strikes in the public sector in 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

82. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many working days were lost through strikes in the public sector and the private sector of the economy in 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** In the 12 months to March 1989, working days lost through stoppages of work due to industrial disputes totalled 1,561,000 in the public sector and 1,296,000 in the private sector. The public sector figure includes 1,163,000 working days lost in the postal disputes in August and September last year and the private sector figure includes 754,000 working days lost in a shipyard dispute. Expressed in terms of days lost per thousand employees, the public sector figure is 247, the corresponding private sector figure 68.

68. **Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many strikes there have been in the last 12 months; and how many there were 10 years ago.

**Mr. Nicholls:** In the 12 months to May 1989, a total of 700 stoppages of work due to industrial disputes are provisionally recorded as being in progress. In the corresponding period 10 years ago, the 12 months to May 1979, a total of 2,453 stoppages were recorded as in progress. These statistics exclude stoppages involving fewer than 10 workers or lasting less than one day unless the total number of working days lost is greater than 100.

88. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of the causes of the rise in working days lost through industrial disputes in April compared to March of the current year.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The latest estimates of working days lost through stoppages of work caused by industrial disputes for March and April of this year are 74,000 and 89,000 respectively. There is normally a significant fluctuation from month to month in the number of working days lost and the March to April increase is smaller than the median of other monthly increases over the past 36 months. The April 1989 figure is, apart from the April 1988 figure, the lowest for any April since 1954.

93. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many days have been lost by industrial action in the first six months of the current year; and what was the comparable figure for each of the previous 10 years.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The estimate for June 1989 of working days lost through stoppages of work due to industrial disputes is not yet available; but for the first five months of 1989 it is provisionally recorded that 435,000 working days were lost. The comparable figures for the first five months in each of the previous 10 years are as follows:

*Working days lost through stoppages of work due to industrial disputes in first five months of each year*

| *Year* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 8,076,000 |
| 1980 | 2,341,000 |
| 1981 | 2,341,000 |
| 1982 | 2,510,000 |
| 1983 | 2,125,000 |
| 1984 | 8,669,000 |
| 1985 | 5,012,000 |
| 1986 | 1,082,000 |
| 1987 | 2,626,000 |
| 1988 | 1,226,000 |

98. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet representatives of the Trades Union Congress to discuss strikes on London transport, British Rail and in the docks; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend has no such plans. The resolution of these disputes is a matter for the parties concerned.

113. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many days were lost in industrial disputes *(a)* in the most recent 12 month period for which figures are available and *(b)* in 1978.

**Mr. Nicholls:** A total of 2,911,000 working days were lost through stoppages of work due to industrial disputes in the most recent 12-month period ending in May 1989. In 1978, a total of 9,405,000 working days were lost.

## Small Businesses

23. **Mr. Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has recently met the chairman of the National Training Task Force to discuss the establishment of new small businesses; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met Brian Wolfson, chairman of the National Training Task Force, on Wednesday 12 July when development funding for the first training and enterprise councils was announced. These new, local, employer-led organisations will help establish a coherent network of support for new and small businesses by, among other things, building upon help provided by local enterprise agencies and others.

83. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he plans to meet the chairman of British Venture Capital Association to discuss the development of small businesses; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** I have no immediate plans to meet the chairman of the BVCA in the near future, but I do have regular contact with the association.

91. **Mr. Carttiss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will report what the Government are doing to help small businesses; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** The Government's overall policy towards small businesses is to create a climate in which they can flourish and to tackle their unmet needs for professional advice and access to finance. The principal Government measures of particular help for small businesses include:

The small firms service, which provides information and business counselling to new and established small firms and to those wishing to start a business. The SFS gives support to local enterprise agencies which also receive grants from the Government;

The Rural Development Commission, which provides similar advice and technical services to small firms in rural areas;

The enterprise initiative, launched by the DTI in January 1988, which offers access to specialised consultancy in a number of key business areas. particular emphasis is being given to single European market issues;

The recently extended loan guarantee scheme, under which small firms can secure bank loans with the backing of substantial underwriting from the Department;

The business expansion scheme which encourages equity investment in small firms by allowing tax relief on eligible investment;

The enterprise allowance scheme which provides an allowance of £40 per week to previously unemployed people to make up for loss of benefit in their first year of self-employment; and

A range of training programmes operated by the Training Agency which take account of new and established small firms' business training needs.

The success of these measures is reflected in continued steady healthy growth of the small firms sector.

## Training and Enterprise Councils

25. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what role the training and enterprise councils will have in setting up and advising small business; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** Training and enterprise councils will be contractually responsible to the government within their areas for three programmes currently run by the Training Agency area offices—the enterprise allowance scheme, business growth training and small firms counselling—and they will work with local enterprise agencies and others to ensure a coherent network of support for small firms.

36. **Mr. Dickens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many expressions of interest he has received in setting up training and enterprise councils; and if he will make a statement.

45. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what progress has been made in establishing training and enterprise councils; and if he will make a statement.

53. **Mr. Tracey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the number of expressions of interest he has received to set up training and enterprise councils.

75. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received from employers on training and enterprise councils; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The National Training Task Force has now received 32 applications for training and enterprise council development funding. This is an excellent response. On 12 July my right hon. Friend announced the 19 applications which have so far been approved. These are listed as follows.

*List of training and enterprise council areas that have been approved for development funding as at 12 July*

*South East:*
- Essex
- Hampshire
- Hertfordshire
- Isle of Wight
- Milton Keynes

*South West:*
- Devon and Cornwall
- Dorset

*West Midlands:*
- Birmingham
- North West Midlands
- Walsall

*Yorkshire and Humberside:*
- Calderdale and Kirklees
- Sheffield

*North West:*
- Cumbria
- East Lancashire
- Oldham
- Rochdale
- South and East Cheshire

*Northern:*
- Teesside
- Tyneside

## Wages Councils

28. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of employees in the clothing manufacturing industry are paid at the wages council minima.

105. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of employees in the licensed non-residential industry are paid at wages council minima.

106. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of employees in the retail food industry are paid at wages council minima.

118. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of employees in the retail food industry are paid at wages council minima.

**Mr. Nicholls:** No estimates are made of the proportion of workers paid on the wages council minimum in individual trades. Recent estimates for the wages council system as a whole suggest that a substantial proportion of workers—probably as many as two thirds are paid more than minimum.

67. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of the impact that the proposed abolition of wages councils will have on pay rates in Yorkshire and Humberside.

**Mr. Nicholls:** No such assessment has been made. However, the removal of wages councils minima would enable employers to offer, and workers to accept, jobs at rates which would previously have been unlawful. It is not possible to measure this greater flexibility on pay levels, but it is unlikely that there would be any general reduction in the earnings of workers in wages council trades.

## Industrial Action (Ballots)

29. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received about the need for a code of practice on industrial action balloting; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Various representations on the draft statutory code of practice were received and are now being considered. My right hon. Friend will, in due course, decide whether to proceed with the draft, and if so whether to modify it in the light of these representations.

114. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many pre-strike ballots were carried out by trade unions in 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Advisory, Concilliation and Arbitration Service is currently aware of some 490 ballots which took place between 1 January 1988 and 31 May 1989.

## Fraud Investigators

30. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much money the employment fraud investigators saved the Exchequer in the year 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** The net benefit saved from this Department's fraud investigators' work during the year 1988-89 was £62·5 million.

## Tourism

31. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will discuss with the chairman of the British Tourist Authority the provision of training facilities for employees and employers in the tourist industry; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** I am keen to encourage improvements in training in the tourism industry, and the education and training unit, run jointly by the English tourist board and the British Tourist Authority, has made a most valuable contribution to that.

49. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he willl make a statement on his plans to encourage British tourism.

99. **Mr. Robert Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he intends announcing the results of his tourism review; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** I refer my hon. Friends to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 6 July to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham Yardley (Mr. Bevan) at column *278*.

51. **Mr. Charles Wardle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet the chairman of the English tourist board to discuss the tourism review.

**Mr. Lee:** I frequently meet the chairman of the ETB to discuss a range of matters affecting tourism.

64. **Mr. Bevan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a further statement on the tourism review.

**Mr. Lee:** I have nothing to add to the answer given to my hon. Friend by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 6 July at column *278*.

87. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the role of regional tourist boards following the tourism review.

**Mr. Lee:** I expect the English tourist board to devolve many of its activities and direct substantially more of its funding to the regional tourist boards. This will enable the RTBs to increase their marketing activities and their direct involvement in encouraging the development of tourism locally.

100. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet the chairmen of the regional tourism boards to discuss the tourism review; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** I hope to meet the chairmen of the regional tourist boards very shortly.

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report*, the total Government expenditure on the British Tourist Authority and each of the national tourist boards for each year from 1978 to the latest available year at current and constant 1988 prices.

**Mr. Lee:** Responsibility for the Scottish, Wales and Northern Ireland tourist boards lies with their respective Secretaries of State. The figures requested for the British Tourist Authority and the English tourist board (including the payments of grants under section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969, administered by the English tourist board) are:

*Current prices*

*£ million*

|  | *BTA* | *ETB* | *Section 4 scheme* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 11·0 | 5·0 | 1·3 |
| 1979-80 | 12·8 | 6·1 | 4·2 |
| 1980-81 | 14·2 | 7·3 | 4·2 |
| 1981-82 | 16·2 | 8·7 | 4·0 |
| 1982-83 | 18·1 | 10·5 | 4·5 |
| 1983-84 | 17·0 | 8·6 | 6·3 |
| 1984-85 | 17·3 | 9·2 | 8·4 |
| 1985-86 | 17·1 | 8·8 | 7·9 |
| 1986-87 | 20·4 | 10·3 | 9·5 |
| 1987-88 | 22·0 | 11·3 | 12·0 |
| 1988-89 | 23·7 | 12·6 | 13·2 |

*Constant 1988 prices*

*£ million*

|  | *BTA* | *ETB* | *Section 4 scheme* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 24·3 | 11·0 | 3·0 |
| 1979-80 | 24·7 | 11·8 | 8·1 |
| 1980-81 | 22·9 | 11·8 | 6·8 |
| 1981-82 | 23·4 | 12·6 | 5·8 |
| 1982-83 | 24·3 | 14·1 | 6·0 |
| 1983-84 | 21·7 | 11·0 | 8·1 |
| 1984-85 | 21·1 | 11·2 | 10·3 |
| 1985-86 | 19·8 | 10·2 | 9·1 |
| 1986-87 | 22·8 | 11·5 | 10·6 |
| 1987-88 | 23·4 | 12·0 | 12·8 |
| 1988-89 | 23·7 | 12·6 | 13·2 |

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the total planned expenditure on the British Tourist Authority and each of the national tourist boards for 1989-90, 1990-91, and 1991-92, respectively.

**Mr. Lee:** Responsibility for the Scottish, Wales and Northern Ireland tourist boards lies with their respective Secretaries of State.

In 1989-90, planned expenditure on grant-in-aid to the British Tourist Authority and to the English tourist board is £24·8 million and £13·2 million respectively. In addition, £10 million will be available to fulfil commitments made under the section 4 scheme prior to its suspension.

Expenditure plans for following years will be determined under public expenditure survey arrangements in the normal way.

## TVEI

39. **Mr. Haselhurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the progress of the technical and vocational education initiative.

**Mr. Cope:** The technical and vocational education initiative is making excellent progress. TVEI is helping to prepare young people for working life by ensuring that their education is directly relevant to the world of work. All education authorities in Great Britain are now taking part in TVEI: by September this year, some two thirds of them will have moved from the pilot phase to extending TVEI to all schools and colleges.

### Labour Costs

40. **Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the effect of changes in unit labour costs in manufacturing over the last year on employment.

**Mr. Lee:** Over the last year average earnings in manufacturing have risen by about 9¼ per cent., but the 5½ per cent. increase in productivity has kept the increase in unit wage costs over the period to May 1989 down to 3 per cent. In the year to May 1989, employees in employment in manufacturing fell by 37,000.

There are many factors that affect employment over a short period of time and it is not possible to give an estimate of the effects of unit wage costs. However, if manufacturing in this country is to remain competitive it is vital that industry keeps unit wage costs under control.

### Disabled People (Legislation)

43. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has received the report recently published by the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR), and the Southwark law project on the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** I have received the report and noted the contents. The conclusions reached in it are being considered in the internal review of services which the Department provides to support the employment and training of people with disabilities.

61. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many inspections were carried out during the last financial year of employers' premises, to check that obligations under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 were being met; and how many of these revealed infringements.

63. **Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many inspections were carried out during the last financial year of employers' premises, to check that obligations under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 were being met; and how many of these revealed infringements.

**Mr. Lee:** In the year from April 1988 to April 1989 quota enforcement officers carried out 2,050 inspections of employers records under the terms of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944. The number of inspections revealing infringements was 632. The inspections were targeted particularly on employers known not to hold a permit to recruit people not registered as disabled, and thus did not cover a representative cross section. The employers concerned undertook in future to comply fully with their obligations under the Act.

120. **Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what aspects of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 are being considered in his Department's internal review of employment assistance to disabled adults; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** The review is considering all aspects of my Department's services for people with disabilities which are provided under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944. These include the quota scheme, sheltered employment for people with severe disabilities, and the arrangements at national and local level for advising the Secretary of State on matters concerning the employment and training of people with disabilities. It is proposed to consult widely about the conclusions of the review.

### Minimum Wages

46. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many prosecutions for breaches of minimum wages legislation were undertaken in 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989 to date; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The numbers of prosecutions for all offences under wages council legislation for the years requested are as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1985 | 2 |
| 1986 | 3 |
| 1987 | 8 |
| 1988 | 11 |
| [1]1989 | 2 |

[1] To date.

The policy of the wages inspectorate under all Governments has been to seek compliance with the law by advice and persuasion and to consider prosecution only where an offence is deliberate or repeated.

### Engineering

47. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the average hours of full-time workers in the engineering industry including overtime.

**Mr. Lee:** The latest available information, for April 1988, is published in table X2, part B of the 1988 new earnings survey report. A copy of the report is in the Library.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the average numbers of hours of work of full-time employees in the engineering industry in each year since 1980.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Estimates compiled from the new earnings survey are provided in the table. Data on a consistent industry classification basis are not available prior to 1982.

*Average total weekly hours*[1]
*Engineering industry*[2]*—Great Britain*

| *April* | *Hours* |
|---|---|
| 1982 | 40·9 |
| 1983 | 41·1 |
| 1984 | 41·6 |
| 1985 | 41·8 |
| 1986 | 41·9 |
| 1987 | 41·9 |
| 1988 | 42·3 |

[1] Full time employees on adult rates of pay whose earnings in the survey week were not affected by absence. However, 1982 relates to males aged 21 and over and females aged 18 and over.

[2] Covers Standard Industrial Classification (1980) Classes 32 (Mechanical Engineering), 33 (Manufacture of Office Equipment and Data Processing Equipment), 34 (Electrical and Electronic Engineering) and 37 (Instrument Engineering).

## Dock Workers

50. **Mr. Janman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received about the port-by-port negotiations between dock workers and the port employers; and if he will make a statement.

84. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has received any representations about the need for port-by-port negotiations between the dock workers and their employers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend has received no representations about port-by-port negotiations between former registered dock workers and their employers. Following the abolition of the restrictions of the dock labour scheme, employers and employees must decide what form of negotiations about the terms and conditions of 9,200 former registered dock workers meets the needs of the ports concerned.

The Government note that terms and conditions of 30,000 other workers in scheme and non-scheme ports are the product of successful local negotiations between employers and employees, and that port employers have offered similar talks to former registered dock workers. The Government believe that the offer should be taken up, in the interests of the dock workers themselves and the ports on which their jobs depend.

## Labour Market

52. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking to improve the labour market; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** We have taken positive steps to improve the labour market by developing an effective range of employment and training measures, improving industrial relations, promoting enterprise in small firms and self-employment and removing barriers to employment. These measures have made a major contribution to the massive improvement in the employment situation in the last three years and will be vigorously pursued in the future.

## Picketing

55. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to amend the code on picketing; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend has no current plans to amend the statutory code of practice on picketing.

## Skill Shortages

57. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what measures he is taking to reduce skill shortages; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Government are continuing to encourage employers to define and tackle their own skill needs through the introduction of training and enterprise councils and business growth training. The Government are also helping young people and the unemployed to learn new skills through YTS and employment training.

## Enterprise Allowance

59. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of the extent to which the enterprise allowance scheme provides value for money in creating new jobs; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** Both the IBBs efficiency unit and the National Audit Office have in recent reports endorsed the scheme as a value-for-money employment measure. The net cost per person who leaves the unemployed register is £1,846. This figure takes into account flow backs in the form of tax, national insurance and savings in benefit and the effects of deadweight and displacement, but excludes administration costs. Latest survey evidence shows that 65 per cent. of those who complete a full year on the scheme are still trading two years after the allowance has ended, and that for every 100 businesses continuing at this three year point, 114 additional jobs have been created.

103. **Mr. Bright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the progress of the enterprise allowance scheme.

**Mr. Nicholls:** A total of 446,000 people have started their own business under the enterprise allowance scheme since it began in 1982. Some 84,000 people are currently in receipt of the allowance.

## Social Charter

66. **Mr. Marland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement setting out his reasons for opposition to the proposed European social charter.

**Mr. Cope:** I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Butler) on Tuesday 20 June 1989 at column *120*.

116. **Mr. Curry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what indications he received of the intentions of the French presidency to proceed with the social charter following the EC Employment Ministers meeting in Auxerre; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** I attended the informal meeting of EC Employment Ministers at Auxerre on 10 July and agreed that the United Kingdom would take part in the working group which the French presidency now intend to set up to consider a social charter. Our view remains that the provisional draft charter proposed by the European Commission is unnecessary and unacceptable and that it will do nothing to contribute to job creation which was agreed to be the top social priority at the European Council in Madrid last month. We will be making clear in our discussions during the French presidency the problems and disadvantages we see in the Commission's proposed charter. We will continue to stress the very important point agreed in Madrid that national legislation and voluntary agreements have a legitimate role in achieving the Community's social dimension, and not everything has to be the subject of directives from the European Community.

### ACAS

69. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many industrial disputes have been referred to the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Information on the number and types of conciliation cases dealt with by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service is published in its annual report. In 1988 the service received a total of 1,163 requests for conciliation. In over 80 per cent. of the cases no industrial action took place. It is entirely for the parties concerned to decide whether they wish to seek the assistance of ACAS in settling disputes.

### Part-time Workers

71. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on action taken to improve the working conditions and employment protection of part-time workers in the past decade.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Government believe that the interests of all workers, including part-timers, are best served by their policy since 1979 of reducing barriers to economic efficiency.

### Industrial Training Boards

73. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment with which industrial training boards he has still to agree a levy for the financial year 1989-90.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend has agreed proposals from six industry training boards to collect levy from their industries in the financial year 1989-90. No further levy proposals are expected for this period.

### Trade Union Immunities

76. **Mr. Day:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received seeking the restoration of trade union immunities as they existed prior to the passing of the Employment Act 1981; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Representations seeking the repeal of the measures taken to reform industrial relations and trade union law since 1979 are made to my right hon. Friend from time to time, from various sources. These reforms have, however, helped to correct imbalances of power between unions and employers, and unions and their own members, and contributed significantly to the important changes of attitude which have made the improvement in our industrial relations record possible.

### Hairdressing (Training)

78. **Sir John Hunt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the present arrangements in respect of training schemes within the hairdressing industry.

**Mr. Cope:** The Government actively support structured training leading to vocational qualifications and welcomes the efforts made in the last few years by the hairdressing industry to improve its training arrangements. The industry, represented by the hairdressing training board, has developed a national scheme for new entrants to the industry and has recently received approval from the National Council for Vocational Qualifications for its new qualification in hairdressing.

### Tourism (Japan)

80. **Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet the chairman of the British Tourist Authority to discuss the promotion of the British tourism and leisure industry in Japan; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** I have recently returned from Japan where I led a delegation of senior representatives of the British tourism, travel, and retail industries including representatives of the BTA. The aim was to convince the Japanese of our interest in their market and to bring back practical advice to the British tourism industry on how to encourage more Japanese visitors to Britain. I am convinced that the Japanese market offers great potential and I will be considering with the chairman of the British Tourist Authority how best to carry forward the delegation's recommendations.

### Secondary Industrial Action

86. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet the trade union commissioner to discuss secondary picketing and secondary action; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend has no such plans to meet the Commissioner for the Rights of Trade Union Members.

102. **Mr. Nicholas Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received seeking the repeal of current laws relating to secondary picketing and secondary action; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Representations on the proposals for changes to industrial relations law put forward in the Green Paper "Removing Barriers to Employment" are currently being considered. The proposal to make it unlawful to induce industrial action by workers of an employer not party to a trade dispute, except in the case of lawful picketing, was supported by a majority of those commenting on it.

### TUC

95. **Mr. Ward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet the general secretary of the Trades Union Congress to discuss the current industrial relations situation.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend has no current plans for such a meeting.

### Standards Programme

96. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the implementation procedures for the standards programmes launched by his Department on 22 June.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The publication "Standards significant to health and safety at work", launched by the Health and

Safety Executive on 22 June 1989, updates a similar publication first produced in 1983. It is a list, published for information, of those standards to which frequent reference is made by HSE in its advisory and enforcement work.

## Enterprise Agencies

97. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many enterprise agencies are operating in the United Kingdom; how much they received from his Department in 1988; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** We know of 433 local enterprise agencies operating in the United Kingdom. Of these, 394 are approved under statutory provisions which allow for tax relief on donations to them. In 1988-89 just over £2·5 million was also paid out in grant aid by my Department to approved local enterprise agencies in England.

## Training Agencies

101. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action his Department is taking to monitor the work of private training agencies contracted to work for his Department.

**Mr. Cope:** The Employment Department, through the Training Agency, has in place a comprehensive strategy for the monitoring and quality development of training delivered through contracts with other organisations.

Employment training and YTS contractors are examined rigorously to establish whether they should become approved training organisations. Once approved, contractors continue to be visited regularly by Training Agency staff and training standards advisory service inspectors to review the performance and quality of training, and financial and health and safety arrangements. The Training Agency also carries out an annual review of all contracts to draw together all available information before deciding the size and scope of any future contracts.

Training providers who contract to deliver seminars and workshops under business growth training are monitored by Training Agency staff against expenditure and performance; the quality of training is reviewed at periodic meetings with contractors, and by follow-up questioning of trainees.

## Health and Safety

108. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to extend the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend has no such plans. The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 already applies to the control of virtually all workplace risks in Great Britain. It also applies to offshore installations and to certain other activities within territorial waters and designated areas of the continental shelf. The Act places duties on all people concerned with work, including employers, employees and the self-employed, to ensure the health and safety of people at work and of others who may be affected by working activities.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many accidents, fatalities and diseases at work reported to the Health and Safety Executive occurred in retail in each year since 1981.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The available information for the retail industry, based on reports to the local authorities and to the Health and Safety Executive, is as follows:

| | | Severity of injury | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Employment Status* | *Year*[2] | *Fatal* | *Major* | *Over three days* |
| Employees | 1986-87 | 4 | 851 | 5,291 |
| | [1]1987-88 | 2 | 831 | 6,000 |
| Self-employed | 1986-87 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| | [1]1987-88 | 1 | 5 | 10 |
| Members of the public | 1986-87 | 7 | 499 | n/a |
| | [1]1987-88 | 4 | 493 | n/a |

[1] Provisional
[2] For the year commencing 1 April
n/a Not available

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish a table showing accidents at work, fatalities at work, and diseases at work reported to the Health and Safety Executive in each year since 1980 by standard region.

**Mr. Nicholls:** This information is not held by standard region and could be provided in this form only at disproportionate cost. Available information broken down by Health and Safety Executive areas is as follows:

*Fatal injuries[3] to employees at work reported to HSE's factory and agricultural inspectorates[5]*

| *Health and Safety executive area* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986-87*[1] | *1987-88*[1][6] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| South West | 8 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 12 | 17 | 12 |
| South | 11 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 14 |
| South East | 17 | 17 | 17 | 19 | 21 | 14 | 23 |
| Greater London | 29 | 33 | 32 | 29 | 34 | 26 | 32 |
| East Anglia | 8 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 16 | 13 | 10 |
| Northern Home Counties | 5 | 9 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 10 | 8 |
| East Midlands | 13 | 14 | 9 | 8 | 12 | 11 | 8 |
| West Midlands | 13 | 16 | 18 | 11 | 11 | 7 | 11 |
| Wales | 22 | 23 | 13 | 23 | 19 | 21 | 27 |
| Marches | 11 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| North Midlands | 14 | 16 | 16 | 11 | 12 | 8 | 8 |
| South Yorkshire and Humberside | 11 | 14 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 15 | 11 |
| West and North Yorkshire | 19 | 18 | 21 | 19 | 17 | 19 | 11 |
| Greater Manchester | 13 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 10 |
| Merseyside | 9 | 9 | 11 | 16 | 16 | 9 | 12 |
| North West | 10 | 13 | 17 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| North East | 18 | 21 | 9 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 11 |

| *Health and Safety executive area* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986-87*[1] | *1987-88*[1,6] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scotland East | 19 | 21 | 29 | 22 | 18 | 22 | 15 |
| Scotland West | 28 | 27 | 12 | 17 | 13 | 8 | 18 |

*All injuries[4] to employees at work reported to HSE factory and agricultural inspectorates[5]*

| *Health and Safety Executive Area* | *1986-87*[1] | *1987-88*[4,6] |
|---|---|---|
| South West | 6,781 | 6,486 |
| South | 6,472 | 6,556 |
| South East | 5,889 | 5,642 |
| Greater London | 13,918 | 12,949 |
| East Anglia | 5,637 | 6,064 |
| Northern Home Counties | 4,318 | 4,409 |
| East Midlands | 4,862 | 4,987 |
| West Midlands | 7,728 | 7,536 |
| Wales | 8,539 | 8,203 |
| Marches | 5,834 | 5,725 |
| North Midlands | 8,645 | 7,891 |
| South Yorksire and Humberside | 8,376 | 8,104 |
| West and North Yorkshire | 9,596 | 9,022 |
| Greater Manchester | 8,804 | 8,461 |
| Merseyside | 9,086 | 7,959 |
| North West | 6,561 | 6,643 |
| North East | 11,082 | 10,723 |
| Scotland East | 7,734 | 8,518 |
| Scotland West | 7,132 | 7,285 |

[1] Data for the year beginning 1 April.

[2] From 1981 to 1985 the figures include some injuries to the self employed and from 1981 to 1983 they may also include some injuries to members of the public.

[3] Fatalities to employees reported to HSE's Factory and Agricultural Inspectorates under, and as defined in, the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, 1980 for the years 1981 to 1985 and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, 1985 since 1 April 1986.

[4] Includes major injuries and over three day absences reported directly to enforcing authorities under RIDDOR.

[5] Figures reported to other enforcing authorities are not available by HSE area.

[6] Provisional.

*Ill-health notifications reported to HSE's Factory and Agricultural Inspectorates[2]*

| *Health and Safety Executive Area* | *1986-87*[1] | *1987-88*[1,3] |
|---|---|---|
| South West | 23 | 23 |
| South | 14 | 12 |
| South East | 25 | 15 |
| Greater London | 40 | 15 |
| East Anglia | 5 | 4 |
| Northern Home Counties | 13 | 3 |
| East Midlands | 10 | 8 |
| West Midlands | 29 | 14 |
| Wales | 18 | 9 |
| Marches | 9 | 18 |
| North Midlands | 11 | 9 |
| South Yorkshire and Humbersade | 14 | 14 |
| West and North Yorkshire | 12 | 11 |
| Greater Manchester | 15 | 10 |
| Merseyside | 12 | 14 |
| North West | 11 | 14 |
| North East | 16 | 12 |
| Scotland East | 8 | 4 |
| Scotland West | 5 | 49 |

[1] Data for the year beginning 1 April.

[2] Figures reported to other enforcing authorities are not available by HSE area.

[3] Provisional.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will take steps to make it compulsory for accidents in shops to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 already require that accidents which arise out of or in connection with, work activities covered by the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 are reported to the relevant enforcing authority. In the case of accidents in shops this is normally the local authority.

## Training Schemes

109. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to review his Department's schemes for the unemployed; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** The Government's policies have produced a business climate in which nearly 3 million new jobs have been created over the last six years. As a result, there are now more people in work in this country than ever before in our history. My Department runs a wide range of programmes which have assisted unemployed people to secure those jobs and share in this new prosperity. These measures are kept under regular review to ensure that they continue successfully and cost effectively to help unemployed people back into work.

## French Employment Minister

111. **Dame Jill Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on his meeting with the French Employment Minister on 4 July in London; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Cope:** M. Soisson visited London on 4 July at the invitation of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. We held a constructive meeting covering a wide range of issues, in particular plans for the current French presidency of the European Commission.

## Co-operative Development Agency

112. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he will be announcing his plans for the future of the Co-operative Development Agency.

**Mr. Cope:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) on 13 July at columns *581-82.*

115. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to develop and encourage the work currently undertaken by the Co-operative Development Agency.

**Mr. Cope:** The Co-operative Development Agency has done good work in supporting and advising co-operatives but much of this is now carried out by other support bodies. Consequently, as I announced in a reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) on 13 July, the Government have decided not to extend the life of the CDA when the ceiling of grant available to support it is reached.

The agency has also played a role in co-ordinating and representing the interests of the co-operative movement as a whole. We believe that it is for co-operative organisations themselves to determine their future needs and arrangements in this respect.

## Restart

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many unemployed people have *(a)* been called for a restart interview, *(b)* attended a restart interview, *(c)* been referred to unemployment benefit office for failing to attend a restart interview, *(d)* been disallowed, *(e)* been called for a restart follow-up interview, *(f)* attended a restart interview, *(g)* been referred to the unemployment benefit office for failing to attend a follow-up interview and *(h)* been disallowed after referral to the unemployment benefit office for the Training Agency in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Great Britain in the year to March 1989.

**Mr. Lee:** The information requested is provided in the table:

| | *England* | *Scotland* | *Wales* | *Great Britain* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Called for a Restart interview | 2,506,409 | 381,418 | 177,809 | 3,065,636 |
| (b) Attended a Restart interview | 1,822,031 | 291,197 | 136,479 | 2,249,707 |
| (c) Referred to UBO for failing to attend a Restart interview | 277,948 | 28,334 | 19,265 | 325,547 |
| (d) Been disallowed after referral to UBO | 21,075 | 2,555 | 1,757 | 25,387 |
| (e) Called for a Restart follow-up interview | 261,335 | 17,131 | 23,140 | 301,606 |
| (f) Attended a follow-up interview | 188,780 | 12,463 | 18,964 | 220,207 |
| (g) Referred to UBO for failing to attend a follow-up interview | 23,113 | 946 | 1,656 | 25,715 |
| (h) Been disallowed after referral to UBO | not available separately (included in (d) above) | | | |

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how may unemployed people have been referred to the following outcourses as a result of their restart interviews, and, for each of the outcourses, how many people started or attended *(a)* a job, *(b)* a restart course, *(c)* employment training, *(d)* community programme, *(e)* new job training schemes, *(f)* a jobclub *(g)* enterprise allowance schemes, *(h)* voluntary work/voluntary projects programmes, *(i)* employment rehabilitation centres, *(j)* disablement rehabilitation option and *(k)* claimant adviser for the Training Agency in the year to March 1989 in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Great Britain.

**Mr. Lee:** The information requested is provided in the table. We do not know how many of those interviewed ultimately end up in a job or other opportunity as a result of the restart interview.

*Restart counselling*

| | *Numbers referred to:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *England* | *Scotland* | *Wales* | *Great Britain* |
| Job | 185,405 | 32,330 | 17,525 | 235,260 |
| Restart course | 56,403 | 12,905 | 6,829 | 76,137 |
| Employment training | 237,256 | 47,121 | 21,134 | 305,511 |
| Community programme | 25,054 | 5,783 | 2,802 | 33,639 |
| New job training scheme | 98,480 | 14,702 | 7,869 | 121,051 |
| Jobclub | 165,939 | 34,506 | 14,663 | 215,108 |
| Enterprise allowance scheme | 78,832 | 7,267 | 5,417 | 91,516 |
| Voluntary work/VPP | 9,263 | 1,028 | 1,100 | 11,391 |
| E.R.C. | 1,7[illegible] | 257 | 189 | 2,236 |
| D.R.O. | 57,204 | 9,758 | 4,266 | 71,228 |
| Claimant adviser | 140,878 | 20,424 | 10,439 | 171,741 |

## Western Europe (Visits)

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report (a)* the number of visits to Great Britain from western Europe, *(b)* the number of visits from western Europe to Great Britain, giving details of (i) the number of business and tourist trips, (ii) the average number of nights' stay and (iii) average expenditure at current and constant 1988 prices for each year from 1978 to 1988 inclusive.

**Mr. Lee:** The available information relates to visits to and from the United Kingdom and is given in the following tables. Suitable price indices for the calculation of expenditure at constant prices are not available.

*Table 1 Visits to the United Kingdom by residents of Western Europe*[1]

| | *Number of visits (thousands)* | | *Average number of nights' stay* | | *Average expenditure per visit at current prices (£)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *All tourists* | *of which: business* | *All tourists* | *Business tourists* | *All tourists* | *Business tourists* |
| 1978 | 7,865 | 1,566 | 9·1 | 4·5 | 130·4 | 152·1 |
| 1979 | 7,873 | 1,646 | 9·5 | 4·2 | 149·6 | 172·4 |
| 1980 | 7,910 | 1,784 | 9·2 | 4·8 | 154·1 | 185·8 |
| 1981 | 7,055 | 1,650 | 9·2 | 4·0 | 153·9 | 182·5 |
| 1982 | 7,082 | 1,634 | 9·1 | 4·4 | 163·9 | 203·1 |
| 1983 | 7,164 | 1,712 | 9·4 | 4·1 | 191·3 | 217·3 |
| 1984 | 7,551 | 1,925 | 9·1 | 4·1 | 202·7 | 219·8 |
| 1985 | 7,870 | 2,035 | 9·4 | 4·3 | 226·8 | 251·7 |
| 1986 | 8,355 | 2,244 | 9·0 | 4·3 | 259·7 | 291·8 |
| 1987 | 9,317 | 2,473 | 9·3 | 4·0 | 269·4 | 303·1 |
| 1988 | 9,668 | 2,889 | 8·9 | 4·3 | 257·8 | 299·4 |

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[1] European Community plus Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Gibraltar, Iceland, Malta, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Yugoslavia.

*Table 2 Visits to Western Europe[1] by residents of the United Kingdom*

| | *Number of visits (thousands)* | | *Average number of nights' stay* | | *Average expenditure per visit at current prices (£)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *All tourists* | *of which: business* | *All tourists* | *Business tourists* | *All tourists* | *Business tourists* |
| 1978 | 11,517 | 1,802 | 10·2 | 5·4 | 99·4 | 107·3 |
| 1979 | 12,959 | 2,037 | 10·3 | 5·9 | 116·0 | 122·4 |
| 1980 | 14,455 | 2,158 | 10·1 | 5·6 | 131·6 | 137·7 |
| 1981 | 15,862 | 2,147 | 10·4 | 5·3 | 140·2 | 151·9 |
| 1982 | 17,625 | 2,190 | 9·8 | 5·3 | 146·5 | 165·8 |
| 1983 | 18,229 | 2,328 | 9·9 | 4·9 | 163·6 | 187·0 |
| 1984 | 19,371 | 2,533 | 10·2 | 5·0 | 178·3 | 202·2 |
| 1985 | 18,944 | 2,566 | 10·2 | 5·1 | 191·6 | 237·1 |
| 1986 | 21,877 | 2,596 | 10·4 | 5·2 | 209·3 | 242·8 |
| 1987 | 23,678 | 2,898 | 10·4 | 5·3 | 227·1 | 266·4 |
| 1988 | 24,519 | 3,187 | 10·5 | 5·1 | 239·6 | 263·1 |

[1] European Community plus Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Gibraltar, Iceland, Malta, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Yugoslavia.

## Domestic Trips

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* for each year from 1978 to the latest date available, the number of domestic trips undertaken by Great Britain residents, giving the average number of nights and expenditure at current and constant 1988 prices.

**Mr. Lee:** The following table gives the available information. Suitable official price indices for the calculation of expenditure at constant prices are not available.

*Domestic trips of one night or more by British residents*

| *Year* | *Number of trips (thousands)* | *Average number of nights per trip* | *Average expenditure per trip at current prices (£)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1978 | 119,000 | 4·5 | 26·1 |
| 1979 | 118,000 | 4·5 | 32·2 |
| 1980 | 130,000 | 4·3 | 35·0 |
| 1981 | 126,000 | 4·2 | 36·5 |
| 1982 | 123,000 | 4·2 | 36·6 |
| 1983 | 131,000 | 4·2 | 40·8 |
| 1984 | 140,000 | 4·1 | 42·7 |
| 1985 | 126,000 | 4·0 | 50·2 |
| 1986 | 128,000 | 4·0 | 55·9 |
| 1987 | 132,000 | 3·8 | 51·3 |
| 1988 | 130,000 | 4·0 | 60·4 |

*Source:* British Tourist Authority.

## Skills Training Agency

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is his timetable for the privatisation of each skill centre.

**Mr. Cope:** An advertisement offering the Skills Training Agency for sale will be published later in the summer. Bids for all or part of STA will be invited. I expect that negotiations with potential purchasers will take place in the autumn, and that a sale will be concluded after Royal Assent to the Employment Bill.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans his Department has formulated to ensure that the quality and participation rate of training are safeguarded within the Skills Training Agency after privatisation.

**Mr. Cope:** The customer will be the primary judge of training quality in the STA after privatisation. The normal monitoring will apply to programmes that they contract with the Government to provide.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all information required for collective bargaining purposes will be made available to the recognised trade unions in the Skills Training Agency.

**Mr. Cope:** The Department will disclose information required for collective bargaining purposes in accordance with their legal obligations. Since the announcement that the STA is to be offered for sale, there have been 10 meetings with the recognised trade unions, eight special information bulletins, and many letters responding to questions asked by the trade unions.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he plans to issue the sale memorandum for the skill centres.

**Mr. Cope:** The information memorandum will be ready for issue to prospective purchasers later in the summer.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list in the *Official Report*, all monies received by the Skills Training Agency from the Manpower Services Commission, Training Commission and Training Agency in each year since 1984; if he will detail the developments in skills training provision with reference to each specific allocation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** Moneys received by the Skills Training Agency from the MSC, Training Commission, Training Agency for each financial year since 1984 are as follows:

| | *£000's* |
|---|---|
| *1984-85* | |
| Training Opportunities Programme | 71,339 |
| Youth Training Scheme | 3,755 |
| Total | 75,094 |
| *1985-86* | |
| Old Job Training Scheme | 63,078 |
| Youth Training Scheme | 1,615 |
| Total | 64,693 |
| *1986-87* | |
| Old Job Training Scheme | 65,354 |

| | *£000's* |
|---|---|
| Youth Training Scheme | 1,467 |
| Jobclub and Restart[1] | 862 |
| Total | 67,683 |
| *1987-88* | |
| Old Job Training Scheme | 58,472 |
| New Job Training Scheme | 1,883 |
| Youth Training Scheme | 1,364 |
| Jobclub and Restart[1] | 651 |
| Total | 62,370 |
| *1988-89* | |
| Old Job Training Scheme | 29,232 |
| Employment Training | 7,283 |
| New Job Training Scheme | 1,606 |
| Youth Training Scheme | 1,412 |
| Jobclub and Restart[1] | 340 |
| Total | 39,873 |

[1] Sponsored by the Employment Service.

## Rural Areas

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on his employment and training policies for rural areas.

**Mr. Lee:** Rural areas benefit from the full range of my Department's measures to reduce unemployment and promote training. We are conscious of the special needs of rural areas and these are taken into account in designing and delivering our programmes.

## Accidents (Deaths)

**Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people have been killed in accidents at work in the last 10 years; and what the figure was for the previous 10-year period.

**Mr. Nicholls:** In the 10 years ending March 1988, a total of 4,713 fatal injuries to employees were reported to the appropriate authorities. The corresponding figure for the previous 10 years was 7,297.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Wednesday 19 July 1989*

## ENERGY

### Nuclear Power, East Midlands

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what discussion on nuclear power took place between Ministers or officials from his Department and John Harris, chairman of the East Midlands electricity board, on Wednesday 12 July; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Discussions between my right hon. Friend and the area board chairmen are confidential.

### Safe Integral Reactor

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what encouragement he is giving to the development or purchase of the safe integral reactor; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 17 July 1989 at column *52*.

## THE ARTS

### Items in Lieu of Tax

**Mr. Faulds:** To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will specify the allocations made to public institutions in the United Kingdom during the half-year ended 30 June of individual works of art and museum objects pre-eminent for national, scientific, historical or artistic interests which have been accepted in satisfaction of inheritance tax or capital transfer tax, together with information, where applicable, as to conditions or wishes expressed by testators or executors in the matter of allocation; whether he will list the works of art and museum objects which are still awaiting allocation, with the respective dates of their acceptance in satisfaction of inheritance tax or capital transfer tax; and whether the customary press notice will be issued from the Office of Arts and Libraries covering the information given in his reply.

**Mr. Luce** *[holding answer 12 July 1989]:* The information the hon. Member requests is as follows:

| *Items allocated* | *To whom allocated* | *Conditions/wishes expressed* |
|---|---|---|
| "The Artist's Studio" by Peter Tillemans | Castle Museum, Norwich | Conditional |
| Bryant letters | Imperial War Museum | Unconditional |
| Two busts by Roubiliac | National Museums of Scotland | Conditional upon remaining in situ at Mellerstain House |
| Two portraits by Angelica Kauffman | National Galleries of Scotland | Conditional upon allocation to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery |
| "Fabula" by El Greco | National Galleries of Scotland | Conditional |
| Rubens Cameo | Ashmolean Museum, Oxford | Conditional |
| Nine portraits | National Galleries of Scotland | Conditional upon remaining in situ at Cawdor Castle |
| Naum Gabo Sculpture | Leeds City Art Gallery | Unconditional |
| Flower painting by Jacob Marrel | Bowes Museum, County Durham | Unconditional |
| "A Tartar Huntsman" by Rubens | Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge | Wish expressed that it be allocated to Fitzwilliam |

| *Items accepted but not yet allocated* | *Date of acceptance* |
|---|---|
| "Allée à Chantilly" by Cezanne<br>A press notice is being issued. | 23 March 19[illegible]9 |

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Manufacturing

86. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the deficit in manufactured trade for 1989-90.

**Mr. Major:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) on 21 June at column *138*.

### Trade Deficit

87. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give his latest estimate of Britain's end of year trade deficit in 1989 and 1990.

**Mr. Major:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) on 6 July at columns *217-18*.

### Private Medical Insurance

**Mr. Redwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made in deciding what treatments will be permitted under private medical insurance contracts which will be eligible for tax relief from 6 April 1990; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I am pleased to be able to announce the Government's decisions.

Our intention is that a comprehensive range of treatments will be permitted under private medical insurance contracts which attract tax relief. Contracts will therefore be permitted to cover charges for medical and surgical procedures (including diagnosis), the purpose of which is the relief of illness or injury, given or personally controlled by a registered medical or dental practitioner in the United Kingdom. Contracts may cover charges or fees, consequent on such procedures, for nursing (including home nursing), physiotherapy, speech therapy, chiropody, equipment, drugs, dressings, prostheses, hospital accommodation, other hospital services, transport, and convalescence in the United Kingdom for up to 14 days after an operation. Specialist fees and theatre fees will also be covered.

In addition, contracts will be permitted to cover GP operations, including associated drugs, dressings and so on, but not subsequent prescriptions.

The following will not, however, be permitted: "alternative medicine", dental procedures carried out in a general dental practice, general ophthalmic procedures not carried out in hospital, any medical or surgical procedures (other than GP operations) not carried out on an in-patient, outpatient or day patient basis, and cash benefits (except sums of up to £5 per night during private in-patient treatment).

Regulations giving effect to these provisions will be laid before the House in the autumn.

### Pre-tax Income

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report*, the amount and share of pre-tax income accruing to *(a)* the top 1 per cent., *(b)* the top 5 per cent., *(c)* the top 10 per cent., *(d)* the top 25 per cent., *(e)* the bottom 70 per cent., *(f)* the bottom 5 per cent. and *(g)* all taxpayers in the year 1989-90 and the amount and share of tax liability for each of these groups.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 19 June 1989]:* Information is given in the table. Estimates are based on a projection of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes and are provisional; they include estimates of occupational pension contributions and investment income not reported to tax offices.

I regret that information on the bottom 5 per cent. of taxpayers is not available.

*Gross incomes before tax and share of income tax liabilities 1989-90*

| *Group of taxpayers* | *Gross income before tax* | *Income tax liabilities* |
|---|---|---|
| *Top 1 per cent.* | | |
| Amount £ billion | 21·0 | 6·7 |
| Share per cent. | 7·0 | 13·0 |
| *Top 5 per cent.* | | |
| Amount £ billion | 56·7 | 15·1 |
| Share per cent. | 18·0 | 30·0 |
| *Top 10 per cent.* | | |
| Amount £ billion | 87·7 | 20·8 |
| Share per cent. | 28·0 | 41·0 |
| *Top 25 per cent.* | | |
| Amount £ billion | 154·6 | 31·9 |
| Share per cent. | 49·0 | 62·0 |
| *Bottom 70 per cent.* | | |
| Amount £ billion | 141·8 | 16·5 |
| Share per cent. | 45·0 | 32·0 |
| *All taxpayers* | | |
| Amount £ billion | 313·7 | 51·2 |

### Public Sector Debt

**Mr. Redwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the sterling component of the net public sector debt outstanding at *(a)* the end of December 1988; and *(b)* the end of the financial year 1988-89.

**Mr. Lilley:** Figures for public sector financial assets and liabilities at the end of December 1988 will be published in "Financial Statistics" for September as part of a breakdown of financial assets and liabilities for each main sector in the economy. These data do not identify the sterling component explicitly. The net public sector debt at the end of March 1989 will be published in the *Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin* for November. From these data it will be possible to make an estimate of the sterling component.

### VAT

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received about the procedures concerning value added tax within free ports; whether he will apply existing customs rules within free ports; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lilley** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) on 17 December 1987 at columns *651-52.*

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Licensed Teachers (Australasia)

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any proposals to apply the licensing scheme to teachers from Australasia; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Butcher:** As my right hon. Friend announced yesterday, he proposes that overseas-trained teachers, including those from Australasia, should be eligible to be licensed teachers, and in certain cases should obtain qualified teacher status after only one term's service.

### Pupil Numbers

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the number of pupils between the ages of five years and 16 years in 1979; and what is the latest figure.

**Mr. Butcher:** The numbers of pupils aged[1] 5 to 15 inclusive in January 1979 and January 1988 in all schools in England were as follows:

| | *Pupils (thousands)* |
|---|---|
| January 1979 | 8,085·2 |
| January 1988 | 6,462·3 |

[1] aged at previous 31 August.

### Student Loans

**Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has received recent representations from the Napier polytechnic students association, Edinburgh, about student loans; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jackson:** My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland has forwarded to me a letter from Napier polytechnic students' association. I shall reply in due course.

### Departmental Establishment

**Dr. Hampson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science by how many the establishment of civil servants in his Department has changed as a consequence of the increased responsibilities of and expenditure on the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council and the Universities Funding Council.

**Mr. Jackson:** Setting aside the implications of the UFC's employing its own staff, the effect on the Department's staffing of the increased responsibilities of the two funding councils has been offset by the change to funding from the Department's votes for the polytechnics and colleges sector and by the need for transitional arrangements for that transfer.

### Inner London Education

**Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what further plans the Government have to help the inner London boroughs with the cost of assuming responsibility for education.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** The Government have decided to make available a transitional grant totalling £100 million in 1990-91 to assist the inner London boroughs and the City as they take on responsibility for education. We plan that the grant will be phased out over a five-year period. The precise profile of the grant and the method of distributing it will be announced in the autumn.

### Teachers (Vacancies)

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a table showing teacher vacancies by region in January 1989, distinguishing between vacancies in *(a)* nursery and primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools.

**Mr. Butcher** *[pursuant to his reply, 20 June 1989, c. 81-82]:* Information on the number of teacher vacancies in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools in England is now available for all regions. The figures are:

| | *Nursery and Primary schools* | *Secondary schools* |
|---|---|---|
| North | 92 | 62 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 200 | 155 |
| North West | 307 | 219 |
| East Midlands | 145 | 145 |
| West Midlands | 222 | 262 |
| East Anglia | 47 | 59 |
| Greater London | 1,305 | 819 |
| Other South East | 617 | 542 |
| South West | 181 | 161 |
| England | 3,116 | 2,424 |

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Children Bill

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he intends to enact for Northern Ireland the provisions of the Children Bill, currently being enacted for Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Needham:** Preparation of legislation is already in hand to replace the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968 and to revise enactments dealing with family law matters and, in the light of changes to be introduced by the Children Bill, a working party of officials is to give careful consideration to the implications for Northern Ireland. It is hoped that a consultation paper will be issued shortly inviting views.

### Care in the Community

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what conclusions he has reached about the recommendations in the Griffiths report on care in the community; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Needham:** My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health last week announced the Government's conclusions on the recommendations in the Griffiths report. On the same day, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security announced corresponding changes in the benefit system. Full details of the new arrangements, as they will apply to Great Britain, will be published in a White Paper later this year.

The Griffiths report did not extend to Northern Ireland, where we already have an integrated administration structure for the health and personal social services. I have asked the health and social services boards in carrying out the current review of their management structures to ensure that their proposals meet the management needs of the personal social services as well as those of the health services, and facilitate the co-ordinated provision of health and social care. I have also kept in close touch with the Government's detailed consideration of the Griffiths recommendations, whose emphasis on the development of care in the community is very much in keeping with our own regional strategy for the health and personal social services.

In particular, we are already committed to enabling people who need care to stay in or return to their own homes and neighbourhoods and live there with as much dignity and independence as their disabilities allow. This means making available improved and better co-ordinated services in the community. It means ensuring that members of the public have access to the information and objective professional advice they need to make sensible choices about the way they run their lives. It means ensuring that an extensive range of services is available, including support for the dedicated relatives, friends, neighbours and volunteers who will continue to provide so much care so unselfishly. And it means ensuring that public money is used as effectively and efficiently as possible to meet the needs of clients of the health and personal social services and their informal carers.

Substantial resources have been devoted in recent years to improving community care services in Northern Ireland. I will give some concrete examples of the progress that has been made between 1979-80 and 1986-87. Expenditure on community health services rose by 32 per cent. in real terms, and on personal social services by 29 per cent. Attendances by mentally ill people at day hospitals arose by 26 per cent. and at out-patient clinics by 40 per cent. Training centre places for mentally handicapped adults have almost doubled. Day care places for various groups rose by 28 per cent. The number of community psychiatric nurses more than trebled. In addition, Northern Ireland has shared in the rising national expenditure on social security benefits to support individuals in residential and nursing homes and other accommodation.

Earlier this month I announced an additional injection of resources amounting to £6 million over the next three years, to be used as bridging finance to support patients discharged from long-stay hospitals. This brought the total bridging funds available to health and social services boards over the five-year period from 1987 to £18 million, all of it specifically targeted towards enabling mentally ill and mentally handicapped people to move out of long-stay institutions and into the community. There remains much more to be done, and I am confident that our health and social services boards will rise to the challenge.

At present people who are unable to support themselves and need social care can look to two separate sources of help: to social security offices for payments towards the cost of places in residential and nursing homes and to health and social services boards for home care, day care and residential care services. This arrangement is not consistent with the priority which we wish to give to supporting people at home where that is otherwise possible and desirable. Social security payments for residential and nursing home care are not subject to any assessment of individual need for care.

The same changes to the social security system will be introduced in Northern Ireland as in the rest of the United Kingdom, and funds will be transferred on the same basis to the boards. In the longer term, they will become fully responsible for funding the care element of public support for people in private and voluntary residential and nursing homes and for ensuring that services are developed and funds allocated in accordance with their assessment of individuals' care needs.

As in Great Britain, residents of private or voluntary residential and nursing homes will from April 1991 be given access to help from the normal income support system and from housing benefit on a similar basis to the help they would receive in their own home.

Existing residents of private or voluntary homes who are already in receipt of income support or who may become eligible for such support at any point after that date will continue to be covered by the present arrangements.

To derive maximum benefit from establishing boards as a unified source of public funding for community care, priority will be given to the development of assessment procedures so that services can be planned on the basis of full and accurate information about each individual's need and a better balance achieved between residential care and support for people living in their own homes. Close attention will be paid to devising arrangements which will provide members of the public with easily understood access to information about services and help suited to their individual needs. People who are thinking of entering a residential or nursing home, whether on a private basis or with public funding, are particularly likely to benefit from objective advice about any other options available to them.

Boards will continue to meet the full cost of accommodating people in statutory homes, subject to their existing powers to charge according to resident's ability to pay. There will be no change in the benefit rules applying to residents in these homes.

The new arrangements will clearly have expenditure implications for boards and my Department will take these into account when determining their financial allocations.

I will be giving careful consideration to the development of suitable planning and monitoring arrangements to allow me to assess the implementation of the new policy.

My Department issued a consultative document last November on the registration and inspection of private and voluntary residential and nursing homes, and is now considering the responses, totalling over 100, which have been received. Proposals for a Registered Homes Order will be brought forward later this year, to consolidate and update existing legislation.

In Northern Ireland, the current strategy for the health and personal social services is to reduce the number of occupied beds in mental illness and mental handicap hospitals rather than to promote a programme of hospital closures. The substantial bridging funds to which I have already referred are being allocated against specific schemes identified by the four boards to develop and expand community facilities and services in advance of patients being discharged from hospital. Discharges of long-stay patients, who will have the greatest adjustments to make to life in the community, are already the subject of careful planning. They take place only after the patients concerned have taken part in a programme of rehabilitation and proper services and facilities are in place to support them in the community. Earlier this year, my Department invited tenders for a monitoring and evaluation project which will track all long stay patients discharged into the community over a three-year period; evaluate the care they receive; and focus on their quality of life and that of their informal carers. A paper will be published in the autumn which will spell out in greater detail the implications of these changes for Northern Ireland, and explain how they will fit in with the new arrangements to be introduced on foot of the current review of boards' management structures.

I am confident that the Government's proposals, and in particular the establishment of a single source of funding for community care, will enable a higher priority than ever before to be given to the co-ordinated development of services aimed at supporting people in their own homes, at providing more help for families and other informal carers and at developing the part played by voluntary and other interests in achieving these objectives.

## PRIME MINISTER

### European Monetary Union

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Prime Minister when the conference on European monetary union agreed at Madrid will take place; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to my statement to the House on 29 June on the outcome of the European Council in Madrid.

### Junk Bonds

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Prime Minister what changes in the policies of Her Majesty's Government are envisaged arising from the increased use of junk bonds in relation to British companies; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** None.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Broadcasting

**Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assurances about the future regulatory framework for media ownership of satellite services broadcasting to the United Kingdom were given by the Government to satellite broadcasting companies prior to the launch of Sky Television.

**Mr. Renton:** Our proposals for regulating ownership in the independent television sector were published in paragraphs 6·48 to 6·53 of the White Paper "Broadcasting in the '90s: Competition, Choice and Quality" (Cm 517), which was presented to Parliament on 7 November 1988. These proposals were amplified in a written answer on 19 May at column *317*.

### Mrs. Fatma Bassau

**Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the appeal of Mrs. Fatma Bassau whose date of birth is 1 December 1964 reference B 253061, is scheduled for consideration.

**Mr. Renton:** I refer the hon. Member to my letter to him of 2 June. The Home Office explanatory statement will be prepared in its turn as soon as practicable.

### Citizenship Applications

**Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to shorten the time taken to deal with applications for British citizenship; and what is the current average time taken to process applications.

**Mr. Renton:** The average time taken to process applications completed during June 1989 was 18 months for registrations and 23 months for naturalisations.

Despite the provision of a considerable number of additional staff to process citizenship applications, the number of applications received at the end of 1987 was so great that there is no prospect of average processing times being reduced in the immediate future. However, we expect there to be an improvement during 1990-91 when the backlog of registrations has been cleared.

### Magistrates Courts

**Mr. Hayes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has now received the report of the scrutiny of the magistrates courts service which he announced on 17 January; and what action he proposes to take on it.

**Mr. Hurd:** I am today publishing the report of the scrutiny, which was completed on 4 July. The report includes wide-ranging proposals for the reconstruction of the magistrates courts service as an executive agency with a number of specific proposals directed towards improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the service while maintaining public confidence in the impartial administration of local justice. The major proposals would require legislation. The report, rightly, accepts as a fundamental principle that judicial decisions in the magistrates courts must be wholly independent of Government direction.

I welcome the report's thorough and perceptive analysis of the problems facing the magistrates courts service. I welcome also its recognition of the considerable efforts now being made by the members of the magistrates courts service to improve its performance within the limits imposed by the present system.

The proposals raise issues of considerable importance. Before reaching decisions on the scrutiny I should like the interested parties, including the bodies representing the magistracy, justices' clerks and their staff and local authorities, to let me have their considered views, and to provide an opportunity for public comment more generally. Consultations will begin shortly, and it would be helpful if initial comments could be sent to the Home Office (Room 418, Queen Anne's Gate) by 30 September.

### Drink-driving

**Mr. Bright:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been convicted of drink-driving offences in *(a)* England and *(b)* Bedfordshire since 1 January 1985.

**Mr. John Patten:** The available information relates to findings of guilt for driving, etc. after consuming alcohol or taking drugs and is published annually by police force area in table 16 of "Offences relating to motor vehicles, England and Wales, Supplementary tables"; copies are in the Library. The latest issue relates to 1987; figures for 1988 will be published in the autumn.

### Breath Tests

**Mr. Bright:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many roadside breath tests have been conducted by police officers in *(a)* England and *(b)* Bedfordshire since 1 January 1985.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information requested is published annually in a Home Office statistical bulletin "Statistics of breath tests, England and Wales"; copies are in the Library. Table 5 of issue 8/89 gives the figures for 1987; figures for 1988 will be published in August.

## Racial Attacks

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis about the progress of the investigation into the alleged racial attack involving murder upon an Asian family in their home in Flower and Dean walk, Stepney, on Sunday 9 July; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The conduct of the investigation is a matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis. I understand that the police are conducting a major investigation into what appears at present to have been an attempted robbery which ended in murder.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning the speed of police response to emergency calls alleging racial attack; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No record of the number of such representations is kept centrally. The report of the interdepartmental racial attacks group published in May 1989 recommends that, where there is public concern about the police response in cases alleging racial attacks, the police should monitor their response times carefully.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will request the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to publish an addendum to the latest edition of his annual report for 1988 on the force order on racial harassment issued in June 1987 which set out guidelines for the police investigating racial harassment and monitoring investigations of racial harassment; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** While it is not the general policy of the Commissioner to make public force orders, an exception has been made to the extract from police orders of 26 June 1987 which dealt with racial attacks and harassment. This has been published as annex H of the report of the interdepartmental racial attacks group published in May 1989. Copies of this report are available in the Library of the House. The Government fully support the many initiatives taken by the Metropolitan police to combat racial attacks and harassment.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evaluation there has been of the effectiveness of the force order on racial harassment; whether it will be made public; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** An internal management review of force instructions on racial attacks and harassment was carried out in 1988. This showed that all divisions within the Metropolitan police have adopted the minimum requirements set down, with most providing additional services in consultation with their local communities. The review is not being made public, but is being used to spread good practice throughout the force.

## Commission for Racial Equality

**Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was allocated to the Commission for Racial Equality in 1987-88 and 1988-89.

**Mr. John Patten:** The Commission was allocated grant-in-aid of £10,845,000 in 1987-88 and £11,256,000 (provisional) in 1988-89.

## Crimes by Children

**Mr. Bright:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to bring forward proposals to make parents accept responsibility for failing to prevent crimes by their children; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** The debate about the proposals put forward earlier this year for increasing parents' responsibility for their children's offending is continuing. Views have been received from a number of interested parties covering matters including parental attendance at juvenile court hearings; parental liability for fines and compensation orders imposed upon their children; and the wider use of existing penalties. We shall decide how to proceed in the light of those and other responses.

## UKIAS

**Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of requests for advice or assistance with the preparation of immigration appeals made to the UKIAS in Glasgow in each year since 1979.

**Mr. Renton** *[holding answer 6 July 1989]:* The United Kingdom Immigrants Advisory Service is an independent organisation and the Home Office keeps no central records of the number of people assisted by the service at its Glasgow office. UKIAS does, however, publish an annual report which gives information on its workload on a regional basis. Copies are available in the Library.

## Immigration Appeals

**Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the appellate authority about delays in presenting immigration appeals in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton** *[holding answer 6 July 1989]:* None. Delays in the hearing of appeals are essentially a matter for my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor who has responsibility for the immigration appeals system.

## Deaf Drivers

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what response he has received from the European Commissioner for Transport regarding European Economic Community proposals to prevent the deaf and hard of hearing from driving minibuses, light goods vehicles and heavy goods vehicles.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I have been asked to reply.

The Commission proposals are unlikely to lead to any change in the existing domestic arrangements for licensing the drivers of heavy goods vehicles, which exclude the deaf.

In our negotiations with the Commission we are seeking to preserve our existing licensing arrangements as far as possible. These allow the deaf to drive minibuses and light goods vehicles. There have been no detailed negotiations about the draft directive as a whole so far.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Taiwan

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has received from the Anglo-Taiwan trade committee about the opening in Taipei of the British visa-handling office; how many visas were processed on each of the first seven days after it opened for business; how many Taiwan Chinese are expected to apply for and to receive British visas via this office in 1989 and at what approximate annual rate as far as can be estimated; how much is charged in NT dollars for each visa that is issued; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the charges made by the United States and by other EEC member countries which issue, or have been issued on their behalf, visas in Taipei.

**Mr. Eggar:** The Anglo-Taiwan trade committee has given us the following information about the operation of its visa-handling unit:

*(i) Visas processed on each of the first seven days after opening*

| *Date* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Thursday 1 June | 21 |
| Friday 2 June | 65 |
| Monday 5 June | 129 |
| Tuesday 6 June | 73 |
| Wednesday 7 June | 71 |
| Thursday 8 June | [1]Nil |
| Friday 9 June | 188 |

[1] National Holiday.

(ii) The Anglo-Taiwan trade committee anticipates that approximately 26,000-27,000 Taiwan Chinese will apply for and receive United Kingdom visas via their office in 1989. It estimates that it will process around 40,000 applications in 1990 and forecasts an upward trend thereafter.

(iii) The Anglo-Taiwan trade committee currently charges NT $1,250 for a single entry visa and NT $2,450 for a multiple entry visa.

*(iv) Visa charges levied in Taiwan by United States and other EC member countries*

| *Country* | *NT$ charge* |
|---|---|
| United States | 250 |
| Belgium | 900-4,000 |
| Denmark | 1,500 |
| France | 205-410 |
| FRG | 660 |
| Greece | 1,700 |
| Ireland | 3,250 |
| Italy | 1,000 |
| Luxembourg | 900-4,000 |
| Netherlands | 1,000-4,000 |
| Portugal | 1,900-3,000 |
| Spain | 1,700 |

### Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

**Mr. Michael Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the outcome of the current year's meeting of the committee on the peaceful uses of outer space; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The committee on the peaceful uses of outer space, which met from 5 to 15 June 1989, gave priority consideration to the ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. The Committee recommended that the general assembly endorse the initiative of the international scientific organisations to designate 1992 as international space year. In considering the report of its scientific and technical sub-committee, the committee debated the techniques of remote sensing of the earth from outer space, the uses of nuclear power sources in outer space, space transportation systems and the technical attributes of the geostationary orbit. The elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space was the main item considered by the committee in the debate on the report of its legal sub-committee. We attach considerable importance to the United Nations committee on the peaceful uses of outer space since its inception in 1959 and welcome its role as a focal point for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

### Human Rights

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give a breakdown by country of the names of those individuals who are the victims of human rights abuses and upon whose behalf he has made representations to the authorities in the country in question during the last six months; and if he will indicate, where appropriate those cases which have satisfactorily been resolved.

**Mr. Eggar:** In the last six months we have made representations on behalf of many individuals who are the victims of human rights abuse. Those representations have been made to the authorities in a wide range of countries and, in some instances, have helped to bring about a satisfactory resolution of the cases involved.

It would not be in the interests of current or future victims of abuse if we were to make public the details of our representations about individual cases.

### Foreign Affairs Council

**Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council held on 17 July.

**Mrs. Chalker:** The first Foreign Affairs Council of the new French presidency took place in Brussels on 17 July. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development, and I attended for the United Kingdom.

The Council had a procedural discussion on the handling of further work on the economic and monetary issues considered at the European Council in Madrid. It also exchanged views inconclusively on the broadcasting directive.

In the light of the discussion of western support for reform in Poland and Hungary at the Paris economic summit, the Council considered appropriate action and noted that the Commission will urgently submit a proposal for the supply of surplus food stocks to Poland, and will convene a meeting of a wider group of interested countries.

The Council considered the Community's trade relations with the United States and asked the Commission to continue its efforts to resolve the dispute over hormones in meat.

The Council discussed further the Community's position for the renegotiation of the Lomé convention. Final agreement was not possible: the Council will consider the matter further in October.

In their capacity as representatives of the Governments of member states, Ministers appointed the President and members of the new Court of First Instance, which will begin work in the autumn.

In the margins of the Council, the Austrian Foreign Minister formally handed over to the presidency Austria's application for membership of the Community.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Social Fund

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) which of his Department's offices in the county of South Yorkshire have spent more than 100 per cent. of their profile allocation for social fund loans and social fund grants for *(a)* April, *(b)* May, and *(c)* June;

(2) which of his Department's offices in the county of South Yorkshire have spent between 90 per cent. and 100 per cent. of their profile allocation for social fund loans and social fund grants for *(a)* April, *(b)* May, and *(c)* June.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The information requested is set out in the table. Details of actual expenditure are available in the Library.

| *Office* | *Loans* | | | | | | *Grants* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *90-100 per cent.* | | | *Over 100 per cent.* | | | *90-100 per cent.* | | | *Over 100 per cent.* | | |
| | *April* | *May* | *June* | *April* | *May* | *June* | *April* | *May* | *June* | *April* | *May* | *June* |
| Barnsley East | | | | | x | x | | | | x | x | x |
| Barnsley West | x | | x | | x | | | | | | | |
| Doncaster East | x | | | | x | x | | | | x | x | x |
| Doncaster West | x | | | | x | | x | | | | | |
| Rotherham North | | | x | x | x | | | | | x | | x |
| Rotherham South | | | | x | | | x | x | x | | | |
| Sheffield North East | | | | x | x | x | | | | x | x | x |
| Sheffield North West | | | | x | x | x | | x | | x | x | |
| Sheffield South East | | | x | x | x | | | | | x | x | x |
| Sheffield South West | | | x | | x | | | x | x | x | | |
| Wath on Dearne | | | | x | x | x | | | | x | x | x |

### Industrial Injuries Advisory Council

**Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has accepted the findings of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council's recent report on chlamydiosis and Q fever; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Scott:** The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council's report on chlamydiosis and Q fever is published today and a copy has been placed in the Library. The Council concludes that there is sufficient evidence to prescribe Q fever and chlamydiosis as industrial diseases under the terms of section 76(2) of the Social Security Act 1975 and recommends that both be added to the schedule of prescribed diseases. We have accepted these recommendations and regulations have been laid today which will bring them into operation on 9 August 1989.

### Family Credit

**Mr. Lester:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the effect on the number of families entitled to family credit if all wives in paid work stopped working.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I regret that the information requested is not available.

### Standards of Living

**Mr. John Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what has been the average increase in living standards of couples with children whose main source of income is social security benefit since 1979.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd** *[holding answer 10 July 1989]:* The latest available information is that from 1979 to 1985, the living standards of supplementary benefit recipient couples with children improved on average by 16 per cent. This estimate uses the methods and assumptions of the "Households Below Average Income" statistics and is based on net income before housing costs ie net income from all sources.

## TRANSPORT

### Docklands Light Railway

**Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what increases in the capacity of the Docklands light railway are now planned to take place; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** London Regional Transport is planning to double the capacity of the railway between Tower Gateway and the Isle of Dogs early next year with the introduction of two-unit trains. A further increase is planned for early 1991 with the delivery of new trains, bringing the capacity of the railway from Tower Gateway to some 6,500 passengers per hour compared with 1,750 at present. Improvements at Tower Gateway station will be completed early in 1990 to match the increased train capacity and to provide better facilities for passengers.

The design concept of the Canary Wharf station has been agreed and will be integrated into the construction programme for the railway. The scale of the station development at Canary Wharf and the complexity of construction at Bank station, have caused some delays in the programme.

Completion of the first tunnel at Bank station is now scheduled for late 1990. The aim is to provide a single-tunnel service as soon as possible, provided that that can be done satisfactorily in the light of current forecasts of increased passenger demand. Completion of both tunnels is scheduled by late 1991, with full service provision following normal commissioning procedures. I have asked LRT to do everything it can to advance the opening dates for the new services.

### M11 (Service Area)

**Mr. Haselhurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce his decision on the proposal to site a motorway services area on the M11 at Birchanger.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Transport expect to announce their decision shortly.

### Underground (Safety)

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will direct London Underground Limited to publish the hazard analysis report into Tottenham Court Road station; and if he will place a summary of the report in the Library.

**Mr. Portillo:** The report was commissioned by London Underground Ltd. and publication is for it to consider.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will meet the chairman of London Regional Transport to discuss a date for the completion of the complete study to be made of the movement of passengers through the central underground system to assess properly all risks to staff and passengers to which they may be exposed, and the safe passenger capacity as recommended by the railways inspectorate in its report of an investigation into the management of safety concerning passengers and staff in stations on the London Underground dated 28 April; if he will report the conclusions of these discussions to Parliament; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** I understand that London Underground Ltd. hopes shortly to appoint selected consultants to conduct the study. The work will be completed as soon as possible but it is too soon to say when that will be.

### Warning Lamps

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list any classes of vehicle that have an entitlement to use blue lamps but are not used for police, fire or ambulance purposes;

(2) if he will list those regulations that are currently in force that control the use of blue lamps on police, fire, ambulance or any other types of vehicle;

(3) if he will specify what is covered by the terms *(a)* warning beacon and *(b)* special warning lamp as used in road traffic regulations; and if he will list those regulations that are currently in force that control where on a vehicle these may be attached.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** In addition to ambulances and motor vehicles used for fire brigade and police purposes, the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1984 allow the following categories of emergency vehicle to use blue lamps:

Motor vehicles owned by a body formed primarily for the purposes of fire salvage and used for those or similar purposes;

Motor vehicles owned by the Forestry Commission or a local authority and used from time to time for the purposes of fighting fires;

Motor vehicles owned by the Secretary of State for Defence and used—

(i) for the purposes of the disposal of bombs or explosives,

(ii) by the Naval Emergency Monitoring Organisation for the purposes of a nuclear accident or an incident involving radio-activity,

(iii) by the Royal Air Force Mountain Rescue Service for the purposes of rescue operations or any other emergencies, or

(iv) by the Royal Air Force Armament Support Unit;

motor vehicles primarily used for the purposes of the Blood Transfusion Service provided under the National Health Service Act 1977 or under the National Health (Scotland) Act 1978;

motor vehicles used by Her Majesty's Coastguard Auxiliary Service for the purposes of giving aid to persons in danger or vessels in distress on or near the coast;

motor vehicles owned by the National Coal Board and used for the purposes of rescue operations at mines;

motor vehicles owned by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and used for the purposes of launching lifeboats; and

motor vehicles primarily used for the purposes of conveying any human tissue for transplanting or similar purposes.

Current requirements controlling the use of blue lamps on emergency vehicles are given in regulations 11(2), 13, 15 and 23(6) of the regulations.

The regulations specify that a warning beacon means a lamp that is capable of emitting a flashing or rotating beam of light throughout 360° in the horizontal plane. A special warning lamp is defined as a lamp fitted to the front or rear of an emergency vehicle, capable of emitting a blue flashing light and not any other kind of light. Schedule 15 to the Regulations sets out the positioning requirements for warning beacons. There are no specific fitting provisions laid down for special warning lamps.

### Public Transport Strike (Publicity)

**Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the newspapers in which the advertisement entitled "If there is a Public Transport Strike Tomorrow" appeared on 11 July; what was the cost of each advertisement; and what was the total cost of the production and displaying of the advertisement.

**Mr. Portillo** *[holding answer 18 July 1989]*: The advertisement appeared on 11 July in southern editions of the *Daily Mail, Daily Express, Today, The Star, The Sun,* and *Daily Mirror*; and national editions of *The Times, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, The Independent, Financial Times* and in the *London Evening Standard.*

The total cost of this advertising including production was £190,733·59. Information about the breakdown of costs by each newspaper, as requested, is commercially confidential.

### Street Lighting

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those programme areas which are eligible for allocations for improved street lighting in residential areas.

**Mr. Trippier:** I have been asked to reply.

All highway authorities are eligible to apply to the Department of Transport for capital allocations in respect of roads, and these may cover expenditure on street lighting schemes in residential and other areas. The 57 local authorities which are eligible to receive urban programme funds are listed in "DOE Inner City Programmes 1987-88", a copy of which is in the Library. The urban programme has supported a number of projects in inner city areas which have included the provision of improved street lighting as part of a package of measures designed to reduce crime and improve the environment. Urban programme resources are not allocated to particular project types. It is for each local authority to decide whether it wishes to include projects involving street lighting improvements in its inner area programme.

## SCOTLAND

### Eye Tests

**Mr. Dewar:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number of National Health Service eye tests carried out in Scotland in the last three months and the number carried out over the same period in 1988.

**Mr. Rifkind:** Information about the number of National Health Service sight tests carried out in Scotland between 1 April 1989 and 30 June 1989 is not yet available. The latest figures available show that 337,069 sight tests were undertaken under general ophthalmic services between 1 January and 31 March 1989. The comparable figure for the same period in 1988 is 309,417.

### Atlantic Salmon Conservation Trust (Scotland)

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on procedures for the regulation of charities in Scotland in the light of the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Trust (Scotland) case.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** My right hon. Friend hopes to make a statement on the regulation of charities in Scotland later this year.

### Housing Defects

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of Dorran-type houses investigated by the Building Research Establishment were shown to be *(a)* suffering from current corrosion of steel enforcing bars, *(b)* sound, and *(c)* liable to structural defect within the next 30 years; and if he will give a breakdown of the analysis by district council area.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The Building Research Establishment visually inspected a sample of about 100 Dorran two-storey houses and 30 Dorran bungalows in Scotland, and of these one house and one bungalow were examined in detail. Corrosion of reinforcement was found in the ring beam of the houses, but all houses and bungalows were found to be structurally sound at the time of inspection. All components tested showed carbonation of the concrete, and this condition could lead to corrosion of the steel reinforcement within the next 30 years.

Information is not available by district council area.

### Findhorn Bridge

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the cost of erecting a temporary bridge on the A96; and what is the estimated cost of anticipated repairs to the old Findhorn bridge.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The cost of buying, installing and maintaining the temporary bridge is £235,000. The total cost of the temporary diversion—that is, bridge and approach roads—was £579,000, of which aproximately £120,000 is for re-usable temporary bridging.

The cost of strengthening and refurbishing the existing Findhorn bridge is estimated to be £706,000.

### EC Projects

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the value of the projects described in the European Commission's publication, "Second Programme of the European Communities to Combat Poverty", and give the reasons for Scotland's exclusion.

**Mr. Lang:** Scotland did not take part in the second EC programme to combat poverty because the size of the programme and the net benefit which Scotland could have expected to gain from it did not justify participation. A complete evaluation of the programme is not yet available.

### Airports

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the (i) economic, (ii) technical, (iii) safety and (iv) national and international criteria on which his decision not to grant Glasgow airport a gateway status was based.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The criterion against which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport judged the request of BAA plc for a review of the lowland airports policy was that set out in the 1985 White Paper "Airports Policy"; the absence of a steady improvement by 1989 in Prestwick's financial results. The data provided by BAA plc showed that there had been such an improvement, and my right hon. Friend announced accordingly that a review would not take place.

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the national and international airlines flying to and from Scotland which support his decision to keep Prestwick as Scotland's only gateway airport.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Representations have been received on Prestwick's long haul gateway status, but it would be for the airlines concerned to make their views public, if they wished.

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from the following organisations about his decision to retain Prestwick airport as Scotland's only gateway airport: (i) Confederation of British Industry Scotland, (ii) Glasgow chamber of commerce, (iii) Edinburgh chamber of commerce, (iv) Association of British Travel Agents, (v) Scottish Council (Development and Industry) and (vi) Scottish tourist board; and which supported and which opposed his decision.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Representations to my right hon. and learned Friend about Scottish lowland airports policy have been received from a number of organisations, but it would be for those concerned to make their views public, if they wished.

### School Meals

**Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the results of the annual census of school meals in Scotland held in January; what were the corresponding 1988 results; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** the information obtained from the census is set out in the table. The 1989 census is the first following the changes in entitlement to free school meals introduced under the Social Security Act 1986 on 11 April 1988. It confirms the Government view that these changes would not have a detrimental effect on the uptake of school meals, and the number of pupils taking meals as a percentage of those present is greater than that at the 1988 census. Under the new arrangements the children's rates of family credit include an element to cover the cost of school meals. The significant increase in the number of children taking paid meals, which corresponds with the drop in free meals, suggests that many families are receiving and using family credit for the purpose intended.

*Education Authority Schools (including nursery and special schools)*

| | *1989* | | *1988* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Number* | *As percentage of pupils present* | *Number* | *As percentage of pupils present* |
| Pupils present on Census day | 713,034 | — | 729,505 | — |
| Pupils taking school meals | | | | |
| on payment | 223,456 | 31·3 | 184,780 | 25·3 |
| free | 105,232 | 14·8 | 145,219 | 19·9 |
| total | 328,688 | 46·1 | 329,999 | 45·2 |
| Pupils bringing own food on school premises | 104,266 | 14·6 | 98,488 | 13·5 |

A detailed statement of the returns from education authorities from which these national figures are derived is being placed in the Library.

The following table shows, as percentage of pupils attending their respective sectors, those primary and secondary pupils taking meals or bringing their own food.

| | *Primary* | | *Secondary* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1989 Per cent.* | *1988 Per cent.* | *1989 Per cent.* | *1988 Per cent.* |
| Pupils taking school meals | 51·5 | 50·0 | 42·1 | 41·8 |
| Pupils bringing own food | 22·2 | 20·6 | 5·3 | 5·3 |

All authorities provide the fixed traditional 2 course meals and cafeteria style meals, with the latter accounting for 64 per cent. of all meals served.

The figures are as follows;

| | *1989* | | | *Per cent. of pupils present* | *1988* | | | *Per cent. of pupils present* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Paid* | *Free* | *Total* | | *Paid* | *Free* | *Total* | |
| Pupils taking fixed meals | 74,345 | 44,327 | 118,672 | 16·6 | 97,635 | 109,937 | 207,572 | 28·5 |
| Pupils taking cafeteria meals | 149,111 | 60,905 | 210,016 | 29·5 | 87,145 | 35,282 | 122,427 | 16·8 |

### Staffing Review

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to issue the final circular on staffing in Scottish schools following publication of the draft circular arising from the staffing review in June 1988.

**Mr. Lang** *[holding answer 3 May 1989]:* I am considering the precise form of final guidance to authorities, taking account of relevant developments since last June.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Petitions

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Lord President of the Council (1) if he will institute a review of the wording required of petitions in order to make the submission of petitions less likely to be invalid because of petitioners not using a precise form of words;

(2) if he will take action to permit the modernisation of the language required to be used on petitions in order to assist potential petitioners.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I have no plans to do so. If the hon. Member can demonstrate that the language required to be used on petitions has caused widespread difficulty for petitioners he should bring the matter to the attention of the Select Committee on Procedure for its consideration. The growth in the number of public petitions presented over the last decade, from 42 in 1979-80 to 356 in 1987-88, suggests that there is no problem and hon. Members may consult the Clerk of Public Petitions when necessary.

### Planted Questions

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will launch an inquiry into the practice of planting questions.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I have no plans to do so.

## HEALTH

### Self-Governing Hospitals

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the cost of producing the communications pack called "Self-Governing Hospitals—An Initial Guide", a Members' briefing and a video.

**Mr. Mellor:** The estimated cost of the staff communications pack of self-governing hospitals which included "Self-Governing Hospitals—An Initial Guide", "Self-Governing Hospital—Briefing for NHS Managers" and a video, was £300,000.

### Eye Tests

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will instigate a study to establish whether extending the range of people who are exempt from eye test charges could reduce hospital referrals.

**Mr. Mellor:** No. We have no reason to believe such a study is necessary. GPs are well aware that only those patients who require diagnosis and treatment of a suspected eye condition should be referred to hospital eye departments.

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the average cost to *(a)* a hospital and *(b)* an ophthalmic medical practitioner to give an eye test; and what assessment he has made of the reasons for any differences.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not have centrally information on the average cost of providing sight tests in hospitals. However, the current fee of £8·69 paid to an ophthalmic medical practitioner (OMP) for conducting an NHS sight test includes an expenses element of £2·13 based on the recommendation of the doctors and dentists review body. In framing its recommendation the review body took note of the results of an inquiry, which reported in 1988, into the expenses of OMPs. No comparison between the costs of undertaking sight tests in hospitals and by OMPs has been made.

### Benzodiazepines

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide for each of the last three available years a breakdown of the number of prescriptions issued by community pharmacists for the following benzodiazepines *(a)* diazepam, *(b)* temazepam, *(c)* lorazepam, *(d)* nitrazepam and *(e)* oxazepam.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information is as follows:

*Number of prescriptions dispensed*

*Millions*

| *England* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Diazepam | 4·4 | 4·2 | 4·1 |
| Temazepam | 5·1 | 5·8 | 6·2 |
| Lorazepam | 2·6 | 2·6 | 2·4 |
| Nitrazepam | 5·0 | 4·7 | 4·4 |
| Oxazepam | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·6 |

The above data are estimates based on a sample of approximately one in 200 prescriptions dispensed by retail pharmacists and drug stores.

### Staffing (Gateshead and Newcastle)

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the qualified staffing per capita levels in *(a)* Gateshead district health authority and *(b)* Newcastle district health authority.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information which I understand the hon. Member requires is set out in the table.

| | *Gateshead DHA* | *Newcastle DHA* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Enrolled nursing and midwifery staff per 100,000 resident population | 146·4 | 359·0 |
| 2. Registered nursing and midwifery staff per 100,000 resident population | 273·9 | 734·7 |
| 3. In-patients treated in year ending 31 March 1988 | 21,729 | 92,352 |

Items 1 and 2—Source—Department of Health Annual Census of non-medical manpower (September 1987).

Item 3—Source—Department of Health returns from Health Authorities on number of patient stays year ending 31 March 1988. Form SH3A.

### Cyclotron Machine

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the cyclotron machine for which the Government provided funds will be owned by the National Health Service.

**Mr. Freeman:** Details of the operational arrangements for the proposed project have yet to be settled in consultation with those concerned.

### NHS Reform

**Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many responses he has received to date on the White Paper "Working for Patients".

**Mr. Mellor:** We have received more than 8,500 representations since the White Paper was published on 30 January.

### Patients' Records

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he proposes to take to improve the transfer of patient medical records from one general practitioner to another.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Mr. Nicholson) on 22 June at column *216*.

### Porton Down

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about the future of the centre for applied microbiology and research at Porton Down near Salisbury.

**Mr. Freeman:** The centre for applied microbiology and research (CAMR) is a public body managed by the public health laboratory service (PHLS). As with any body spending public funds, reviews are carried out from time to time on how effectively those funds are being used and whether they are being spent on activities which properly belong within the public sector. The Department and the PHLS are currently carrying out such a review of the arrangements for the management of CAMR. No decisions have yet been made, but we will ensure that the centre's essential public health work continues.

### HIV

**Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will give such details as can be released without breach of confidentiality of any cases in which National Health Service injury benefits compensation has been paid to a worker who had acquired the HIV infection;

(2) how many cases of HIV infection alleged to be acquired at work have been, and are currently being investigated to date for National Health Service injury benefit compensation; and how many of these have been accepted.

**Mr. Mellor:** No benefits have been paid under the National Health Service (Injury Benefits) Regulations in respect of HIV infections. There has been only one occasion where a claim has been made under the injury benefit regulations alleging that a HIV infection was attributable to National Health Service employment. That claim was subsequently withdrawn while still under consideration when the source of the infection was traced to a previous employment.

### AIDS Research

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list in the *Official Report* the amounts of *(a)* Government and *(b)* non-Government investment in AIDS research over the latest period for which figures are available.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Government have allocated the following sums for AIDS research since 1984:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 0·17 |
| 1985-86 | 0·66 |
| 1986-87 | 2·46 |
| 1987-88 | 10·36 |
| 1988-89 | 13·95 |

We do not hold information about non-Government investment in AIDS research.

### "Working for Patients"

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what role nurses will have on the new family practitioner committees envisaged in "Working for Patients".

**Mr. Mellor:** The nurse member will be a full member of the newly constituted family practitioner committee in England, contributing to all its intended functions and activities and will bring to the committee special skills and experience bearing on the increasingly important part which nursing plays in modern general practice.

### Disability

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial support Her Majesty's Government are giving to the activities of the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes) on 14 July at columns *657-58*.

### Electromagnetic Fields

**Sir Russell Johnston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what legislation he plans to bring forward, in the light of the National Radiological Protection Board's recommendations in their recently published "Guidance to Restrictions on Exposure to Time-varying Electromagnetic Fields," and the 1988 recommendations of the International Non-ionising Radiation Committee.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Health and Safety Commission is not planning to propose new legislation on non-ionising electromagnetic fields. However, the Health and Safety Executive will take account of the National Radiological Protection Board's recommendations in any further guidance it issues, but does not expect that any major revision of current guidance will be needed.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Livestock Compensatory Allowance

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Western Isles on 30 June, *Official Report*, column *585*, how many individual farmers as landowners will receive livestock compensatory allowance payments annually; what information he has in respect of how much is paid out in total and how much to individual farmers and landowners in hill livestock compensatory allowance payments; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** We estimate that about 65,000 producers in the United Kingdom's less-favoured areas will receive hill livestock compensatory allowances this year, and that total expenditure will be of the order of £120 million. We do not have a breakdown of these figures between landowners and other claimants.

### Set-aside Scheme

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many whole farms have been set aside from agricultural production under the European Community scheme in each county in England and Wales.

**Mr. Ryder:** Following are the numbers of participants who have set aside in the crop year 1988-89 the whole area used in the base year 1987-88 for relevant arable crops. This area is not necessarily the whole of the farm concerned.

| | *Number of participants* |
|---|---|
| *England* | |
| Avon | 6 |
| Bedfordshire | 9 |
| Berkshire | 5 |
| Buckinghamshire | 20 |
| Cambridgeshire | 16 |
| Cheshire | 5 |
| Cleveland | 1 |
| Cornwall | 13 |
| Cumbria | 1 |

| | *Number of participants* |
|---|---|
| Derbyshire | 7 |
| Devon | 20 |
| Dorset | 5 |
| Durham | 4 |
| Essex | 32 |
| Gloucestershire | 18 |
| Hampshire | 12 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 4 |
| Hertfordshire | 14 |
| Humberside | 11 |
| Isle of Wight | — |
| Kent | 22 |
| Lancashire | — |
| Leicestershire | 8 |
| Lincolnshire | 4 |
| Greater London | 2 |
| Greater Manchester | — |
| Merseyside | — |
| West Midlands | 1 |
| Norfolk | 23 |
| Northamptonshire | 14 |
| Northumberland | 6 |
| Nottinghamshire | 7 |
| Oxfordshire | 11 |
| Shropshire | — |
| Somerset | 10 |
| Staffordshire | 6 |
| Suffolk | 36 |
| Surrey | 13 |
| East Sussex | 18 |
| West Sussex | 29 |
| Tyne and Wear | — |
| Warwickshire | 13 |
| Wiltshire | 9 |
| North Yorkshire | 21 |
| South Yorkshire | 2 |
| West Yorkshire | 3 |
| Total | 461 |
| *Wales* | |
| Gwent | 3 |
| Dyfed | 7 |
| Total | 10 |

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will estimate how many full-time and part-time jobs have been lost as a consequence of the set aside scheme for agricultural land in England and Wales; and if he will estimate how many of those job losses are attributable to whole farm set aside.

**Mr. Ryder:** Losses of agricultural jobs are to be expected as farming adjusts to a more rigorous price policy, but alternative non-agricultural activities on farms will generate new jobs. Set-aside is designed both to work with stabilisers to achieve the adjustment of agricultural production and to provide new opportunities for farmers to use their land for non-agricultural purposes. I will be in a position to form a judgment on the employment effects of set-aside when I have the results of the evaluation of the scheme commissioned by my Department.

### White Papers

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, for each of the last three White Papers issued by his Department, for which legislation has been started, he will state the time elapsed between their publication and the First Readings of any Bills connected with them; and if he will do the same for the last three White Papers issued by his Department prior to May 1979.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** In recent years it has not been usual practice for my Department to issue White Papers in advance of the publication of bills. Information for the period prior to May 1979 is not readily available.

### Cereals Co-responsibility Levy

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will press for the discontinuation of the cereals co-responsibility levy in future years.

**Mr. Ryder:** Yes. I will continue to press for the levy to be replaced by price cuts, which are a far better way of dealing with a surplus.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish in the *Official Report* the declared purpose of funds generated by the cereals co-responsibility levy; and how have they actually been spent.

**Mr. Ryder:** When the Commission of the European Communities proposed the introduction of the cereals co-responsibility levy in 1986 it declared that the objective of the levy was to make producers more aware of market realities and to make them contribute to financing the burden placed on the European Community budget by surplus production. Income from the levy has been used to offset expenditure in the cereals sector.

### Imported Eggs

**Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many representations he has received over the new arrangements for the testing of imported eggs for salmonella which *(a)* allege that the safeguards are inadequate or *(b)* propose that the importer, rather than the taxpayer should pay the cost of testing; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have received a considerable number of representations about the arrangemens for testing imported eggs for salmonella. However, I am advised that the sampling rate of 60 eggs per lorry load is adequate to enable the risk of infection from imports to be established. There are no powers to charge importers for testing under the Imported Food Regulations 1984.

### Global Warming

**Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research is being carried out by his Department to determine the impact of global warming on British agriculture.

**Mr. Ryder:** My Department is planning to commission research in 1990-91 on the impact of climate change in agriculture; on the effects of climatic change on crop responses, pests and diseases; quantification of methane emissions by ruminants on farms and the reduction of such emissions; and desk studies to estimate the possible impact of climatic change on land drainage.

### Free-range Eggs

**Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has plans to help small free-range egg producers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have no such plans.

### Pasties

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, if he will arrange for an EWP licence to export meat products within the European Community to be issued to Trade Routes in Ivybridge, Devon, to enable them to export pasties to Spain.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** An EWP approval number is issued to a plant operator rather than an export agent, such as Trade Routes, for a meat product plant which satisfies the hygiene standards of production required for intra-Community trade.

Pasties, however, are regarded as meat preparations for intra-Community trade purposes and are the subject of bilateral agreements between member states. Negotiations are in progress with the Spanish authorities intended to secure their agreement to British exports of these preparations.

### National Fruit Collection

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he is now in a position to make a statement on the future of the national fruit collection at Brogdale.

**Mr. Ryder:** I have nothing to add to the reply given to the hon. Member as recently as 17 July.

### Meat Tenderisers

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he intends to publish the results of recent research into the effects of meat tenderisers administered to cattle.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The results of research into the effects of meat tenderisers administered to cattle were published in *Meat Science* in 1987. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

### Quangos (Appointments)

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list all the appointments he has made to quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations together with the salary payable since January 1989.

**Mr. Donald Thompson** *[holding reply 13 July 1989]:* The following list shows appointments and re-appointments that I have made either alone or jointly since 1 January 1989 to the Executive etc, Bodies and Public Corporations set out under my Department in "Public Bodies 1988" of which a copy is in the Library. It also shows current remuneration.

| | *Appointment* | *Remuneration* |
|---|---|---|
| *Meat and Livestock Commission* | | |
| R. W. Mattes | Deputy Chairman | £21,293 p.a. |
| Mrs. E. Rose | Independent Member and Chairman of Consumers Committee | £10,225 p.a. |
| J. G. Steer | Member | £5,030 p.a. |
| C. G. Smith | Member | £5,030 p.a. |
| R. E. Meuric Rees CBE | Member | £5,030 p.a. |
| H. G. Marshall | Member | £5,030 p.a. |
| J. F. Royan OBE | Member | £5,030 p.a. |
| *Agricultural Training Board* | | |
| J. E. Smith | Chairman | £6,216 p.a. |
| M. J. Curtis | Deputy Chairman | £5,699 p.a. |
| N. J. Mallett | Member | Expenses only |
| J. S. Burnett | Member | Expenses only |
| D. H. Roberts | Member | Expenses only |
| A. Fooks MBE | Member | Expenses only |
| J. A. Kilgour | Member | Expenses only |
| I. Monckton | Member | Expenses only |
| M. D. Pollard | Member | Expenses only |
| G. J. Baird | Member | Expenses only |
| Dr. Kathleen Anderson | Member | Expenses only |
| *Apple and Pear Development Council* | | |
| B. J. Collingridge | Member | £25 per day |
| S. F. Hay | Member | £25 per day |
| C. Graham | Member | £25 per day |
| N. Longe | Member | £25 per day |
| P. R. D. Tippett | Member | £25 per day |
| Mrs. T. Wickham | Member | £25 per day |
| *Covent Garden Market Authority* | | |
| R. Smith OBE | Member | £4,790 p.a. |
| *Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew* | | |
| Mrs. A. Lennox-Boyd | Trustee | Expenses only |
| *Home-Grown Cereals Authority* | | |
| G. B. Nelson | Chairman | £14,567 p.a. |
| Mrs. V. Boakes | Independent Member | £2,510 p.a. |
| M. Garrod | Member | £2,510 p.a. |
| D. Walton | Member | £2,510 p.a. |
| J. Dillon-Robinson | Member | £2,510 p.a. |
| D. George | Member | £2,510 p.a. |
| R. Pirie | Member | £2,510 p.a. |
| K. Hairs | Member | £2,510 p.a. |

## ENVIRONMENT

### Sewage Sludge

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), *Official Report*, 28 June, column *955*, he will set out the basis for his statement that incineration of sewage sludge may be the worst environmental option.

**Mr. Howard:** Incineration of sewage sludge needs a significant input of energy in the form of oil or gas to achieve the necessary combustion efficiency. The ash which sludge incinerators produce contains relatively high concentrations of heavy metals, up to 50 times the levels in sludges disposed of in liquid form to agricultural land or to sea. Therefore, special protective measures must be taken at the landfill sites where it is deposited to ensure long-term environmental safety. Unlike other sludge treatment processes, incineration carries a risk of uncontrolled discharge of contaminants to the atmosphere if operational breakdown causes faulty combustion or inefficient cleansing of exhaust gases.

For these reasons, incineration is used only where the sludge producer has no practicable alternative available. Only about 10 per cent. of the sludge produced in other EC member states is dealt with by incineration.

### New Town Development Corporations

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will issue guidance to new town development corporations that they should, when issuing press releases about intended 7(1) submissions, issue them also to hon. Members whose constituencies are affected by such submissions.

**Mr. Trippier:** New town development corporations are being asked to follow this procedure.

### Hazardous Wastes

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidelines and safeguards exist to control the disposal of radioactive wastes together with domestic wastes on local authority landfill sites.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Small amounts of low-level solid radioactive wastes are authorised under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 for disposal with ordinary domestic refuse. Strict limits and conditions are contained in certificates of authorisation issued under the Act to ensure that such disposals present no hazard to the public, to the refuse collectors or at the disposal site.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the availability of anti-static devices containing polonium 210 in the United Kingdom in the light of their withdrawal in the United States of America because of radioactive contamination.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Anti-static devices containing polonium 210 imported from the United States have been withdrawn in the United Kingdom. A United Kingdom manufacturer currently supplies most devices now used in this country. These devices are robust and there is no evidence of radioactive contamination.

### Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total area of areas of outstanding natural beauty in England; and what proportion of this total lies within each of the standard planning regions.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The information is as follows:

| *Standard[1] region* | *Per cent. of total* |
|---|---|
| North | 12 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 2 |
| East Midlands | 3 |
| East Anglia | 5 |
| South East | 34 |
| South West | 34 |
| West Midlands | 6 |
| North West | 4 |
| England | 100<br>18,455 sq km |

[1] These coincide with the economic planning regions.

### Homelessness

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his policy on housing and homelessness in the light of the resolution of the Assembly of the Baptist Union of Great Britain passed in April on housing and homelessness, a copy of which has been sent to him.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to make all local authorities follow the same criteria for the definition of homelessness; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is reviewing the homelessness legislation and hopes to announce conclusions soon.

**Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give figures for the first quarter of 1988 to the first quarter of 1989 and for five years and 10 years, previously, on a yearly basis, for *(a)* lettings to homeless households, *(b)* expenditure on homeless households, *(c)* numbers in bed and breakfast accommodation and other forms of temporary accommodation, *(d)* the level of homelessness identified, *(e)* the average cost per family per week in bed and breakfast, *(f)* the total number of children and total of under-fives in bed and breakfast and *(g)* the average length of stay in temporary accommodation for each local authority in England and Wales.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 11 July 1989]:* The information requested is not yet available for 1988-89. The available information is listed hereafter.

Information on lettings to homeless households as reported by local authorities in England in their housing investment programme returns (HIP1) is available in the "HIP1 All Items Print" for 1988 (columns E5b, E9b and E10b), for 1984 (columns D5a, D9b and D10a) and for 1979 (column J3b13).

Information on net expenditure on homeless households by local authorities in England and Wales is given in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy publication "Homelessness Statistics Actuals" for 1987-88 and 1983-84 (column 22) and for 1978-79 (column 20).

The number of households in temporary accommodation for each local authority in England and Wales at the end of 1988 is available in table 9 of edition No. 89 of "Local Housing Statistics". For the end of 1983 and 1978 the information is in table 12 of editions Nos. 70 and 52 respectively of the same publication.

Annual figures for the number of households accepted as homeless for each authority are also given in "Local Housing Statistics". The latest available are for 1987 (table 9(b) of edition no. 86). For 1983 the information is given in a table placed in the Library in answer to a question by the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright), on 15 May 1987. For 1978 the information is available only for half-years and is given in edition 52.

The latest information on homelessness (Q1 1989 figures) is available in table 7 of "Local authorities' action under the homeless provisions of the 1985 Housing Act: England. Results for the first quarter 1989. Supplementary Tables".

Total expenditure by local authorities in England and Wales on bed and breakfast accommodation together with the number of household days placed in bed and breakfast as reported to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) are given in "Homelessness Statistics Actuals" for 1987-88 and 1983-84 (columns 14 and 17) and for 1978-79 (columns 12 and 15).

Information on the total number of children and under-fives in bed and breakfast accommodation and the average length of stay in temporary accommodation is not available centrally.

Copies of all the documents and publications referred to are in the Library. For further information about Welsh authorities I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

### Rhododendrons

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the threat to woodlands and wild landscapes which comes from the spread of rhododendrons.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Department has not carried out specific work on this subject, but in 1984 the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology published a report noting that in many areas of Britain there was evidence of significant increases in the spread of rhododendron. The Forestry Commission controls rhododendron on its own land where it is affecting tree growth and gives advice as appropriate to owners of private woodlands. In addition the commission is undertaking research on alternative means of control, including methods of limiting regrowth after cutting.

### House Prices

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the information currently held by local authorities on domestic property price movement; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** Information held on domestic house price movements is a matter for individual local authorities and no record of practice is kept centrally. The Department itself obtains informatiom from building societies and banks; and regional and national analyses of house price movements from these sources are published regularly.

### Asbestos

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the organised dumping sites where asbestos may be dumped in the area covered by Greater London.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution has a record of some 32 waste disposal facilities licensed to deposit asbestos waste in the London area. Further details of these sites will be available on the public register of licensed sites maintained by the London waste regulation authority.

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what checks are made, and how, by officers of his Department as to the following of rules when asbestos waste is dumped.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The responsibility for the conditions under which asbestos waste is deposited on licensed sites rests with the relevant waste disposal authorities.

General guidance on the disposal of asbestos wastes is given in waste management paper No. 18, published by the Department, and in the Institute of Waste Management's code of practice for the disposal of asbestos waste, which was supported by the Department.

### Bed-and-Breakfast Accommodation

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of families placed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation by the London borough of Wandsworth as of 1 July.

**Mr. Trippier:** This information is reported quarterly by local authorities and I referred the hon. Member to the latest available figures in the reply that I gave him on 15 June 1989. [*Official Report*, Vol. 154, column *538*].

### Pollution Standards

82. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek powers to ensure that new factories and workshops conform to European Community standards of environment pollution and noise pollution.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Government intend to strengthen the pollution control powers available to local authorities and introduce a system of integrated pollution control for major industrial processes which will be applied by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution. Taken with the creation of the National Rivers Authority under the Water Act 1989, our proposals will create a powerful pollution control régime which will ensure compliance not only with European Community standards, but in many cases with more stringent standards. There are no European Community standards of environmental noise pollution for new factories and workshops. Controls are exercised through the planning system and the statutory nuisance provisions of the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

### HAT, Southwark

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) over what period of time any ballot on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark will be open to those eligible to vote;

(2) to whom spoilt ballot papers will be referred during the count of votes cast after any ballot on the proposed formation of a housing action trust in Southwark;

(3) what provisions will be made for those, such as the elderly, infirm and disabled unable to take part in any ballot on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark;

(4) what steps will be taken to ensure the maximum participation by residents in any ballot on the creation of a housing action trust in Southwark;

(5) whether any vote on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark will take the form of *(a)* a postal vote, *(b)* a ballot box vote or *(c)* both;

(6) whether he will ask the Electoral Reform Society to encourage residents to vote in any ballot on the proposed formation of a housing action trust in Southwark;

(7) which individuals are entitled to attend and observe the count of the votes cast after any ballot on the proposed formation of a housing action trust in Southwark;

(8) who will have the responsibility for conducting the count of the votes cast after any ballot on the proposed formation of a housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave her yesterday.

We shall certainly encourage the Electoral Reform Society to take all reasonable steps to ensure that eligible tenants have an opportunity to vote in a housing action trust ballot.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when the new terms of the tenancy agreement will be finalised in relation to the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark;

(2) if he will now publish a draft tenancy agreement that would operate in the event of the establishment of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** I refer the hon. Member to my answer to her questions yesterday.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether tenants leaving the Gloucester Grove and North Peckham estates in Southwark after the compilation of the register of those entitled to vote in any ballot on the creation of a housing action trust will retain voting rights.

**Mr. Trippier:** I refer the hon. Member to the answers that I gave her yesterday.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many members of the proposed Southwark housing action trust would be nominated by the council.

**Mr. Trippier:** When I met Southwark council and tenants' representatives on 24 May I said that a trust for Southwark could consist of a chairman and up to 10 other members. Half these other members could be tenants and council representatives. Tenants and the council are welcome to suggest candidates. The Secretary of State is required to consult the local authority before appointing such members.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discretion would be given to the proposed housing action trust in Southwark over individual rent arrears cases.

**Mr. Trippier:** A trust's statutory position as a landlord would be exactly the same as that of a local authority as regards the discretion it could exercise over individual rent arrears cases. Trusts would be sensible managers which would follow the best practices of local authorities in trying to avoid the accumulation of rent arrears. My Department has issued a circular (18/87) on best practice, which trusts would be encouraged to follow.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what powers he would have to intervene in the running of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark;

(2) what powers he would possess in relation to decisions made by the proposed housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** Day-to-day decisions would be for the trust itself. Section 72 of the Housing Act 1988 enables the Secretary of State to give an established trust directions in the exercise of its functions. Other provisions in part III of the Act set out the basis on which the Secretary of State may determine a trust's financial duties; and the circumstances in which he has to authorise, oppose or consent to its actions.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the powers of the proposed housing action trust board in Southwark; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** The powers of a trust are set out in part III of the Housing Act 1988. Its objects and general powers are covered in section 63. The Secretary of State may by order under sections 65, 67 and 68 confer various housing, planning and public health functions on the trust. Wherever possible our intention is to leave powers with the local authority.

## Capital Receipts (Ipswich)

**Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total spending power out of capital receipts of the borough of Ipswich in each of the last eight years.

**Mr. Gummer:** The table shows total spending power from capital receipts for the borough of Ipswich from 1985-86 onwards. This information is not available for earlier years.

*Spending power from capital receipts*

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1985-86 | 6·161 |
| 1986-87 | 7·497 |
| 1987-88 | 9·610 |
| 1988-89 | 16·710 |

## Mosley Common Colliery

**Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will indicate the total amount of derelict land grant awarded in respect of the reclamation of the site of the former Mosley Common colliery in Wigan.

**Mr. Trippier:** The total estimated cost of this scheme to derelict land grant is £1,239,920, of which £874,240 has already been paid.

**Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the recipients of derelict land grant involved in the reclamation of the former Mosley Common colliery site in Wigan.

**Mr. Trippier:** The sole applicant and grant recipient is Whelmar Homes Limited.

## Environmental Affairs

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what efforts he is making to promote his Department's role in environmental affairs.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Department issues many publications which give information and guidance to the public on specific environmental issues. In addition, it publishes annually a digest of environmental protection and water statistics which provides authoritative data on most aspects of environmental protection. Copies are in the Library. It has published "Protecting Your Environment—A Guide" which provides a summary of current environmental issues and policies across the board, describes the principles which underlie the Government's actions in this field, and provides a "who does what" guide to environmental protection. A copy is in the Library. It has published "Environment in Trust"—a series of leaflets which give in-depth accounts of environmental issues and current policies. Copies are in the Library.

### Community Charge

**Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish illustrative figures for 1989-90 showing for each area *(a)* community charges, *(b)* differences between general rates and the national non-domestic rate and *(c)* domestic bills with a combined system of capital value rates and local income tax, so that a comparison can be made with current local government taxes.

**Mr. Ridley:** I have today placed in the Library illustrative community charge figures for English authorities which are consistent with 1989-90 rate levels and show what the community charge might have been if the new local government finance system were in operation now. The figures have been calculated on the basis of the safety net and other transitional proposals which I announced earlier today.

The figures are subject to the same qualification as those for earlier years. In particular they are not a prediction of the community charges which will apply in 1990-91. Those will depend largely on the spending decisions of individual local authorities.

These figures are based on: estimated 1989-90 income from rates and Government grants for individual authorities; the new revenue support grant arrangements (but using the 1989-90 distribution of grant-related expenditure between individual authorities); the 1989-90 equivalent to aggregate external finance (grant and business rates); the business rate distribution which will come into effect from April 1990; and a safety net calculated on the principles for 1990-91 which I announced today.

These figures illustrate the community charge levels associated with current levels of spending. The new local government finance system would have allowed all authorities to finance expenditure sufficient to provide a standard level of service while levying a community charge of £240 in 1989-90.

The extent to which the full, unsafety-netted, community charge in any area exceeds £240 is simply a measure of the overspending by local authorities in the area. Likewise a full community charge of less than £240 is a measure of the efficiency of the authorities concerned.

In this way the level of the full community charge in each area will provide a ready reckoner enabling chargepayers to compare the amount which their councils spend with the cost of providing a standard level of service and with the performance of other authorities. The message is clear. High spending leads to high community charges.

In 1989-90 the level of local authority spending is likely to be 6·8 per cent. higher than allowed for in the settlement. This leads to an average illustrative community charge of £274 before the safety net, the same as the average rate bill per adult.

The published figures also include the latest estimates of the effect of moving to a uniform business rate. The latest figures suggest that about 60 per cent. of non-domestic hereditaments would have benefited from the uniform business rate on its own.

The move to a uniform poundage will be of particular benefit to businesses in the north and the inner cities. For example, poundages would reduce by 35 per cent. in Sheffield, 31 per cent. in Manchester and over 28 per cent. in Liverpool. The uniform business rate is particularly good news for areas of above-average unemployment where high rates have slowed economic regeneration. And businesses generally will benefit from the linkage of business rates to the RPI.

Although the move to the national business rate could mean significant changes in rate bills when combined with the revaluation of non-domestic properties, there will be transitional arrangements to limit the year-on-year changes.

I have also placed in the Library estimates of the impact of the combination of a local income tax and capital value rates.

As the basis for calculating community charges has been changed since 1988-89 figures were placed in the Library on 23 June 1988, I have also provided a comparative table showing 1988-89 and 1989-90 community charges calculated on a consistent basis. In 1990-91 actual charges will be determined by the amount that local authorities need to raise from their chargepayers. The nearest equivalent in 1989-90 is the amount they raise in rates. Illustrative charges in previous years were based on total expenditure which determined an authority's block grant but which is no longer relevant.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Manufacturing Productivity

2. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the G7 countries that have a higher level of manufacturing productivity than the United Kingdom.

44. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the G7 countries that have a higher level of manufacturing productivity than the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Newton:** No reliable comparisons exist for absolute levels of manufacturing productivity between different countries. But available figures do show that in the 1980s the United Kingdom has had the fastest rate of growth of manufacturing productivity of the seven major industrial countries.

### GATT

18. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress is being made in securing the inclusion of clauses concerning workers' rights in the negotiations in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade Uruguay round; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Forth:** Consultations are continuing over a United States proposal for a GATT working party, separate from the Uruguay round, on the relationship between trade and workers' rights.

## Consumer Credit

19. **Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the most recent monthly figure for consumer credit.

27. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the most recent monthly figure for consumer credit.

43. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the most recent monthly figure for consumer credit.

**Mr. Maude:** The amount outstanding at the end of May was £28·4 billion excluding lending by banks and insurance companies.

54. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the level of personal consumer credit.

**Mr. Maude:** The latest available figures for consumer credit are as follows. At the end of March 1989 that amount of consumer credit outstanding on the broad definition, which includes bank lending, was £43·4 billion. On the narrower definition, at the end of May it was £28·4 billion. The vast majority of household borrowing is accounted for by mortgages.

## Beer

20. **Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects to conclude his consideration of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the supply of beer; and if he will make a statement.

26. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, when he expects to be able to respond fully to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the supply of beer.

**Mr. Maude:** I announced our response to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the supply of beer in the House on 10 July.

## Competitiveness

22. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on which statistical measures of competitiveness Britain's competitiveness has *(a)* improved and *(b)* declined over the last 10 years.

56. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on which statistical measures of competitiveness Britain's competitiveness has *(a)* improved and *(b)* declined over the last 10 years.

73. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on which statistical measures of competitiveness Britain's competitiveness has *(a)* improved and *(b)* declined over the last 10 years.

**Mr. Newton:** While United Kingdom relative unit labour costs have increased recently, they are little changed by comparision with ten years ago and our share of world trade in manufactures has been stable over the last seven years after decades of decline. Other measures such as relative export, prices and import price competitiveness have fluctuated over the period. However, competitiveness also depends on non-price factors such as quality, reliability and delivery performance.

## Investment

23. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the net flow of investment in and out of Britain for the last year that is available; and what were the comparable figures 10 years earlier.

40. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the net flow of investment in and out of Britain for the last year that is available; and what were the comparable figures 10 years earlier.

47. **Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the net flow of investment in and out of Britain for the last year that is available; and what were the comparable figures 10 years earlier.

**Mr. Atkins:** Net direct and portfolio investment in the United Kingdom from abroad in 1988 is provisionally estimated to have been £11·4 billion whilst net direct and portfolio investment abroad was £25·4 billion. The corresponding figures for 1978 were £1·8 billion and £4·6 billion respectively.

65. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the level of investment in manufacturing industries in the north-west in actual and constant value terms in 1987 and 1979.

**Mr. Atkins:** Net capital expenditure in manufacturing industry[1] in the north-west is estimated to amount to £971 million in 1979 and £1,204 million in 1987. At constant 1985 prices the figures are £1,510 million and £1,108 million respectively.

[1] Divisions 2-4 Standard Industrial Classification, Revised 1980.

## Japan

24. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the current visible trade balance between the United Kingdom and Japan.

**Mr. Newton:** In the 12 months to May 1989, United Kingdom visible trade with Japan was in deficit by £4·8 billion.

35. **Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are the comparable figures for exports per head of population in *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* in Japan.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** In 1988 exports per head of population amounted to US $2,500 and the comparable figure for Japan was US $2,200.

79. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent representations he has received regarding the new and improved access for British exporters to the Japanese market.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The Government continue to attach great importance to Britain's trade with Japan. Where appropriate, we take up representations on market access with the Japanese authorities, both directly and through the European Commission. Such action has brought improved access to the market, most recently in respect of Scotch whisky. At the same time, through the Opportunity Japan campaign, my Department is encouraging British exporters to take advantage of the great potential of the Japanese market. Over the last five years our exports to Japan have doubled in value and are presently running at nearly £2 billion per annum.

81. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will give the latest value of United Kingdom exports to Japan; and what was the comparable figure five years ago.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** In the 12 months to May 1989 United Kingdom exports to Japan were £2·0 billion compared with £1·0 billion five years ago.

### Mergers and Takeovers

25. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the most recent annual figure for spending on mergers and takeovers.

68. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the most recent annual figure for spending on mergers and takeovers.

76. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the most recent annual figure for spending on mergers and takeovers.

**Mr. Maude:** Expenditure in 1988 on acquisitions and mergers within the United Kingdom by industrial and commercial companies is estimated to be about £22 billion. Expenditure in 1988 on acquisitions overseas by United Kingdom companies is estimated to be about £17 billion.

### European Single Market

28. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the take-up to date of information on 1992 in each of Britain's regions.

32. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the take-up to date of information on 1992 in each of Britain's regions.

62. **Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the take-up to date of information on 1992 in each of Britain's regions.

**Mr. Maude:** The number of centrally recorded requests for published information, by region, since the "Europe Open for Business" campaign began, is as follows:

| *Region* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Scotland | 8,300 |
| Wales | 4,600 |
| Northern Ireland | 3,300 |
| North | 4,500 |
| North west | 16,500 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 12,300 |
| East midlands | 10,800 |
| West midlands | 15,300 |
| East Anglia | 6,100 |
| South east | 95,300 |
| South west | 13,600 |
| Total | 190,600 |

### Manufacturing Output

29. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the most recent figure for output in manufacturing industry; and what was the figure for the same month in 1973.

**Mr. Atkins:** In May 1989 manufacturing output was at a level of 119·0, based on 1985 equal to 100. This is 9 per cent. more than the level of 109·1 for May 1973. But my hon. Friend will appreciate that monthly data can be erratic. A firmer based comparison would be in the three months to May 1989 manufacturing output was 8 per cent. higher than in the same period in 1973.

### Origin Marking

30. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any further plans to bring in regulations about the origin marking of goods.

**Mr. Forth:** I have no plans to do so. The Trade Descriptions (Place of Production) (Marking) Order 1988 which requires corrective origin marking in cases where the consumer might otherwise be misled as to where goods were produced, represents the most that is possible on a national basis within the confines of our European Community obligations.

### Trade Statistics

31. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster with which European Community countries the balance of trade has improved over the last 10 years.

37. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster with which European Council countries the balance of trade has improved over the last 10 years.

64. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster with which European Community countries the balance of trade has improved over the last 10 years.

**Mr. Atkins:** Our exports to France, Italy and Spain have gown faster over this period than our imports from them. And our trade with Spain is now in surplus.

50. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster with which Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries the United Kingdom is running a trade surplus.

**Mr. Atkins:** In the 12 months to May, United Kingdom visible trade was in surplus with Australia, Spain, Ireland, Greece and Canada.

### Estate Agents

33. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on his plans to regulate estate agents.

34. **Mr. Allan Roberts:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on his plans to regulate estate agents.

71. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on his plans to regulate estate agents.

**Mr. Forth:** My Department has received views from the Consumers Association and from my hon. Friends the Members for Harrogate (Mr. Banks) and for Skipton and Ripon (Mr. Curry) on the plans for improving standards in estate agency which I announced on 21 June.

### Company Accounts

36. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the reform of company accounts.

67. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the reform of company accounts.

77. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the reform of company accounts.

**Mr. Maude:** We receive many representations about possible changes in the law on company accounts and a number of them have been reflected in the Companies Bill.

### Environment-friendly Products

38. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will introduce a Government-sponsored labelling scheme for environment-friendly products.

41. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will introduce a Government-sponsored labelling scheme for environment-friendly products.

**Mr. Atkins:** The Government have discussed with consumers, producers, retailers and environmentalists, the question of labelling environmentally friendly products, and is keeping the issue under review. The DTI and the Department of the Environment intend shortly to issue a discussion document.

### Brewers Society

39. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met the Brewers Society; and what was discussed.

46. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met the Brewers Society; and what was discussed.

74. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met the Brewers Society; and what was discussed.

**Mr. Maude:** The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and I met representatives of the six national brewers on 6 July. A representative of the Brewers Society was also present. These were private discussions. My last meeting with the Brewers Society took place on 13 June.

### Interest Rates

42. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what further representations he has received on the cost to industry of the current levels of interest rates.

59. **Mr. Ted Garrett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what further representations he has received on the cost to industry of the current levels of interest rates.

61. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what further representations he has received on the cost to industry of the current levels of interest rates.

**Mr. Atkins:** My Department has received a number of representations on the level of interest rates. The Government's firm action to curb inflation continues to receive strong support from industry.

### Financial Services

45. **Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he is satisfied that the Financial Services Act is being operated to the benefit of the investor.

**Mr. Maude:** Yes, but I remain ready to review the operation of the Act if there is evidence that it is not working to the benefit of investors.

57. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the regulation of financial services.

**Mr. Maude:** I receive a considerable number of representations on a variety of topics relating to the regulation of financial services. Those which relate to the scope of the framework of the regulatory system, or the powers under the Financial Services Act which the Government retain, are given careful consideration. Those which relate to matters which are the responsibility of the SIB or of another regulatory authority are passed to the appropriate body.

### Mining

48. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the implications for those industries which are involved in mining equipment, engineering and technology of the continuing contraction in the British mining industry.

**Mr. Atkins:** It is for companies to decide how to respond to change, not Government.

### Shipbuilding

49. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a further statement on the operation of the European Economic Community's Renaval programme to assist shipbuilding areas.

**Mr. Newton:** Applications for eligibility have been made to the European Commission by the Government for Plymouth, Gibraltar and Strathclyde. I am consulting my right hon. Friends about the submission of applications for other areas. Most shipbuilding and shiprepair areas already receive all available benefits from the European regional development fund.

### Deregulation

51. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress is being made in implementing the new deregulation initiatives outlined in the document entitled "Releasing Enterprise".

**Mr. Maude:** Departments are pushing ahead with the plan of work set out in "Releasing Enterprise". They have already made much good progress under the programme, resulting in a wide range of benefits to business, and are committed to maintaining momentum. I expect to make a statement to the House in the autumn.

### New Industry (Liverpool)

52. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what amount of central Government funds has been invested in creating new industry in Liverpool during the last 10 years.

**Mr. Atkins:** Central Government investment towards industrial and commercial development in Liverpool is undertaken in the main by the DTI and Department of Environment.

DTI expenditure on investment in the travel-to-work area of Liverpool, through the main schemes of regional selective assistance, regional development grant and, from 1988, regional enterprise grant was £258 million during the last 10 years.

In addition, funding for Liverpool city through the Department of Environment urban programme and derelict land grant and including expenditure by the Merseyside development corporation amounted to £439 million, though not all of this is directly related to industrial development.

### Research and Development

53. **Dr. Bray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what were the percentage increases, in real terms, in *(a)* profits and *(b)* research and development expenditure, in the United Kingdom between 1979 and 1988, or the nearest years for which comparable information is available.

**Mr. Forth:** Between 1978 and 1987 expenditure on research and development performed by United Kingdom industry increased by 31 per cent. at 1985 prices. Profits figures are not readily available with the same coverage as research and development and conceptually, because they cannot be related to specific flows of goods and services, they could not be adjusted to constant prices.

60. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to seek to increase the level of civil research and development by British industry.

**Mr. Forth:** The Government have created a favourable economic climate which encourages companies to invest in R and D themselves. Industry increased its own funding of R and D by about 30 per cent. in real terms between 1983 and 1987.

### Inner City Task Forces

55. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the progress achieved to date by the inner city task forces.

**Mr. Forth:** The inner city task forces have continued to make good progress in meeting their objectives of securing more jobs and training for local people and encouraging local enterprise. Since the task forces began their work in 1986 they have committed about £42 million in support of over 1,300 projects. These generate, or safeguard, nearly 7,000 jobs, facilitate nearly 30,000 training places and provide support for 7,000 businesses. Over 450 private sector companies have supported task force projects.

I announced on 9 March, as part of the Government's Action for Cities anniversary announcements, that the task forces would be withdrawing from Leicester, Wolverhampton and Preston, and that new task forces would be opening in Bradford, Granby/Toxteth and Deptford in Lewisham. I am pleased to say that the Granby/Toxteth task force is now operational with a small team occupying temporary premises. It is hoped that Bradford and Deptford task forces will open later in the year.

### Manufacturing (Unit Costs)

58. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the effect in the change in unit costs on manufacturing industry.

**Mr Atkins:** My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Financial Statement and Budget Report forecast that total unit costs in maufacturing industry would increase by $4\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. in 1989. Restraint of unit costs, which is in industry's own hands, is the key to improved competitiveness.

### Media Ownership

63. **Mr. Orme:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the concentration of media ownership.

75. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on the concentration of media ownership.

**Mr. Maude:** We receive many representations on the concentration of media ownership both where it concerns ownership of a single medium and where cross-media ownership is the issue.

### United Kingdom Goods

66. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps he is taking to encourage people to purchase goods made in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Forth:** Ministers repeatedly point out the advantages of buying United Kingdom goods where they are competitive in design, quality and price. My Department's policies are geared to helping businesses achieve this.

### Export Credits Guarantee Department

69. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received recently concerning the future of the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** A report on the future status of ECGD, commissioned by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, was submitted to Ministers in May 1989. The report takes account of evidence provided to Mr. Kemp, its author, by a wide range of interested parties including exporters, banks and the insurance industry. In order to assist those same parties to contribute to the consideration of the report itself, Ministers decided that the report should be published. At the same time we established an inter-Departmental working group of officials, chaired by ECGD's chief executive to provide advice on the status options identified in the report. Comments have already been submitted to the working group by interested outside parties.

### Appledore-Fergusons

70. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, when he last met the chairman of British Shipbuilders, they discussed the disposal of Appledore-Fergusons of Port Glasgow; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton:** I last met the chairman of British Shipbuilders on 29 June. The disposal of Ferguson Shipbuilders Limited was among the topics discussed.

### Mortgage Finance

72. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will make a statement on the working of the Financial Services Act so far as it affects seeking advice on mortgage finance.

**Mr. Maude:** Advice to house purchasers on mortgage finance is not in itself a matter covered by the Financial Services Act, but if the arrangements for repaying the mortgage involve an investment agreement (for instance, by the borrower taking out an endowment life insurance policy) then that element of the transaction is subject to regulation. A person giving investment advice on such transactions by way of business must, unless exempted, be authorised under the Act and abide by rules regulating the conduct of that business.

### Enterprise Initiative

78. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the total cost of the advertising campaign for the enterprise initiative; and what has been the average cost per take-up.

**Mr. Newton:** Expenditure on advertising the enterprise initiative since January 1988 has been about £19 million. Of this, we estimate that some £14·4 million has been specifically directed at promoting the six consultancy initiatives, which would represent an average of about £485 per application.

### Textile Industry

80. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the current state of the textile industry in Britain.

**Mr. Atkins:** There have been major improvements in productivity in the industry since 1980 and significant new investment. The woollen textiles sector announced a new record for exports in 1988 and a further increase in the first four months of this year. The industry continues to make an important contribution to the wealth of the country.

### Cyclotron

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether the manufacturers of the cyclotron machine received any Government grants to develop the machine.

**Mr. Freeman:** I have been asked to reply

Cyclotron machines have a variety of applications in medicine and research. The development of cyclotrons specifically for medical use has not been funded by the Department. Details of the cyclotron to be installed at St. Thomas's hospital have yet to be settled by those concerned.

### Road Building (EEC)

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the 1992 potential for United Kingdom road building and surfacing contractors in the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Trippier:** I have been asked to reply.

Such assessments are a matter for the industry itself.

## DEFENCE

### Low Flying

**Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he keeps any record of accidents to motor vehicles or horse riders due to panic reaction caused by low-flying aircraft.

**Mr. Neubert:** I regret that the information requested is not maintained in the format required.

### Maps (Military Installations)

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy regarding the inclusion of military installations on Ordnance Survey maps.

**Mr. Neubert:** Most military installations are included in Ordnance Survey maps. Those that are not are excluded for security reasons.

### Community Charge

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men and women have become liable for the community charge in Scotland since April; how many of these are also ratepayers in other parts of the United Kingdom; what representations he has received on this point; whether he proposes to indemnify them against additional costs; and what advice he is giving as to whether to register for the community charge in England and Wales.

**Mr. Neubert:** No comprehensive information on numbers of service personnel liable for the community charge is held either by service authorities or the Ministry of Defence. Seventeen letters have been received from hon. Members, service personnel or their families about concurrent liability for community charge in Scotland and rates in England and Wales. As I said in my answer to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) on 5 May 1989 at column *278*, we are prepared to consider, for possible exceptional financial compensation, cases where the requirements of the service place personnel in a worse position this year than they would be in next year when the community charge applies throughout Great Britain. Copies of guidance given to members of the Armed Forces about liability for the community charge have already been placed in the Library of the House.

## Boscombe Down Research Establishment

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the aircraft and armaments research establishment at Boscombe Down near Salisbury.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The Aircraft and Armaments Experimental Establishment (A&AEE), Boscombe Down, plays an important role in the evaluation and acceptance into service of all military aircraft, their armament and associated equipment. It was not listed as one of the MOD establishments initially selected for inclusion in the Defence Research Agency. This was in no way an indication of any uncertainty over its continuing role but simply a reflection of fact that the work undertaken at Boscombe Down is not strictly of a research nature. The position of A&AEE is currently under consideration as part of a further study being undertaken on the most appropriate organisation for the MOD's test and evaluation facilities. This study is scheduled for completion later this year.

## European Fighter Aircraft

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many front line RAF squadrons will be equipped with European fighter aircraft when it enters service.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** On present plans, seven front line squadrons would be equipped with the European fighter aircraft when it enters service.

## Strategic Defence Initiative

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel from his Department are currently employed in the strategic defence initiative unit.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Seventeen Ministry of Defence staff are employed in the strategic defence initiative participation office, 14 based in London and three on the staff at the British Embassy, Washington. A further five staff are based in London, on secondment from other Government Departments or from United Kingdom companies; and the embassy in Washington employs four locally engaged civilian staff in support. The total is 26.

## RAAF (Bounty)

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Auxiliary Air Force officers and other ranks were awarded their annual bounty for completion of the minimum training commitment in the 1988-89 financial year.

**Mr. Neubert:** This information is not held centrally. I will write when the details have been collected.

## Royal Marine Reserve (Bounty)

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Marine Reserve officers and other ranks, respectively, were awarded their annual bounty for completion of the minimum training commitment during the1988-89 financial year.

**Mr. Neubert:** The answer is 59 officers and 526 other ranks.

## Royal Naval Reserve

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Naval Reserve officers and other ratings were awarded their annual bounty for completion of the minimum training commitment in the 1988-89 financial year.

**Mr. Neubert:** The answer is 1,729 officers and 2,762 ratings.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current strength of the Royal Naval Reserve in officers and ratings.

**Mr. Neubert:** It is 2,094 officers and 3,463 ratings, as at 31 March 1989.

## Tucano

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Shorts Tucano aircraft have been delivered to Royal Air force training command to date.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Twenty two aircraft have been delivered to the RAF by July 1989.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when basic flying training courses will commence on Royal Air Force Shorts Tucano aircraft.

**Mr. Neubert:** It is currently scheduled that the first Royal Air Force ground school training course for the Tucano aircraft will begin on 16 October 1989, with flying training commencing at RAF Church Fenton on 4 December 1989.

## Territorial Army

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army officers and other ranks were awarded their annual bounty for completion of the minimum training commitment in the 1988-89 financial year.

**Mr. Neubert:** A total of 5,225 TA officers and 41,839 TA other ranks qualified for and received their annual bounty in respect of the period 1988-89.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current strength of the Territorial Army in officers and other ranks.

**Mr. Neubert:** The strength of the TA as at 31 May 1989 is 7,864 officers and 65,747 other ranks, excluding the HSF.

## Air Defence Weapons

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what air defence weapons are currently available for British land and amphibious forces earmarked for the defence of Norway.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The British land and amphibious force contribution to NATO reinforcements for the defence of the Northern Region, including Norway, has a balance of air defence weapons which includes Javelin missiles and machine guns in the air defence role.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what air defence weapons are currently available for British land and amphibious forces earmarked for the defence of Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The British land and amphibious force contribution to NATO reinforcements for the defence of Denmark and Schleswig Holstein has a balance of air defence weapons which includes Rapier and Javelin missiles, and machine guns in the air defence role.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what air defence weapons are currently available to land forces serving with the British Army of the Rhine.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Land forces currently serving with the British Army of the Rhine have a balance of air defence weapons which includes tracked and towed Rapier missiles, Javelin missiles, and machine guns in the air defence role.

## Intrepid and Fearless

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his assessment of the cost of treating corrosion on the assault ships HMS Intrepid and HMS Fearless.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Corrosion repair and preventative work are normal features of the refitting of warships. HMS Intrepid is currently operational; whilst she will shortly undergo a hull survey, no major corrosion problems are expected. Some corrosion treatment, which is not unduly extensive, is in hand in the refit of HMS Fearless; but the cost of this treatment could be separately identified only at disproportionate cost.

## Home Service Force

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current strength of the home service force in officers and other ranks.

**Mr. Neubert:** The strength of the HSF as at 31 May 1989 is 167 officers and 2,883 other ranks.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of HSF personnel have had previous armed forces experience prior to enlistment.

**Mr. Neubert:** All HSF personnel have had previous armed forces experience prior to enlistment.

## Royal Army Education Corps

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current strength of the Royal Army Education Corps.

**Mr. Neubert:** The strength of the Royal Army Education Corps as at 30 June 1989 was 518 Officers.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans his Department has to privatise the work of the Royal Army Education Corps.

**Mr. Neubert:** There are currently no plans to privatise the work of the Royal Army Education Corps. However, all areas of the corps responsibility are regularly reviewed in the normal planning process and the potential for privatisation, civilianisation or contractorisation identified where appropriate.

## Royal Auxiliary Air Force

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current strength of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force in officers and other ranks.

**Mr. Neubert:** The strength of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force as at 1 April 1989, is 143 officers and 1,429 other ranks.

## Royal Marine Reserve

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current strength of the Royal Marine Reserve in officers and other ranks.

**Mr. Neubert:** The answer is 81 officers and 1,145 other ranks, as at 31 March 1989.

## Royal Naval Auxiliary Service

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current strength of the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service in officers and ratings.

**Mr. Neubert:** The answer is 114 volunteer staff officers and 2,817 auxiliary men and women as at 31 March 1989.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of RNAS personnel have had previous armed forces experience prior to enlistment.

**Mr. Neubert:** I regret that this information is not held centrally.

## Volunteers (Payments)

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what payment and bounties are paid to RNAS and HSF volunteers for training and partaking in exercises.

**Mr. Neubert:** RNAS volunteers are not paid in peacetime and do not receive a bounty. They are, however, reimbursed approved travel and subsistence expenses and may qualify for a loss of earnings allowance and a course and exercise training allowance on a daily basis where eight hours or more training are involved. The HSF are paid in accordance with TA rates of pay and receive a bounty of £45 in the first year, £90 in the second year and £150 in the third year, on completion of six days' minimum annual training.

## Fisheries Protection

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any plans to privatise the Royal Navy's fisheries protection role.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The Royal Navy provides a fishery protection service for both the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and, in the North Sea, for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland (DAFS). At present there are no plans to change these arrangements. Additionally, DAFS owns vessels and aircraft and MAFF charters civilian aircraft which are employed on fishery protection duties. I understand that there are at present no plans to change these arrangements either.

## Wintex 89

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Government Departments participated in Exercise Wintex 89.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The following Government Departments participated in WINTEX 89.

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Cabinet Office
HM Customs and Excise
Department of Employment
Department of Energy
Department of the Environment
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Department of Health
Home Office
Northern Ireland Office
Scottish Office
Department of Social Security
Department of Trade and Industry
Department of Transport
HM Treasury
Welsh Office

### Portsmouth Naval Base

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Royal Navy vessels are currently undergoing refits or major servicing at Portsmouth naval base.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** HMS Exeter is the only vessel currently undergoing a refit at Her Majesty's naval base, Portsmouth; the following vessels are undergoing docking and essential defects (DEDs):

HMS Otter, Jupiter, Charybdis, Endurance and Bristol.

### Anthrax

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give an indication of all work undertaken by Porton Down involving anthrax in the last five years; what was the purpose of such activity and the locations involved; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The United Kingdom is a signatory to the 1972 convention on biological warfare and does not undertake any work on the development of biological weapons. The chemical defence establishment at Porton Down is charged with the responsibility of research into the application of up-to-date technology leading to the provision of the best possible equipment to the armed services for the detection, decontamination and treatment of such agents as well as protective systems against them. CDE's work on anthrax conforms to these criteria. Some of the work has potential to benefit the civil population and therefore involves interaction with other agencies and publication in open literature. CDE's scientists carry out their studies at Porton Down and one of the useful consequences has been the recent successful clean-up operation on Gruinard island, which has been contaminated since being used for wartime tests.

### Land Holdings

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state the location of the areas referred to in footnote 2, page 50, cm. 675-II, Statement on the Defence Estimates vol. 2.

**Mr. Neubert:** The two locations are 50,000 hectares of Forestry Commission land in Galloway and 11,679 hectares of British Aluminium Company land at Kinlochleven. In both cases, there are restrictions upon the nature and extent of the training that may take place.

### Military Exercises

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he has had with the Supreme Allied Commander Europe or the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe concerning the possibility of reducing the size and number of military exercises.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Together with his subordinate commanders, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, is conducting a review of exercise activity within his command to ensure that, in nature, size, scope and number, exercises undertaken represent an effective and economical way of meeting Alliance requirements. Recommendations have yet to be put to NATO allies for decision.

### Major Colin Wallace

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, further to the reply of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, 8 June, *Official Report*, column 458, he intends to write to the hon. Member for Linlithgow in relation to the points he raised on Major Colin Wallace.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

### Environmental Pollution

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to which NATO member states have legislation to require *(a)* their own military bases and *(b)* bases allocated to United States military forces on their territory to provide (i) an environmental impact statement for military bases and (ii) environmental pollution data regarding military base operations, to their governments.

**Mr. Neubert** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* The Ministry of Defence follows the provisions of Department of Environment circular 15/88, Welsh Office circular 23/88 and Scottish Development Department circular 13/88 in respect of environmental impact assessments relating to projects carried out on behalf of both home forces and visiting forces. There is no general requirement to make statements or provide data in respect of existing operations. The legislative requirements of other NATO members are matters for the Governments of the countries concerned.

### Aldermaston (Radiation Monitoring)

**Mrs. Wise:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what additions have been made since May 1979 to the personnel radiation monitoring programme technology at atomic weapons establishment, Aldermaston.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[holding answer 6 July 1989]:* I understand that the hon. Lady is referring to the personnel radiation monitoring programme. In addition to making relevant adjustments for compliance with requirements of new legislative measures arising since May 1979, the atomic weapons establishment have made the following major changes since that date in monitoring low levels of personal radiation exposures that might arise at their Aldermaston and other premises:

- *(a)* the use of personnel-borne air samplers (PAS) has been extended to cover any personal occupational exposures to radioactive and toxic substances which might be of health and safety significance;
- *(b)* thermoluminescent radiation dosimeters (TLD) have been brought into use in place of film-badges as a means of assessing any personal gamma radiation exposures that might occur;
- *(c)* two *in vivo* (whole body) monitors have been installed and are operating for assaying any levels of radioactive substances that might have been deposited in the bodies, and particularly the lungs, of workers;
- *(d)* newly developed instruments have been, and are continuing to be, installed to provide further facilities for monitoring radioactivity that might be dispersed in the air, on surfaces or on persons in occupational work-spaces.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Employment Schemes

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, for each of the Training Agency's areas within Greater London, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Glasgow, Sheffield, Birmingham and Solihull, Coventry and Warwickshire, what are the monthly statistics for the latest available three months for employment training showing *(a)* the number of referrals to ET from restart interviews, *(b)* the number of ET action plans completed, *(c)* the number of starts with ET training managers, *(d)* the number of ET filled places and *(e)* the number of unfilled ET places.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The information is not available in the precise form requested. Restart referrals are available only for employment service areas and are given in table 1. The figures for action plans, starts at training managers and filled places are given in tables 2, 3 and 4. Information about unfilled places is available only for May and these figures are given in table 5.

Table 1. *Employment service restart referrals to ET training agents February to April 1989*

| *Employment service area* | *February* | *March* | *April* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inner London South | 598 | 494 | 435 |
| Inner London Central | 782 | 595 | 550 |
| Inner London West | 630 | 295 | 444 |
| Inner London East | 646 | 694 | 491 |
| London South East | 370 | 303 | 326 |
| London South West | 298 | 273 | 167 |
| London North West | 516 | 428 | 368 |
| London West | 345 | 667 | 314 |
| London South | 377 | 349 | 386 |
| London East | 464 | 444 | 458 |
| London North | 604 | 490 | 422 |
| Merseyside North | 713 | 660 | 599 |
| Merseyside South | 953 | 1,033 | 723 |
| Liverpool Central and Wirral | 600 | 591 | 343 |
| Manchester City[1] | 562 | 726 | — |
| Manchester North East[1] | 285 | 316 | — |
| Manchester North West[1] | 510 | 455 | — |
| Manchester South[1] | 358 | 392 | — |
| Manchester West[1] | 352 | 444 | — |
| Manchester Central[1] | — | — | 758 |
| Manchester East[1] | — | — | 505 |
| Manchester West[1] | — | — | 610 |
| Glasgow North | 1,392 | 1,466 | 895 |
| Glasgow South | 833 | 805 | 538 |
| Sheffield | 870 | 742 | 769 |
| Birmingham and Solihull | 1,808 | 1,776 | 1,267 |
| Coventry and Warwickshire | 656 | 735 | 487 |

[1] Employment service areas re-organised from 1 April 1989.

Table 2. *Employment training Action plans completed by training agents March-May 1989*

| *Training agency area* | *March* | *April* | *May* |
|---|---|---|---|
| London North | 1,000 | 820 | 730 |
| London West | 630 | 380 | 370 |
| London East | 1,090 | 730 | 740 |
| London South | 540 | 420 | 410 |
| Inner London North | 2,090 | 1,630 | 1,600 |
| Inner London South | 740 | 500 | 420 |
| Merseyside | 2,220 | 2,060 | 1,670 |
| Manchester East | 910 | 710 | 640 |
| Manchester Central | 840 | 830 | 640 |
| Manchester North | 890 | 810 | 690 |
| Glasgow | 1,920 | 1,430 | 1,190 |
| Sheffield | 1,040 | 940 | 990 |
| Birmingham and Solihull | 1,600 | 1,470 | 1,180 |
| Coventry and Warwickshire | 830 | 660 | 520 |

Table 3. *Employment training Starts with training managers March-May 1989*

| *Training agency area* | *March* | *April* | *May* |
|---|---|---|---|
| London North | 850 | 570 | 580 |
| London West | 280 | 180 | 190 |
| London East | 490 | 380 | 340 |
| London South | 300 | 360 | 220 |
| Inner London North | 1,120 | 930 | 770 |
| Inner London South | 760 | 680 | 460 |
| Merseyside | 2,030 | 1,860 | 1,640 |
| Manchester East | 800 | 660 | 550 |
| Manchester Central | 870 | 920 | 770 |
| Manchester North | 720 | 620 | 520 |
| Glasgow | 1,310 | 970 | 800 |
| Sheffield | 1,340 | 1,140 | 820 |
| Birmingham and Solihull | 1,580 | 1,440 | 960 |
| Coventry and Warwickshire | 570 | 560 | 410 |

Table 4. *Employment Training Filled places March-May 1989*

| *Training agency area* | *March* | *April* | *May* |
|---|---|---|---|
| London North | 3,280 | 3,320 | 3,560 |
| London West | 1,180 | 1,210 | 1,180 |
| London East | 2,010 | 2,160 | 2,200 |
| London South | 1,440 | 1,630 | 1,610 |
| Inner London North | 5,580 | 5,680 | 5,790 |
| Inner London South | 3,020 | 3,360 | 3,350 |
| Merseyside | 7,680 | 8,170 | 8,700 |
| Manchester East | 2,400 | 2,550 | 2,630 |
| Manchester Central | 3,940 | 4,170 | 4,190 |
| Manchester North | 2,550 | 2,660 | 2,620 |
| Glasgow | 4,130 | 4,410 | 4,510 |
| Sheffield | 5,370 | 5,550 | 5,490 |
| Birmingham and Solihull | 6,700 | 7,350 | 7,350 |
| Coventry and Warwickshire | 2,330 | 2,600 | 2,660 |

Table 5. *Employment Training Unfilled places May 1989*

| *Training agency area* | *May* |
|---|---|
| London North | 160 |
| London West | 360 |
| London East | 280 |
| London South | 280 |
| Inner London North | 740 |
| Inner London South | 850 |

| Training agency area | May |
|---|---|
| Merseyside | 4,670 |
| Manchester East | 610 |
| Manchester Central | 5,030 |
| Manchester North | 2,170 |
| Glasgow | 2,110 |
| Sheffield | 740 |
| Birmingham and Solihull | 2,140 |
| Coventry and Warwickshire | 1,220 |

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for Great Britain and each standard training agency region, what are the monthly statistics for the latest available three months for employment training showing *(a)* the number of referrals to ET from restart interviews, *(b)* the number of ET action plans completed, *(c)* the number of starts with ET training managers, *(d)* the number of ET filled places and *(e)* the number of unfilled ET places.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The information is not available in the precise form requested. Restart referrals are available only for employment service regions and are given in table 1. The figures for action plans, starts at training managers and filled places are given in tables 2, 3 and 4. Information about unfilled places is available only for May and these figures are given in table 5.

Table 1. *Employment Service Restart referrals to ET training agents February to April 1989*

| Employment Service Region | February | March | April |
|---|---|---|---|
| London and South East | 8,300 | 7,600 | 7,600 |
| South West | 1,600 | 1,600 | 1,200 |
| West Midlands | 5,000 | 5,200 | 4,000 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 3,000 | 2,800 | 2,900 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 4,100 | 4,100 | 3,800 |
| North West | 5,700 | 5,900 | 4,800 |
| Northern | 3,400 | 3,300 | 3,300 |
| Wales | 2,800 | 2,800 | 2,400 |
| Scotland | 7,100 | 7,600 | 4,800 |
| Great Britain | 41,000 | 41,000 | 33,800 |

Table 2. *Employment Training Action plans completed by training agents March to May 1989*

| Training Agency Region | March | April | May |
|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 4,300 | 3,600 | 3,000 |
| London | 6,100 | 4,500 | 4,300 |
| South West | 2,800 | 2,300 | 2,000 |
| West Midlands | 5,900 | 4,900 | 8,900 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 4,000 | 3,600 | 3,000 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 5,600 | 5,100 | 5,000 |
| North West | 7,200 | 6,400 | 5,300 |
| Northern | 5,300 | 4,600 | 4,300 |
| Wales | 3,400 | 2,800 | 2,800 |
| Scotland | 7,800 | 5,700 | 5,300 |
| Great Britain | 52,300 | 43,700 | 38,900 |

Table 3. *Employment Training Starts at Training Managers March to May 1989*

| Training Agency Region | March | April | May |
|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 2,100 | 2.300 | 1,600 |
| London | 3,800 | 3,100 | 2.600 |
| South West | 2,300 | 2,000 | 1,700 |
| West Midlands | 4,900 | 4,100 | 3,200 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 3,200 | 3,100 | 2,400 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 5,400 | 4,900 | 4,100 |
| North West | 6,500 | 5,800 | 4,800 |
| Northern | 4,700 | 3,800 | 3,300 |
| Wales | 3,200 | 2,900 | 2,300 |
| Scotland | 6,000 | 4,400 | 4,000 |
| Great Britain | 42,200 | 36,300 | 30,000 |

Table 4. *Employment Training Numbers in Training (Filled Places)*

| Training Agency Region | March | April | May |
|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 9,900 | 10,200 | 10,700 |
| London | 16,500 | 17,400 | 17,700 |
| South West | 10,900 | 11,300 | 11,500 |
| West Midlands | 20,600 | 22,100 | 22,400 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 14,000 | 14,900 | 15,300 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 23,900 | 24,600 | 24,900 |
| North West | 24,800 | 25,900 | 26,400 |
| Northern | 20,000 | 21,100 | 21,800 |
| Wales | 13,400 | 14,200 | 14,500 |
| Scotland | 20,900 | 22,000 | 22,300 |
| Great Britain | 175,000 | 184,000 | 187,000 |

Table 5. *Employment Training Unfilled Places May 1989*

| Training Agency Region | May |
|---|---|
| South East | 5,900 |
| London | 2,600 |
| South West | 3,000 |
| West Midlands | 7,600 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 3,600 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 4,300 |
| North West | 15,800 |
| Northern | 6,700 |
| Wales | 5,800 |
| Scotland | 12,600 |
| Great Britain | 68,000 |

## Employment Training

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give a breakdown of the number of accidents that have occurred on employment training since its inception in the categories covered by "Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences, 1985"; and if he will express this also as a percentage per 100,000 trainees.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The table gives the numbers of fatal, major and minor accidents reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 which have occurred to trainees on employment training since the inception of the programme on 5 September 1988. Accident rates are expressed as an annual rate per 100,000 trainees.

| | Number of Accidents | Accident Rate/100,000 (provisional) |
|---|---|---|
| Fatal | Nil | Nil |
| Major | 83 | 74 |
| Minor | 452 | 403 |

### Hotels and Catering

**Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people he estimates are employed in the hotel and catering industry throughout the United Kingdom; and how many of these he estimates come from other European Community countries and from outside the European Community.

**Mr. Lee:** It is estimated that in March 1989 there were 1·2 million employees in employment in the hotel and catering industry in the United Kingdom. Preliminary results from the 1988 labour force survey show that in spring 1988 there were about a further 0·2 million self-employed people in the hotel and catering industry.

The labour force survey also suggests that, of those in employment in the hotel and catering industry in spring 1988, either as employees or as self-employed, about 5 per cent. were nationals of other European Community countries and a further 4½ per cent. were nationals of countries outside the European Community.

### Jobclubs (Nottingham)

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the reasons for the closure of jobclubs in Bestwood park, Nottingham; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) on 27 January 1989, *Official Report*, column *810*, in which he announced that we would be able to increase numbers helped by jobclubs while streamlining the network.

There was substantial underused capacity in the Bestwood park jobclub and the closure decision was taken to make better use of resources. Long-term unemployed people in the Bestwood park area will continue to have full access to the jobclub programme. There are a number of jobclubs within easy travelling distance and travelling expenses to and from jobclubs are paid in full.

### Training, Gloucester

**Mr. French:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will state the number of employment training places currently available in the Gloucester travel-to-work area.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Programme information is not held on a travel-to-work area basis. Information about the number of contracted places will be available later in the year for the area covered by the Training Agency's Gloucester and Wiltshire area.

### Trade Union Rights

**Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many requests for assistance have been received by the new commissioner for the rights of trade union members; and if he plans to introduce measures to extend the commissioner's powers.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I understand that up to the beginning of this month, the commissioner for the rights of trade union members has received over 100 inquiries and 19 formal applications for assistance.

Proposals to extend the commissioner's powers were made in the Green Paper "Removing Barriers to Employment". The Government are considering responses to these proposals and an announcement will be made in due course.

### Training and Enterprise Councils

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he intends to take to ensure that existing national training schemes will not be prejudiced by the proposed training and enterprise council system.

**Mr. Cope:** The introduction of training and enterprise councils will enhance training provision and ensure that skill needs are addressed in the light of national and local priorities. Proposals have been issued to national providers under which they will contract directly with training and enterprise councils; but the Training Agency will continue to provide a service to national providers to facilitate their involvement under the new arrangements. Training and enterprise councils and national providers have much to offer each other.

### Repetitive Strain Injury

**Sir Bernard Braine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action has been taken to publish guidelines to employers and managers on the need to identify the cause and to prevent repetitive strain injury in the workplace.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Health and Safety Executive has published a guidance note on this subject, entitled "Beat Conditions and Tenosynovitis" and is preparing new guidance which we expect to be published before the end of the year.

### Collieries (Accidents)

**Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of reportable accidents and fatalities at the following collieries for the last three years *(a)* Murton, *(b)* Easington, *(c)* Dawdon, *(d)* Vane Tempest, *(e)* Wearmouth, *(f)* Westo, and *(g)* Ellington.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Reportable accidents and fatalities for the last three years are:

| *Mine* | *Reportable accidents* | | | *Fatalities* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
| *(a)* Murton | 249 | 166 | 204 | — | — | 1 |
| *(b)* Easington | 153 | 112 | 161 | — | — | — |
| *(c)* Dawdon | 200 | 124 | 260 | — | — | — |
| *(d)* Vane Tempest/Seaham | 169 | 87 | 118 | — | — | — |
| *(e)* Wearmouth | 308 | 202 | 253 | — | — | — |
| *(f)* Westoe | 232 | 142 | 123 | — | — | — |
| *(g)* Ellington | 230 | 141 | 229 | — | — | — |

## Earnings

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy the latest figures, in terms of national currency, showing average earnings of adult male workers in the steel, motor car and mechanical engineering industries and of adult female workers in the textile and clothing industries.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The latest available figures are to be found in the Eurostat publication "Earnings in Industries and Services" No. 2 1988, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number and percentage of employees earning less than £2·80 per hour giving *(a)* the total, *(b)* male, in total and full and part-time, *(c)* female, in total and full and part-time, *(d)* full-time, in total and male and female and *(e)* part-time, in total and male and female for each region and England, Scotland, Wales and Great Britain for the latest available year.

**Mr. Lee:** The available information is published in part E table 115 and part F table 175 of the 1988 new earnings survey report, for full-time employees and female part-time employees respectively. A copy of the report is in the Library. Information on part-time male employees is available only for Great Britain: 54·5 per cent. of part-time male employees in the 1988 new earnings survey sample earned less than £2·80 per hour.

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the smallest geographical unit for which information on the number and percentage of employees earning less than £2·80 per hour is available.

**Mr. Lee:** Information on the distribution of earnings of employees in the new earnings survey sample is available for the standards regions of England plus Scotland and Wales, for full-time employees and part-time female employees. Equivalent information on part-time male employees is available only for Great Britain as a whole.

## Tourism

83. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what estimate he has made of the contribution made to Britain's economy by the tourist industry.

**Mr. Lee:** The total turnover of tourism in the United Kingdom in 1988 was estimated to be some £19 billion.

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of *(a)* jobs, *(b)* full-time jobs and *(c)* part-time jobs in all tourism-related industries for each year for 1978 to the latest date available.

**Mr. Lee:** The available information is given in the following tables. Table 1 shows the number of employees in employment in all tourism-related industries in Great Britain in June of each year from 1978 to 1988. Table 2 is based on information from the labour force survey and shows the number of self-employed people in the hotel and catering industry in Great Britain in the spring of each of those years from 1978 to 1988 in which a labour force survey took place. Separate figures for full-time and part-time self-employed people are not available.

Table 1

*Employees in employment in all tourism-related industries in Great Britain*

*Thousands*

| *June of each year* | *Males*[1] | *Females* | | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Full-time* | *Part-time* | |
| 1978 | 428 | 232 | 436 | 1,097 |
| 1979 | 445 | 242 | 467 | 1,154 |
| 1980 | 455 | 241 | 488 | 1,183 |
| 1981 | 443 | 234 | 474 | 1,152 |
| 1982 | 448 | 241 | 484 | 1,173 |
| 1983 | 443 | 219 | 481 | 1,143 |
| 1984 | 465 | 229 | 508 | 1,202 |
| 1985 | 515 | 248 | 529 | 1,291 |
| 1986 | 524 | 257 | 536 | 1,318 |
| 1987 | 534 | 276 | 548 | 1,358 |
| 1988 | 567 | 304 | 554 | 1,424 |

[1] separate figures for full-time and part-time male employees are not available.

Table 2

*Self-employed people in the hotel and catering industry in Great Britain*

| *Spring of each year* | *SIC (68) Minimum List Headings 884 to 888 Thousands* |
|---|---|
| 1978 | n/a |
| 1979 | [1]100 |
| | *SIC (80) class 66* |
| 1980 | n/a |
| 1981 | 145 |
| 1982 | n/a |
| 1983 | 142 |
| 1984 | 169 |
| 1985 | 170 |
| 1986 | 185 |
| 1987 | 180 |
| 1988 | 183 |

n/a = not available

[1] not strictly comparable with later years

## Local Enterprise Agencies

85. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any information as to the current level of use of local enterprise agencies.

**Mr. Cope:** Local enterprise agencies are independent private sector-led organisations. Information on the use made of them is not collected by the Government. I understand, however, that a recent business in the community survey estimates that the 314 agencies which they recognise undertook 250,000 counselling sessions last year, thereby assisting 50,000 small businesses.

## BAT Bid

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of the number of jobs that will be created if the Hoylake bid for BAT is successful; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** We have made no assessment of job gains and losses that could result from the Hoylake/BAT takeover bid.

## Deptford Skillcentre

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many TOPS trainees were trained at Deptford skillcentre during 1986; how many achieved skilled status; and how many were placed in employment.

**Mr. Nicholls:** In 1986-87, 605 trainees completed the courses at Deptford skillcentre. Of these, 465 were trained for skilled occupations. A total of 393 trainees were placed in employment.

## Employment Rehabilitation Services

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if, pursuant to the reply to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe on 21 June, *Official Report*, column *186*, he will make it his policy that the employment rehabilitation services of his Department should remain within the public sector.

**Mr. Lee** *[holding answer 5 July 1989]:* A wide-ranging review of services for people with disabilities has been undertaken by this Department. A consultation exercise will be undertaken before any final decisions are taken.

## Job Interview Guarantee Initiative

39. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment in which inner-city areas the new job interview guarantee initiative is on offer; and if he will make a statement.

50. **Mr. Sayeed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment in which inner-city areas the new job interview guarantee initiative is on offer; and if he will make a statement.

63. **Mr. Batiste:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what response he has had to the job interview guarantee initiative; and if he will make a statement.

65. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what response he has had to the job interview guarantee initiative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee** *[holding answer 20 June 1989]:* I refer my hon. Friends to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) on 14 July 1989, *Official Report*, column *654*.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Thursday 20 July 1989*

## TRANSPORT

### White Papers

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, for each of the last three White Papers issued by his Department, for which legislation has been started, he will state the time elapsed between their publication and the First Readings of any Bills connected with them; and if he will do the same for the last three White Papers issued by his Department prior to 1979.

**Mr. Channon:** The last three White Papers published by my Department, in which legislation was proposed and has been subsequently started or completed, were: Airports Policy (Cmnd. 9542), Channel Fixed Link (Cmnd. 9735) and Merchant Shipping (Cmnd. 239). These were published on 5 June 1985, 4 February 1986 and 2 November 1987 respectively and the First Readings of the Airports, Channel Tunnel and Merchant Shipping Bills resulting from them took place on 16 January 1986, 17 April 1986 and 18 January 1988. It is not for me to answer for the record of the last Government in this matter, but the information requested should be available in the Library of the House and the *Official Report*.

### London River Bus Service

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will consider making a further grant to the London river bus service in order that it may accept London Regional Transport tickets and passes.

**Mr. Portillo:** An arrangement for Riverbus to accept London Regional Transport's tickets and passes would be a matter for negotiation between the operators in the light of their commercial interests. I do not consider that it would justify a further grant.

### Summer Time

**Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the equivalent figures for the years 1968-69 and 1970-71 to correspond with those from the transport and road research laboratory, illustrated on page 9, paragraph 28 of the Government's Green Paper, "Summertime", Cmd. 722.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The estimates for the winter of 1968-69 and 1970-71 that correspond to those contained in paragraph 28 of the Green Paper are:

| | *1968-69* | *1970-71* |
|---|---|---|
| *Reduction in:* | | |
| fatalities | 239 | 226 |
| serious casualties | 908 | 866 |
| slight casualties | 1,234 | 1,211 |

**Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport with reference to the transport and road research laboratory calculations illustrated in the Government's Green Paper, "Summertime", Cmd. 722, what would be the estimated effect on figure 3 on page 10, tables 1 and 2 on page 11 and table 3 on page 12 of an extra 1·5 million workers joining the morning and evening commuter rush hours.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** When roads are congested, accidents occur at lower speed, leading to lower risk of injury, and less serious injuries. Thus, transferring substantial numbers of trips to the peak periods could lead to fewer—and less serious—casualties among these travellers. While there could be more casualties in the less congested pre-peak period, the net effect on the results quoted in the Green Paper is likely to be negligible.

### Orange Badge Scheme

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will initiate a pilot survey to investigate the extent and nature of the abuse of the orange badge scheme;

(2) if he has made any estimate of the extent to which abuse of the orange badge scheme has contributed to any overloading and ineffectiveness of the scheme.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Any research into abuse of the orange badge scheme, no matter how carefully handled, could well be seen as questioning the parking concessions which many genuinely disabled people quite properly enjoy. That could spread unjustified alarm and lead to allegations of harassment of disabled people.

Advice from organisations representing disabled people and letters to the Department by members of the public show that abuse of the scheme is widely perceived to be a problem.

It is at present difficult for police and traffic wardens to spot misuse of orange badges by able-bodied people.

We have proposed that the orange badge should be redesigned in the form of a personal passport-type document. There would be space for a photograph of the holder. We believe that this will do much to deter abuse and aid enforcement.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it an offence for non-disabled drivers to display an orange badge whilst driving, unless the person to whom it was issued is in the car, and whilst parking, unless the car is being used to pick up or drop off the badge holder.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** It is already an offence for an able-bodied person to misuse an orange badge. The maximum penalty is £400.

We believe that our proposal to redesign the badge with space for a photograph of the holder will deter misuse.

We do not rule out further changes to the operation of the scheme should they be necessary to preserve its value to severely disabled people.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport approximately how many people now possessing an orange badge were awarded it at the discretion of the local authority; and what is the estimated number of these who would lose entitlement if the recommendations of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee were implemented.

**Mr. Bottomley:** Information on the criteria under which local authorities issue badges is not held centrally.

Soundings of a number of local authorities in 1986 suggested that about three quarters of badges were being issued under regulation 5(d) of the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) Regulations 1982.

We do not want to restrict badges only to those who receive mobility allowance. We propose to tighten the criterion in regulation 5(d). We shall consult widely on detailed proposals.

There is no proposal to withdraw existing badges. Our aim is to ensure that in future only severely disabled people who most need badges will qualify for them.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many people currently receive mobility allowance; how many of them also have orange badges; and if any study has been made of the reasons why those with the mobility allowance who do not have the orange badge have not claimed it;

(2) if his Department has collected evidence on whether people without mobility allowance, who have an orange badge awarded under the discretionary powers of the local authority, might be eligible for mobility allowance were they to apply.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Some 580,000 people currently receive mobility allowance.

We have no reason to find out how many mobility allowance recipients hold orange badges; why those recipients without badges have not claimed them; or how many people with badges might be eligible for mobility allowance were they to apply.

We do not propose to restrict eligibility for orange badges only to those who receive mobility allowance.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received any advice regarding the maximum and minimum number of orange badges that would give a fair balance between the needs of severely disabled people and the requirement to have a scheme that is not so overloaded that it becomes unworkable.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Our proposals for the eligibility criteria are designed to ensure that people with severe mobility problems continue to qualify for a badge in accordance with the original aims of the scheme.

We have no quota or target in mind for the number of badges on issue. There will be no rationing of badges.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider the proposal that all applications for orange badges to be issued under the discretionary powers of local authorities should be accompanied by a medical note from a doctor who is not the applicant's personal general practitioner nor from the same practice.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The introduction of independent medical assessments was considered in the Department's 1986 consultation paper which looked at possible changes to the orange badge scheme. Opinions on this idea were divided.

We shall in due course be considering with interested bodies how eligibility criteria could be framed and how assessments could be handled.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if there has been any investigation of the contribution to the variation in the number of orange badges per capita issued by local authorities that is made by *(a)* variation in the local incidence of disability and *(b)* local authorities' differing interpretations of the guidelines.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The different issuing rates of certain comparable and neighbouring local authorities provide a strong indication that authorities do not apply the rules uniformly.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what evidence he has regarding the proportion of the people receiving an orange badge issued by local authorities under their discretionary powers, who supply a medical note from their own general practitioner with their application; and what proportion are examined by or supply a note from a doctor who is not their own general practitioner.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** It is for local authorities to decide how to assess applications for orange badges.

This information is not held centrally.

## National Bus Company Subsidiaries

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Workington of 10 July, whether he will list the 18 properties in which mortgage charges were placed as part of the sale of 14 National Bus Company subsidiaries; and whether he will state at what price each of the National Bus Company subsidiaries was sold.

**Mr. Portillo:** Details of such properties are regarded as commercially sensitive. For similar reasons the proceeds of individual sales are not being disclosed, although details of the overall proceeds from NBC's disposal programme were provided to the House on 25 January in response to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw).

## Driving Licences

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve the acceptability abroad of British driving licences; and if he will take steps to press for an extension of the validity of international driving permits.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** From next april DVLC will begin issuing a new-style pink driving licence which will in due course show all of an individual's driving entitlement—motor cycles, cars, lorries and buses—on a single licence. The vehicle categories on the driving licence will broadly conform to the categories used on international driving permits (IDPs), and the design of the licence will correspond very closely to the Community model prescribed in the first directive on driver licensing. Although we are unaware of any significant problems with international recognition of the current pink driving licence, the new licence should be even more acceptable and intelligible to overseas authorities.

The maximum period of validity of an IDP is laid down in the international conventions governing their issue. It is not within the United Kingdom's competence to extend the validity of IDPs unilaterally.

## A1-M1 Link

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give the average daily flow of vehicles for the A1-M1 link road projected for its first year of opening and the comparable current and projected figures for the M45.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The required estimates, in terms of annual average vehicles per day, are:

(a) projected flow on A1-M1 link in 1991-92—19,000.

(b) projected flow on the M45 in its year of opening (1959) was 16,000.

(c) the estimated flow on the M45 in 1987 was 7,900.

The projected figure for the M45 was made before the opening of the M6, after which the traffic flow on the M45 declined considerably.

### Airports

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what study his Department has made of the agreements reached between the United States Government and other European states on access to their airports for United States carriers; when he now expects negotiations with the United States Government on access to Manchester airport to be re-opened; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We understand that some European states' bilateral agreements automatically give United States carriers wide access to their airports. But our agreement requires the maintenance of balanced opportunities for the parties. The United States Government have indicated that they will soon propose a package of new rights for their carriers, including rights into Manchester. They are unlikely to be ready to negotiate before October, however.

### Scottish Lowland Airports

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to revise the traffic distribution rules for Scottish lowland airports before the House rises for the summer recess.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Government are appealing against the recent ruling in the Scottish Court of Session, and understand that, pending the outcome of that appeal, the effect of the judgment is suspended. Scottish lowland airports policy remains as set out in the 1985 White Paper "Airports Policy" and confirmed by my right hon. Friend in his parliamentary answer of 8 May 1989, at column 343.

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what have been the total costs incurred by his Department resulting from court action in relation to the implementation of Scottish lowland airports policy.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Government have yet to be advised of the legal costs they have incurred in relation to the proceedings in court.

### South Circular Assessment Study

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions since 1 August 1988, his officials have met Travers Morgan to discuss the south circular assessment study.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Officials have held monthly progress meetings and other meetings as necessary.

### Used Vehicles (Roadworthiness)

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will outline the steps taken by his Department to empower trading standards officers to inspect used vehicles for sale on garage forecourts for roadworthiness.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Director General of Fair Trading has submitted proposals on these lines on behalf of a number of organisations. These are being considered in the light of existing responsibilities and powers of the Department's vehicle examiners. Any purchaser of an older second-hand car, whether from a forecourt or elsewhere, would be well advised to seek a recent MOT certificate and consider employing a qualified independent third party to inspect the vehicle.

### HGV Wheel Loss

**Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, following the talks with the Institute of Road Transport Engineers, future funding of research into heavy goods vehicles wheel loss has now been determined.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* The principal reason for heavy goods vehicle wheel detachment is ineffective maintenance. The Department supports the initiatives being taken by the IRTE to remedy this including advice to operators.

Further research into wheel and fixing design is a matter for the industry and is being considered by the appropriate BSI committee.

## ENERGY

### Pressurised Water Reactor, Wylfa

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy why the standard consultation period of six months prior to a public inquiry has not been provided in the case of the application to build a third pressurised water reactor at Wylfa in North Wales; if he will reinstate a consultation period of six months; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** My right hon. Friend needs to set time periods in which objectors can make their views known to him. The statutory obligation on him is to give a period of not less than 21 days in which objections from the public can be made to him. I believe that the three months period which he has set in this case provides ample time for anyone who wishes to object to the proposal to do so.

In the light of all the representations he receives, my right hon. Friend will then decide whether a public inquiry is necessary. If he calls for an inquiry to be held all objectors, registered pursuant to section 34 of the Electricity Act 1957, will be sent details of the inquiry, including the procedures to be followed if the objector wishes to give evidence.

### Mining Subsidence

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the recommendations of the Waddilove committee on coal mining subsidence which have so far been implemented and the timescale in which he expects the remaining recommendations to be implemented, together with details thereof;

(2) when he proposes that British Coal's code of practice in respect of compensation for coal mining subsidence will be brought into statute.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Ellesmere

Port and Neston (Dr. Woodcock) on 12 January, at columns *739-41*. This lists those recommendations of the Waddilove committee which have been implemented wholly or in part by British Coal. The Government's proposals for legislation to deal with the remaining recommendations were set out in a consultation document circulated in April 1988, copies of which are in the Library of the House. These proposals, which include putting British Coal's code of practice on a statutory footing, will be implemented as soon as the parliamentary timetable permits.

### Fiddlers Ferry

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has on when the Central Electricity Generating Board is going to install a flue gas desulphurisation plant at Fiddlers Ferry; and what is its estimated cost.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** This is an operational matter for the CEGB, and I have asked the chairman to reply to the hon. Member.

### Energy Efficiency

**Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the campaign to promote energy efficiency in the public sector.

**Mr. Parkinson:** The Government are leading a campaign to improve energy efficiency within the public sector.

The campaign will start with Government Departments and then extend to the public services. The aim for Government Departments is to achieve savings rising to £45 million per annum—15 per cent. of the current total bill—over five years.

A Minister within each Department has been given specific responsibility for energy efficiency. A list of these Ministers will be placed in the Library. My Department's Energy Efficiency Office is creating a small team to brief each Minister, enabling them to set targets for their Departments and agree plans for achieving these targets. This team will monitor progress and report to me, and targets and measures of performance will be published.

Departments will be able to count these new gains towards their targets for efficiency improvements in three year running costs management plans.

**Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has given further consideration to the requirement for electricity suppliers to promote energy efficiency.

**Mr. Parkinson:** I have today placed copies of a revised condition 18 of the public electricity supply licence in the Library.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### ODA Videos

**Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give the print run, production and distribution costs of the Overseas Development Administration publication, "British Overseas Aid, Anniversary Review 1989" and the two associated videos with details of their distribution.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** On the Anniversary Review I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) on 14 July at column *648*.

The two new videos form part of the Overseas Development Administration's annual information programme. With supporting material the videos cost a total of £175,000 to produce and, like the Anniversary Review, were given the ODA's usual distribution for such publicity material.

### Africa

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recently published African alternative framework and structural adjustment programmes endorsed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** We agree with the ECA's objectives to ensure that economic growth in Africa proceeds hand in hand with the development of Africa's human resources and the alleviation of poverty. Spending in these areas should not be made the scapegoat in times of fiscal austerity.

However, some of the policy measures and instruments recommended in the report would not, in our view, help the cause of "growth with equity". They would have the effect of slowing growth down and perpetuating distortions. They appear to represent a partial return to the kind of dirigiste policies from which increasing numbers of African countries have been successfully moving away.

It must remain a matter of priority to bring down the excessively high levels of inflation and unsustainable budgetary deficits in many African countries which only hamper growth prospects and the ability to tackle longer-term issues—including poverty alleviation—in a sustainable manner.

### Nicaragua

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total of bilateral aid given to Nicaragua by Her Majesty's Government in the year 1988-89.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Final figures of bilateral aid for 1988-89 are not yet available. Provisional figures indicate that our aid to Nicaragua in that financial year was £260,000. This does not include our contribution through the European Community or to development projects jointly funded with British voluntary agencies.

### EC Budget

**Sir John Stanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will be taking steps to try to secure an increase in the total expenditure under line 941 of the Community budget and in the percentage share of that expenditure going to United Kingdom non-governmental organisations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Member states are at present considering allocations under the 1990 Community budget including line 941 which has increased substantially in recent years. We shall keep in mind the popularity and success of this programme during budget discussions.

There are no set percentage shares for member states' NGOs, but United Kingdom NGOs have consistently received more support than those from other member states.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### Child Care Facilities

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service, pursuant to the answer of 7 July, *Official Report,* column *321,* to the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) concerning child care facilities, if he will publish in the *Official Report* the total number of whole-time equivalent child care places currently organised in Government Departments and the percentage of Government Departments offering full-time child care facilities.

**Mr. Luce** *[holding answer 18 July 1989]:* The information is not held centrally as Departments have discretion to set up and support child care schemes. As far as I am aware, there are currently 42 full-time home-based child care places directly supported by the Department of Social Security in Newcastle. There are firm plans for three value-for-money nurseries at Home Office (Croydon), Ministry of Defence (London) and Civil Service college (Sunningdale). Fifteen departments are running holiday schemes for school-aged children for between three and 10 weeks a year and the number of schemes is increasing. In February this year, Government Departments were given the freedom to provide ongoing financial support for child care schemes where these offer good value for money. Real progress is now being made to expand child care arrangements to help our recruitment and retention needs in the 1990s.

## WALES

### Quangos

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the female chairpersons of quangos appointed by him in Wales.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Since taking office in June 1987 I have appointed the hon. Mrs. Lindy Price to chair the advisory group for breast cancer screening and Mrs. Sara Reeve to the Glamorgan agricultural dwelling house advisory committee panel of chairmen. I have reappointed the following:

Mrs. Edith M. Herbert—Dyfed family practitioner committee
Lady Crawshay—Local Government Boundary Commission.

I also extended Ms. G. L. Thomas' period of office as chairman of the Powys agriculture dwelling house advisory committee's panel of chairmen for a further year from 1 January 1989. I appointed Prof. C. M. Chapman to the Welsh national board for nursing, midwifery and health visiting in September 1988. The members subsequently elected her as their chairman.

I also concurred with the proposal of my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to re-appoint Rhiannon Bevan as chairman of the Welsh Consumer Council in April 1988.

### Skill Shortages

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he proposes to publish his asessment of skill shortages in Wales and the impact of the single market; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** As part of my Valleys programme, a skills survey is being undertaken by the Training Agency, and my Department will be in close touch with the agency and with the Welsh Development Agency to ensure that appropriate action is taken to meet any training requirements which are revealed. This is part of a continuing review of the situation throughout Wales under which my Department maintains close liaison with the Training Agency on the range of Government training measures designed to provide young people, the unemployed and existing employers with the skills which employers need, taking account of the move towards the single European market. The greater involvement of employers, through the establishment of training and enterprise councils, will ensure that training is even more responsive to the needs of local labour markets.

### House Renovation Grants

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to be able to inform local authorities about their capital allocation in respect of house renovation grants for 1990-91.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Subject to the enactment of the Local Government and Housing Bill, capital allocations for 1990-91 will be replaced by credit approvals and capital grant. On present plans, I expect to notify individual local authorities of their share of resources shortly after the publication of the 1989 autumn statement. Resources are not generally hypothecated. It is for individual authorities to decide the balance between home improvement grant and their other spending.

### NCC Advisory Committee

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the names of members of the Nature Conservancy Council's advisory committee for Wales, giving in each case their occupation, employer and nominator, and the date upon which their term of office is due to expire.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The information is as follows:

| *Name* | *Employer* | *Occupation* | *Expiry date of appointment* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Professor G. Owen (Chairman) | Retired | Former Principal, University College, Aberystwyth | 31 March 1991 |
| Mrs. E. Colwyn Foulkes | Self Employed | Architect | 31 March 1990 |
| Mr. J. Elias | Self Employed | Environmental Consultant | 31 March 1992 |

| *Name* | *Employer* | *Occupation* | *Expiry date of appointment* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dr. W. A. Evans | Dyfed County Council | Headmaster, Comprehensive School | 31 March 1992 |
| Dr. B. A. Haines | Self Employed | Freelance writer, Editorial Consultant Partner in agricultural consultancy | 31 April 1991 |
| Mr. J. M. Harrop | Self Employed | Farmer | 31 May 1990 |
| Dr. W. R. Howells | Self Employed | Consultant in pollution control, fisheries and conservation | 31 March 1991 |
| Dr. B. S. John | Self Employed | Geographer, Author, Publisher | 30 April 1991 |
| Professor G. R. Sagar | University of Wales | Vice Principal and Professor of Agricultural Botany, University College, Bangor | 31 March 1990 |
| Professor D. Taylor Smith | University of Wales | Head of School of Ocean Sciences, University College, Bangor | 31 March 1992 |

Members are appointed by the Nature Conservancy Council following the approval of my right hon. Friend and are not nominated to represent particular organisations.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Remote Sensing

**Mr. Michael Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much public funding was provided for research and development work related to the processing and application of remote sensing data in 1988-89; how much will be provided during 1989-90; and through which agencies such funds are distributed.

**Mr. Jackson:** Funds from the science budget amounted to about £5 million in each of the years 1988-89 and 1989-90. These are distributed through the Natural Environment and the Science and Engineering Research Councils.

**Mr. Michael Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans the National Economic Research Council has to expand its work in the field of satellite remote sensing; and what would be the financial implication of any such expansion.

**Mr. Jackson:** The Natural Environment Research Council's published corporate plan for the period 1990-91 to 1994-95 states that the council plans developments in the use of remote sensing techniques and will seek to promote applications development in preparation for satellite programmes in the 1990s. It will be for the council to decide its specific research priorities within the overall resources available.

### Adult Education (Bolton)

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the number of students currently enrolled on adult education courses in the Bolton education authority area; what was the comparable figure for each of the previous five years; and what is the cost to the education authority for the current year and each of the previous five years.

**Mr. Jackson:** The number of students enrolled on evening-only further education courses, which will include most adult education courses, is shown in the following table. Corresponding cost data are not available centrally.

*Evening-only further education course enrolments: Bolton Education Authority*

| | *Position at 1 November of year shown* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* |
| Leading to a qualification | 1,398 | 1,670 | 1,696 | 1,932 | 2,352 | 2,438 |
| Not leading to a specified qualification | 5,808 | 5,956 | 5,149 | 5,839 | 5,790 | 4,541 |

*Source:* Further Education Statistical Record.

### Ethnic Minorities

**Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many staff from ethnic minorities are employed in his Department in grade 5.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** Three.

### Osteoporosis

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects the Medical Research Council to report on the criteria and techniques of screening for osteoporosis.

**Mr. Jackson:** The Medical Research Council has set up an expert group on osteoporosis, under the chairmanship of Professor D. L. Hamblen, to consider methods for detecting women at particular risk of fracture associated with osteoporosis. Screening methods based on measurements of bone density are regarded by the group as promising, and a trial is currently being designed to evaluate such techniques. It is not possible to predict when the outcome of these studies will be known.

### Social Work Courses

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science why his Department proposes to place social work courses on the lowest funding band for higher education; and what representations have been received regarding this matter.

**Mr. Jackson:** The proposals in the consultation paper "Shifting the Balance of Public Funding of Higher Education to Fees" reflected available information on teaching costs. Before drawing up more detailed plans, we shall be considering the view of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work that social work degree courses should be in one of the higher bands. However, the majority of social work training is provided through courses which fall outside the scope of the fee proposals.

### Secondary Education

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many young people aged 19 years are currently in secondary education; and what is his estimate of the numbers of young people who will be in secondary education beyond the age of 19 years in 1990-91 and in each of the three years thereafter.

**Mr. Butcher:** In January 1989 there were some 1,260 pupils aged 19 or over in English maintained secondary schools. The Department projects that the corresponding numbers will be 1,200 in 1989-90 and 1990-91, 1,100 in 1991-92, and 1,000 in 1992-93 and 1993-94.

### A-Level (Replacement)

**Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to hold talks with relevant interested parties on a possible replacement for the existing A-level examination for school leavers.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend has no plans to consider the replacement of A-levels, and therefore no plans for holding talks on any such replacement. He hopes very shortly to reply to advice from the School Examinations and Assessment Council regarding the development and rationalisation of existing A-level provision and the promotion and further development of the associated AS examinations.

### Midland Examining Board

**Mr. Michael Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will direct the School Examination and Assessment Council to call for a report as to who at the midland examining group was responsible for the appointment of a probationary teacher as a moderator for the GCSE in technology, and as to what safeguards are to be instituted to prevent a recurrence.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** We look to the independent examining groups to ensure fairness and consistency in examination assessment. Officials have been in contact with the midland examining group which stressed that all moderation work is checked. I have asked the School Examinations and Assessment Council to verify that the group's moderation arrangements are adequate and that candidates' interests are safeguarded.

### Aluminium Toxicity

**Mrs. Ann Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what funding the Government are proposing to make for research into the toxicity of aluminium and the long-term consequences of ingestion of aluminium in *(a)* small and *(b)* large quantities.

**Mr. Jackson** *[holding reply 13 July 1989]*: The Medical Research Council, which receives a grant-in-aid from this Department, is the main agency through which the Government support medical research. The council, which itself determines the allocation of the funds at its disposal, is supporting research on the possible link between aluminium and Alzheimer's disease at its environmental epidemiology unit at Southampton and at its neurochemical pathology unit in Newcastle. It is also supporting research on the absorption of aluminium from soya-based infant foods at its Dunn nutrition unit in Cambridge. The council is not currently supporting work on the effects of ingestion of large amounts of aluminium.

The council is always willing to consider soundly based proposals for new research programmes in competition with other proposals.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Interest Rates

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list in the *Official Report* the current level of base, or equivalent, interest rates in all European Community countries.

**Mr. Lilley:** There are no direct equivalents to United Kingdom base rates in the other European Community countries. The table below shows short-term interest rates in the EC countries on 18 July.

*Short-term interest rates in the European Community countries*[1]

| | *Rates* |
|---|---|
| Germany | 7·1 |
| France | 9·1 |
| United Kingdom | 13·9 |
| Italy | 12·6 |
| Spain | 15·7 |
| Netherlands | 7·2 |
| Belgium | 8·5 |
| Portugal | 12·5 |
| Greece | 20·5 |
| Denmark | 9·5 |
| Ireland | 9·6 |
| Luxembourg[2] | 8·5 |

[1] 3 month interbank rates for all countries except Portugal (3 month Treasury bill rate).

[2] No separate interest rate data is available for Luxembourg. Figure given is Belgian rate.

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list every change in the rate of interest since 1979 *(a)* by date of change and *(b)* by percentage change.

**Mr. Lilley:** The information requested is published in table 13.10 of *Financial Statistics* and table 200 of the *Economic Trends* annual supplement.

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the average annual rate of interest every year snce 1979.

**Mr. Lilley:** The information requested is published in table 13.15 of *Financial Statistics*.

### Retail Price Index

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will show, using 100 as the base, the increase in the retail price index in each European Community country from May 1979 to the most recent date for which figures are available.

**Mr. Lilley:** The information is as follows:

*Published Consumer Price Indices of the European Community Countries (May 1979 = 100)*[1]

| *EC Country* | *Index* |
|---|---|
| Germany | 134 |
| France | 205 |
| United Kingdom | 211 |
| Italy | 293 |
| Spain | 267 |
| Netherlands | 133 |
| Belgium | 161 |
| Portugal | 496 |
| Greece | 588 |
| Denmark | 198 |
| Ireland | 241 |
| Luxembourg | 158 |

[1] Figures are for June 1989 for the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands; May for France and Belgium; February for Ireland and April for the other European Community countries.

### Foreign Exchange

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current figure for total foreign exchange reserves held by Her Majesty's Government.

**Mr. Lilley:** At the end of June, the United Kingdom official reserves stood at $43,665 million, which is equivalent to £28,167 million when converted at the closing market rate on 30 June of £1 = $1·5502.

### Chemical Fertilisers

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to impose a tax on chemical fertilisers equal to 100 per cent. of the nitrogenous content; and what estimate he has made of the revenue yield from such a tax based on estimated sales to United Kingdom farmers in 1988.

**Mr. Lilley:** No, and none.

### OECD Statistics

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he supplied the information for the figures for gross and net operating surplus published in tables 7·1 of OECD Historical Statistics 1960-86; and if he will provide comparable information for 1987, 1988 and a forecast for 1989.

**Mr. Major:** The percentages for the United Kingdom given in the OECD publication are based on data supplied to the organisation by the Central Statistical Office and are compatible with the 1987 edition of "United Kingdom National Accounts". Later estimates, which will extend only to 1987, are currently in preparation, based on data in the 1988 edition of the CSO publication.

### Bank of England (Staff)

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff are employed by the Bank of England to undertake the bank's money market operations; and if he will list their grades and salaries.

**Mr. Lilley:** The information requested is a matter for the Bank of England. Some information on Bank of England staff numbers and salary levels is published in the Bank of England report and accounts.

### VAT

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total income raised by value added tax in 1988.

**Mr. Lilley:** The revenue yield from value added tax was £26·6 billion in 1988.

### Capital (Rate of Returns)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the net rate of return on capital employment in manufacturing industry each year since 1959 and his forecast for 1989 together with the return on trading assets.

**Mr. Major:** Official data for the current cost net rate of return on capital employed in manufacturing companies are published in "British Business", 30 September 1988. A copy is available in the Library. No official forecast is available.

### Capital and Running Cost Underspends

**Mr. Jeremy Hanley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the entitlements for 1989-90 resulting from the carry forward of capital and running costs underspends allowed under the end-year flexibility schemes.

**Mr. Major:** A list of entitlements totalling £620,595,000 for capital expenditure and £19,217,000 for running costs is shown in the following table.

Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimates, the individual cash limits and running costs limits will be increased when entitlement is taken up.

The total increase in cash limits resulting from the take-up of end-year flexibility will be charged to the reserve and will therefore not add to the planned total of public expenditure.

*Entitlement for 1989-90 cash limits resulting from the carryforward of capital underspends*

| *Class* | *Vote* | *Department* | *Description* | *Amount (£'000s)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | 2 | Ministry of Defence[1] | Defence procurement | 435,690 |
| II | 1 | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | Overseas representation | 4,518 |
| II | 3 | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | External broadcasting and monitoring | 1,823 |

| Class | Vote | Department | Description | Amount (£'000s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| IV | 4 | Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food | Other agricultural and food services and support for the fishing industry | 2,000 |
| V | 3 | Department of Trade and Industry | Administration, regulation of trade and industry and consumer protection | 813 |
| VII | 2 | Department of Employment | Employment programmes and central services | 2,931 |
| VIII | 1 | Department of Transport | National roads, England | 22,832 |
| VIII | 2 | Department of Transport | Administration and transport services | 2,000 |
| VIII | 4 | Department of Transport | Driver and vehicle licensing | 1,913 |
| X | 2 | Department of the Environment | Central environmental services, etc. | 1,599 |
| X | 4 | Department of the Environment | Royal palaces, royal parks, historic buildings, ancient monuments and the national heritage | 927 |
| X | 5 | Department of the Environment | Administration | 864 |
| XI | 2 | Home Office | Prisons, England and Wales | 905 |
| XI | 3 | Home Office | Administration, immigration and police support services, England and Wales | 183 |
| XII | 1 | Department of Education and Science | Schools, research and miscellaneous services | 3,412 |
| XII | 2 | Department of Education and Science | Higher and further education | 391 |
| XII | 4 | Department of Education and Science | Administration | 177 |
| XII | 5 | Department of Education and Science | Science | 1,607 |
| XIV | 1 | Department of Health and Social Security | Hospital and community health and other services, England | 17,340 |
| XIV | 3 | Department of Health and Social Security | Administration, miscellaneous health and personal social services, England | 1,003 |
| XVI | 2 | Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland | Agricultural services and fisheries for Scotland | 2,000 |
| XVI | 3 | Industry Department for Scotland | Regional and general industrial support, Scotland | 101 |
| XVI | 6 | Scottish Development Department | Roads, transport and environmental services, Scotland | 1,673 |
| XVI | 11 | Scottish Courts Administration | Administration of justice, Scotland | 1,685 |
| XVI | 14 | Scottish Home and Health Department | Prisons, hospitals and community health services, etc. Scotland | 4,747 |
| XVI | 15 | Scottish Education Department | Education, Arts, Libraries and Social work, Scotland | 750 |
| XVI | 19 | General Register Office | General Register Office, Scotland | 637 |
| XVII | 5 | Welsh Office | Tourism, roads and transport, housing, other environmental services (including civil defence), education and science, arts and libraries, and health and personal social services, Wales | 2,140 |
| XVII | 9 | Welsh Office | Administration | 317 |
| XVIII | 1 | Northern Ireland Office | Law, order, protective and miscellaneous services, Northern Ireland | 420 |
| XIX | 2 | Customs and Excise | Administration | 2,171 |
| XIX | 7 | Inland Revenue | Administration | 3,985 |
| XIX | 11 | Her Majesty's Treasury | Administration | 661 |
| XIX | 13 | Her Majesty's Treasury | Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency | 2,000 |
| XX | 7 | Ordnance Survey | Ordnance Survey | 1,788 |

| *Class* | *Vote* | *Department* | *Description* | *Amount (£'000s)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| XX | 12 | Office of Fair Trading | Office of Fair Trading | 125 |
| XX | 14 | Office of Telecommunications[2] | Office of Telecommunications | 1 |
| XX | 15 | Office of Population Censuses and Surveys | Office of Population Censuses and Surveys | 323 |
| Total voted | | | | 528,135 |

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[1] The five cash limited Defence votes are each separate cash limits but, by agreement with the Treasury are managed as a cash block. Underspend on expenditure eligible for the scheme in these cash limits has been carried forward to Class I, Vote 2.

[2] This vote is a token one. Carryforward will be taken in the form of increased appropriations in aid of £88,000.

*Entitlements for 1989-90 cash limits resulting from the carryforward of capital underspends.*

*Non voted cash limits*

| *Cash block* | *Department* | *Description* | *Amount (£000's)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| NID1 | Northern Ireland | Services broadly analagous to Great Britain services covered by cash limits including family practitioner services. | 2,059 |
| SO/LA1 | Scottish Office | Capital expenditure in Scotland by local authorities on roads and transport, water and sewerage, general services, urban programmes, police and social work, schools further education, teacher training and arts and libraries. | 12,000 |
| SO/LA2 | Scottish Office | Capital expenditure in Scotland by local authorities, new towns, and the Scottish Special Housing Association, on schemes financed by the Housing Corporation and commercial investment by new towns. | 24,900 |
| DOE/UA1 | Department of the Environment | External financing requirements of urban development corporations and capital expenditure by local authorities and other bodies on the urban programme, the derelict land reclamation programme and other expenditure (including some inner cities initiative). | 26,251 |
| DOE/HC1 | Department of the Environment | Capital expenditure in England on housing financed through the Housing Corporation. | 3,250 |
| DOE/NT1 | Department of the Environment | Capital expenditure in England by new towns on housing, roads, commercial and industrial investment and certain water services. | 24,000 |
| Total non voted | | | 92,460 |
| Total carryfoward of capital underspends | | | 620,595 |

*Entitlements for 1989-90 running costs limits resulting from the carryforward of running cost underspends*

| *Department* | *Amount (£'000s)* |
|---|---|
| Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce | 89 |
| Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food | 1,182 |
| Department for Trade and Industry | 1,251 |
| Department of Employment | 3,018 |
| Department of Transport | 1,288 |
| Scottish Courts Administration | 114 |
| Scottish Office | 975 |
| General Register Office (Scotland) | 50 |
| Welsh Office | 205 |
| Northern Ireland | 2,547 |
| Customs and Excise | 2,320 |
| Inland Revenue | 5,405 |
| Her Majesty's Treasury | 302 |
| Ordnance Survey | 279 |
| Office of Population Censuses and Surveys | 192 |
| Total carryforward of running costs underspends | 19,217 |

## Pay and File System

**Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any changes are planned to the rules for claiming reliefs when the new system of pay and file for companies comes into operation.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The new arrangements for the assessment and payment of corporation tax by companies, known as corporation tax pay and file, are due to come into force in 1993 on present plans. The Inland Revenue has been discussing with a group of representatives of companies and professional practitioners details such as the design of the new corporation tax return and the way in which claims to relief would be made under pay and file. They will be reporting the outcome of these discussions to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his decisions.

## Fixed Investments

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the increase in 1988 of fixed investments expressed as a percentage of total fixed investments.

**Mr. Major:** Total gross domestic fixed capital formation is estimated to have increased in volume by 12 per cent. between 1987 and 1988. In current prices, the increase was 18 per cent.

### Delors Report

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met the Governor of the Bank of England to discuss the Delors committee report; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lilley:** My right hon. Friend has regular discussions, on a wide range of subjects, with the Governor of the Bank of England.

### Junk Bonds

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the effects upon the United Kingdom economy of the development of the junk bond market; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* There is at present no junk bond market in the United Kingdom in the usual sense of that term.

### Hoylake (Bermuda) Ltd.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what consequences he anticipates for *(a)* the gilts market, *(b)* the shares in privatised companies and *(c)* foreign exchange levels arising from the recent Hoylake bid for BAT; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* It is not my policy to comment on takeover bids.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Computerisation

**Mr. Andrew Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what will be the minimum period needed for administrative purposes between the announcement of upratings and the beginning of the benefit year when the computerisation of his Department's records is complete;

(2) what would be the minimum period needed for administrative purposes between the announcement of upratings and the beginning of the benefit year when the computerisation of his Department's records is complete if all social security benefits were paid by ACT.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The minimum period needed for administrative purposes between the uprating announcement and the beginning of the benefit year is 23 weeks. The 20 week renewal cycle for order books, and the three week period required for the selection of order books, will not be affected by the full computerisation of the Department's records. This renewal process is already fully computerised for pensions.

There are no plans to make payment by ACT compulsory. Therefore, while order books remain in use, the minimum period needed between the uprating announcement and the beginning of the benefit year will continue to be 23 weeks.

### Nursing Homes

**Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will assess the impact of the uprating of nurses' salaries on the costs of providing nursing home care;

(2) what evidence he has that the fees paid through income support are sufficient to allow voluntary nursing homes to meet the costs of providing appropriate care;

(3) whether he will consider making more frequent upratings of income support levels for people in residential nursing homes.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The level of charges in a home is primarily a matter between the residents and the owners of the home to agree on based on the services being provided.

The Government receive evidence on the adequacy of income support, the level of fees and the factors governing costs in homes from a number of sources, including home owners and their representatives; and review the limits annually.

More frequent upratings are not necessary. The Government take account of annual changes in reviewing the limits.

**Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will estimate the number of voluntary nursing homes which have closed because of difficulties in meeting the costs of care through fees paid by income support.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The Department does not collect figures on the closure of independent nursing homes.

**Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what evidence he has received from the Brendoncare Foundation of the financial difficulties in providing nursing care for elderly residents.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** We have received representations from a number of hon. Members who have forwarded correspondence from the Brendoncare Foundation about the levels of help available through income support for people in nursing homes. The foundation has also been in direct correspondence with us.

### Incomes

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what percentage of total average weekly household income in the northern region came from social security benefits in *(a)* 1975 and *(b)* 1988.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The available information, which is drawn from "Regional Trends", is as follows. In 1975-76, some 10·9 per cent of total household income in the north came from social security benefits. In 1986-87, the corresponding figure was 16·2 per cent. These estimates exclude the contribution made by housing benefit to household incomes.

### Employment Training

**Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what guidelines are issued to his Department's staff reviewing the benefit eligibility of disabled people leaving the employment training programme; whether these guidelines are available to the public; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Disabled people who are not taking up full-time employment and who remain incapacitated may again receive sickness benefit, invalidity benefit, or severe disablement allowance provided that they produce medical evidence to substantiate their condition.

Departmental staff are instructed to this effect. Disabled claimants who were receiving an incapacity benefit immediately before starting their employment training course are sent a letter advising them that if they are sick within a period of eight weeks after their training course ends they may be entitled again provided that they make a fresh claim.

The relevant guidelines for determining income support claims are set out in income support circular No. 15/88, and in the adjudication officers' guide paragraph 25495, both of which are published. Most disabled people receiving income support immediately before they start employment training continue to do so throughout their course. Although termination of training constitutes a change in status from employment trainee to unemployed or sick and/or disabled, payments of income support can normally continue provided the claimant re-registers as unemployed at the unemployment benefit office or submits suitable medical evidence.

## Grants and Loans

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list the percentages of *(a)* budgeting loans and *(b)* community care grants which were awarded to each of the 15 client groups defined by his Department for (i) the Leeds, West area and (ii) nationally, for the financial year 1988-89.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The table provides the information available for the year 1988-89.

*Budgeting loans and community care grants for Leeds West ILO and nationally, percentage by client group 1988-89*

*Per cent.*

| | *(00)* | *(01)* | *(02)* | *(03)* | *(04)* | *(05)* | *(06)* | *(07)* | *(08)* | *(09)* | *(10)* | *(11)* | *(12)* | *(13)* | *(14)* | *(15)*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Leeds West ILO* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Budgeting Loans | 0·5 | 0·6 | 0·6 | 4·3 | 0·2 | 2·5 | 2·9 | 48·4 | 0·8 | 2·4 | 14·9 | 17·2 | 1·0 | 3·6 | 0·0 | n/a |
| Community Care Grants | 0·5 | 4·2 | 0·9 | 12·0 | 0·5 | 2·8 | 4·2 | 35·2 | 0·0 | 0·0 | 8·3 | 17·1 | 4·6 | 5·1 | 0·0 | 4·6 |
| *Great Britain* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Budgeting Loans | 0·5 | 0·3 | 0·6 | 3·9 | 0·4 | 3·6 | 3·6 | 43·9 | 0·7 | 2·1 | 16·7 | 18·8 | 1·0 | 3·8 | 0·0 | n/a |
| Community Care Grants | 0·4 | 4·5 | 3·7 | 14·3 | 0·9 | 3·4 | 10·0 | 25·2 | 0·7 | 1·5 | 9·5 | 16·4 | 2·0 | 6·3 | 0·0 | 1·1 |

n/a = not available

[1] *Key to client groups*

| *Code* | *Meaning* |
|---|---|
| 00 | unallocated or unidentified |
| 01 | over 80—with Income Support higher pensioner premium |
| 02 | aged 60-79—disabled with higher pensioner premium |
| 03 | aged 60-79—with ordinary pensioner premium, or over 60 without pensioner premium |
| 04 | lone parent with Income Support disability premium |
| 05 | family with disability premium |
| 06 | other with disability premium |
| 07 | lone parent without disability premium |
| 08 | signs at UBO quarterly with Income Support family premium |
| 09 | signs at UBO quarterly without family premium |
| 10 | signing unemployed or with training allowance with family premium |
| 11 | signing unemployed or with training allowance without family premium |
| 12 | others with family premium |
| 13 | others without family premium |
| 14 | involved in trade dispute |
| 15 | applicant not in receipt of Income Support—not applicable for budgeting loans |

## Benefits

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Leeds, West of 6 July, *Official Report*, column *247*, on income support totals; what is the imputed proportion of income support which his Department used in its calculation of the total amount payable to cover food costs under normal circumstances.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Income support is paid as a total amount intended to cover all normal day-to-day living expenses. There is no specific proportion included to cover individual items such as food.

## Medical Appeal Tribunals

**Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many medical appeal tribunals have been held in Edinburgh for each of the past five years; and how many of these found in favour of the applicant and how many against.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I regret that the Department does not hold the information requested. However, the office of the President of Social Security and Medical Appeal Tribunals keeps certain statistics and the hon. Member may care to contact it direct.

## Residential Homes

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the current minimum and maximum difference in Nottingham between charges levied by private residential homes in Nottingham and the maximum weekly payment made by his Department; and how many elderly people have been evicted from residential homes in Nottingham in the last 12 months.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The level of charges in a residential care home is a matter between the residents and the owners of the home. Information on the fees charged by individual homes or on evictions is not collected centrally.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the maximum weekly payment made by his Department in Nottingham to support elderly people in private residential and private nursing homes.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The maximum weekly payments towards fees in residential care and nursing homes from income support are:

| | *Residential care homes* £ | *Nursing homes* £ |
|---|---|---|
| Elderly | 140 | 190 |
| Elderly and blind or elderly and entitled to the higher rate of attendance allowance | 155 | — |
| Physically disabled and the disability began under pension age | 200 | 235 |
| Suffering from a terminal illness | — | 235 |

### Retirement Allowance

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his estimate of the numbers of people who retired on or after 10 April 1989 who no longer receive the reduced earnings allowance but receive the retirement allowance; what is the maximum loss of income which this change causes; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** It is estimated that 1,200 people who retired on or after 10 April 1989 are in receipt of retirement allowance. For virtually all recipients, the maximum possible benefit loss would be £21·36 a week. For a very small number of beneficiaries, fewer than five, who have two awards at the maximum rate of reduced earnings allowance, the maximum loss would be £49·84 a week.

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the estimated saving in public expenditure in each of the next five years from replacing the reduced earnings allowance with the retirement allowance for people who retired on or after 10 April; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** It is not feasible to give firm estimates of future savings from this change. The estimated savings for the next three years are as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1989-90 | 2·0 |
| 1990-91 | 5·6 |
| 1991-92 | 9·7 |

### Social Fund

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make it his policy to create a right of appeal against refusals of social fund applications to independent social security appeal tribunals; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** No. Arrangements for review of decisions by social fund officers, first by a senior manager in the social security local office and, secondly, if the applicant remains dissatisfied, by an independent social fund inspector, are already provided for in social security legislation. These arrangements are more in keeping with the discretion-based social fund scheme than the appeal system which applies to other social security benefits where entitlement depends upon a person satisfying specific conditions or rules set out in regulations.

**Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he proposes to publish his annual report on the social fund.

**Mr. Moore:** The report has been published today. It contains detailed information about the first year's operation of the social fund. I am happy to report that, despite the early fears expressed regarding the operation of the scheme, the figures speak for themselves; over 1 million people have received help from the fund, which has operated flexibly and in a way not previously possible under the old single payments scheme.

Over half a million people on income support have received interest-free budgeting loans averaging £214, nearly 400,000 have received interest-free crisis loans averaging £45, an 153,000 people in vulnerable groups or families under stress have been helped with non-repayable community care grants averaging £271. There have been many examples of imaginative use of discretion by social fund officers which has enabled them to direct help to where it was most needed.

The staff and management of my Department accepted the new challenge which the social fund presented. It is evident that those involved have worked hard to master the very different principles of this new scheme. It is a significant achievement by all concerned, all the more so when set against a background of hostility and scepticism from some quarters. And we are now seeing the tremendous experience gained in the first year being put to good use in the second.

Copies are available in the Library.

### Mr. Pietro Camerino

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when his Department intends to pay Mr. Pietro Camerino of 298 Harnall lane east, Coventry, the arrears of sickness and invalidity benefit that his Department's overseas branch has acknowledged are owed to Mr. Camerino since November 1984; if he intends to make any compensatory payment to Mr. Camerino; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Benefit has been paid to Mr. Camerino by his local social security office since 24 March 1989. Urgent arrangements are being made for the arrears of sickness benefit and invalidity benefit due from November 1984 to be paid to Mr. Camerino and payment should arrive shortly. A compensatory payment is being considered and I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Child Benefit

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will make it his policy to extend payment of child benefit in respect of young people over 19 years who are required to remain in secondary education.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** No.

### Access Committee for England

**Mr. Gregory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether the Minister responsible for the disabled is yet in a position to make a statement on the future of the Access Committee for England.

**Mr. Scott:** I have written to the retiring chairman of the Access Committee, Mr. Arthur Goldthorpe, and to the chairman of the Centre on Environment for the Handicapped, the body which, at the Government's request, hosts the Committee, Mr. John Penton, to announce my decision on the future arrangements for the committee. In making my decision, I have taken account of the views I have received from the members of both the Access Committee and the CEH management committee. I have accepted the majority view that it would be best to retain a link between the committee and CEH. Their differing but complementary roles means that they can be more effective if they work together on access issues.

However, I recognise that the Access Committee needs a more clearly defined independence of policy and finances, and that it needs a stronger direction. These needs have been provided for in the letters I have today sent to Mr. Penton and Mr. Goldthorpe, and will be fully reflected in the terms of reference for the committee which the Government will issue later in the summer.

I hope to announce the appointment of the new chairman of the Access Committee shortly. Following that appointment, I hope that the Committee will be able to resume full effectiveness in the autumn.

I am very grateful to all those concerned for their help and patience in the resolution of the difficulties of the Access Committee. I believe that we have now found a positive and constructive way forward.

A copy of my letter to Mr. Penton has been placed in the Library.

### Disability

**Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has received recent representations from the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People about public funding; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes) on 14 July 1989 at column *658*.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Bread (Northern Ireland)

41. **Mr. Kilfedder:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will set up an inquiry into the high cost of bread in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Maude:** Under United Kingdom competition legislation it falls to the Director General of Fair Trading to keep commercial activities in the United Kingdom under review. The director general's office has considered the competitive situation in the retail sale of bread in Northern Ireland, and has taken into account the report of the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland on the price of a large loaf in Northern Ireland published on 29 June, but does not consider that formal action under the competition legislation is warranted. If the hon. Member has any evidence of monopoly abuse, anti-competitive or restrictive trade practices he should draw it to the attention of the Director General of Fair Trading.

### Insurance Brokers

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many brokers are registered under the Insurance Brokers Registration Act 1977.

**Mr. Maude:** As at 13 July 1989, 18,270 individuals, and 3,145 bodies corporate, were registered.

### Investment

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement about the level of investment in industry during the period 1979 to 1988.

**Mr. Atkins:** The latest estimates show that investment in the manufacturing, construction, distribution and financial industries in 1988 was at a record level of £34·2 billion at 1985 prices. This was around 60 per cent. higher than the level in 1979.

### European Single Market

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans his Department is making to mark the arrival of the open market of 1 January 1993 with exhibitions, exchanges, media campaigns or similar events.

**Mr. Newton** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]*: We will be considering how to mark the occasion in due course. My Department's "Europe Open For Business" campaign is already alerting the business community to the opportunities and challenges the single market will bring, recognising that many of the measures to complete the single market will of course have been implemented well before 1 January 1993.

### Credit Cards

**Mr. Michael Morris:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the report of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the supply of credit card services in the United Kingdom will be published; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maude:** The report will not be published before the recess.

### Film Industry

**Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans he has for future funding of the British film industry.

**Mr. Atkins:** My Department is already committed to providing support of £2 million a year through British Screen Finance Ltd. for the five years 1986-90. I am pleased to announce that we have decided that this should continue at the same level for a further three years, until the end of 1993. I hope this clear indication of further Government support for United Kingdom film-making will help BSF to build on its achievements to date and that industry will also extend its own commitment.

### Shipbuilding and Ship Repair

**Ms. Quin:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will give the total amounts of the grants applied for by his Department from the European Commission for assistance under the Renaval programme for *(a)* Plymouth, *(b)* Gibraltar and *(c)* Strathclyde;

(2) if he will list the information supplied by his Department to the European Community in support of the applications for assistance under the Renaval programme for *(a)* Plymouth, *(b)* Gibraltar and *(c)* Strathclyde;

(3) if he will supply the following information required under the terms of the Renaval regulation in respect of *(a)* Tyne and Wear, *(b)* Cleveland, *(c)* Merseyside and *(d)* Plymouth (i) the average rate of unemployment and the European Community average in the last three years and (ii) the percentage of industrial employment in total employment and the European Community average;

(4) what information he has on the total number of redundancies in the shipbuilding and ship repair industries in Gibraltar since 1 January 1984;

(5) what is the total number of redundancies in the shipbuilding and ship repair industries in Plymouth since 1 January 1984;

(6) what is the total number of redundancies in the shipbuilding and ship repair industries in *(a)* Wearside, *(b)* Tyneside and *(c)* Tyne and Wear county since 1 January 1984;

(7) what is the total number of redundancies in the shipbuilding and ship repair industries in the county of Cleveland since 1 January 1984.

**Mr. Atkins:** The European Commission has stipulated that grants can be based on up to 3200 ecu for each qualifying job loss in shipbuilding or ship repair. At prevailing exchange rates this would amount to £13·25 million for Plymouth, £1·34 million for Gibraltar and £14·5 million for Strathclyde.

The information supplied by the Government in support of the applications related to the criteria for eligibility set out in the Renaval regulation, (EEC) No. 2506/8.

The information requested on unemployment rates and industrial employment is as follows:

| | *Total job losses shipbuilding and ship repair since 1 January 1984* | *Average rate of unemployment 1986–88* | *Industrial employment (standard industrial classification 1 to 5) in total employment in 1984, the latest available year* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | *percentage* | *percentage* |
| Tyne and Wear | 9,375 | 17·3 | 34·3 |
| of which: | | | |
| Wearside | 2,775 | | |
| Tyneside | 6,600 | | |
| Cleveland | 1,680 | 19·7 | 36·6 |
| Merseyside | | 20·1 | 31·0 |
| Plymouth | 5,675 | 12·8 | 33·8 |
| Gibraltar | 580 | | |
| European Community average (estimate on comparable basis) | — | 11·9 | 35·0 |

*Sources:*

United Kingdom data—Department of Employment. Figures exclude self-employed.

EC data—Statistical Office of the European Communities.

Eligibility also depends on the shipbuilding and ship repair proportion of industrial employment.

## NESL

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many letters his Department *(a)* received from the Anglo-Greek bidders for NESL between 1 January and 30 June and *(b)* sent to the Anglo-Greek bidders for NESL between 1 January and 30 June.

**Mr. Newton:** One letter was sent and a reply received. The Department also received copies of certain correspondence between the bidders and British Shipbuilders.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on how many occasions during *(a)* 1988 and *(b)* 1989 (i) the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke) and (ii) himself met representatives of interests bidding for NESL.

**Mr. Newton:** The only such meeting was between myself and one of the interests in bidding for the yards, at their request, on 11 May 1989.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), 13 July, *Official Report*, column *1151*, if he will specify *(a)* on what day in May a second shipbuilding bid was received for NESL and *(b)* whether this bid was in writing at that time.

**Mr. Newton:** British Shipbuilders received a formal offer in writing on 3 May.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), 13 July, *Official Report*, column *1151*, on what day an approach was made by officials of his Department to the Commission concerning a shipbuilding bid for NESL.

**Mr. Newton:** My officials saw Commission officials on 10 April following British Shipbuilders receipt of the first offer concerning shipbuilding on 6 April.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what were *(a)* the terms of credit agreed by his Department for the contract for two vessels to be built at the Govan yard for the Cosco company of the People's Republic of China and *(b)* the terms of credit requested by Cuban shipping interests in connection with their inquiries for NESL for 10 SDIS King cargo ships.

**Mr. Newton:** The credit terms for the two ships presently being completed at Kvaerner Govan Ltd. on behalf of British Shipbuilders for Cosco are financed under the £300 million financial arrangement relating to development loans signed between Her Majesty's

Government and the Government of China in May 1986. Under this arrangement 20 years' credit is available for the whole value of a transaction at an interest rate of 5 per cent. with a five-year moratorium. Acemex on behalf of Mambisa was looking for standard OECD shipping terms of 8 per cent. for 80 per cent. of the price of 10 ships with credit stretched from 8½ to 15 years. It was also looking for credit for the 20 per cent. deposit on the best terms available.

### Cuban Shipping Interests

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on how many occasions between 1 April 1988 and 31 March 1989 *(a)* he, or the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke) and *(b)* his officials, met representatives of Cuban shipping interests.

**Mr. Newton:** My officials met representatives of the Cuban shipping company Mambisa in Havana in July 1988. They have had other meetings with financial advisers to Acemex, a company which provides certain services in Mambisa.

### British Shipbuilders

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on what date the Government formally decided to wind up British Shipbuilders Ltd. as a publicly owned corporation.

**Mr. Newton:** The Government decided to proceed with the disposal of British Shipbuilders' remaining facilities in April 1988. There are no plans at present to bring before the House proposals for legislation to wind up British Shipbuilders as a public corporation.

### Enterprise Zone, Sunderland

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on what date he informed Tyne and Wear urban development corporation that preparations for an enterprise zone in Sunderland were to be suspended.

**Mr. Newton:** I announced to the House on 7 June that elements of the proposed remedial package not yet implemented, including designation of an enterprise zone, would be held in abeyance until decisions had been taken about the expressions of interest in NESL. The Tyne and Wear urban development corporation was informed the same day.

### Manufacturing Investment

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the amount of net manufacturing investment in new buildings, machinery and plant in the period 1980 to 1988; and what was the comparable figure for 1971 to 1979.

**Mr. Major:** I have been asked to reply.

The latest estimates of net domestic fixed capital formation by manufactured industry for 1977-87 appear in the 1988 edition of the Central Statistical Office publication "United Kingdom National Accounts", table 13.5. Estimates for earlier years may be obtained from the CSO Databank, a collection of macroeconomic time series in computer readable form to which the House of Commons Library has direct access. Estimates for 1988 are not yet available. Separate estimates of net investment in new buildings and works, and plant and machinery are not of publishable quality.

The published figures do not include capital goods leased from financial sector lessors. Furthermore, there are difficulties in measuring net domestic fixed capital formation since the national accounts estimates of the economic lives of fixed assets, used to estimate capital consumption, are very broad brush.

### Balance of Trade

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he has made an estimate of the balance of trade with Germany in 1992;

(2) if he has made an estimate of the United Kingdom's balance of trade with the European Community in 1992.

**Mr. Major:** I have been asked to reply.

No.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Proceedings of the House (Telephone Relay)

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what progress has been made on the proposal that a live relay of the proceedings of the House be made available to telephone subscribers as part of British Telecom's range of specialist call services.

**Mr. Wakeham:** A proposal from BT Citicall for a live telephone relay of the 1988 Budget speech lapsed, as the House had not nominated the Select Committee on Sound Broadcasting, to which it would have fallen to consider this application for the use of the sound feed. On 26 May this year the House agreed that the relevant responsibilities of that Committee should be transferred to the Select Committee on Televising of Proceedings of the House. I understand that BT is now considering the submission of a fresh application once legal and regulatory problems have been resolved. Any such application would raise important questions of principle about the way in which the sound feed is used, which the Committee would have to examine very carefully along with other proposals of a similar type which have been submitted. In addition, as was recognised by the Select Committee on Sound Broadcasting in its first report of Session 1986-87 (HC 281), the approval of the House as a whole would be required before a service of the kind suggested could proceed.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Lord President of the Council (1) if he will consider seeking a change in Standing Orders automatically to unstar all oral questions drawn below 30th place;

(2) if he will consider seeking a change in Standing Orders to provide for a tabling limit of 10 written questions per Member each day.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I have no plans to do so.

### Phone Calls

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what is the total cost per annum of telephone calls made from the Palace of Westminster.

**Mr. Wakeham:** A breakdown of all telephone charges is shown at appendix 1 of the first report of the Select Committee on House of Commons (Services) of this Session (HC(1989-90)143).

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Security

9. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland.

16. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland.

18. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland.

40. **Mr. Molyneaux:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation.

**Mr. Tom King:** I refer the right hon. and hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy).

### Local Government

11. **Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will report on progress on the talks to improve democratic representation in local government in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Tom King:** Over recent months we have been exploring with politicians and others their ideas about how local elected representatives might be more fully involved in the administration of Northern Ireland. These discussions are continuing and I hope that the political parties will also discuss their ideas together.

13. **Sir Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what inquiries into the efficiency and powers of the local government of the Province have taken place since the MacCrory report.

14. **Mr. Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to proceed with changes in the operation of local government in Northern Ireland.

21. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his plans for local government in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Needham:** Two efficiency studies covering energy management and the provision of leisure services have been undertaken recently. Proposals for improving the general efficiency and effectiveness of local government were published last November. We are now considering 60 or so responses.

### Crime Statistics

15. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland for the most recent period for which figures are available.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** As stated in the chief constable's latest annual report, the level of recorded crime in 1988 fell for the second year in succession. The downward trend in the level of reported crime is encouraging, especially in the light of the improving crime detection rate.

### Planning Applications

17. **Mr. Clifford Forsythe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications were approved in 1988 *(a)* in Newtownabbey borough council area and *(b)* in Antrim borough council area.

**Mr. Needham:** The figures are 448 and 426 respectively.

### General Practitioners

19. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the trend in the number of general practitioners since 1979.

**Mr. Needham:** The number of general practitioners has risen from 738 in 1979 to 934 in 1989.

### EEC (Communications)

20. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to improve communications between Northern Ireland and the rest of the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** Plans to improve transport and communication links have been included in the regional development plan submitted to Brussels on 28 March under the star programme and the transportation programme.

### Payments for Debt

12. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met groups seeking a repeal of the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** There have been no such meetings on this subject recently.

22. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the operation of the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** The provisions of the Payments of Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971 continue to make an important contribution towards the objective of reducing the high levels of public debt in Northern Ireland.

25. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has had seeking to repeal the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** In the last year there have been a number of questions from hon. Members on this subject.

### Handicapped Children

23. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the level of funding for services for handicapped children in the Province.

**Mr. Needham:** Services for handicapped children are provided by a wide range of Government Departments and statutory and voluntary agencies. It is not possible to identify separately the total expenditure committed to meeting the needs of these children.

### Homes

24. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many homes in Northern Ireland are privately owned; how many are in the privately rented sector; how many are owned by *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and *(c)* other public bodies; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Needham:** In October 1988, 322,000 dwellings were privately owned and 29,600 were in the private rented sector, including housing associations. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is the sole public sector housing authority within the Province and owns 171,000 houses.

Statistics on the total number of houses owned by local authorities and other public bodies are not available but the number is small.

### Student Loans

26. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the estimated cost of the introduction of student loans.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** The estimated total costs for introducing the top-up loans scheme were given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science in his statement to the House on 19 June. The Northern Ireland component of these costs will be related to the Northern Ireland share of total costs which are still being discussed.

35. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what annual level of inflation has been used to calculate the projected cost of the student loan scheme.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** In Northern Ireland the top-up loan scheme for students will operate on a parity basis with the rest of the United Kingdom. Details of the costs are outlined in annex E of the White Paper (Cm. 520) where the level of inflation is assumed to increase by 3·5 per cent. in 1990-91 and thereafter to run at 3 per cent. annually.

### Government (Province)

27. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals he has for the better government of the Province.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** We should like to achieve arrangements for the government of the Province which more fully involve local elected representatives. Steps towards that goal can be achieved only as the result of discussion and agreement between political representatives of both sides of the community. Meanwhile, the Government will continue their efforts to defeat terrorism, strengthen the economy, improve the public services and seek to ensure that Northern Ireland is a fair society for all.

### Transport Policy

28. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on transport policy.

**Mr. Needham:** The Government's policy on transport in Northern Ireland is to ensure that effective, safe and convenient transport services are provided to meet the needs of the travelling public. This policy is being pursued by continuing support within the financial resources available for public transport services and by a programme of investment in roads and related infrastructure.

### Secular Education

29. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on the development of secular education in each of the years since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** The law requires that religious instruction is given in all grant-aided schools other than nursery schools.

Disaggregation of costs in the form requested cannot be provided.

### Transport

30. **Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he proposes to seek European Community structural funds to improve transport infrastructure and minimise peripheral disadvantages to Northern Ireland within the European single market.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** The broad strategy to improve transport infrastructure and minimise peripherality with regard to the European Community was one of the development priorities set out in the infrastructure section of the regional development plan which was submitted to the European Commission on 28 March 1989. This was the first stage in the new procedures in obtaining EC funds for Northern Ireland for this and future years.

Negotiations with the Commission are continuing on the overall level of funding and the type of projects which will be eligible for EC assistance.

31. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the transport needs of Northern Ireland in the context of the single European market.

32. **Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what preparation he is making to improve transport links between Northern Ireland and the rest of the EEC.

**Mr. Needham:** The Government recognise the importance to Northern Ireland of transport links in its peripheral position in the European Community. Therefore, the Government are taking steps to improve transport to allow Northern Ireland industry to take advantage of the enhanced business opportunities offered by the single European market. These steps include the development of a transportation programme which is to be submitted for aid from the European regional development fund and which includes projects to improve port, airport and rail facilities and the roads network.

### Short Brothers

33. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in the completion of the sale of Short Brothers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Viggers:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran).

### Disabled People (Funding)

34. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on Government funding of services for people with disabilities.

**Mr. Needham:** Services for people with disabilities are provided by a wide range of Government Departments and statutory and voluntary agencies. It is not possible to identify separately the total expenditure committed to meeting the needs of these people.

### Education Reform

36. **Mr. Michael Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent representations he has received regarding the problems for education reform.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** The proposal for a draft Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order was published for consultation on 13 June with a closing date of 12 September. No formal representations have yet been received.

### Emigration

37. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what are the latest available figures for annual emigration from Northern Ireland to *(a)* Great Britain, *(b)* the Republic of Ireland and *(c)* the rest of the world.

**Mr. Needham:** The information is as follows:

*(a)* 16,000
*(b)* 1,400
*(c)* 4,200

Figures are derived from the 1988 mid-year estimates of population and cover the period 1 July 1987 to 30 June 1988.

### Local Government Consultative Document

38. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received concerning the local government consultative document issued by the Northern Ireland Department of the Environment.

**Mr. Needham:** Over 60 responses to the local government consultative paper were received from district councils, political parties, trades unions, professional associations and others. The comments made by these respondents are presently being considered.

### Transport Groups

39. **Mr. Bernie Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent representations he has received from transport groups.

**Mr. Needham:** None.

### Structure Investment

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether his Department will be responding to the report by the Institution of Civil Engineers on structure investment; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Needham:** I shall write to my hon. Friend.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Welsh Farming Unions

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received recently from Welsh farming unions on the state of agriculture in Wales.

**Mr. McGregor:** My Department has in recent months received representations from the Welsh farming unions on a range of matters, including the general state of agriculture in Wales, the Commission's price-fixing proposals and the organisation of ADAS activities in Wales.

### Egg Producers

**Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many representations he has had on the problems of very small-scale egg producers in the context of the Testing of Poultry Flocks Order 1989; and whether he has any proposals to amend this order.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have received a number of representations from the operators of small flocks about the effect of the monitoring requirements contained in the Testing of Poultry Flocks Order 1989. A new order laying down registration requirements for laying flocks is in preparation, which will also contain provisions on the monitoring of poultry flocks to replace those in the Testing of Poultry Flocks Order.

### Nuvan

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the chemical Nuvan can be used to increase the shelf life of salmon.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Nuvan is not a permitted food additive.

### Potato Marketing

**Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will announce his conclusions following the consultation exercise on potato market policy in Great Britain after 30 June 1990.

**Mr. McGregor:** My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales and I have received a wide range of representations. A number of growers, supported by the processing industry and the multiple retailers, favour a free market (option (i) in the consultation paper). The majority of growers wish to retain the essentials of the present potato marketing scheme but accept the need for non-producer interests to be represented (option (iii)). There was no support for option (ii)—retention of the scheme but without the board's basic area and quota powers.

My colleagues and I have decided that we would propose to retain the basic elements of the existing potato marketing scheme in view of the need to maintain stability in the potato industry at a time of major adjustment in the arable crop sector generally. This is subject, however, to review in the longer term, and on condition that the following changes are made to the existing arrangements.

First, we believe it is essential to ensure that consumers and other non-producer interests are given a greater influence in market management decisions. I have therefore invited the board to enter into discussions with other interests with a view to proposing modifications to the present scheme along the lines of option (iii). Secondly, it remains the Government's intention to abolish the guarantee arrangements as soon as parliamentary time permits. But in the meantime we shall be seeking substantial changes to the financial agreement between the Government and the board. We shall, therefore, be discussing with the board and the farmers' unions—as required under the Agriculture Acts 1947 and 1957:

(i) A significant revision of the formula for allocating intervention costs with a view to enabling the industry to accept financial responsibility for its own affairs.

(ii) A switch from pre-season contracts to direct intervention with a view to rendering intervention more cost-effective and strengthening the board's reserves.

(iii) Elimination of the Government's contribution to the board's administrative costs.

We aim to reach final conclusions on these matters by the end of September.

### Veterinary Products Committee

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to what extent members of the veterinary products committee have to declare an interest; and if he will list their interests.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Members of the veterinary products committee are required to declare all their interests which might affect the impartial discharge of their functions. Their personal interests are to be published shortly in the committee's annual report for 1988.

### Unregistered Fishing Vessels

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps his Department has taken to notify all vessels not registered as British under the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 to stop fishing on the British quota.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The fishing licenses issued by Fisheries departments make clear that they are valid only if the vessels are registered. Fishing by unregistered vessels is illegal, and where offences are detected prosecution action will be considered in the normal way.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many fishing vessels not registered under the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 are still *(a)* fishing in the British quota, *(b)* in FPOs and *(c)* have been notified by his Fisheries Department to stop fishing in the British quota.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Fishing vessels which are not appropriately registered are not legally entitled to fish against United Kingdom quotas. To date we have evidence which points to illegal fishing by 19 unregistered vessels (of which seven are members of producer organisations). The owners involved are being notified of possible prosecution action in the usual way.

### Arctic Corsair and Arctic Range

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the registration status of the Arctic Corsair and the Arctic Range currently fishing in Greenland waters under the British quota in those waters.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Registration is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. I understand that both the Arctic Corsair and the Arctic Ranger have been accepted for registration under part II of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988.

### Marine Farms (Licensing)

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what criteria determine whether operators of marine and shell fish farms require a licence from his Department prior to commencing operation.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** A licence is not required for the operation of marine fish and shellfish farms. However, such operations must first obtain consent from the Crown Estate Commissioners and are also subject to statutory controls on aspects such as discharge and fish disease.

### Pesticides

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Caerphilly, of 27 June, *Official Report*, column *446*, what exemptions on account of age apply to regulations on the handling of certain pesticides.

**Mr. Ryder:** In clarification of the reply given on 27 June the only exemption on account of age applies to people born before 1965 who are not required to hold an appropriate certificate of competence when using pesticides on their own land or on their employer's land. The requirement to hold an appropriate certificate of competence when providing a commercial service applies regardless of age.

Age does not exempt anyone from the general obligation on users of pesticides to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health of people, creatures and plants and to safeguard the environment. In addition, anyone using pesticides in their business or employment must have had adequate instruction and guidance so as to be competent in what they are doing.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list all those pesticides cleared for use in Britain under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985; and what percentage these form of the total number of pesticides currently approved for use in Britain.

**Mr. Ryder:** All pesticides currently approved for use in the United Kingdom have been approved under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985. A list of approved products is published annually and is available in the Library of the House.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many of his Department's scientists are currently engaged in reviewing pesticides under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 procedures.

**Mr. Ryder:** It is not possible to give a precise figure, as explained in my reply to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) on 23 March at column *726*.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many older pesticides he expects to be reviewed by *(a)* the end of 1989, *(b)* the end of 1990, *(c)* the end of 1994 and *(d)* the end of 1999; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** It is not possible to predict how long reviews of particular pesticides will take.

### Farm Diversification Scheme

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Caerphilly of 18 May, *Official Report*, columns *293-94*, if he will give a full description, by type, of the 23 environmental facilities established under the farm diversification scheme by that date; and if he will state the number of schemes including proposals to create wetland habitats such as ponds, reed beds, marshes, etc., and the area which such habitats cover.

**Mr. Ryder:** These projects cover nature trails, woodland walks and associated interpretation centres and educational facilities. Most of the nature trails incorporate existing wetland habitats or newly established ponds. Statistics on the precise area covered are not readily available.

### Fishing Vessels (Grants)

**Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has regarding the total sums awarded by the European Community grants for fishing vessels to each maritime member state in the fourth round of European Community regulation 4028/86.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The information requested is as follows:

*Regulation 4028/86—4th Round*

| *Member state* | *EC vessel grants Mecus* | *Stirling equivalent £ million* |
|---|---|---|
| Belgium | 0·18 | 0·12 |
| Denmark | 1·83 | 1·18 |
| Germany | 1·38 | 0·89 |
| Greece | 2·84 | 1·83 |
| Spain | 15·69 | 10·12 |
| France | 5·37 | 3·46 |
| Republic of Ireland | 0·48 | 0·31 |
| Italy | 5·62 | 3·63 |
| Netherlands | 0·03 | 0·02 |
| Portugal | 5·31 | 3·43 |
| United Kingdom | 1·99 | 1·28 |
| Total | 40·72 | 26·27 |

### Fisheries Multi-annual Guidance Programme

**Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has regarding the steps taken by each maritime European Community member state regarding steps to meet the objectives set in the fisheries multi-annual guidance programme.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Member states have adopted various measures, including a decommissioning grants scheme, to meet their programme objectives.

### Fisheries Management

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he has taken to support the principle of sustainable fisheries management based on scientific evidence; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The Government provide over £15 million a year for monitoring and research towards achieving sound and rational management of fish as a renewable resource. Furthermore we have sought to ensure in discussions in the European Community that total allowable catches are set, as far as scientific knowledge allows, on a biologically sound basis and that appropriate technical conservation measures are adopted. We will continue with these policies.

### Aquatic Environment

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the ways in which he carries out his duties to protect the aquatic environment.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** A total of 130 scientists and support staff in my Department's fisheries laboratories carry out a substantial research and monitoring programme for the protection of the marine and freshwater environments. Reports are published of the results of research and of monitoring the environmental quality of our waters.

We take a major role in international work to strengthen understanding and protection of the aquatic environment.

Strict statutory controls under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 are applied to regulate disposal and incineration at sea of waste material, in conformity with international commitments to protect the environment. No waste may be dumped without a strict scientific assessment to ensure that disposal to sea will not harm the marine environment. The availability of disposal routes on land is also assessed. Licences are limited to one year to permit frequent review of the availability of land disposal. Concentrations of contaminants in sewage sludge have been reduced, and we are continuing to reduce the number of liquid industrial wastes dumped at sea as alternative means of disposal on land become available.

Discharges to sea of radioactive waste are authorised jointly by my Department and the Department of the Environment and have been very substantially reduced over the lifetime of this Government.

My Department advises upon applications for consents to discharge waste through pipelines to estuaries and coastal waters. These applications are carefully scrutinised with a view to avoiding any harmful effects from such discharges.

Under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 the terms of approval of pesticides include any conditions relating to storage or use which are necessary to ensure protection and conservation of the aquatic environment.

My Department plays an active role, both nationally and internationally, in the management and conservation of marine and freshwater fish and shellfish stocks.

My agricultural development and advisory service advises farmers on ways to reduce pollution of the aquatic environment. Reducing pollution of our rivers and watercourses is a very important consideration in the operation of the recently introduced farm and conservation grant scheme. I have made available grants of 50 per cent. for the installation on farms of facilities for the safe treatment and disposal of slurry and silage effluent.

## Sharks

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the research on which the current Norwegian-European Community fisheries agreement quota for basking shark exploitation is based; whether the level of exploitation is sustainable; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The Norwegian quota for basking shark in Community waters is set as part of the annual EC-Norway fisheries agreement. Data available indicates that there has been no decline in the stock in Community waters since 1978. The annual quota has remained the same since 1985. I understand that Norway's catch in the Community zone has been nil in the last two years. The species will not therefore have been affected by fishing in Community waters.

## Fisheries Inspectors

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the duties of his fisheries inspectors; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The principal duties of my Department's fishery inspectors are to enforce EC and United Kingdom fisheries conservation and management regulations, to enforce EC fish marketing regulations, to assist in the enforcement of marine environmental protection legislation and to collect fisheries statistics and provide other information and advice to assist with the development and implementation of fisheries and other regulations.

## Marine Pollution

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list all the research projects and their locations which his Department carries out into marine pollution; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** My Department has a substantial investment in research on marine pollution covering almost 100 distinct projects. A full list of these projects is being placed in the Library of the House.

## Seals

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many post-mortem examinations of seals have been carried out by his Department in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** My Department's veterinary investigation service carried out the following numbers of post mortem examinations of seals in 1985-89 (to date):

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1985 | 1 |
| 1986 | 7 |
| 1987 | 6 |
| 1988 | 8 |
| 1989 | 2 |

Examinations are performed as part of the diagnostic service provided to private veterinary practitioners.

The Department of the Environment has primary responsibility for matters concerning the recent epidemic of disease in seals.

## Organic Produce

**Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what percentage of agricultural produce was produced in 1980 classified as organic; and what is the latest annual figure available.

**Mr. Ryder:** This information is not available.

## Anthrax

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has now been informed of the source of the anthrax infection in Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]*: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) on 14 July at column *667*.

## Pollution

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he is monitoring the input of nutrients, including nitrates and phosphates, into the North sea; and if he will give the results of any such monitoring.

**Mr. Donald Thompson** *[holding answer 18 July 1989]*: My Ministry monitors the input of nutrients to the sea arising from sea disposal operations licensed under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985. Such inputs are a very small proportion of the total nutrient inputs into the North sea, of the order of 1 per cent. for nitrates and less than 3 per cent. for phosphates.

Water authorities record inputs of nutrients from rivers to estuaries. This monitoring shows that there has been no change in nitrate inputs in the last 10 to 15 years. Phosphate inputs have shown a detectable rising trend.

Ministry scientists have examined records of nitrate concentrations in sea water in winter, the period of maximum and stable nitrate concentrations. These show that there has been a cyclical pattern in nitrate concentrations but no consistent rising trend. The same cyclical pattern occurs throughout the mid and southern North sea and is believed to reflect climatic or other long-term changes rather than anthropogenic nitrate inputs.

It is known that a substantial proportion of the nutrients entering the estuary do not reach the sea. An investigation is now in preparation by MAFF scientists and others to establish the scale on which the removal processes involved occur.

## Conservation

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields of 22 June, *Official Report*, columns 252-53, how many of the 35 national training courses on wildlife and landscape conservation have been held in each year since 1981; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder** *[holding answer 18 July 1989]:* The breakdown of national training courses on wildlife and landscape conservation since 1981 is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1981 | 4 |
| 1982 | 4 |
| 1983 | 4 |
| 1984 | 5 |
| 1985 | 7 |
| 1986 | 8 |
| 1987 | 2 |
| 1988 | 1 |

Since 1987, greater emphasis has been placed on regionally organised conservation awareness training for front-line ADAS advisers to meet their enhanced responsibilities under section 17 of the Agriculture Act 1986. Specialist training continues to be organised on a national and regional basis.

## Fish Imports

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the tonnage, species and value of fish and fisheries products imported into the United Kingdom from Iceland in each of the past five years and for the first four months of the current year.

**Mr. Donald Thompson** *[holding answer 11 July 1989]:* The imports of fish and fisheries products (fresh, chilled, frozen, dried, salted, in brine, smoked) and prepared or preserved fish into the United Kingdom from Iceland since 1984 have been as follows:

*Quantity (tonnes)*

| | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* | [1] *1989* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cod | 23,987 | 45,284 | 60,719 | 58,593 | 59,441 | 19,054 |
| Haddock | 5,733 | 9,512 | 10,613 | 10,383 | 16,786 | 6,185 |
| Saithe | 925 | 1,390 | 2,228 | 2,796 | 2,462 | 595 |
| Plaice | 3,645 | 6,478 | 7,537 | 7,824 | 8,124 | 2,385 |
| Dogfish | 8 | 1 | 2 | — | — | — |
| Flounder | 7 | 1 | 3 | — | — | — |
| Halibut | 1,422 | 1,812 | 1,512 | 2,231 | 1,441 | 636 |
| Ling | 43 | 125 | 140 | 122 | 158 | 86 |
| Redfish | 790 | 609 | 719 | 1,000 | 1,065 | 321 |
| Whiting | 21 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 20 |
| Herring | 3,149 | 2,800 | 2,741 | 3,888 | 3,297 | 2,177 |
| Mackerel | — | 13 | — | — | — | — |
| Salmon | 21 | 18 | 1 | 29 | 32 | 3 |
| Trout | — | — | — | — | 282 | 1 |
| Other fish | 1,915 | 2,113 | 2,798 | 2,537 | 3,211 | 1,229 |
| Livers and roes | 254 | 467 | 408 | 295 | 201 | 56 |
| Shrimps and prawns | 591 | 785 | 927 | 1,194 | 895 | 153 |
| Other crustacea | 17 | — | 6 | 34 | 10 | 2 |
| Squid | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Molluscs | — | 6 | 1 | — | 9 | — |
| Fishmeal | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Prepared and preserved fish | 1,646 | 2,466 | 3,226 | 3,319 | 3,897 | 11 |
| TOTAL | 44,175 | 73,890 | 93,582 | 94,248 | 101,321 | 32,914 |

[1] January to April.

*Source:* Customs and Excise Overseas Trade Statistics.

*Value (£'000)*

| | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* | [1] *1989* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cod | 22,847 | 44,031 | 70,090 | 75,707 | 73,281 | 24,658 |
| Haddock | 3,949 | 6,282 | 10,698 | 10,238 | 17,293 | 7,036 |
| Saithe | 323 | 686 | 1,612 | 2,094 | 1,854 | 532 |
| Plaice | 2,633 | 3,847 | 6,022 | 5,873 | 5,991 | 1,766 |
| Dogfish | 4 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — |
| Flounder | 7 | 1 | 7 | — | — | — |
| Halibut | 999 | 1,360 | 1,646 | 2,336 | 1,835 | 752 |
| Ling | 13 | 49 | 95 | 62 | 81 | 46 |
| Redfish | 243 | 209 | 384 | 604 | 798 | 236 |
| Whiting | 6 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 6 |
| Herring | 1,395 | 1,324 | 1,362 | 1,768 | 1,731 | 1,097 |
| Mackerel | — | 5 | — | — | — | — |
| Salmon | 9 | 74 | 3 | 117 | 120 | 9 |
| Trout | — | — | — | — | 174 | 3 |
| Other fish | 1,139 | 1,367 | 1,979 | 1,894 | 2,046 | 710 |
| Livers and roes | 257 | 533 | 642 | 662 | 427 | 157 |
| Shrimps and prawns | 2,393 | 3,260 | 5,662 | 7,504 | 4,998 | 712 |

| | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* | *[1]1989* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Other crustacea | 33 | — | 28 | 195 | 54 | 16 |
| Squid | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Molluscs | 1 | 23 | 2 | — | 33 | — |
| Fishmeal | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Prepared and preserved fish | 5,759 | 9,635 | 21,646 | 20,188 | 20,529 | 64 |
| TOTAL | 42,011 | 72,691 | 121,879 | 129,244 | 131,256 | 37,800 |

[1] January to April.

*Source:* Customs and Excise Overseas Trade Statistics.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the tonnage, species and value of fish and fisheries products imported into the United Kingdom from Norway in each of the past five years and for the first four months of the current year.

**Mr. Donald Thompson** *[holding answer 11 July 1989]:* The imports of fish and fisheries products (fresh, chilled, frozen, dried, salted, in brine, smoked) and prepared or preserved fish into the United Kingdom from Norway since 1984 have been as follows:

*Quantity (tonnes)*

| | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* | *1989 January to April* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cod | 20,599 | 19,818 | 21,323 | 23,083 | 18,565 | 6,847 |
| Haddock | 3,079 | 3,009 | 5,252 | 6,866 | 9,247 | 3,929 |
| Saithe | 5,626 | 4,811 | 3,098 | 2,704 | 2,723 | 508 |
| Plaice | 698 | 416 | 316 | 132 | 109 | 55 |
| Dogfish | 152 | 1 | 22 | 1 | — | — |
| Flounder | 298 | — | 5 | — | — | — |
| Halibut | 5 | 4 | 2 | 45 | 127 | 14 |
| Ling | 100 | 49 | 36 | 35 | 41 | 8 |
| Redfish | 41 | 44 | 174 | 173 | 169 | 57 |
| Whiting | 1 | — | 104 | 20 | 134 | 119 |
| Herring | 1,893 | 4,164 | 4,661 | 2,253 | 2,852 | 3,133 |
| Mackerel | 379 | 1,480 | 218 | 83 | 95 | 255 |
| Salmon | 1,739 | 2,005 | 1,684 | 1,385 | 2,143 | 626 |
| Trout | 73 | 11 | 16 | 124 | 53 | 7 |
| Other fish | 929 | 1,010 | 884 | 1,673 | 2,367 | 418 |
| Livers and roes | 89 | 89 | 48 | 6 | 7 | — |
| Shrimps and prawns | 99 | 42 | 2 | 44 | 33 | 6 |
| Other crustacea | 2 | 23 | 18 | 19 | 11 | 7 |
| Squid | 146 | 106 | 108 | 61 | 318 | 21 |
| Molluscs | 36 | 26 | 7 | 44 | 474 | 9 |
| Fishmeal | 18 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 15 | 4 |
| Prepared and Preserved Fish | 7,477 | 9,788 | 5,354 | 3,067 | 3,922 | 79 |
| Total | 43,479 | 46,908 | 43,344 | 41,830 | 43,405 | 16,102 |

*Source:* Customs and Excise Overseas Trade Statistics.

*Value (£'000)*

| | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* | *1989 January-April* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cod | 19,982 | 32,170 | 39,414 | 47,819 | 34,918 | 12,372 |
| Haddock | 3,735 | 4,700 | 8,314 | 11,920 | 14,214 | 5,483 |
| Saithe | 3,819 | 3,718 | 3,051 | 3,001 | 2,523 | 399 |
| Plaice | 409 | 309 | 253 | 125 | 113 | 33 |
| Dogfish | 69 | 1 | 19 | 1 | — | — |
| Flounder | 157 | — | 3 | — | — | — |
| Halibut | 11 | 4 | 9 | 87 | 107 | 11 |
| Ling | 53 | 33 | 38 | 44 | 46 | 12 |
| Redfish | 25 | 35 | 169 | 215 | 141 | 51 |
| Whiting | 1 | — | 80 | 8 | 63 | 54 |
| Herring | 783 | 1,859 | 2,066 | 936 | 1,279 | 1,386 |
| Mackerel | 18 | 485 | 53 | 41 | 36 | 47 |
| Salmon | 7,970 | 9,915 | 7,380 | 7,012 | 9,360 | 2,412 |
| Trout | 309 | 42 | 44 | 440 | 368 | 72 |
| Other Fish | 805 | 947 | 1,225 | 1,551 | 2,388 | 577 |
| Livers and Roes | 111 | 141 | 93 | 19 | 7 | — |
| Shrimps and Prawns | 226 | 129 | 11 | 262 | 183 | 29 |
| Other Crustacea | — | 77 | 46 | 50 | 32 | 26 |
| Squid | 147 | 136 | 137 | 130 | 32 | 26 |
| Molluscs | 26 | 30 | 26 | 160 | 448 | 41 |
| Fishmeal | 94 | 87 | 76 | 90 | 119 | 39 |
| Prepared and Preserved Fish | 27,793 | 35,876 | 30,015 | 17,857 | 19,531 | 278 |
| Total | 66,543 | 90,694 | 92,522 | 91,768 | 85,908 | 23,348 |

*Source:* Customs and Excise Overseas Trade Statistics.

## HEALTH

### Airline Meals

**Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Cynon Valley of 2 May, *Official Report*, column *100*, if he has now given consideration to the report of a survey of microbiological quality of airline meals to three London boroughs; and if he will now make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** The survey by the three local authorities surrounding Heathrow was carried out between 1984 and 1986. The results are of concern to the Government and we are co-operating with both the airline catering industry and the appropriate environmental health departments to draw up codes of practice relevant to the operation of the airline caterers. These codes should incorporate all the best features of the present European and international guidelines as well as the Department's guidelines on cook-chill and frozen catering systems. We recognise that there will need to be detailed discussion between the interested parties, but we would expect the new codes of practice to be published in the spring of 1990. We will then consider whether any further measures are necessary to safeguard the public from food poisoning while flying on British-controlled aircraft. In our review of the Food Act, we will also consider carefully any revision of powers. I am advised that the food hygiene regulations apply to airline meals on any British-controlled aircraft and under certain circumstances the Air Navigation Order 1965/1643 article 47 could be evoked.

### Chiropody Services

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what is the current advice being given to people seeking an initial appointment and assessment for chiropody about *(a)* when they will be seen, *(b)* where they will be seen and *(c)* how to get to the place at which they will be seen in (i) Calderdale, (ii) Bradford, (iii) Kirklees, (iv) Wakefield and (v) Leeds; and what it is in each district health authority in England and Wales;

(2) what is the National Health Service waiting list for an initial appointment and assessment for chiropody in *(a)* Calderdale, *(b)* Bradford, *(c)* Kirklees, *(d)* Wakefield and *(e)* Leeds; and what it is in each district health authority in England and Wales.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not collect this information centrally. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the health authorities concerned for the information she is seeking.

### NHS Reform

**Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received about the proposals in the White Paper, "Working for Patients", to increase the number of consultants.

**Mr. Mellor:** Twelve letters and five parliamentary questions on this specific proposal have been received.

**Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how women general practitioners will be affected by the new general practitioners' contract.

**Mr. Mellor:** The new contract will increase opportunities for women GPs. There is considerable demand from patients to have the choice of seeing a woman doctor, and partnerships will be keen to provide this option. Formalised arrangements for flexible working will provide specific opportunities for women doctors with domestic or other commitments.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether expressions of interest by persons employed in, or associated with National Health Service hospitals, in the hospital concerned changing status to the proposed National Health Service trust status, were supposed to be referred for comment to members of the regional health authority in whose area the hospitals affected lie; and whether he has relieved regional health authorities of that duty before they forwarded such expressions of interest to his Department without regional health authority members having the opportunity to comment on them.

**Mr. Mellor:** The chief executive of the National Health Service management board, in his letter of 14 March to regional general managers, asked regional health authorities to invite interested parties in their regions to provide outline expressions of interest on their proposals for establishment of NHS hospital trusts. Regional health authorities were asked to consider the expressions of interest and to send them, together with any comments which they might have on the proposals, to the Department. The letter did not explicitly require expressions of interest to be referred to the full health authority for comment at this stage. There will, of course, be opportunities for full discussion of any applications which are developed from initial expressions of interest.

### Immunisations and Smears

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how a refusal by a person or a parent to have or allow an immunisation or smear despite repeated requests from the general practitioner will be counted under the new contract.

**Mr. Mellor:** It is important that all children should be immunised and all eligible women should have smear tests taken. We recognise, however, that in a few cases it may be impossible for a doctor to carry out these procedures because the patient cannot be persuaded. The target levels that we have set reflect this, and there is no need to make any additional allowance for such cases in the calculation of coverage for payments purposes.

### White Papers

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, for each of the last three White Papers issued by his Department, or its predecessor, for which legislation has been started, he will state the time elapsed between their publication and the First Reading of any Bill connected with them; and if he will do the same for the last three White Papers issued by the Department of Health and Social Security prior to May 1979.

**Mr. Mellor:** The last three White Papers published by the Department of Health and Social Security, in which legislation was proposed and has been subsequently started or completed, were: "Promoting Better Health", "Law on Child Care and Family Services" and "Reform of Social Security: Programme for Action". These were published on November 1987, January 1987 and December 1985 respectively and the First Readings of the Health and Medicines Act 1988, Children Bill and Social Security Act 1986 took place on November 1987, November 1988 and January 1986. It is not for me to answer for the record of the previous Government in this matter, but the information requested should be available in the Library.

### Consultants

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new consultants' posts will be created in north-west England as a result of the proposals in the White Paper.

**Mr. Mellor:** Under the White Paper proposals 100 extra consultant posts will be allocated in England. Their distribution cannot be determined until bids for them have been received from regional health authorities, and analysed.

### General Practitioners

**Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health for how long it is proposed that the new general practitioners' contract should run unamended.

**Mr. Mellor:** The new contract represents the first major change to the family doctor service for over 20 years. We shall monitor the effect on patient care and, although no further major changes are planned, we shall be ready to amend the contract should that prove necessary in the light of events.

### Health Authorities

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list in rank order of size of the waiting list the health authorities for which he is responsible as at 31 March indicating in each case the change in position in the rank order since 31 March 1988.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not yet have available information about the number of people waiting for hospital in-patient treatment at 31 March 1989. The latest published figures are for 30 September 1988 and a copy of the booklet "Hospital In-patient Waiting Lists—England" is in the Library.

### Bone Mass Screening

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the locations at which bone mass screening is available within the National Health Service.

**Mr. Freeman:** We do not hold this information centrally.

### Centre for Advanced Microbiological Research

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place a copy of the agreement between the Centre for Advanced Microbiological Research and Porton International Limited in the Library.

**Mr. Freeman:** No. Agreements between the public health laboratory services centre for applied microbiology and research and companies in the Porton International group are commercially confidential.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the income generated by the Centre for Applied Microbiological Research in each year since 1980.

**Mr. Freeman:** The income generated by the centre for applied microbiology and research for each year since 1980, including grants for specific work, has been:

*£ million*

| *Year* | *Amount* |
|---|---|
| 1980-81 | 1·8 |
| 1981-82 | 2·0 |
| 1982-83 | 2·3 |
| 1983-84 | 2·2 |
| 1984-85 | 2·5 |
| 1985-86 | 3·0 |
| 1986-87 | 2·8 |
| 1987-88 | 3·7 |
| 1988-89 | 4·2 |

### Hormone Replacement Therapy

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will state the number of patients receiving hormone replacement therapy within the National Health Service in each year since 1982.

**Mr. Freeman:** We do not hold this information centrally.

### Public Health Laboratory Service

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has *(a)* the employment in and *(b)* the costs of, each branch of the public health laboratory service in each year since 1980.

**Mr. Mellor:** The number of staff employed by the public health laboratory service in each branch since 1980 is:

| | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Central Public Health Laboratory | 359 | 291 | 299 | 300 | 289 | 309 | 305 | 295 | 295 |
| Centre for Applied Microbiology and Research | 259 | 323 | 305 | 302 | 308 | 313 | 318 | 315 | 323 |
| Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 44 | 50 | 54 | 61 |
| Area and Regional Laboratories | 1,469 | 1,493 | 1,421 | 1,375 | 1,362 | 1,363 | 1,360 | 1,361 | 1,364 |
| Headquarters | 57 | 57 | 73 | 79 | 78 | 78 | 84 | 89 | 98 |

The cost of each branch of the service since 1980 expressed as net expenditure is:

| | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Central Public Health Laboratory | 3·6 | 4·3 | 4·1 | 4·1 | 4·1 | 4·9 | 5·4 | 5·9 | 6·5 |
| Centre for Applied Microbiology and Research | 3·3 | 3·2 | 3·4 | 5·3 | 4·2 | 4·3 | 5·3 | 4·6 | 5·7 |
| Communicable Diseases Surveillance Centre | 0·3 | 0·4 | 0·4 | 0·5 | 0·7 | 0·7 | 0·9 | 1·1 | 1·3 |
| Area and Regional Laboratories and Headquarters | 11·1 | 13·6 | 13·9 | 15·1 | 15·9 | 17·3 | 17·8 | 20·1 | 21·7 |

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the basic pay of all grades of staff employed by the public health laboratory service in animal handling; and what is the actual average gross pay and hours worked on each public health laboratory service site.

**Mr. Mellor:** The basic pay varies according to salary grades and duties but the average gross pay per annum including overtime is £9,663. Average hours worked per week by animal handlers on PHLS sites with such a facility vary between 37 and 43.

### Porton International Ltd.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were *(a)* the fees paid to, *(b)* costs of services supplied to, and *(c)* income derived from Porton International Ltd. in each year since 1982.

**Mr. Freeman:** This information cannot be disclosed as it is commercially confidential.

### Mr. Graham Gaskin

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice his Department has issued to local authorities regarding a client's access to past social work records following the recent ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Mr. Graham Gaskin.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) on 18 July at column *133*.

### York City Hospital

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to ensure that the discharges of elderly patients from York city hospital into private residential care are being handled in accordance with the requirements of his Department's circular on discharges of patients issued during 1988.

**Mr. Freeman:** This is a local matter. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of York health authority for such information.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to reply to the letter, reference number 22.s.13/VJN/H, from the assistant chief executive of St. Helens metropolitan borough council which was sent to his Department on 26 May; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** I am making inquiries on the delay and shall ensure a reply is sent as soon as possible.

### Lead-free Petrol

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many health authorities have converted their petrol-driven vehicles to run on lead-free petrol; and what action his Department is taking to encourage such conversions.

**Mr. Freeman:** Of 14 regional health authorities in England, nine already have a policy of conversion to lead-free usage wherever possible. The rest have the matter under active consideration. The Department, through its procurement directorate, has encouraged regional supplies directors to move as quickly as possible towards use of lead-free vehicles and is planning the issue of general guidance on the subject later this year.

### Energy Efficiency

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking to encourage health authorities to implement energy efficiency policies.

**Mr. Freeman:** Energy use in the NHS is monitored using performance indicators to ensure that the Department's 1985 commitment to the Public Accounts Committee to achieve savings of £1·3 billion (or savings of 1·5 per cent. per annum) over 15 years is being achieved.

Detailed guidance, under the general title "Encode", has been issued to health authorities on a range of energy efficiency measures, including measuring energy usage, setting targets for savings and measuring effectiveness. Computer software for building management systems has also been developed and marketed. A third volume of guidance, aimed specifically at managers, is in preparation. Construction of an exemplar nucleus low-energy hospital designed to secure energy savings of 50 per cent. is well advanced at Newport, Isle of Wight. Construction of a second exemplar low-energy hospital, which aims to secure even greater energy savings, has just commenced.

### Bleaching

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking to encourage manufacturers to phase out the practice of bleaching wound dressings and incontinence products.

**Mr. Freeman:** None, because the evidence of the recently published report "Dioxins in the Environment" is that residue levels of dioxins arising from bleaching of such products are at the limits of detection and pose no risk to patients. However, until alternatives to bleaching can be found, bleaching is necessary to make natural cotton absorbent. I welcome industry efforts to find an acceptable alternative which will satisfy performance requirements.

### Chlorofluorocarbons

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures his Department is taking to encourage health authorities to phase out the use of chlorofluorocarbons in hospitals.

**Mr. Freeman:** NHS authorities have been urged to phase out their use of CFCs in all but essential medical and refrigeration uses by the end of 1989 and to purchase CFC-free alternatives. In some cases the alternative products may involve an increased flammability risk, and guidance on safe storage and disposal of such products was issued in November 1988. Where no alternative is currently available, the overall CFC usage is likely to be small, but we will continue to encourage industry and other efforts to find suitable replacements.

### Incineration

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources his Department is providing to bring incineration facilities up to the required legal standards.

**Mr. Freeman:** Health authorities are expected to comply with current statutory standards governing emissions to the atmosphere. New and more stringent statutory controls are expected to be introduced in 1990 and the Department will shortly be issuing guidance to health authorities to enable them to ensure that their installations comply with the new statutory requirements. It is anticipated that these requirements will provide a transitional period for the replacement of existing incinerators. Many incinerators will therefore be upgraded or replaced at the end of their useful lives as part of the normal cycle of planned equipment renewal. Authorities will also be expected to review waste disposal services, taking account of the scope for rationalising and reducing the number of incinerator facilities and the contribution the private sector can make.

### Playgroups

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received about the imposition of registration and inspection fees on pre-school playgroups; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** Five from hon. Members and four from members of the public. The Children Bill, which has completed Committee stage in this House, proposes to give the Secretary of State power to make regulations to prescribe fees to be levied by local authorities for registration and inspection of childminders and providers of day care. No decisions about the levels of fees will be made without prior discussion with interested parties such as local authority associations and voluntary organisations.

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has undertaken about the likely impact of registration and inspection fees being imposed on pre-school playgroups *(a)* in Bradford and *(b)* elsewhere.

**Mr. Mellor:** None.

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to provide grants for pre-school playgroups in areas where there is no public nursery provision.

**Mr. Mellor:** No. This is a matter for local decision.

### Speech Therapy

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what speech therapy is available to children with severe learning difficulties who attend schools within the Liverpool area health authority's district; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not hold this information centrally. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the Liverpool district health authority.

### Hearing Aids

**Mr. Lawrence:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the average delay in the provision of hearing aids; what are the regional differences in waiting times; and if he will make a statement about the action he may be taking to speed the delivery of such hearing aids.

**Mr. Freeman:** According to a survey carried out in 1986 by the British Association of Audiology Technicians, the average waiting time for a hearing aid fitting in the United Kingdom is 7·2 weeks. Information on regional differences in waiting times is not held centrally. We are considering the action which might be taken in response to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf's "Fair Hearing" campaign.

### NHS Staff (Pensions)

**Sir George Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health on how many occasions in each of the last five years he has exercised his discretion under regulation 62 of the National Health Service (Superannuation) Regulations 1980 and reduced the pension or retiring allowance of National Health Service staff.

**Mr. Mellor:** On only one occasion in the past five years, in June 1986, has the Secretary of State directed that the forfeiture provisions of regulation 62 should apply. That decision was subsequently reviewed and upheld earlier this year.

### Welfare Milk Tokens

**Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he intends to reduce the value of welfare milk tokens in relation to the full cost of the doorstep pint of milk.

**Mr. Freeman:** We have no plans to reduce the value to beneficiaries of welfare milk tokens. But the Department is negotiating a reduced price with the liquid welfare milk suppliers.

### Lowermoor Incident Group

**Mr. Neale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about the report of the Lowermoor incident health advisory group.

**Mr. Freeman:** The report of the Lowermoor incident health advisory group is being published today. The group was set up in January 1989 at my request to provide independent expert advice to the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly district health authority on the implications for the health of the population in the Camelford area following the contamination of their drinking water in July 1988. Copies of the report have been sent to the Department of Health and to the Department of the Environment, and I am placing copies in the Library. I am grateful to Dame Barbara Clayton and her colleagues for their very thoughtful and authoritative report.

The Government welcome the group's advice that no long-term effects on health are expected. The group's main findings are that:

> (i) early symptoms, which were mostly gastrointestinal disturbances, rashes and mouth ulcers and which appeared to be mostly mild and short-lived, can most probably be attributed to the incident. Other causes such as viral infections cannot be discounted for some of the cases.
>
> (ii) it is not possible to attribute the very real current health complaints to the toxic effects of the incident, except insofar as they are the consequence of the sustained anxiety naturally felt by many people. A number of factors have contributed to this anxiety, particularly in relation to long-term effects, and these are addressed in the report.

It is for the district health authority to take any further measures it thinks necessary for the health of the local population in the light of these findings. The Department of Health notes that the advisory group welcomes the DHA's survey of pregnancy outcomes as a sensible precautionary measure and also the continuance of the special consultant sessions for people who are anxious and unwell. The Department has asked the DHA for its observations on the group's recommendations about the availability of patch tests for patients concerned about aluminium hypersensitivity and has noted that general practitioners are advised to consider referral to a rheumatologist for patients with persistent joint or muscle pain.

The report also addresses several recommendations to central Government. We accept all these recommendations; indeed, some have already been implemented.

A formal requirement for a water utility to notify the district health authority without delay of such incidents is included in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 1989 (SI No 1147). The need for the population and the media to have proper medical and scientific advice as promptly as possible for advance planning to ensure sound management of any such crisis, and for good communications were all addressed by the Government's review of water utilities' management and operating procedures at treatment works following the incident.

The provision of alternative drinking water supplies is also part of normal contingency arrangements, but the terms of the recommendation on this aspect, especially as it relates to bottle-fed infants, will be taken up with the utilities. The need for health authorities to have immediate access to an authoritative source of medical and toxicological advice is accepted, and we are studying the practical details of implementation. A further statement on all outstanding aspects will be made as soon as possible.

### Food Safety

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will give additional powers to local authorities to allow them to deal more effectively with listeria-contaminated food;

(2) if he will issue clear guidelines on the level of listeria contamination which makes food unfit;

(3) when his Department was first notified of listeria-contaminated paté being imported into Britain; when he issued warnings; and what was the reason for the delay.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 18 July 1989]:* While local authorities already have powers under the Food Act 1984 to deal with food contamination, we are proposing measures in a new Food Bill which will strengthen these powers.

In a report "Foodborne Listeriosis" published in 1988, the World Health Organisation concluded:

> "Virtually nothing is known about the infectious dose of Listeria monocytogenes in man, nor is there good quantitative information relating to the amount of contaminated foodstuff ingested with the risk of acquiring disease. It is likely that infectious dose may be related to host susceptibility."

We understand that this conclusion is shared by experts in this country. Hence we have no sound scientific basis upon which to issue guidelines on dangerous levels of Listeria monocytogenes in foods.

On 30 June 1989, the Department was informed of the results of a survey of patés which had been carried out in two districts in Wales. At that time, the problem appeared to be mainly one of poor handling in the local stores and our understanding was that appropriate advice had been given to the supermarkets concerned by the local environmental health officers, in particular about the correct storage temperature and handling of paté. There was nevertheless the possibility that there might be a more general problem with patés. Arrangements were made for a nationwide survey, by the public health laboratory service, of all types of paté on sale in England and Wales. The EC and Belgian authorities were alerted and asked to inspect the Belgian factories. In the light of further evidence received by the Department from one of the importers on the evening of 11 July, the public were alerted on 12 July that certain vulnerable groups should for the time being avoid eating paté.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### White Papers

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, for each of the last three White Papers issued by his Department, for which legislation has been started, he will state the time elapsed between their publication and First Reading of any Bill connected with them; and if he will do the same for the last three White Papers issued by his Department prior to May 1979.

**Mr. Hurd:** The last three White Papers published by my Department in which legislation was proposed and has been subsequently started or completed, were: "Criminal Justice Bill Plans for Legislation" (Cm 9658); "Firearms Act 1968: Proposals for Reform" (Cm 261) and "Reform of Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911" (Cm 1108). These were published on 6 March 1986, 2 December 1987 and 29 June 1988 respectively and the First Readings of the Criminal Justice, Firearms (Amendment) and Official Secrets Bills resulting from them took place on 14 November 1986, 17 December 1987 and 30 November 1988. It is not for me to answer for the record of the previous Government in this matter, but the information requested should be available in the Library.

### Orange Badge Scheme

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by what percentage the £400 fine for the unauthorised use of the orange badge would have to be increased for the fine to have the same real value as it had when it was first introduced; and what has been the percentage increase in the general parking fine over this period.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The maximum fine for unauthorised use of the orange badge was set at level 3 on the standard scale in May 1984. The maximum fine for parking and waiting offences was also set at level 3 in May 1984. Since that time, the general index of retail prices has risen by 30 per cent.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will discuss with chief constables the possibility of improving the monitoring of the misuse of orange badges and penalising the offenders.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** A number of proposals for improvement of the orange badge scheme were announced on 25 April by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, the hon. Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley). The implementation of these proposals should result in a significant reduction in opportunity for abuse of the scheme. The operation of the scheme will be carefully monitored and discussions held with chief police officers as necessary.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to increase the £400 fine for the unauthorised use of an orange badge to £2,000.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No.

### Asylum

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were granted asylum in the United Kingdom in each year since 1978.

**Mr. Renton:** The numbers of persons granted refugee status or asylum in the United Kingdom in each of the years 1979-88 are shown in table 2 of Home Office Statistical Bulletin Issue 25/89 "Refugee Statistics, United Kingdom 1988", published today, a copy of which is in the Library. This shows that the provisional number of asylum applicants given refugee status in 1988 was 960, the highest figure since 1983. Corresponding information for 1978 is not available.

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what estimate he has of what proportion of all refugees seeking asylum come to Great Britain;

(2) if he will list in ranked order the 10 main refugee-receiving countries in Europe expressed as a figure per head of the population.

**Mr. Renton:** Information is not available on asylum applications to all countries. The information available for the principal countries is given in the following table.

*Asylum seekers in certain Western European countries and Canada by year of application*
*1984 to 1988*
*Number of persons*

| | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 7,200 | 6,700 | 8,700 | 11,400 | 15,700 | 49,700 |
| Belgium | 3,700 | 5,300 | 7,700 | 6,000 | 5,000 | 27,700 |
| Canada | 7,100 | 8,400 | 25,000 | 35,000 | 34,000 | 109,500 |
| Denmark | 4,300 | 8,700 | 9,300 | 2,100 | 4,700 | 29,100 |
| France | 15,900 | 25,800 | 23,400 | 24,800 | 31,000 | 120,900 |
| Netherlands | 2,600 | 5,700 | 5,900 | 14,000 | 7,500 | 35,700 |
| Norway | 300 | 900 | 2,700 | 8,600 | 6,600 | 19,100 |
| Sweden | 12,000 | 14,500 | 14,600 | 18,500 | 20,000 | 79,600 |
| Switzerland | 7,500 | 9,700 | 8,600 | 10,900 | 16,700 | 53,400 |
| United Kingdom | 3,900 | 5,400 | 4,800 | 5,200 | 5,100 | 24,400 |
| West Germany | 35,000 | 73,900 | 99,700 | 57,400 | 103,000 | 369,000 |
| TOTAL | 99,500 | 165,000 | 210,400 | 193,900 | 249,300 | 918,100 |

Information on the population of these countries is available from a number of published sources including the "United Nations Demographic Yearbook", a copy of which is in the Library.

### Kurdish Refugees

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further measures he intends to undertake to assist the plight of Kurdish refugees.

**Mr. Renton:** Existing central and local government services provide for asylum seekers' basic needs. We have agreed to reimburse some of the exceptional expenses incurred by churches and community and voluntary organisations in helping Kurdish asylum seekers who have recently arrived from Turkey. We are considering whether any further assistance is required.

### Privacy

**Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) by what date he has asked the review body on privacy and related issues, announced on 21 April, *Official Report*, column 593, to report to him;

(2) how many people will be appointed to serve on the body appointed to review privacy and related issues, announced on 21 April, *Official Report*, column 593;

(3) whether he will publish the detailed terms of reference of the review of privacy and related issues, announced on 21 April, *Official Report*, column 593;

(4) whether he will publish the report of the review of privacy and related issues, announced on 21 April, *Official Report*, column 593;

(5) whether the membership of the body appointed to review privacy and related issued, announced on 21 April, *Official Report*, column 593, will include representatives of *(a)* the churches, *(b)* the press trades unions, *(c)* working journalists, *(d)* consumer groups and *(e)* media rights groups;

(6) whether the review of privacy and related issues announced on 21 April, *Official Report*, column 593, will be able to *(a)* invite evidence from organisations and *(b)* commission research and surveys;

(7) whether the review of privacy and related issues, announced on 21 April, *Official Report*, column 593, will take evidence *(a)* in public session, *(b)* at regional meetings, *(c)* in Scotland, *(d)* in Wales and *(e)* in Northern Ireland;

(8) whether the review of privacy and related issues, announced on 21 April, *Official Report*, column 593, will inquire into *(a)* ownership and control of the press, *(b)* the future of the Press Council, *(c)* the right of reply, *(d)* freedom of information and *(e)* alternative means of address to the public.

**Mr. Renton:** As my right hon. Friend announced in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Winchester (Mr. Browne) on 5 July at column *193*, the terms of reference of the committee to review privacy and related matters will be as follows:

> "In the light of recent public concern about intrusions into the private lives of individuals by certain sections of the press, to consider what measures (whether legislative or otherwise) are needed to give further protection to individual privacy from the activities of the press and improve recourse against the press for the individual citizen, taking account of existing remedies, including the law of defamation and breach of confidence; and to make recommendations."

The chairman, Mr. David Calcutt, QC, has been asked to complete his report speedily. We hope it will be published by next summer. The membership is being considered. The task of the committee will be to concentrate on privacy and recourse for the citizen in respect of the press. This includes recourse against inaccuracies as well as intrusion. The committee will be able to consider any matter that it regards as relevant to that task and to seek what evidence it wishes.

### Mr. Tarek Sharif

**Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received from Mr. Tarek Sharif, a Libyan, about his passport; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** I understand that Mr. Sharif's passport was impounded by the court. I have received letters from Mr. Sharif and his solicitors. His immigration status is under consideration.

### Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will seek an explanation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board as to why it has not yet responded to correspondence dated June 1988 from the solicitors acting for Mr. James Bloomfield of 45 Cheltenham street, Bosford, Nottingham.

**Mr. Hurd:** Jointly with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland I have responsibility for general oversight of the criminal injuries compensation scheme. However, under the terms of the scheme the board is entirely responsible for the handling and determination of individual applications for compensation. I have therefore referred the matter to the board, which has been asked to write to the hon. Member.

### Broadcasting (Competitive Tendering)

**Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 13 July, *Official Report*, column *635*, how many submissions he has received supporting the principle of competitive tender for the award of commercial television and radio licences.

**Mr. Renton:** I regret that the information sought would involve a fresh analysis of more than 3,000 submissions and could therefore be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Female Prisoners

**Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for improving the management of longer-term and life-sentence female prisoners; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The policy for the management of female longer-term and life-sentenced inmates has been reviewed recently. It is now intended to increase the number of establishments which cater for these inmates, other than those in category A. The result of the new policy will be that female prisoners serving life or long sentences can be allocated to prisons closer to their homes and a wider variety of regimes can be offered. In addition to those prisons which currently cater for life-sentenced inmates, four more will take these prisoners in future. They are the closed prisons at New Hall in Yorkshire and Bullwood Hall in Essex, and the open prisons at Drake Hall in Staffordshire and East Sutton Park in Kent. I have written to the hon. Members concerned.

## SCOTLAND

### Govan Initiative

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the grants and loans made by the Scottish Development Agency to the Govan initiative in each year since its inception.

**Mr. Lang:** Grants made to the Govan initiative by the Scottish Development Agency since its inception are shown in the table. These grants represent payment towards core funding of the initiative. No loans have been made by the agency.

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1986-87 | 14,000 |
| 1987-88 | 28,000 |
| 1988-89 | 85,000 |

### Farming

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many whole farms have been set aside from agricultural production under the European Community scheme in each region in Scotland.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The table gives details of holdings where participants have opted to set aside all their eligible arable land. As indicated in the table, the area set aside represents considerably less than the whole farm area.

| *Region* | *Number of holdings* | *Total area set aside (ha)* | *Total area of holdings (ha)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Borders | 3 | 76 | 334 |
| Central | 3 | 216 | 357 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | — | — | — |
| Fife | 3 | 43 | 96 |
| Grampian | 76 | 2,093 | 4,738 |
| Highland | 12 | 572 | 1,240 |
| Lothian | 4 | 226 | 733 |
| Strathclyde | 6 | 168 | 390 |
| Tayside | 12 | 328 | 846 |
| Islands areas | — | — | — |
| SCOTLAND | 119 | 3,722 | 8,734 |

## Sewage, Firth of Forth

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what quantity of raw sewage and sewage sludge is discharged into the firth of Forth each year from *(a)* Fife, *(b)* Central and *(c)* Lothian Regions.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The quantities of untreated sewage discharged in 1988 were:

*(a)* Fife: the information is not available in the form sought. However, 84,000 cu m per day, much of it screened, were discharged into Fife's estuarine and coastal waters.

*(b)* Central: 4,800 cu m per day.

*(c)* Lothian: the information is not available in the form sought. However, sewage, much of it screened, from a population of approximately 90,000 was discharged into Lothian's estuarine and coastal waters.

Since sewage sludge is a product of the treatment of sewage, there is none arising from the discharges noted above. Sludge generated at treatment works is not discharged to the sea, although 250,000 wet tonnes of sludge from works serving the Edinburgh area is dumped at sites in the outer firth of Forth. This disposal operation takes place in accordance with the terms of a licence issued by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland under the Food and Environment Protection Act.

## Dental Hospital (Edinburgh)

**Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he can indicate a starting date for the building of a new dental hospital in Edinburgh.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The nature of future dental hospital provision in Edinburgh depends initially on the Universities Funding Council's decision about the future of undergraduate dental education in Edinburgh. Once that decision is known, it will be for Lothian health board to progress appropriate hospital development in Edinburgh.

## Edinburgh Dental School

**Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the catchment area and its population in and around Edinburgh for cases available for teaching purposes was considered before he accepted the proposal to close the Edinburgh dental school.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I have not accepted the approval to close the Edinburgh dental school. This is a matter for the Universities Funding Council.

Before making its recommendation, the working party on the review of dental provision in Scotland advised, on the basis of outpatient attendance figures, that

> "the attendance figures between Edinburgh and Dundee are sufficiently close as to make little difference in terms of undergraduate education".

I have sent its report to the Universities Funding Council, and asked the council to consider the working party's advice in reaching decisions on undergraduate dental education.

## School Staffing

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if, in the light of paragraphs 5.3 of SED "Statistical Bulletin" 5 January 1989, he is yet in a position to offer guidance to determining staffing needs in Scottish primary and secondary schools; and what provision for school staffing in session 1989-90 has been included in central Government funding made available to regional councils.

**Mr. Lang:** The provision made for teaching costs in schools in Scotland in the revenue support grant settlement for 1989-90 was £879 million. This was based on the staffing standards contained in the draft circular which was issued last year following the Department's review of school staffing. The settlement for 1990-91 will similarly be based on these standards. Consideration is still being given to the nature of any final guidance which might go to authorities.

## New Towns

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the outstanding debt in the industrial and commercial properties and land of each of the five new towns.

**Mr. Lang:** Outstanding long-term loans payable to the National Loans Fund at 31 March 1989 were:

| | *£000* |
|---|---|
| Cumbernauld | 233,362 |
| East Kilbride | 117,948 |
| Glenrothes | 149,773 |
| Irvine | 163,622 |
| Livingston | 295,576 |
| Total | 960,281 |

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the total income received from industrial and commercial properties and land of each of the five new towns.

**Mr. Lang:** The total income from non-housing activities received by the five development corporations for the financial year which ended on 31 March 1989 was:

| | *£000* |
|---|---|
| Cumbernauld | 2,992 |
| East Kilbride | 6,439 |
| Glenrothes | 3,745 |
| Irvine | 2,656 |
| Livingston | 6,729 |
| Total | 22,561 |

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the value of the industrial and commercial properties and land in each of the five new towns.

**Mr. Lang:** The new book values of industrial, commercial properties and land at 31 March 1989 for each of the five development corporations are set out in the following table.

|  |  |  | *£'000s* |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | *Industrial* | *Commercial* | *Land* |
| Cumbernauld | 26,005 | 6,497 | 14,100 |
| Glenrothes | 16,872 | 12,268 | 4,580 |
| East Kilbride | 40,705 | 30,245 | 8,040 |
| Irvine | 19,603 | 6,522 | 8,084 |
| Livingston | 60,633 | 27,598 | 347 |
| TOTAL | 163,818 | 83,130 | 35,151 |

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will give an estimate of the amount of debt of industrial and commercial properties and land, in each of the new towns, to be written off as part of the wind-up proposal as agreed to in July 1987;

(2) if, pursuant to paragraph 9.4, page 17, of "Scottish New Towns—The Way Ahead", he will give the estimated value of writing off loans not represented by asset value in each of the five new towns.

**Mr. Lang:** The amount of debt to be written off will be derived from a calculation of the amount of debt which the corporations' industrial and commercial activities will be able to service and repay until wind-up. The precise amount of debt to be written off has yet to be determined.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to ensure that the industrial and commercial assets in each of the five new towns will be sold at market value as part of the wind up process.

**Mr. Lang:** Yes, other than in exceptional cases which will be treated strictly on their merits.

### Development Agency

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if any discussions have taken place with the chief executive of the Scottish Development Agency regarding the sale of the equity investments in Scottish companies.

**Mr. Lang:** Yes.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if companies renting factory space from the Scottish Development Agency will retain the right to buy.

**Mr. Lang:** Detailed arrangements for the disposal of agency properties, including any conditions relating to existing tenants, have yet to be determined. In the meantime, requests to purchase particular properties will be considered by the agency on their individual merits, having due regard to the agency's duty to make the best use of public assets within its control.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate how much factory space, owned by the Scottish Development Agency, has been sold in each of the years 1979-80 to 1988-89 inclusive.

**Mr. Lang:** Factory space sold by the Scottish Development Agency in each of the years 1980-81 to 1988-89 inclusive is shown in the table. No information is available for 1979-80.

|  | *Factory Space Sold (Square foot)* |
|---|---|
| 1980-81 | 286,664 |
| 1981-82 | 269,000 |
| 1982-83 | 1,016,271 |
| 1983-84 | 1,217,684 |
| 1984-85 | 2,110,043 |
| 1985-86 | 1,779,481 |
| 1986-87 | 1,996,000 |
| 1987-88 | 1,821,000 |
| 1988-89 | 1,536,009 |

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give an estimate of the value of *(a)* factory space, *(b)* land and *(c)* commercial property owned by the Scottish Development Agency.

**Mr. Lang:** The estimated value of industrial property, land and commercial property owned by the Scottish Development Agency as at 31 March 1988 (latest available date) is shown in the table.

| *Property Type Owned* | *Value (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| Industrial property | 130·1 |
| Land | 20·9 |
| Commercial property | 1·4 |
|  | 152·4 |

The industrial property shown includes business centres which in some cases may include office accommodation. The commercial property shown is confined to the agency's own offices.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give an estimate of the value of the Scottish Development Agency investment portfolio in each of the years 1982-83 to the latest year for which information is available.

**Mr. Lang:** The cumulative total of the Scottish Development Agency's investment portfolio is published each year in the agency's annual accounts. In accordance with the agency's accounting policies, the investments are stated at cost and consist of secured loans, unsecured loans, loan stocks, preference shares and equity shares. Funding for these investments comes from grant-in-aid, public dividend capital, the National Loans Fund and the European Coal and Steel Community. The net cumulative total of agency investments (after provisions) for each year from 1982-83 to 1988-89 is set out in the table.

|  | *£,000* |
|---|---|
| 1982-83 | 29,988 |
| 1983-84 | 37,259 |
| 1984-85 | 43,077 |
| 1985-86 | 42,032 |
| 1986-87 | 47,306 |
| 1987-88 | 52,065 |
| 1988-89 | [1]48,654 |

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[1] Unaudited.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the average rental per square foot of factory space owned by the Scottish Development Agency and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the sale of those assets on rents.

**Mr. Lang:** The agency does not produce a figure for average rent for its properties, because the variations in rent between different locations, for different types of property and for other reasons render such a figure meaningless. On the impact of any sale on rents, tenants will continue to occupy their premises in accordance with the terms of their existing leases, which include provisions for rent reviews. Any change in rents will take place as a result of these reviews. These will take place over an extended period as they fall due, and it is not possible to anticipate what the effect might be.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the estimated value to be realised by the sale of factory space, land and commercial property owned by the Scottish Development Agency.

**Mr. Lang:** No.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list by constituency factories, land and other commercial properties owned by the Scottish Development Agency.

**Mr. Lang:** This information is not available in the form requested and cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the institutions being consulted regarding the take-over of the Scottish Development Agency's investment portfolio.

**Mr. Lang:** I have received advice from Quayle Munro Ltd. in connection with the possible disposal of the agency's investment portfolio. The agency has also sought professional advice as appropriate. There has otherwise been no formal consultation with financial institutions.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the Scottish companies which have shown an interest in the purchase of total land and property assets of the Scottish Development Agency.

**Mr. Lang:** No. This information is commercial in confidence.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to ensure that all factory space, land or commercial property sold by the Scottish Development Agency will be sold at market value.

**Mr. Lang:** Yes, other than in exceptional cases which will be treated strictly on their merits.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the date on which all land and factories owned by the Scottish Development Agency are to be sold.

**Mr. Lang:** I expect to announce my decision on the sale of the agency's property portfolio, including the timing and nature of any such disposal, shortly.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the Scottish Development Agency or the Scottish Office has consulted *(a)* those who have leased land or property and *(b)* local authorities over the possible sale of industrial and commercial assets owned by the Scottish Development Agency.

**Mr. Lang:** No.

## Labour Statistics

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was *(a)* the long-term unemployment total for each month January 1987 to June 1989 and *(b)* the percentage change of long-term unemployment for each month over the same period.

**Mr. Lang:** The information requested is available only on a quarterly basis.

The number of claimants unemployed for one year or more in Scotland in each quarter from January 1987 to April 1989 (the latest date for which information is available) and the percentage of the total unemployed claimants this represents are set out in the table.

| | *Scotland* | |
|---|---|---|
| *Date* | *Claimants unemployed for one year or more* | *Percentage of total unemployed claimants* |
| *1987* | | |
| January | 148,957 | 39·2 |
| April | 146,702 | 40·4 |
| July | 142,212 | 41·5 |
| October | 136,185 | 41·8 |
| *1988* | | |
| January | 131,213 | 39·3 |
| April | 123,873 | 40·1 |
| July | 117,173 | 40·3 |
| October | 110,846 | 41·8 |
| *1989* | | |
| January | 106,190 | 39·5 |
| April | 98,248 | 40·0 |

Due to a change in the compilation of the count in September 1988 these figures are not directly comparable.

This information is available in the Library.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was *(a)* the seasonally adjusted unemployment total for each of the months January 1987 to June 1989 and *(b)* the percentage change for each month over the same period.

**Mr. Lang:** The information requested is set out in the table which shows for Scotland for each month since January 1987 the level of seasonally adjusted unemployment, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate and the change in the rate compared with the previous month.

*Seasonally adjusted unemployment, Scotland, January 1987 to June 1989*

| | Level | Rate-Workforce Basis | Change in Rate from previous month |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (000's) | Per cent | (percentage points) |
| *1987* | | | |
| January | 340·6 | 13·7 | |
| February | 337·8 | 13·6 | −0·1 |
| March | 336·0 | 13·5 | −0·1 |
| April | 337·6 | 13·6 | +0·1 |
| May | 329·3 | 13·2 | −0·4 |
| June | 326·6 | 13·1 | −0·1 |
| July | 323·2 | 13·0 | −0·1 |
| August | 318·7 | 12·8 | −0·2 |
| September | 313·6 | 12·6 | −0·2 |
| October | 309·4 | 12·4 | −0·2 |
| November | 305·1 | 12·3 | −0·1 |
| December | 302·3 | 12·1 | −0·2 |
| *1988* | | | |
| January | 299·7 | 12·0 | −0·1 |
| February | 296·6 | 11·9 | −0·1 |
| March | 293·3 | 11·7 | −0·2 |
| April | 288·4 | 11·5 | −0·2 |
| May | 284·8 | 11·4 | −0·1 |
| June | 279·7 | 11·2 | −0·2 |
| July | 275·9 | 11·0 | −0·2 |
| August | 273·4 | 10·9 | −0·1 |
| September | 272·3 | 10·9 | −0·0 |
| October | 270·1 | 10·8 | −0·1 |
| November | 266·5 | 10·7 | −0·1 |
| December | 260·2 | 10·4 | −0·3 |
| *1989* | | | |
| January | 256·6 | 10·3 | −0·1 |
| February | 253·4 | 10·1 | −0·2 |
| March | 250·5 | 10·0 | −0·1 |
| April | 243·3 | 9·7 | −0·3 |
| May | 239·5 | 9·6 | −0·1 |
| June[1] | 234·9 | 9·4 | −0·2 |

[1] Provisional.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the reduction in unemployment in Govan constituency in the past two years; what are the numbers who have found employment in the age ranges *(a)* 16 to 20 years, *(b)* 21-30 years, *(c)* 31-40 years, *(d)* 41-50 years, and *(e)* 51-60 years; and how many in each age range went into part-time employment.

**Mr. Lang:** Between June 1989 and June 1987 unemployment in the Govan constituency fell by 1,529. Information on numbers going into employment by age ranges is not available.

## Electricity Privatisation

**Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consultations he has had with the Scottish members of the Association of Independent Electricity Producers with regard to the Government's proposals to privatise the electricity industry in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** I met representatives of the Association of Independent Electricity Producers on 8 June. A number of issues related to the present operation of the electricity supply industry in Scotland and the proposed arrangements for privatisation were discussed.

## Sports Clubs (Rates)

**Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the system of rate relief for non-profit-making sports clubs from local authorities in place in Scotland.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The decision whether to give rate relief to sports clubs, and if so how much, is at the discretion of local authorities. Where an authority does give relief, it is compensated for the lost rate income by a corresponding increase in revenue support grant.

## Fishing

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps have been taken by his Department to notify fishing vessels not registered under the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 to stop fishing.

**Mr. Lang:** The fishing licenses issued by fisheries departments make it clear that only registered vessels are entitled to fish against United Kingdom quotas. Where necessary, appropriate enforcement action will be taken to ensure compliance with this condition.

## Nursery School Places

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the annual revenue cost of creating and maintaining a nursery school place.

**Mr. Lang:** Most children attend nursery school on a part-time basis. In 1987-88, the last year for which figures are available, the average annual revenue cost per child was £781 and the whole-time equivalent cost £1,488.

### Hospital Service Capital Programme

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will express in real terms, using 1966 as base, the expenditure within Scotland on the hospital service capital programme for each of the past 22 years; what is his estimate for the current year; and if he will also give the figures in real terms for revenue expenditure over the same period.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The expenditure by health boards on hospital services for the past 22 years and the estimated expenditure for the current year at 1966 prices is as follows:

| *Year* | *Revenue £'000s* | *Capital £'000s* |
|---|---|---|
| 1966-67 | 84,631 | 12,439 |
| 1967-68 | 89,098 | 13,835 |
| 1968-69 | 92,918 | 13,849 |
| 1969-70 | 97,341 | 12,198 |
| 1970-71 | 107,111 | 13,091 |
| 1971-72 | 115,441 | 14,464 |
| 1972-73 | 122,141 | 16,295 |
| 1973-74 | 134,342 | 17,523 |
| 1974-75 | 156,944 | 16,570 |
| 1975-76 | 167,402 | 16,867 |
| 1976-77 | 167,021 | 14,029 |
| 1977-78 | 166,779 | 12,698 |
| 1978-79 | 171,560 | 15,363 |
| 1979-80 | 175,265 | 14,905 |
| 1980-81 | 190,361 | 12,924 |
| 1981-82 | 194,342 | 16,334 |
| 1982-83 | 193,326 | 17,091 |
| 1983-84 | 195,269 | 17,040 |
| 1984-85 | 198,333 | 17,655 |
| 1985-86 | 198,559 | 18,869 |
| 1986-87 | 204,499 | 15,330 |
| 1987-88 | 210,782 | 15,182 |
| 1988-89 | 218,912 | 15,945 |
| 1989-90 | [1]220,987 | [1]18,833 |

[1] Estimated.

*Notes:*

1. The above figures apart for those for 1989-90 were taken from Health Boards annual accounts.
2. The capital expenditure is total expenditure on hospital and community health services. Hospital services are not shown separately in the annual accounts.

### Child Care

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will show central Government financial support for child care services in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on Government policy.

**Mr. Lang:** The Scottish Office has provided support for expenditure on social work services by local authorities, including child care, through successive increases in rate support grant. It is for individual local authorities to decide on their spending priorities according to their own needs and available resources. In addition, we have made available grants under section 10 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 to a wide range of voluntary organisations concerned with child care services.

### Community Charge

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people whose main place of residence in the United Kingdom is in Scotland, but who are exempt from payment of income tax as they work overseas and are resident in the United Kingdom for 90 days or less each year, have been exempted from payment of *(a)* all and *(b)* part of their community charge; and if he will make a statement on his Department's advice to local authorities in these circumstances.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** There is no provision which exempts a person from any of the community charges by reason of his being exempt from income tax in the United Kingdom through living abroad. A person's liability for the personal community charge in Scotland depends upon whether that person is solely or mainly resident in Scotland. This is determined by the community charges registration officer for the appropriate regional or islands council area on the basis of the facts and circumstances of each case. A person has a right of appeal against the registration officer's decision. A person who is resident abroad may be liable for the standard community charge if he owns or is the long-term tenant of a property which is nobody's sole or main residence. The decision about whether a standard community charge liability arises is again for the registration officer and again there is a right of appeal. My right hon. and learned Friend has not issued guidance to registration officers on how they should act in respect of particular cases, nor would it be appropriate for him to do so. It is for individuals to appeal against the registration officer's decisions if they disagree with those decisions.

### Basking Sharks

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what instructions he has issued to district fisheries inspectors about the recording of basking sharks that are landed; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** The basking shark fishery has been carried out in recent years by a single vessel based in the firth of Clyde. The sea fisheries inspectorate obtains details of any landings.

### Scottish Consumer Council

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list members of the Scottish Consumer Council and indicate the method of appointing those members.

**Mr. Forth:** I have been asked to reply.

The chairman and members of the Scottish Consumer Council are as follows:

Mrs. Barbara Kelly (Chairman)
Mrs. Joan Aitken
Mrs. Patricia Bolton
Mrs. Patricia Cooper
Mr. Cowan Ervine
Mr. Kenneth Gilbert
Mr. Christopher Harley
Mrs. Deirdre Hutton
Father Matthew McManus
Mrs. Winifred Sherry JP
Mr. Gordon Smith
Mr. Mark Steiner
Dr. Douglas Williamson

Members of the SCC are appointed by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the salaries and remunerations paid to members of the Scottish Consumer Council including the director.

**Mr. Forth:** I have been asked to reply.

The chairman of the Scottish Consumer Council receives a salary of £3,770 per annum as a member of the National Consumer Council. Other members of the SCC receive no salary but can currently claim a fee of £44 for attendance at council meetings. The salary of the director of the SCC is within the range of £13,318 to £17,149, which is equivalent to a senior executive officer post in the Civil Service.

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met representatives of the Scottish Consumer Council; and whether he discussed the problem of alcohol abuse among young people in Scotland.

**Mr. Forth:** I have been asked to reply.

I attended the SCC's council meeting on 19 May and discussed a number of topics of particular concern to Scottish consumers. The problem of alcohol abuse among young people in Scotland was not discussed.

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what qualifications are required to be a member of he Scottish Consumer Council.

**Mr. Forth:** I have been asked to reply.

Although no specific qualifications are required, prospective members would be expected to have an active interest in, and knowledge of, matters relevant to consumers in Scotland.

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland who is responsible for the appointment of the director of the Scottish Consumer Council.

**Mr. Forth:** I have been asked to reply.

The appointment is made by the Scottish Consumer Council, in consultation with the director of the National Consumer Council.

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what qualifications are required for the post of Director of the Scottish Consumer Council.

**Mr. Forth:** I have been asked to reply.

It is a matter for the two bodies concerned with the appointment to decide what qualifications are appropriate for the post.

### Greater Glasgow Health Board

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) on what date authorisation was given for the Greater Glasgow health board laboratory services and records department to be let out to competitive tendering; and who gave the authorisation;

(2) who was consulted before Greater Glasgow health board put its laboratory services and records department out to competitive tendering.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]*: The laboratory services and records department of Greater Glasgow health board have not been put out to tender.

## DEFENCE

### Low Flying

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many night low-level flights took place in the United Kingdom low-flying system in 1988.

**Mr. Neubert:** Central records are not available in a form which would allow the information requested to be provided.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy of 24 January, *Official Report*, column *555*, whether centre is quantified as a radius in kilometres in the instructions to pilots concerning overflight of the centres of major conurbations and built-up areas in the United Kingdom low flying system.

**Mr. Neubert:** No.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the replies to the hon. Member for Meirionydd Nant Conwy of 9 November 1987, *Official Report*, columns *36-7*, 20 January 1988, *Official Report*, column *765*, and 10 May 1989, *Official Report*, columns *474-5*, on what assumed average number of movements per sortie the figures for low-flying sorties in the years 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1988, as recalculated by the pre-1985 method of estimating sorties from numbers of movements, were based; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Neubert:** Yes.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy of 25 May, *Official Report*, column *732*, what are the differences between the bases of recording low flying movements in the Borders tactical training area before and after July 1988.

**Mr. Neubert:** Depending on the route adopted, flights using the borders tactical training area after July 1988 may generate more than one movement in central records.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what advice is given to military aircrews on the use of the common North Atlantic Treaty Organisation radio frequency for low level flying when operating in the United Kingdom low flying system.

**Mr. Neubert:** There is no common North Atlantic Treaty Organisation radio frequency for low flying. However, a specially designated frequency is available for the transmission of flight safety information within the United Kingdom low flying system.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information on the location of planned entry into and exit from low flying areas is provided to RAF West Drayton by military aircrews planning low flying sorties.

**Mr. Neubert:** None.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the specific purpose of the Milford Haven low flying avoidance area; and if there are any plans to alter its extent and scope.

**Mr. Neubert:** It is not our practice to release specific details of the United Kingdom low flying system.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans exist to lower the minimum permitted altitude for terrain-following radar flying in the Highlands restricted area.

**Mr. Neubert:** Low flying military aircraft using the Highlands restricted area operate within the relevant height constraints of the United Kingdom low flying system and there are no plans to change this.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans exist to permit terrain-following radar flying in areas of the United Kingdom other than the Highlands restricted area.

**Mr. Neubert:** In appropriate meteorological conditions, terrain following radar may already be used to assist flying by suitably equipped aircraft anywhere in the United Kingdom low flying system.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has further to reduce the number and size of low flying avoidance areas covering special rules airspace around civil airports; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Neubert:** Special rules airspace and civil aerodrome traffic zones constitute in themselves avoidance areas for military aircraft, except where entry has been authorised by the controlling authority. There are no plans to change these arrangements.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what use is made of high frequency radio for air traffic control in the United Kingdom low flying system;

(2) what use is made of satellite communications for air traffic control in the United Kingdom low flying system.

**Mr. Neubert:** None. The assistance of air traffic control is not required in the management of the airspace constituting the United Kingdom low flying system.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the percentage change in the number of low-level flights authorised at less than 250 ft between 1979 and 1988.

**Mr. Neubert:** This information is not available in the form requested. The information that is available has already been given in replies to the hon. Member by my predecessor on 2 November 1987, *Official Report*, column *487*, and on 20 January 1988, *Official Report*, columns *764-65*, and in the reply that I gave to the hon. Member on 25 May 1989, *Official Report*, columns *732-33*.

## Chemical Weapons

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all those North Atlantic Treaty Organisation countries which have chemical weapons stored or available for use on British soil.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** None.

## White Papers

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, for each of the last three White Papers issued by his Department, for which legislation has been started, he will state the time elapsed between their publication and the First Readings of any Bills connected with them; and if he will do the same for the last three White Papers issued by his Department prior to May 1979.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** My Department has not since 1979 issued White Papers which have formed the basis of subsequent legislation.

It is not for me to answer for the record of the previous Government in this matter, but the information requested should be available in the Library of the House and the official record.

## Upper Heyford (Aircraft Noise)

**Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will provide a table giving the number of dwellings which the Ministry of Defence has *(a)* offered to purchase because they fall within the 83 LAeq, 12H noise contour and *(b)* offered to provide noise insulation because they fall within the 70 LAeq, 12H noise contour, for RAF Upper Heyford and for each of the military air bases in the United Kingdom at which the above schemes apply.

**Mr. Neubert:** The information requested is show in the table:

| *Airfield* | *Number of properties situated within* *83 dBLAeq 12H contour* | *70 dBLAeq 12H contour* |
|---|---|---|
| RNAS Yeovilton | 11 | 483 |
| RAF Alconbury | — | 138 |
| RAF Kinloss | — | 49 |
| RAF Lossiemouth | — | 293 |
| RAF Leuchars | — | 1,070 |
| RAF Cottesmore | — | 1,506 |
| RAF Honington | — | 260 |
| RAF Leeming | 19 | 926 |
| RAF Marham | 1 | 265 |
| RAF Stornoway | 12 | 180 |
| RAF Coningsby | — | 800 |
| RAF Wattisham | — | 540 |
| RAF Lakenheath/Mildenhall | 2 | 5,600 |
| RAF Upper Heyford | 60 | 770 |
| RAF Chivenor | — | 18 |

## F111 Aircraft

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many United States Air Force F111 aircraft are currently based at RAF Lakenheath; and what changes have occurred in this number since 1979.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I understand that 72 F111F aircraft are assigned to RAF Lakenheath.

## Chemical Agent Monitors

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in which financial year the final batch of chemical agent monitors was ordered.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Financial year 1987-88.

## General Service Respirators

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in which financial year the final batch of general service respirators, S10, was ordered.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The order for the final tranche of the main production of S10 respirator face pieces was made in financial year 1987-88 and that for the respirator canister was made in financial year 1988-89.

### Contracted-out Services

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has on the proportion of those Ministry of Defence civilian employees made redundant as a result of contracting-out and privatisation since 1979 who have been subsequently re-employed by contractors providing services to his Department.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** No such information is held. The Ministry of Defence requires contractors to consider employing civilian staff being made redundant as a result of contracting-out, but the decision is entirely for the contractor. In the case of privatisation of Royal Ordnance and transfer to commercial management of the royal dockyards, staff were not made redundant but were all transferred to the new companies under the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981.

### Arms Control

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures are taken by his Department to ensure that the Government's arms control policies maintain or enhance Britain's military position.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Arms control is an integral part of the Government's security policy. Our arms control objectives are designed to enhance the security of this country and of our allies, and the Ministry of Defence is fully involved in the formulation and implementation of our arms control policies.

### Nuclear Submarines (Disposal)

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what studies he has commissioned into the disposal of nuclear-powered submarines once their operational lives have been completed.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** I would refer the hon. Member to the House of Commons Defence Committee's report on the decommissioning of nuclear submarines (HC, 1988-89, No. 316).

### Pilotless Planes

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many incidents have taken place since 1987 when a plane flew over Britain without a pilot; and if he will make a statement outlining the precautions which were taken to avoid any repetition of the problem.

**Mr. Neubert:** Other than in brief instances when aircrew have had to eject, the only such occasion of which I am aware is the incident involving a Harrier GR5 aircraft on 22 October 1987 during a production test flight, when the pilot was killed after being ejected accidentally. The aircraft crashed into the sea some 500 miles west of the Republic of Ireland. A summary of the findings of the board of inquiry, including remedial actions taken, was placed in the Library in the usual way.

### Tropical Hardwood

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much tropical hardwood in cubic metres was used by the Ministry of Defence in 1988.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Purchases by the Ministry of Defence during 1988 amounted to around 600 cu m. Usage figures for tropical hardwood are not readily available.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of tropical hardwood used by the Ministry of Defence last year came from *(a)* Brazil, *(b)* the Ivory Coast, *(c)* Ghana, *(d)* India and *(e)* elsewhere; and in each case what steps were taken to ensure the wood used originated from plantations managed in a sustainable manner.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Of the tropical hardwood which was bought by the Ministry of Defence in 1988:

16 per cent. came from Brazil.
16 per cent. came from the Ivory Coast.
27 per cent. came from Ghana.
0 per cent. came from India.
41 per cent. came from elsewhere.

All tropical hardwood was procured competitively through importers and stockists in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department has taken to eliminate the use of tropical hardwoods from non-sustainable sources.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** No specific measures have been taken, but the Ministry of Defence has, in recent years, adopted a general policy to minimise, wherever possible, the usage of all types of timber.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in the financial year 1988-89.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The amount spent on official hospitality by the Ministry of Defence in 1988-89 totalled some £3·520 million. This figure included expenditure incurred by the Ministry of Defence itself, by formations and establishments of the armed forces at home and abroad, and by individual officers occupying command and international appointments for which entertainment allowances are payable.

### Emergency Parking, London

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the cost of troop involvement in emergency parking arrangements during the current industrial action on British Rail and London Regional Transport; and who is responsible for meeting the cost.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The costs of service assistance in providing emergency parking facilities will not be known until the facilities are no longer needed and have been withdrawn. The Department of Transport will meet the extra cost incurred by the Ministry of Defence.

### Prime Minister (Transport Costs)

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the cost to his Department of providing transport for the Prime Minister on overseas visits in each year since 1985-86.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The Ministry of Defence charges the Office of the Minister for the Civil Service for providing transport for the Prime Minister on official visits overseas at rates which are calculated in accordance with rules laid down by the Treasury. These rates are designed to ensure that no residual costs are carried on Defence Votes.

### Property Disposals

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total value of property disposed of by his Department in the financial year 1988-89; and what is the current estimate of likely disposals in 1989-90.

**Mr. Neubert:** Receipts from property sold in 1988-89 were £150·6 million. At this early stage of the 1989-90 financial year, we anticipate receipts of around £130 million.

### HMS Fearless

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Rhondda of 17 July, *Official Report*, columns *24*, how the schedule for the refit of HMS Fearless has been revised; and what additional expenditure will be involved.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The completion date of HMS Fearless has been revised from the end of 1989 to spring 1990. The additional expenditure is still subject to negotiation.

### Computer Scientists

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current requirement for specialist computer science staff in the procurement executive.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Computer scientists are in short supply nationally. There is currently a requirement for 272 such staff, mainly in the research establishments.

### Procurement Executive

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total number of military staff employed in the procurement executive in 1980 and 1989.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** No central record of the number of service men employed in the procurement executive before 1 June 1981 exists; the number on that date was 1,655. It is too early in the year to give a definitive figure for 1989. However, it is expected to be around 1,200.

### Centre for Defence Studies

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply of 17 July, *Official Report*, column *254*, whether he will state the planned location of the proposed centre for defence studies.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The intention is to establish the centre for defence studies at an existing university, polytechnic or institute. Its location will depend, therefore, on the outcome of the evaluation of proposals to which I referred in my reply of 17 July.

### Female Employment (RAF)

**Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has plans to widen the opportunities for the employment of women in the Royal Air Force; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Neubert:** We intend to widen the opportunities for women in the Royal Air Force by recruiting and training them as pilots and navigators for the following aircraft:

| *Operational aircraft* | *Training aircraft* |
|---|---|
| Tristar | Chipmunk |
| VC10/VC10K | Bulldog |
| Hercules | Jet Provost |
| Victor | Tucano |
| Sentry (AWACS) | Hawk (AFT only) |
| HS 125 | Dominie |
| BAe 146 | Jetstream |
| Andover | Gazelle |
| Canberra | Wessex |
| Sea King | |
| Wessex (SAR) | |

It remains Government policy that women should not undertake direct combatant duties, and this has determined the aircraft in which women will act as aircrew.

We intend to begin recruiting immediately, and in the first instance shall be looking for up to 10 per cent. women recruits, (25 pilots and 10 navigators) in the first year, but this will be kept under review.

### Single European Market

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information has been prepared by his Department for defence contractors on the implications of 1992 and the single European market.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* Although European Community competence in defence procurement is circumscribed by article 223 of the treaty of Rome, the completion of the single European market will have an important impact on our suppliers, most of which operate in both the civil and defence sectors of the economy. The Department has therefore taken a number of steps to ensure that defence contractors are informed of the implications of 1992 for defence procurement. In April 1989, the Department held a forum for industry on the future of defence procurement in Europe; Ministers and senior officials have addressed the implications of 1992 in speeches and articles; and there are working-level contacts between the defence contractors and Ministry officials concerned with the impact of the single European market.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel from his Department are currently employed in giving advice on the implications of 1992 and the single European market.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* A number of officials in the Ministry of Defence, particularly those concerned with legal affairs and with procurement and contractual matters, give advice on the implications of 1992. However, there is no post in the Department wholly or mainly devoted to advising on EEC matters.

### Nuclear Submarines

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to reply to the Seventh Report from the Select Committee on Defence, on decommissioning of nuclear submarines, (HC, 1988-89, No. 316), before the House rises for the summer recess; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* The Ministry of Defence is studying the Committee's report published on 21 June and will provide a formal response in due course. It will not, however, be possible to reply before the House goes into recess.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Construction Industry Training Board

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the future of the construction industry training board.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 14 February to my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) at column *153*. Consultations with the board and organisations representing employers are almost complete. I expect to be in a position to make a decision shortly.

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number, and percentage of (i) men and (ii) women aged *(a)* 50 to 54, *(b)* 55 to 59 and *(c)* 60 to 64 for men only who are in (1) employment, (2) part-time employment and (3) full-time employment.

**Mr. Lee:** The information requested, based on preliminary results from the spring 1988 labour force survey, is given in the following table.

*Persons in employment by whether working full or part time by sex and selected age groups*

*Spring 1988* *Great Britain, Thousands and per cent.*

| | | *Full or part time status*[1] | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Sex*<br>*Age* | *All in employment*[2] | *Part time* | *Full time* |
| *Men* | | | |
| | Numbers | | |
| 50 to 54 | 1,220 | 26 | 1,194 |
| 55 to 59 | 1,033 | 38 | 994 |
| 60 to 64 | 671 | 65 | 605 |
| | Percentages of all in age group | | |
| 50 to 54 | 83·1 | 1·8 | 81·2 |
| 55 to 59 | 72·7 | 2·7 | 70·0 |
| 60 to 64 | 49·3 | 4·8 | 44·4 |
| *Women* | | | |
| | Numbers | | |
| 50 to 54 | 924 | 482 | 441 |
| 55 to 59 | 729 | 370 | 359 |
| | Percentages of all in age group | | |
| 50 to 54 | 62·4 | 32·6 | 29·8 |
| 55 to 59 | 49·5 | 25·1 | 24·3 |

*Source:* 1988 Labour Force Survey Preliminary results.

[1] Full or part time employment is based on self-assessment by the respondent.

[2] Includes those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what are the latest figures for the unemployment rate for each of the social classes I to V; and what the corresponding rates were in 1979;

(2) what is the percentage of each social class I to V who are unemployed; and by how much each of these percentages has changed since 1979.

**Mr. Lee:** Preliminary estimates from the 1988 labour force survey (LFS), as requested, are shown in the following table:

*Unemployment by social class—Great Britain*
*Spring 1988, per cent.*

| *Social class*[1] | *Unemployment rate*[2] *per cent.* | *Percentage of each social class unemployed*[3] *per cent.* |
|---|---|---|
| I | 1·7 | 1·6 |
| II | 2·7 | 2·5 |
| III | 5·3 | 4·8 |
| IV | 7·9 | 7·0 |
| V | 10·5 | 9·1 |

[1] Based on previous occupation of those unemployed or inactive and current occupation of those in employment.

[2] Unemployed (ILO/OECD definition) as a percentage of economically active (i.e. unemployed plus employed).

[3] Unemployed (ILO/OECD definition) as a percentage of all persons 16 or over.

*Note:* Persons not in employment were not asked about their previous occupation if they left their last job three or more years prior to interview. These persons plus those who have never had a job are excluded from the above table.

Data on unemployment by social class was not collected in the 1979 LFS on a basis comparable with the given estimates.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will update tables published in the *Official Report* on 25 March 1987, columns *171-72*, showing for June 1979 and the latest available date, the number of male and female full-time and part-time workers on adult rates and the estimated average earnings in each case, and the number of full-time and part-time workers who were temporarily employed in each case; and if he will provide what estimate he is able to make of similar data for the self-employed and for workers on non-adult rates.

**Mr. Lee:** Such estimates as are possible for 1988, the latest available date, are provided in the table.

*Great Britain*

| | *Numbers*[1] *employed* *millions* | *Numbers*[2] *in temporary employment* *millions* | *Numbers*[3] *on adult rates* *millions* | *Gross Average*[3] *earnings of those on adult rates* *£ per week* | *Numbers*[3] *not on adult rates* *millions* | *Gross Average*[3] *earnings of those not on adult rates* *£ per week* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1988* | | | | | | |
| *Males* | | | | | | |
| Full-time employees | 11·0 | 0·3 | 10·7 | 245·8 | 0·3 | 98·2 |
| Part-time employees | 0·9 | 0·2 | 0·9 | 69·8 | .. | — |

| | *Numbers[1] employed* *millions* | *Numbers[2] in temporary employment* *millions* | *Numbers[3] on adult rates* *millions* | *Gross Average[3] earnings of those on adult rates* *£ per week* | *Numbers[3] not on adult rates* *millions* | *Gross Average[3] earnings of those not on adult rates* *£ per week* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-employed | 2·2 | 0·2 | — | — | — | — |
| Full-time | 2·0 | 0·1 | — | — | — | — |
| Part-time | 0·2 | . . | — | — | — | — |
| *Females* | | | | | | |
| Full-time employees | 5·8 | 0·2 | 5·5 | 164·2 | 0·2 | 86·7 |
| Part-time employees | 4·3 | 0·5 | 4·2 | 62·0 | 0·1 | 26·4 |
| Self-employed | 0·7 | 0·1 | — | — | — | — |
| Full-time | 0·4 | . . | — | — | — | — |
| Part-time | 0·4 | 0·1 | — | — | — | — |

[1] Relates to June 1988.

[2] Preliminary 1988 estimates.

[3] Relates to April 1988.

— Data either not available or no reliable estimate possible.

. . Figures not significant at the level indicated.

### Disabled People

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many *(a)* registered disabled persons and *(b)* disabled persons were seeking employment at jobcentres for each of the standard regions, Scotland and Wales in 1985 to 1987, inclusive.

**Mr. Lee:** I regret that this information is not available in the form requested but the numbers of people with disabilities registered for work at jobcentres on 8 March 1985, 4 April 1986 and 3 April 1987 were as follows:

| *Region* | *8 March 1985* *(a)* | *(b)* | *4 April 1986* *(a)* | *(b)* | *3 April 1987* *(a)* | *(b)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern | [1]— | [1]— | 2,643 | 6,804 | 2,806 | 7,184 |
| North East | 2,492 | 6,411 | [1]— | [1]— | [1]— | [1]— |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 2,591 | 6,543 | 1,975 | 4,954 | 2,123 | 5,126 |
| East Midlands | 1,639 | 3,631 | 2,650 | 5,587 | 2,570 | 5,578 |
| South East | [1]— | [1]— | 4,397 | 9,454 | 3,650 | 8,293 |
| Southern | 3,677 | 7,725 | [1]— | [1]— | [1]— | [1]— |
| Eastern | 3,269 | 6,763 | [1]— | [1]— | [1]— | [1]— |
| London | [1]— | [1]— | 1,711 | 3,842 | 1,533 | 3,381 |
| London North | 1,399 | 3,340 | [1]— | [1]— | [1]— | [1]— |
| London South and West | 924 | 2,412 | [1]— | [1]— | [1]— | [1]— |
| South West | 2,116 | 4,908 | 1,806 | 4,338 | 1,652 | 4,391 |
| Wales | 2,864 | 7,284 | 2,371 | 6,192 | 2,431 | 6,830 |
| West Midlands | 2,646 | 5,991 | 2,220 | 5,086 | 2,112 | 4,703 |
| North West | 8,228 | 15,973 | 6,647 | 13,066 | 5,697 | 11,349 |
| Scotland | 3,705 | 9,640 | 3,177 | 8,360 | 3,029 | 8,537 |

[1] Regional boundary changes.

*(a)* People with disabilities who were registered at jobcentres as seeking work and who were registered as disabled under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944.

*(b)* People with disabilities who were registered at jobcentres as seeking work (including those in column *(a)*).

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will estimate the number of companies in England, Scotland and Wales covered by the 3 per cent. quota scheme and the percentage of those companies that satisfy the standard.

**Mr. Lee:** On 1 June 1988, 32,441 employers were subject to the quota scheme. Of these, 23·8 per cent. were employing their full quota of registered disabled people.

### Remploy

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many disabled people are known to be seeking work with Remploy but are unable to get jobs.

**Mr. Lee:** Information about the number of severely disabled people seeking work with Remploy is not held. The company has been recruiting and training between 1,000 and 1,200 disabled people a year.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many disabled workers are employed by Remploy; in which areas they are located; and what is their average weekly wage.

**Mr. Lee:** On 31 May 1989 Remploy employed 8,706 severely disabled workers. The following table gives a breakdown into employment service regions:

| *Region* | *Number of severely disabled workers at 31 May 1989* |
|---|---|
| London and South East | 945 |
| South West | 523 |
| West Midlands | 624 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 642 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 1,012 |
| North West | 1,610 |
| Northern | 885 |
| Wales | 1,442 |
| Scotland | 1,023 |

| *Region* | *Number of severely disabled workers at 31 May 1989* |
|---|---|
| Total | 8,706 |

The basic weekly wage is £109·72 for disabled manual workers in London and £96·54 elsewhere. With skill and productivity payments, average weekly earnings are £129·15 in London and £115·97 elsewhere.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are in management jobs in Remploy; and how many of those are disabled.

**Mr. Lee:** Comprehensive information is not available, but four of Remploy's factory managers are disabled. It is the company's policy to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to fill jobs at all levels, and, through its development training programme for shop floor workers, to equip more disabled people for opportunities for promotion.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are in supervisory jobs in Remploy; and how many of them are disabled.

**Mr. Lee:** Comprehensive information is not available, but 306 (46 per cent.) of the 659 supervisory staff in Remploy factories are severely disabled.

## Sheltered Placement Scheme

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide figures for 1985 to 1989 inclusive for each standard region and for Scotland and Wales of the number of sheltered placement scheme places *(a)* approved and *(b)* occupied.

**Mr. Lee:** The information is not available in the form requested. The following table provides information on numbers of places occupied in each employment service region against the number each region had authority to fill in 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89 financial years. Occupancy figures as at the end of financial year 1985-86 are also given. Regions were not given a specified number of places to fill until 1986-87.

| | *Financial year 1985-86* | *Financial year 1986-87* | | *Financial year 1987-88* | | *Financial year 1988-89* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Places occupied at 31 March 1986* | *Approved ceiling at 31 March 1987* | *Places occupied at 31 March 1987* | *Approved ceiling at 31 March 1988* | *Places occupied at 31 March 1988* | *Approved ceiling at 31 March 1989* | *Places occupied at 31 March 1989* |
| South East | 448 | 491 | 476 | 669 | 650 | [2]1,529 | [2]1,263 |
| London | 124 | 226 | 168 | 319 | 259 | | |
| South West | 311 | 422 | 376 | 490 | 472 | 646 | 616 |
| West Midlands | [1]306 | 338 | 328 | 491 | 450 | 650 | 586 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | | 363 | 359 | 522 | 479 | 621 | 590 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 134 | 227 | 209 | 322 | 306 | 465 | 408 |
| North West | 219 | 344 | 300 | 423 | 376 | 540 | 482 |
| Northern | 58 | 93 | 72 | 120 | 99 | 226 | 183 |
| Wales | 88 | 178 | 149 | 239 | 240 | 327 | 312 |
| Scotland | 146 | 281 | 247 | 379 | 389 | 570 | 516 |

[1] The figure of 306 occupied places relates to the whole of the former Midlands region.

[2] The figures of 1,529 and 1,263 relate to the now combined London and South East region.

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the expenditure on the sheltered placement scheme in each of the years 1985-86 to 1988-89 inclusive; and what is the estimated expenditure in each of the years 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1991-92 for each of the standard regions, Scotland and Wales.

**Mr. Lee:** The information is not available in the form requested. The following table gives details of the estimated expenditure nationally and by employment service regions. Boundary changes arising from the establishment of the employment service in October 1987 means that direct comparison at the regional level should be avoided between the years 1985-87 and 1987-89. Information on expenditure for 1989-90 and beyond is not available.

*£000*

| *Region* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89 Forecast* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 222 | 497 | 1,400 | 2,698 |
| London | 284 | 409 | 558 | |
| South West | 1,457 | 2,545 | 1,017 | 1,316 |
| West Midlands | 123 | 264 | 969 | 1,251 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 382 | 510 | 1,031 | 1,260 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 249 | 473 | 659 | 871 |
| North West | 368 | 504 | 810 | 1,029 |
| Northern | 79 | 99 | 213 | 390 |
| Wales | 18 | 58 | 517 | 667 |
| Scotland | 401 | 705 | 838 | 1,102 |
| Great Britain | 3,583 | 6,064 | 8,012 | 10,584 |

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of places on the sheltered placement scheme in each of the years 1985-86 to

1988-89 inclusive; and what is the estimated number of places in each or the years 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1991-92 for each of the standard regions, Scotland and Wales.

**Mr. Lee:** The information is not available in the form requested. The following table sets out the number of places under the sheltered placement scheme in each of the years 1985-86 to 1988-89 inclusive, and estimated figures for the year 1989-90 for each employment service region. Firm estimates for the years 1990-91 and 1991-92 have not yet been made.

| *Employment Service region* | *Places occupied at 31 March 1986* | *Places occupied at 31 March 1987* | *Places occupied at 31 March 1988* | *Places occupied at 31 March 1989* | *Estimated places occupied at 31 March 1990* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 448 | 476 | 650 | [2]1,263 | [2]1885 |
| London | 124 | 168 | 259 | | |
| South West | 311 | 376 | 472 | 616 | 826 |
| West Midlands | [1]306 | 328 | 450 | 586 | 739 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | | 359 | 479 | 590 | 785 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 134 | 209 | 306 | 408 | 586 |
| North West | 219 | 300 | 376 | 482 | 676 |
| Northern | 58 | 72 | 99 | 183 | 297 |
| Wales | 88 | 149 | 240 | 312 | 428 |
| Scotland | 146 | 247 | 389 | 516 | 643 |
| Total | 1834 | 2,684 | 3,720 | 4,956 | [3]6,865 |

[1] The figure of 306 occupied places relates to the whole of the former Midlands Region

[2] The figures of 1,529 and 1,263 relate to the now combined London and South East Region

[3] A further 35 places have still to be allocated.

## Enterprise Allowance

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people have been granted an enterprise allowance in each year since the enterprise allowance scheme was introduced; what information he has about *(a)* the proportion of people who have become self-employed and *(b)* signed as being available for work at the expiry of the enterprise allowance; what proposals he has for the future of the enterprise allowance scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** The numbers of people granted an enterprise allowance are as follows:

*Total number joined in that period*

| *Financial year* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| April 1989 to June 1989 | 22,511 |
| 1988-89 | 98,522 |
| 1987-88 | 106,305 |
| 1986-87 | 86,751 |
| 1985-86 | 60,037 |
| 1984-85 | 46,037 |
| August 1983 to March 1984[1] | 27,629 |
| February 1982 to July 1983[2] | 3,331 |

[1] National implementation.

[2] Pilot in five parts of the country.

Information on the proportion of people who signed as being available for work at the expiry of the enterprise allowance is not collected on a regular basis. However, latest survey evidence shows that of businesses completing a full year on the scheme, six months later 74 per cent. were still trading, 9 per cent. were in paid employment or other self-employment, and 15 per cent. were unemployed (the remaining 2 per cent. were sick, retired, or provided no answer).

In the future, responsibility for running the enterprise allowance scheme, along with training and other enterprise measures, will be passed to the training and enterprise councils (TECs).

## Unemployment Benefit

**Mr. Terry Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many claimants in the west midlands region were suspended from receipt of unemployment benefit during the period from 11 April 1988 to 10 April 1989 for failure to show good cause for the termination of their last employment.

**Mr. Lee:** Information is not available in the precise form requested.

However, for the period 1 January to 31 March 1989, the number of persons, in the west midlands region, who were disqualified from receiving unemployment benefit because they were considered to have left their employment voluntarily without just cause was 24,302.

## Retail Prices

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the change in retail prices over the period 1979-1988, measured against the retail price index, of *(a)* gas, *(b)* electricity, *(c)* bread, *(d)* beer, and *(e)* four star/premium petrol (i) net of duty and taxes and (ii) including duty and taxes.

**Mr. Lee:** The information requested is shown in the table:

*Percentage changes in retail prices*
*June 1979 to June 1988*

| | *Including tax and duty Per cent.* | *Excluding tax and duty Per cent.* |
|---|---|---|
| All items | + 92 | — |
| Bread | +79 | — |
| Gas | +134 | — |
| Electricity | +106 | — |
| Beer | +164 | +147 |
| 4/star petrol | +75 | −1 |

## Training Boards

**Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which of the seven statutory training boards has made proposals to him on the establishment of the industry level training organisation proposed in the White Paper "Employment for the 1990s"; and when he expects to be in a position to respond to each of the boards.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The chairman of each industrial training board has been asked to submit proposals by the end of this month. To date proposals have been received from the clothing and allied products, engineering, offshore petroleum and road transport industry training boards. I intend to respond to each board's proposals shortly.

### Small Businesses

84. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps his Department is taking to ensure that small firms are well placed to compete for Government contracts.

**Mr. Cope** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* I launched a new booklet in June called "Think Big Buy Small", produced by our Department in collaboration with the central unit on purchasing (CUP). It is addressed directly to Government Departments, and advises them on improving the effectiveness and transparency of their purchasing and supply activities. It shows that purchasing officials can help small firms and get the best out of them by simply following good procurement practices. We thought it right to publish the booklet so that small firms themselves could see the advice given to Departments and I am pleased to say that it has been well received.

In addition the small firms service has recently revised and expanded its booklet "Tendering for Government Contracts" which outlines the main purchasing requirements, contract procedures, and special opportunities or simplified procedures for small firms, for all major Departments.

The Government's own purchasing procedures have been simplified so that firms are now usually exempt from normal approval procedures for contracts under £10,000; firms not on Departments' approved lists can bid for non-urgent contracts. The general information that firms have to provide for approval has been standardised between Departments which now review their approved lists regularly to encourage new suppliers and rotate invitations to tender. I am satisfied that the effect of these initiatives is to improve the value for money of Government purchasing.

### Employment and Training Schemes

**Mr. Lester:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish a table setting out for each of the different employment and training schemes for which he is responsible *(a)* the administrative costs, *(b)* the amounts spent on grants/allowances for participants, *(c)* the total costs and *(d)* the numbers of participants.

**Mr. Cope** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* The information requested is mostly in the Department of Employment chapter of the public expenditure White Paper, Cm. 607, published in January 1989, a copy of which is in the Library.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the nuclear non-proliferation treaty was raised during the recent visit of a ministerial delegation from Uganda to the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** No.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what dates and what locations have been arranged for the second and third preparatory conferences for the fourth review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The second preparatory committee will take place in Geneva from 11-18 September. The third preparatory committee will be held from 23 April—4 May 1990, also in Geneva.

### President Menem

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to meet the new Argentine President, Senôr Carlos Menem.

**Mr. Eggar:** No.

### Mrs. Khalil

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he intends to send an independent observer to the trial of Mrs. Khalil, the president of In'ash El-Usra, to be held on 20 July.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** No.

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations his Department has made on behalf of Mrs. Khalil, the president of In'ash El-Usra.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We raised the case of In'ash El-Usra with the Israeli authorities at the time of its closure last summer. We have not raised the specific charges brought subsequently against Mrs. Khalil.

### Nicaragua

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visits have been made to Nicaragua by Her Majesty's ambassador accredited to that country since July 1988.

**Mr. Eggar:** Her Majesty's ambassador to Nicaragua, who is resident in San José, has made 10 visits to Nicaragua since July 1988.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if any assistance has been offered to the Nicaraguan Government in connection with the run-up to the elections in February 1990; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** The Nicaraguan Government have not asked us for any assistance in the preparation or conduct of the election due in February 1990.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if any resources have been made available by Her Majesty's Government to opposition parties in Nicaragua during the past five years.

**Mr. Eggar:** No.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government have requested the new Administration in Washington to cease their economic sanctions against Nicaragua; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** United States bilateral relations with Nicaragua are a matter for the two Governments concerned. We have normal economic relations with Nicaragua.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to visit Nicaragua during 1989; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has no present plans to visit Nicaragua.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contacts have taken place between Her Majesty's representatives in Nicaragua and representatives of Nicaraguan opposition parties in the past 12 months.

**Mr. Eggar:** In the course of their normal duties, Her Majesty's representatives in Managua maintain contact with individuals representing a wide spread of opinion, including the Opposition.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response has been formulated by Her Majesty's Government to the request from President Ortega for an all-party group to visit Nicaragua in the run-up to the 1990 elections in that country.

**Mr. Eggar:** The question of sending an all-party group of hon. Members is for Parliament rather than the Government to consider. For our part, we indicated on 30 June our willingness to send an official observer. We have just received an invitation and shall accept it.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the last visit was made by a Minister of Her Majesty's Government to Nicaragua.

**Mr. Eggar:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, then Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, visited Nicaragua in May 1980.

### Eastern Europe

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if assistance has been offered by Her Majesty's Government to political parties in *(a)* Poland, *(b)* Hungary, *(c)* Yugoslavia and *(d)* the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the past two years.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We have not offered assistance to political parties in any of these countries.

### Ivory

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of the staffing and budget of the special task force set up in Hong Kong to investigate and suppress illegal imports and exports of ivory; and how many cases have been investigated and seizures made to date.

**Mr. Eggar:** The special task force set up by the Customs and Excise Department in Hong Kong consists of one senior superintendent, one assistant superintendent, four senior inspectors and four inspectors. The task force does not have a separate budget but shares the resources of the Customs and Excise Department as is necessary for its duties. Since the task force was established on 1 June 1989, a total of 35 cases have been investigated. Seizures were made in two cases. Two cases are pending.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current estimated stock of elephant ivory in Hong Kong.

**Mr. Eggar:** The current estimated stock of ivory imported into and held in Hong Kong under CITES regulations is approximately 500 tonnes of raw ivory and 170 tonnes of worked ivory.

### Central America

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Costa Rican Government concerning ratification of the treaty establishing the Central American Parliament.

**Mr. Eggar:** We and our EC partners have, on a number of occasions, called on the signatories of the Esquipulas II peace agreement to fulfil their outstanding obligations under the agreement without delay. Ratification of the Central American Parliament treaty is, of course, a matter for national Parliaments rather than Governments.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when representatives of Her Majesty's Government last made representations to the Governments of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador regarding the failure of those countries to abide by the terms of the Esquipulas agreements.

**Mr. Eggar:** We and our European partners have, on a number of occasions, called on all the signatories of the Esquipulas II peace agreement to fulfil their outstanding obligations under the agreement without delay.

### Panama

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement regarding Her Majesty's Government's relations with Panama.

**Mr. Eggar:** Relations would be improved if General Noriega were to stand down and open the way to democratic government.

### Political Parties (Aid)

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which opposition parties in which countries have received offers of assistance from Her Majesty's Government in each of the past five years.

**Mr. Eggar:** The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Peru

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) since prisoners in Peruvian gaols have to provide for their own upkeep, what steps are being taken by Her Majesty's Government to ensure British nationals detained in Lurigancho prison have sufficient funds to obtain sustenance;

(2) under what circumstances John Boxhall and Brian Tristram could be extradited from Peru and charged with offences in the United Kingdom;

(3) what information he has about the detention of John Boxhall and Brian Tristram in a Peruvian gaol since 6 December 1988 and the reasons they have been detained without trial;

(4) what steps are being taken to ensure that John Boxhall and Brian Tristram both of the county of Bedfordshire will be speedily brought to trial in Peru.

**Mr. Eggar:** The information required is not readily available. A further reply will be sent to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Mr. Derrick Gregory

**Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will have urgent and immediate discussions with the Malaysian Government to save the life of Mr. Derrick Gregory, a British subject.

**Mr. Eggar:** My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has appealed for clemency at the highest levels in Malaysia. We have exhausted all avenues of appeal for the sentence of death to be commuted to one of life imprisonment. We do not believe that further representations to the Malaysian Government would be productive.

### College of Europe

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the purpose and role of the College of Europe.

**Mr. Eggar:** The College of Europe at Bruges is a good and effective institution for spreading understanding of the Community and promoting study of it. It provides post-graduate training for European, including British, students to equip them for entry into the European Commission.

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the cost of the College of Europe to United Kingdom public funds in each year since 1970 in 1989 money.

**Mr. Eggar:** We have made an annual grant of £2,500 to the college since 1963.

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the total cost of the College of Europe to European public funds in each year since 1970 in 1989 money.

**Mr. Eggar:** In 1987, the latest year for which such figures are available, the total cost of the College of Europe to European public funds was 79 million Belgian francs. The Belgian authorities contributed 67 million Belgian francs of this figure.

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures he intends to take to ensure that the College of Europe is an effective forum for the exchange of ideas about the possible future development of the European Community.

**Mr. Eggar:** No further measures are necessary. The representative of the British Council in Belgium sits on the college's administrative council and is actively involved in all aspects of the college, including its curriculum.

### Hong Kong

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a summary of the discussions he has had with European Ministers, and in particular his Portuguese counterpart, about the future of Macao; and whether he now intends to give similar European citizenship rights to Hong Kong people.

**Mr. Eggar:** We are in touch from time to time with the Portuguese Government on matters relating to Hong Kong and Macao. Such discussions are confidential and we are not at liberty to publish details. We have had no substantive discussions with other European Governments about the future of Macao.

In order to enjoy the right of free movement and settlement within the EC, Hong Kong people would require full British citizenship. The Government have no plans to grant this to all Hong Kong people.

### USSR Compensation Order

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made in implementing the Foreign Compensation (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (Distribution) Order 1987.

**Mr. Eggar:** Good progress continues to be made. The Foreign Compensation Commission made an interim payment of 10 per cent. of the value assigned to a bond to successful bond claimants in November 1987. Of 2,596 property claims submitted, 529 have been established by the Commission, 1,120 have been dismissed and 72 have been withdrawn. There remain 875 property claims still to be determined by the Commission. Many of these are held up because information is awaited from claimants. Claimants should note that failure to supply essential information without delay may result in dismissal of their claims.

It is now expected that the final payout to claimants is likely to be in excess of 40 per cent. of the value the Commission assigns to a claim rather than approximately 20 per cent. which was the best estimate at the time of the interim distribution to bond claimants in November 1987.

The target date for announcing the final distribution to claimants remains the end of 1989.

### Turkey

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on whether certain British nationals will shortly require visas to visit Turkey.

**Mr. Eggar:** Following the imposition of our visa regime on 23 June, the Turkish Government have decided that all British citizens who, were they Turks, would hold diplomatic, service and special passports, will from 1 August require visas for Turkey, for all visits, including those for the purpose of tourism.

Discussions about the precise extent of the visa regime are continuing but it is likely to cover Members of both Houses of Parliament, judges, civil servants of assistant secretary grade and above, local government employees of equivalent grade, and officers in Her Majesty's forces of the equivalent Army rank of captain and above. Spouses and dependent children will not require visas.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Area Mobility Scheme

**Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether it is his intention to continue the current quota of nominations for housing for hostel projects in London provided under statutory authority through the London area mobility scheme at the same level of provision after March 1990, when the current scheme ends.

**Mr. Trippier:** These matters are currently under consideration in a working party, comprising representatives of the London area mobility scheme and other interested bodies. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment will make a statement when their report is ready, and he has considered it.

### Housing Action Trust, Southwark

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) following the completion of the register of those tenants entitled to vote in any ballot on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark, what arrangements will be made to allow new tenants moving on to either the North Peckham or Gloucester Grove estates to be accorded voting rights;

(2) how long, before any ballot on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark, the register of those eligible to vote will have to be completed.

**Mr. Trippier:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave her on 18 July.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) in which languages other than English any ballot form concerning the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark will be made available;

(2) what length of notice will be given by a ballot on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark; and in what form it will be given;

(3) what will be the wording used on the ballot form concerning the creation of a housing action trust in Southwark;

(4) whether interpreters for non-English speaking tenants will be made available in the period immediately before any ballot on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark;

(5) whether voters in any ballot on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark will be required to vote in the form of a straight yes or no.

**Mr. Trippier:** I refer the hon. Member to the answers that I gave her on 18 and 19 July.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what forum there will be for those not entitled to vote in any ballot on the creation of a housing action trust in Southwark, to put forward their views during the consultation process.

**Mr. Trippier:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave on 24 May 1988 to the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) at column *599-600*. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will take into account the views of all residents in any proposed housing action trust area before deciding whether to make a designation order.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether there will be separate ballots taken on the creation of a housing action trust in the Gloucester Grove and North Peckham estates in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** Any housing action trust ballot will be in respect of the area proposed by the Secretary of State for a designation order under section 60 of the Housing Act 1988.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment who will be entitled to vote in any ballot on the creation of a housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** Each secure tenant, including each joint tenant, and any other categories of tenants prescribed by regulations, living within the area proposed for designation will have a vote.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment for what period members of the proposed housing action trust board in Southwark would be elected or nominated.

**Mr. Trippier:** We shall decide the period of trust appointments in due course.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how abstentions would be recorded in any ballot on the proposed creation of a housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** I refer the hon. Member to the answers that I gave her on 18 and 19 July.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how rents would be paid by tenants to the proposed housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** It would be for a housing action trust to decide how to collect rents.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how the proposed housing action trust in Southwark would deal with racial harassment.

**Mr. Trippier:** A trust would have a duty under section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 to carry out its various functions with regard to the need to eliminate racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity. It would need to decide on policies to fulfil this duty, including how to deal with racial harassment. We would recommend to any trust two recent reports which my Department has drawn to the attention of local authorities: "The Response to Racial Attacks and Harassment: Report of the Interdepartmental Racial Attacks Group" and "Brunel Guide to Good Practice in Tackling Racial Violence and Harassment on Local Authority Housing Estates".

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how the service provided by the proposed housing action trust in Southwark to different ethnic groups would be monitored.

**Mr. Trippier:** We shall encourage trusts to seek advice from the Commission for Racial Equality on the use of ethnic monitoring.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy that all the occupants of demolished properties will be rehoused on the estate, in the event of the establishment of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** A trust would have to find alternative accommodation for any tenant whose home had to be demolished as part of a programme of improvements decided on after consultation with local people. A trust, like a local authority, could not require a tenant to move out of his home if it needed to be demolished unless it secured suitable alternative accommodation for him. Such accommodation could be either on the estates or nearby.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the procedure for electing resident members of the proposed housing action trust board in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave her yesterday.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he will publish a statement as to the allocation policies of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark *(a)* before any ballot and *(b)* after the housing action trust has been formed;

(2) whether the proposed housing action trust in Southwark would maintain its own waiting list with its own prioritising policy.

**Mr. Trippier:** One of the primary objects of a housing action trust under section 63 of the Housing Act 1988 is to secure the proper and effective management and use of the housing for which it is responsible. It would be for a trust to decide on its allocation policy once it had been set up. It would be required, like Southwark council, to publish its allocation policy under section 106 of the Housing Act 1985. It would also have to consider how to make best use of any properties which become available for occupation.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the proposed housing action trust in Southwark would be given the responsibility of assisting residents in obtaining their correct benefit entitlements.

**Mr. Trippier:** Where housing action trusts are set up, local authorities will retain responsibility for the administration of housing benefit.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the proposed housing action trust in Southwark would be able to receive housing benefit payments for tenants directly from the council in a similar way to housing associations.

**Mr. Trippier:** Housing benefit rent allowance payments to trust tenants would be governed by the same rules as apply to all rent allowance payments. Consequently, just as in certain circumstances a housing association can receive benefit payments direct from the local authority administering the benefit, so a trust could receive benefit payments direct.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the proposed housing action trust in Southwark would have an equal opportunities policy.

**Mr. Trippier:** Yes.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the proposed housing action trust in Southwark would support the activities of existing community groups.

**Mr. Trippier:** Section 63 of the Housing Act 1988 sets out the primary objects of a housing action trust which include the improvement of living and social conditions in its area. We expect that a trust would want to use its powers under section 63(2)(b) to work for the benefit of the community.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the proposed housing action trust on the North Peckham and Gloucester Grove estates in Southwark would employ multilingual workers.

**Mr. Trippier:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave her earlier today. It would be for a trust to decide whether it needed to employ multilingual workers.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if at the end of the operating period for a housing action trust created in Southwark, the option of returning to council management would be made available.

**Mr. Trippier:** Once improvements had been carried out, a trust would consult secure tenants about whether they wanted to transfer to a landlord approved by the Housing Corporation, such as a housing association or co-operative, or go back to the council. We would give local authorities the necessary supplementary credit approvals to enable them to buy back properties where tenants opted to return to them.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what training would be provided to enable residents to run a management co-operative at the end of the operating period for a housing action trust in Southwark;

(2) what training would be provided to instruct residents on how to conduct their functions on the estate management boards, during and after the formation of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark;

(3) what would be the role of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark in the training or assisting of residents to take advantage of existing training facilities outside the housing action trust;

(4) what would be the role of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark in the training or assisting of residents to carry out senior management roles, such as membership of the housing action trust board.

**Mr. Trippier:** I have already asked tenants' representatives from the North Peckham and Gloucester Grove estates to discuss training with my officials. Both before and after a trust is set up, we shall ensure that tenants who want to become involved in managing their own housing have access to the training that they need. Trusts may also have a wider role in helping residents to take advantage of other training and employment opportunities which may be available locally. We shall want trusts to discuss with all interested bodies and agencies how best to achieve this.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, in the event of the establishment of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark, any provision will be made for individual blocks in the North Peckham and Gloucester Grove estates, to be able to withdraw their membership at any time.

**Mr. Trippier:** As a trust completed improvements to parts of the estates, tenants in an improved block could opt to transfer to an approved landlord offered to them by the trust, or return to the council. They would also be able to exercise tenants' choice at any time during the life of the trust.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) under what circumstances he would have the power to impose a budget on the proposed housing action trust in Southwark;

(2) what powers he would have to approve or disapprove the annual budget of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** A trust's programme of work will be decided after consultation with residents and the local housing authority. This will form the basis of a plan, including a budget, which the Secretary of State will approve annually. Trusts will be funded through grant-in-aid, which Parliament will be invited to vote each year under normal procedures, and by borrowing up to an agreed limit.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will identify prior to any ballot on the creation of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark which blocks in the Gloucester Grove and North Peckham estates would be demolished.

**Mr. Trippier:** Under section 64 of the Housing Act 1988 a trust board, which would include tenant and council representatives, would be required to draw up a statement of proposals for its area in consultation with the residents and the local authority. The statement would include proposals for physical alterations to the estates. We would expect the trust to take account of the views expressed in the current consultation exercise in drawing up its proposals.

### Disabled Persons Rate Relief

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make a statement on the future of disabled persons rate relief;

(2) what consideration he has given to the payment of compensation to those disabled people who will no longer receive rate relief with the introduction of the community charge in April 1990.

**Mr. Gummer:** The present relief reduces the rateable value of a house to what it would have been if no adaptations or improvements were carried out by a disabled householder to accommodate their disability. Without this adjustment some disabled persons would have been required to pay more in rates because of their disability. No such adjustment is needed under the community charge arrangements because the charge is no longer related to the nature of the property. However, we have structured the community charge rebate system to target help to those who need it and this ensures that disabled people with limited means receive help towards paying their community charge.

### Lancashire Replacement Structure Plan

**Mr. Dover:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations have been received to date concerning modifications 13, 58 and 59 to the Lancashire replacement structure plan *(a)* by his office in Manchester, and *(b)* by his Department in London; and how many of these supported these modifications.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State received at 14 July a total of 780 representations concerning modifications 58 and 59, and somewhat more for modification 13, to the Lancashire replacement structure plan. Few of the representations received support modification 58 and 59, but elsewhere green belt proposals are for the most part supported.

### Multiple Deprivation

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what are the criteria for achieving relativities within ranking according to the score system on the accepted United Kingdom index of multiple deprivation; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the ranking according to the score system on the accepted United Kingdom index of multiple deprivation for *(a)* Bradford, *(b)* Birmingham, *(c)* Merseyside, *(d)* Manchester/Salford/Trafford and *(e)* Strathclyde; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** The information is not available in the form requested. An index was included in an analysis of urban deprivation in all English authorities, based on the 1981 census, which was published as "Census Information Note No. 2: Urban Deprivation" in February 1983. It is available in the Library.

On the basis of that index which is available at district level, the rankings (out of 366 English local authorities) for the districts requested were:

| | | *Rankings* |
|---|---|---|
| *(a)* | Bradford | 32 |
| *(b)* | Birmingham | 15 |
| *(c)* | Merseyside: | |
| | Knowsley | 26 |
| | Liverpool | 15 |
| | St. Helens | 86 |
| | Sefton | 97 |
| | Wirral | 94 |
| *(d)* | Manchester | 11 |
| | Salford | 38 |
| | Trafford | 115 |

No comparable analysis is available for Strathclyde.

### Land Sales

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many directives to sell land registered on the public land register have been issued each year since its inception by the following categories *(a)* land owned by Labour-controlled local authorities, *(b)* land owned by other local authorities and *(c)* other owners.

**Mr. Trippier:** The table shows the number of original directions issued to local authorities each year. A breakdown of these by controlling political party is not readily available. No directions have been issued to other owners.

*Directions issued to local authorities under Section 98 of the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1984 | 4 |
| 1985 | 21 |
| 1986 | 14 |
| 1987 | 25 |
| 1988 | 13 |
| 1989 | 2 |

### Allotments

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what Her Majesty's Government have done since 1979 to improve the use of allotments.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Allotment provision and administration is a local government matter as provided for in the Allotment Acts 1908-1950.

### Canterbury Cross School, Handsworth

**Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement outlining reasons for delay in releasing promised inner-city partnership moneys in respect of Canterbury Cross junior and infant school, Handsworth, Birmingham.

**Mr. Trippier:** The project was submitted for DOE approval on 2 November 1988. Approval (ie authority to spend) was granted on 2 December 1988. Actual disbursement is a matter for Birmingham city council.

### Nature Conservancy

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Sherwood (Mr. Stewart) of 11 July, *Official Report*, columns *482-83*, what measures will be taken to ensure a unified scientific approach to the United Kingdom's responsibilities under *(a)* the Ramsar convention on wetlands of international importance, *(b)* the European community directive on the conservation of wild birds, and *(c)* the Berne convention; and if the scientific criteria for selecting sites of special scientific interest on a United Kingdom basis will remain in place.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Government will ensure that the successor bodies to the present NCC are able to provide appropriate advice on the designation of ramsar sites and special protection areas. NCC's present country headquarters submit the proposals for individual sites. Provision will also be made for the Government to maintain a Great Britain overview based on the best scientific advice. The details of how best to achieve this having regard to the new organisational structure will be discussed with the NCC. No changes are proposed to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

### GLC Heritage Collection

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of each item sold from the Greater London council's heritage collection by the London residuary body; and how much was realised for each item.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I have nothing to add to my answer of 11 April at column *462*.

### Middlesex Guildhall Collection

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of the agreement made between the London residuary body and the London borough of Harrow in respect of the Middlesex Guildhall collection.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The agreement will be made by order under the Local Government Act 1985. London boroughs will be consulted about the proposed arrangements.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment who owns the items from the Middlesex Guildhall collection currently on display in the Middlesex Guildhall.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The London residuary body.

### London Residuary Body

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of the number of occasions upon which the London residuary body has sought his consent to dispose of assets for less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** In the last year the Department has processed 65 applications by the London residuary body for consent to dispose of properties by means of voluntary sales to licensee occupiers at discounted prices.

In addition the London residuary body has sought consent in relation to seven other disposals.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment in what form records are kept in respect of prices paid and the details of new ownership of former publicly owned assets sold by the London residuary body; and what access is available to such records by members of the public and the press.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Such matters are for the London residuary body, and the purchasers.

### Coal-fired Power Stations

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the eight dirtiest coal-fired power stations in the United Kingdom.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Power station operations vary greatly in their load factor throughout the year, depending upon demand from the grid system, and also in their coal supply pattern. It is not possible to categorise them uniquely in terms of pollution.

### Jobs, Sunderland

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many new jobs in Sunderland have been created by the activities of the Tyne and Wear development corporation from its inception up to the latest available date about which he has information.

**Mr. Trippier:** Some 250 jobs have been created to date in Sunderland through the activities of Tyne and Wear development corporation. Further investment already in train is estimated to produce an additional 2,000 to 3,000 jobs.

### Sports Clubs (Rate Relief)

**Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to bring local authority rate relief for non-profit-making sports clubs in England and Wales into line with the situation in Scotland.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Local authorities levying rates in England and Wales, as in Scotland, have discretion to grant up to 100 per cent. rate relief to sports clubs and other non-profit-making organisations and will continue to do so after 1 April 1990.

Paragraphs 20 and 21 of the consultation paper of 16 March 1989 on "Payments into the National Non-Domestic Rating Pool" set out the Government's proposals on the way in which the cost of any such relief should be met in England and Wales. The proposed approach, which differs from that in Scotland, is for the cost to be borne equally by community charge payers and by the national non-domestic rating pool. A number of representations on this point have been received and careful consideration is being given to the arguments advanced. I hope that a decision on this can be announced before too long.

### Crown Suppliers

**Sir George Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress has been made in the privatisation of the Crown Suppliers.

**Mr. Chope:** It is the Government's intention that the Crown Suppliers should be privatised in the first half of

1990, and that parliamentary approval will be sought for the necessary arrangements for the transfer of the Crown Suppliers to the private sector. I expect to be able to launch a competition for the sale in the autumn.

We have taken a number of steps to move the Crown Suppliers towards a more commercial mode of operation, reorganising it on business lines, installing a new computer system and allowing it to begin to trade with the private sector. The board of the Crown Suppliers has recently been strengthened by the appointment of three non-executive members to add further private sector experience and particular skills in finance and marketing to the direction of the Crown Suppliers at a critical phase. They are Mr. Ralph Kaner, formerly international marketing director of Rowntree plc, Mr. David Pearl, chairman of London Securities plc, and Mr. Edward Stanger, formerly chairman of Ford and Weston Group plc.

Professional, technical and industrial grades will transfer to the purchaser by virtue of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 and benefit from the safeguards provided by them. However, in the particular circumstances of the Crown Suppliers' privatisation, consultations have been taking place with the trade unions about the details of a secondment scheme which I hope can be applied to the generalist staff of the Crown Suppliers, for whom we can expect to find alternative Civil Service posts if necessary.

Deloitte, Haskins and Sells has recently been appointed to act as reporting accountants for the sale, and Field, Fisher, Waterhouse as solicitors. They join Samuel Montagu and Co as the Government's advisers on the privatisation.

### Litter

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to deal with the problem of litter in public places; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ridley:** We are determined to tackle vigorously the problems caused by litter and litterers. I am today, together with my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Transport and for Wales, publishing details of our proposals for legislation designed to improve the appearance and standards of cleanliness of public places in England and Wales, and to enable and encourage local authorities, other landowners and individual citizens to take more effective action against litter and those who drop it.

Our proposals include:

An increase in the maximum fine for littering under the 1983 Litter Act from £400 to £1,000;

A power for local authorities to introduce a fixed penalty scheme for littering;

A duty on local authorities to keep clean all land in their beneficial occupancy or control, open to the air and to which the public have access (the duty to include both litter and dog faeces);

A similar duty on certain landowners with statutory functions;

A power for local authorities to extend by designation order a similar duty on owners of certain defined categories of land in other ownership (such as car parks, shopping precincts and forecourts of commercial premises);

Rationalising street cleaning responsibilities by making non-metropolitan district councils wholly responsible for cleaning of all roads (except motorways);

A statutory code of practice to which all those under the duty would be required to have regard, specifying standards of cleanliness and advising on the best means of achieving them;

A system of enforcement whereby *(a)* an aggrieved citizen will be able to apply for a court order directing a local authority, or any other landowner under the duty to keep clean, to discharge the duty; *(b)* the local authority has the power to issue a "litter abatement notice" requiring any other landowner under the duty to discharge that duty; and *(c)* the local authority has default powers to carry out cleaning work itself, and recover costs;

The extension of section 1 of the Litter Act to all areas covered by the duty to keep clean, and the widening of its scope.

I am arranging for copies of the consultation document to be placed in the Library of the House. Copies are also being sent to interested parties inviting comments by 22 September. Subject to responses to the consultation, the Government intend to introduce the necessary legislation at the earliest opportunity.

### Rent Collection

**Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of local authorities' performance in the collection of housing rent; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** It is the responsibility of all local authorities to collect efficiently the rents due to them and most authorities do just this. But a number of authorities have irresponsibly allowed their rent arrears to rise to very high levels.

The Government consider that failure to collect rent due is wholly unacceptable, inevitably putting an unfair burden on others. Rent rebates are available for tenants on low incomes who might otherwise have difficulty in paying their rents. High arrears result from authorities' poor management and from tenants unjustifiably failing to meet their obligations.

At present the burden of any uncollected rent can fall on either ratepayers or tenants, or both, as the authority chooses. Under the proposals for the ring-fenced housing revenue account (HRA) in the Local Government and Housing Bill, authorities will from 1 April 1990 not be allowed to use community charge payers' money to meet their housing costs. So if in future authorities fail in their duty to collect the rents due, the cost, like any other housing cost, will have to be borne on the housing revenue account and will reflect itself in levels of rents or service. This will put councils in the same position as any other landlord, or as any other business, where the costs of bad debts have to be met by cutting back on the service they provide or increasing the charges to their customers. This is a significant change from the present system, and it would have been unfair in earlier days, when council tenants were effectively locked into dependency on their landlords. But council tenants are no longer captive customers. As well as the right to buy, the new tenants' choice scheme gives them the chance to transfer their custom elsewhere, to people who can provide a better service.

We also recognise that it would have been grossly unfair on those tenants who do pay their rents if at the outset of the new system, they were faced with having to make good other tenants' arrears which had accumulated under the existing system. We therefore announced on 26 June, that, exceptionally, the cost of any arrears outstanding at 31 March 1990 which councils do not manage to collect should be met not from the ring-fenced HRA but from the community charge. We are also proposing that in the case of authorities with the worst arrears the cost on the community charge could be spread over three to five years. This will enable every council to start off its new HRA with a clean slate, while still providing an effective incentive on authorities to collect outstanding arrears. We hope tenants and council managers alike will strive to eradicate the irresponsibility which has allowed arrears in the past to build up to intolerable levels.

### Carbon Tax

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any proposals for the introduction of a carbon tax on carbon dioxide emissions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Taxation in the United Kingdom is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am aware, however, of a number of informal proposals for a carbon tax as a possible policy instrument for mitigating climate change. These are likely to be the subject of continuing discussions, particularly in the intergovernmental panel on climate change.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Republic of Ireland

Q23. **Sir Hugh Rossi:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the United Kingdom's relations with the Republic of Ireland.

**The Prime Minister:** No. But we have a close relationship with the Republic of Ireland based on our many shared historical, cultural and family links. I last saw Mr. Haughey on 26 June and look forward to continuing to work with him and his new team of Ministers.

### Government Papers

Q25. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will institute a review of the 30-year rule on the release of Government papers; what steps are taken to ensure the secure preservation of all prime ministerial papers; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** I have no plans to institute a review of the 30-year rule. The preservation of prime ministerial papers, as with all public records, is handled in accordance with the provisions of the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967.

### South Africa

Q28. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the United Kingdom's relations with South Africa.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. I have received support for our policy of encouraging South Africa to solve its problems through dialogue.

### Local Government (London)

Q31. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding local government in London.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. I periodically receive representations about a wide range of aspects of local government in London. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment made a statement yesterday about local government finance.

### Railway Privatisation

Q44. **Mr. Goodlad:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding railway privatisation.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a small number of representations from hon. Members and others, most in favour of privatisation. As I said in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) on 29 June at column 1103, we are not yet ready to bring forward proposals for the privatisation of British Rail which would require careful preparation.

### British Rail (Catering)

Q52. **Mr. Alexander:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the future of catering services on British Rail.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

### Greece

Q72. **Sir Anthony Grant:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the United Kingdom's relations with Greece.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

### Court of Auditors

Q75. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the Court of Auditors in the European Community.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

### Wyke

Q101. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she expects to pay an official visit to Wyke.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### Trade Union Law

Q117. **Mr. Leigh:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding reform of trade union law.

**The Prime Minister:** I do receive representations on this matter from time to time. I have recently received many representations deploring irresponsible industrial action in a number of public services.

### Kirkshaw's Coatbridge

Q123. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next intends to visit Kirkshaw's Coatbridge.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### US President

Q133. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to meet the President of the United States of America.

**The Prime Minister:** I have met President Bush on several occasions in recent weeks which both of us have greatly valued and I am sure that there will be many more meetings in the future. No firm date has yet been fixed for my next meeting with President Bush.

### Soviet Union

Q165. **Mr. Malins:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding human rights in the Soviet Union.

**The Prime Minister:** We receive many representations which reflect the deep concern in this country about human rights in the Soviet Union. We are continuing to press the Soviet authorities over a range of individual cases, and over a wider need for institutionalised reform. These efforts do bear fruit. In the past year, 68 refusenik cases which we have raised have been resolved satisfactorily.

### Energy Conservation

Q170. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding energy conservation.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a number of recent representations regarding energy conservation and energy efficiency. In cash terms the Government are this year spending six times the amount in energy efficiency programmes as was spent in 1979. Over the last four years for which figures are available, this country's ratio of energy use to GDP growth has improved at twice the average rate for the European Community.

### Sea Birds

Q176. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Prime Minister what advice she has been given by the Nature Conservancy Council in relation to Her Majesty's Government's international obligations to protect sea birds' feeding and gathering grounds; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to the written answers I gave him on Tuesday 16 May, at column *119* and on Monday 19 June at column *1*.

### Central Europe

Q181. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she has received recent representations on political developments in Central Europe.

**The Prime Minister:** The Polish authorities and Solidarity have recently made specific requests to Her Majesty's Government for assistance to support reform. No such representation had been made on behalf of Hungary. We have joined in the economic summit's commitment to co-ordinate assistance to Poland and Hungary. The United Kingdom has already pledged some economic assistance, including an offer of £25 million to supply know-how to Poland.

### Italy

Q187. **Mr. Marland:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the United Kingdom's relations with Italy.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

### Social Charter

Q213. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister if the European Economic Community Commission reported to the European Council meeting at Madrid the number of directives it proposed to present to the Council of Ministers arising out of the social charter approved by that Council on a majority vote.

**The Prime Minister:** No. I would also refer my hon. Friend to my reply to him on Tuesday 18 July 1989, at column *141*.

### Engagements

Q216. **Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 July.

Q217. **Mr. Ashton:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 July.

Q218. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 July.

**Mr. Amos:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 July.

**Mr. Stern:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 July.

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 July.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 20 July.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

### EC (Contributions)

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the level of net contributions being made by member states to the European Economic Community.

**The Prime Minister:** I have no plans to do so and would refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 21 June at column *148*.

### Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Prime Minister if, during her meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada in London on 11 July, she raised *(a)* the issue of the fourth review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and *(b)* nuclear exports and safeguards on uranium.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Prime Minister if, during her recent visit to Paris, she discussed with President Sarney of Brazil the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Prime Minister if, during her recent visit to Paris she discussed with the Prime Minister of India the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list the heads of Government and heads of state of African countries with whom she raised the subject of the 4 review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty during her recent visit to Paris; and what representations she made in each case.

**The Prime Minister:** I did not raise the non-proliferation treaty review conference with African leaders during my visit to Paris.

### Brazilian Mahogany

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Prime Minister (1) what steps were taken to ensure that the plantation which supplied the Brazilian mahogany for the proposed refurbishment of the white and blue rooms at 10 Downing street is operated on a sustainable basis;

(2) what steps were taken to ensure the area of the plantation which was cleared to supply the Brazilian mahogany for the proposed refurbishment of the white and blue rooms at 10 Downing street has now been replanted;

(3) which plantation supplied the Brazilian mahogany for the proposed refurbishment of the white and blue rooms at 10 Downing street;

(4) who owns, and whether there is any British involvement in, the plantation which supplied the Brazilian mahogany for the proposed refurbishment of the white and blue rooms at 10 Downing street.

**The Prime Minister:** Only about 25 cu ft of Brazilian mahogany is being used for refurbishment of the blue and white rooms at 10 Downing street, mainly for overdoor and other fine carvings for which it is the most suitable material. This is equivalent to about a quarter of one tree. The importer supplying the specialist joinery contractor undertaking the work has provided inspection certificates issued by the Brazilian Institute of Forest Development indicating that his sawn timber supplies are drawn from areas where officially approved programmes of forest enrichment are in force. This is a process of sustained management of mixed forests whereby mature trees are removed without damage to the remainder, and replaced by mahogany transplants in numbers which ensure that the density of hardwood in the forest is actually increased. The plantations in question are managed by Maginco Madeireira Araguaia S/A Ind Com e Agropecuaria and located at Fazenda Fontalina in the Rio Maria region. It is not known whether there is any British involvement.

### Community Care Minister

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans for the appointment of a Minister for community care.

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State, Department of Health has responsibility, under my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health, for monitoring the implementation of the Government's community care policies.

### Multiple Deprivation Indices

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Prime Minister if it is the policy of Her Majesty's Government that financial support from Government, and support which is sought from the European Commission, should reflect the relative need for such support as illustrated in the United Kingdom/European Community indices of multiple deprivation; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** Financial support from Government, where provided, takes account of the need for support as shown by indicators appropriate to the support scheme concerned. Applications for support from the European Community are made in conformity with the Community's rules.

### French Revolution

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Prime Minister what initiatives Her Majesty's Government will be taking arising from the celebrations of the French Revolution.

**The Prime Minister:** Anglo-French relations are excellent. We shall continue to work closely with the French Government over a wide range of issues.

### Tom Paine

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Prime Minister what proposals she has to commemorate the contribution to democracy of Tom Paine.

**The Prime Minister:** None. Tom Paines' beliefs and writings had a greater effect on the political evolution of the United States of America and of France than on that of this country.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Prime Minister how much was spent by her office on official hospitality in the financial year 1988-89.

**The Prime Minister:** The cost of official hospitality met by my office during 1988-89 was £22,008.

### Expenses

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will provide the final figure for 1988-89 and the estimates for 1989-90 for the total cost to public funds of all her offices, duties, accommodation and expenses.

**The Prime Minister:** The total cost of all my offices in 1988-89 was £6,443,711.[1]

The estimated total cost for 1989-90 is £6,443,711.[1]

*Note:*

[1] Salaries and wages, notional pension liability, administration costs, and the grant-in-aid to the Chequers Trust are included. My salary as a Cabinet minister is also included. My pay and allowances as a Member of this House are excluded.

### Official Residences

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will provide the final figures for 1988-89 and the estimate for 1989-90 for *(a)* the cost of maintaining and running 10 Downing street and additional cost at Chequers, *(b)* the grant-in-aid to the Chequers Trust and *(c)* the costs on a consistent basis and expressed at constant 1984-85 prices.

**The Prime Minister:** The figures requested are as follows:

*(a) Cost of maintaining and running 10 Downing street and additional costs at Chequers*[1,2,3]

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1988-89 | 6,593,793 |
| [5]1989-90 | 6,409,232 |

*(b) Grant-in-aid to the Chequers Trust*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1988-89 | 238,000 |
| 1989-90 | 238,000 |

*(c) Costs at (a) and (b) in 1984-85 price terms*[4]

| | | £ |
|---|---|---|
| 1988-89 | *(a)* | 5,369,530 |
| | *(b)* | 193,810 |
| [5]1989-90 | *(a)* | 4,944,947 |
| | *(b)* | 183,625 |

*Notes:*

[1] The figures include costs at both 10 Downing street and Chequers; the information is not available by location.

[2] Salaries and wages, notional pension liability, administration costs, the costs of office services and the grant-in-aid to the Chequers Trust are included. The salary of the Prime Minister is excluded.

[3] These totals are calculated on a consistent basis with the total for 1986-87 in sub-paragraph *(a)* of the reply to the hon. Member on 23 October 1987 at column 846. If office services costs are excluded (to produce a figure consistent with those at sub-paragraph *(c)* of that reply) the totals are:

| | £ | £ |
|---|---|---|
| 1988-89 | 6,063,266 | [6]4,937,505 |
| 1989-90 | 5,841,190 | [6]4,506,683 |

[4] Constant costs have been calculated using the Treasury's GDP deflator for 1987-88 rebased to 1984-85.

[5] Estimate.

[6] At 1984-85 prices.

## Travel

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Prime Minister what was the total cost to public funds of travel by her and her staff in 1988-89.

**The Prime Minister:** The total cost of my travel and that of my staff in 1988-89 was £952,150.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Friday 21 July 1989*

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Harland and Wolff

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in the management buy out of Harland and Wolff; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Viggers** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]*: Over the last few weeks progress has continued on the drafting of legal documents to enable completion of the sale of the business to a new company being set up by the MEBO/Olsen team. I was encouraged that the trade unions have endorsed new terms and conditions included in offers of employment sent to members of the work force on behalf of the new company on 6 July. Subject to EC approval (expected by the beginning of August) and the satisfactory conclusion of other pre-contract conditions, the sale of the business should be complete in September.

### Civil Servants (Statistics)

**Mr William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show for each grade in the Northern Ireland civil service the number and percentages of: (a) Roman Catholics, (b) Protestants and (c) others, showing the number and percentages of males and females in each category; and if he will indicate the percentage of each of those groupings of working age in Northern Ireland.

**Mr Cope:** The information requested by the hon. Gentleman is contained within the second report of the equal opportunities unit of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The second report was published in December 1987 and shows the make-up of the Northern Ireland Civil Service by sex, religion and disability as at 1 January 1987. Copies of the second report were placed in the Library on 17 December 1987.

The following table shows estimated aggregated figures (1985-87) of the religious affiliation of persons of working age in Northern Ireland, derived from the continuous household survey.

| | *Males* | *Females* | *All* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | per cent. | per cent. | per cent. |
| Catholic | 37·9 | 39·6 | 38·9 |
| Protestant | 57·8 | 57·8 | 57·8 |
| Other or not stated | 4·3 | 2·6 | 3·3 |

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Crown Prosecution Service

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Attorney-General how many cases have been dismissed by the courts for the failure of the Crown Prosecution Service to *(a)* attend at court and *(b)* have the case file at court; and how many adjournments have been given because of *(a)* and *(b)*.

**The Attorney-General:** I regret that the information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Attorney-General how many lawyers have ceased to be employed by the Crown Prosecution Service during its lifetime; and of these how many *(a)* resigned, *(b)* retired and *(c)* were dismissed.

**The Attorney-General:** Since the Crown Prosecution Service was established 334 lawyers have left its employment. Of these 304 resigned, seven retired, four were dismissed, 16 have transferred to other Government Departments and three have died.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the branch areas of the Crown Prosecution Service and state how much money has been paid by each branch to agents to carry out the work of the Crown Prosecution Service for *(a)* 1989 to date, *(b)* 1988-89, *(c)* 1987-88 and *(d)* 1986-87.

**The Attorney-General:** The information requested is set out in the table:

*Expenditure on lawyer agents by the Crown Prosecution Service*

| *Region and area* | [2]*1986-87* £ | *1987-88* £ | *1988-89* £ | *1 April to 30 June 1989* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *London and South East* | | | | |
| 12 Inner London[1] | 871,409 | 2.042,664 | 2,076,722 | 582,052 |
| 14 North London | 608,543 | 1,084,313 | 1,249,981 | 377,907 |
| 16 South London | 332,188 | 753,574 | 1,001,331 | 174,136 |
| 22 Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire | 191,973 | 531,293 | 510,139 | 102,068 |
| 42 Essex | 62,950 | 290,970 | 291,529 | 89,815 |
| 52 Kent | 92,363 | 320,268 | 323,332 | 83,470 |
| Total | 2,159,425 | 5,023,082 | 5,453,033 | 1,409,448 |
| *South and West* | | | | |
| 20 Avon/Somerset | 99,406 | 343,084 | 381,728 | 84,291 |
| 34 Devon/Cornwall | 74,821 | 182,834 | 160,449 | 44,937 |
| 36 Dorset/Hampshire | 186,105 | 600,904 | 538,483 | 153,527 |
| 44 Gloucestershire/Wiltshire | 67,516 | 218,738 | 196,144 | 33,147 |
| 48 South Wales | 146,684 | 256,341 | 96,878 | 8,232 |
| 66 Sussex | 123,943 | 298,478 | 346,318 | 93,595 |
| 68 Thames Valley | 91,779 | 295,599 | 292,773 | 66,520 |
| 70 West Mercia | 160,783 | 525,082 | 237,780 | 41,084 |
| Total | 951,037 | 2,721,360 | 2,250,551 | 525,333 |

| *Region and area* | [2]*1986-87*<br>£ | *1987-88*<br>£ | *1988-89*<br>£ | *1 April to 30 June 1989*<br>£ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Northern* | | | | |
| 26 Cheshire | 42,710 | 171,719 | 123,944 | 46,520 |
| 28 Cleveland/North Yorkshire | 165,575 | 282,594 | 235,368 | 41,943 |
| 30 Cumbria/Lancashire | 214,238 | 547,841 | 752,081 | 172,133 |
| 38 Durham/Northumbria | 420,771 | 548,413 | 547,208 | 172,412 |
| 40 North Wales | 126,080 | 251,626 | 228,545 | 57,123 |
| 46 Greater Manchester | 440,514 | 630,580 | 597,031 | 136,740 |
| 56 Merseyside | 261,918 | 395,883 | 356,736 | 69,003 |
| 62 South Yorkshire | 155,071 | 254,933 | 349,046 | 95,317 |
| 74 West Yorkshire | 389,686 | 595,128 | 668,169 | 169,894 |
| Total | 2,216,563 | 3,589,816 | 3,858,127 | 952,085 |
| *Midlands* | | | | |
| 24 Cambridgeshire/Lincolnshire | 93,811 | 305,722 | 339,352 | 66,013 |
| 32 Derbyshire | 59,681 | 256,853 | 249,403 | 38,458 |
| 50 Humberside | 47,249 | 90,454 | 126,204 | 26,166 |
| 54 Leicestershire/Northamptonshire | 251,362 | 702,516 | 623,090 | 103,409 |
| 58 Norfolk/Suffolk | 159,618 | 384,413 | 359,915 | 99,347 |
| 60 Nottinghamshire | 159,572 | 303,758 | 287,759 | 84,648 |
| 64 Staffordshire/Warwickshire | 234,848 | 493,952 | 365,618 | 106,973 |
| 72 West Midlands | 713,639 | 989,658 | 1,089,245 | 248,652 |
| Total | 1,719,780 | 3,527,425 | 3,440,585 | 773,666 |
| *Headquarters* | | | | |
| 02 Headquarters (Legal casework) | 24,231 | 10,629 | 7,596 | 0 |
| Total | 24,231 | 10,629 | 7,596 | 0 |
| National Total | 7,071,037 | 14,972,313 | 15,009,892 | 3,670,532 |

[1] Including Central Courts Branch.

[2] Apart from the Metropolitan counties and Durham/Northumbria, areas did not become operational as part of the CPS until 1 October 1986.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the branch areas of the Crown Prosecution Service and give the number of current vacancies that exist for lawyers at *(a)* prosecutor, *(b)* senior prosecutor and *(c)* branch prosecutor level.

**The Attorney-General:** The information requested is set out in the table.

*Breakdown of lawyer vacancies by area showing Grade/Job title as at 30 June 1989*

| | *CP* | *SCP* | *ABCP* | *BCP* | | *CCP* | | | *4* | *3* | *2* | *1* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *6* | *6* | *5* | *5* | *4* | *3* | | | | |
| *HQ*[1] | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Director's Office | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 0 |
| Deputy Director's Office | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| HQ Casework | +3 | −7 | 0 | +1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — | — |
| *London/South East* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire | −5·5 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Essex | −3 | −4 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Kent | −16·5 | −1 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Inner London | −20·5 | −7 | −3 | +3 | −3 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Outer London North | −25·5 | −10 | −3 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Outer London South | −25·5 | −4 | +0·5 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — |
| *Midland Region* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cambridgeshire/Lincolnshire | −12·5 | −2 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Derbyshire | −14·5 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Humberside | −10 | −2 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Leicestershire/Northamptonshire | −14·5 | −7 | — | 0 | — | −1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Norfolk/Suffolk | −10 | −1 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Nottingham | −10·5 | +0·5 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Staffordshire/Warwickshire | −15 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| West Midlands | −29·5 | +2·5 | −2 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — |
| *Northern Region* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cheshire | −7·5 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Greater Manchester | −24·5 | +1 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Lancashire/Cumbria | −11·5 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Merseyside | −13 | 0 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Northumbria/Durham | −21·5 | −3·5 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| North Wales/Dyfed Powys | −8 | −1 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| North Yorkshire/Cleveland | −3·5 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |

| | CP | SCP | ABCP | BCP | | CCP | | | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | | | | |
| South Yorkshire | −12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — |
| West Yorkshire | −19·5 | −1 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — |
| *South and West Region* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Avon/Somerset | −12 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Devon/Cornwall | −5 | −0·5 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Dorset/Hampshire | −15 | −4 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Gloucestershire/Wiltshire | −4 | 0 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| South Wales/Gwent | −11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sussex | −4·5 | −3 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Thames Valley | −8 | −4 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| West Mercia | −0·5 | −1 | — | 0 | — | 0 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Total | −391 | −59 | −7·5 | +4 | −3 | −1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

[1] Posts in HQ as grades 5 and 6 have been shown as CCP and BCP equivalents according to grade.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the branch areas of the Crown Prosecution Service and state the numbers of current established posts for lawyers at *(a)* prosecutor, *(b)* senior prosecutor and *(c)* branch prosecutor level.

**The Attorney-General:** The information requested is set out in the table.

*Breakdown of lawyer posts by area, showing Grade/Job title as at 30 June 1989*

| | CP | SCP | ABCP | BCP | | CCP | | | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | | | | |
| *HQ*[1] | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Director's Office | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 |
| Deputy Director's Office | — | 3 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | 4 | 1 | — |
| HQ Casework | 1 | 34 | — | 14 | — | 5 | — | — | — | 1 | — | — |
| *London/South East* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire | 29 | 14 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Essex | 20 | 11 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Kent | 30 | 15 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Inner London | 83 | 43 | 13 | — | 5 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Outer London North | 60 | 29 | 9 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Outer London South | 57 | 27 | 6 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| *Midland Region* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cambridgeshire/Lincolnshire | 26 | 13 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Derbyshire | 21 | 10 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Humberside | 22 | 11 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Leicestershire/Northamptonshire | 30 | 15 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Norfolk/Suffolk | 23 | 12 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Nottingham | 30 | 15 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Staffordshire/Warwickshire | 29 | 14 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| West Midlands | 59 | 28 | 8 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| *Northern Region* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cheshire | 23 | 10 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Greater Manchester | 82 | 40 | 9 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Lancashire/Cumbria | 45 | 21 | — | 4 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Merseyside | 47 | 23 | 6 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Northumbria/Durham | 53 | 26 | — | 4 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| North Wales/Dyfed Powys | 27 | 13 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| North Yorkshire/Cleveland | 34 | 13 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| South Yorkshire | 30 | 15 | 2 | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| West Yorkshire | 48 | 24 | 6 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| *South and West Region* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Avon/Somerset | 30 | 14 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Devon/Cornwall | 25 | 12 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Dorset/Hampshire | 46 | 20 | — | 4 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Gloucestershire/Wiltshire | 21 | 10 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| South Wales/Gwent | 55 | 27 | 1 | 4 | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sussex | 29 | 14 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Thames Valley | 36 | 18 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| West Mercia | 23 | 11 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Total | 1,174 | 605 | 80 | 60 | 25 | 28 | 9 | — | — | 5 | 1 | 1 |

[1] Posts in HQ as grades 5 and 6 have been shown as CCP and BCP equivalents according to grade.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the branch areas of the Crown Prosecution Service and state the number of established posts for lawyers at *(a)* prosecutor, *(b)* senior prosecutor and *(c)* branch prosecutor level on the commencing of the Crown Prosecution Service.

**The Attorney-General:** The information requested is set out in the table:

*Breakdown of lawyer posts by area showing Grade/Job title as at 1 October 1989*

| | *CP* | *SCP* | *ABCP* | *BCP* | | *CCP* | | | *4* | *3* | *2* | *1* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *6* | *6* | *5* | *5* | *4* | *3* | | | | |
| *HQ*[1] | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Director's Office | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 |
| Deputy Director's Office | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 1 | — |
| HQ Casework | 3 | 38 | — | 15 | — | 8 | — | — | — | 3 | 1 | — |
| *London/South East* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire | 27 | 11 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Essex | 18 | 9 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Kent | 24 | 12 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Inner London | 92 | 43 | 13 | — | 5 | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| Outer London North | 50 | 26 | 8 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Outer London South | 45 | 21 | 6 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| *Midland Region* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cambridgeshire/Lincolnshire | 17 | 8 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Derbyshire | 15 | 7 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Humberside | 14 | 6 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Leicestershire/Northamptonshire | 21 | 9 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Norfolk/Suffolk | 16 | 7 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Nottingham | 20 | 9 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Staffordshire/Warwickshire | 22 | 10 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| West Midlands | 48 | 24 | 8 | — | 3 | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| *Northern Region* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cheshire | 16 | 8 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Greater Manchester | 54 | 26 | 9 | — | 3 | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| Lancashire/Cumbria | 35 | 16 | — | 4 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Merseyside | 41 | 21 | 6 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Northumbria/Durham | 34 | 17 | — | 4 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| North Wales/Dyfed Powys | 21 | 9 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| North Yorkshire/Cleveland | 22 | 11 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| South Yorkshire | 23 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| West Yorkshire | 40 | 20 | 6 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| *South and West Region* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Avon/Somerset | 22 | 10 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Devon/Cornwall | 18 | 9 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Dorset/Hampshire | 37 | 16 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Gloucestershire/Wiltshire | 15 | 6 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| South Wales/Gwent | 41 | 20 | 1 | 4 | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sussex | 22 | 10 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Thames Valley | 28 | 14 | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| West Mercia | 15 | 7 | — | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Total | 916 | 471 | 59 | 75 | 25 | 30 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

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[1] Posts in HQ as grades 5 and 6 have been shown as CCP and BCP equivalents according to grade.

## TRANSPORT

### Disabled Travellers

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to ensure that British Rail continues to make provision for disabled people in the event of sale into private ownership.

**Mr. Portillo:** No decisions have yet been taken on rail privatisation but if privatisation did proceed we would certainly wish to consider how best to safeguard the particular interests of disabled people.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to ensure that road pricing or toll schemes which are introduced will exempt disabled motorists who have to travel by road.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Government have no proposals for road pricing. There is a variety of arrangements on existing tolled facilities. As for new privately financed toll roads, the Green Paper "New Roads by New Means" sought views on the extent which tolls should be controlled. We are currently assessing the comments received on the Green Paper.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he is taking to ensure that coaches and buses are made accessible to all disabled people.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Department of Transport has been working closely with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee to develop design guidelines to make buses easier for elderly and ambulant disabled people to use. These improvements are now being widely adopted by manufacturers, operators and local authorities.

The Department is also working with other European Community countries towards changes in regulations that will require future generations of buses and coaches to be fully accessible to people with disabilities.

## Air Accidents

**Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether, in the light of the Government's conclusions on the value of independent investigative machinery in relation to air accidents and air misses as set out in Government observations on the first report of the Transport Committee of session 1988-89 on air traffic control safety and of the CAA's proposals to transfer responsibility for the investigation of the civil air traffic control elements of air accidents from the National Air Traffic service to the Safety Regulation group, he will instruct the Safety Regulation Group to assess the report submitted by the National Air Traffic service to the Air Accidents Investigation branch on the aircraft accident involving GUESS on 8 December 1983; if he will instruct the Safety Regulation group to examine all references to air traffic control in the Air Accidents Investigation branch report of that accident for accuracy and compliance with air traffic control rules and procedures; and if he will make it his policy to make available to the House any results of such assessments.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The accident to GUESS was the subject of a detailed investigation by the Air Accidents Investigation branch. During the course of this investigation the inspector considered all relevant circumstances including the ATC procedures adopted. Following publication of the accident report, there was no request for a review board and no evidence has subsequently been produced sufficient to justify reopening the investigation. It is not within the power of the Secretary of State to instruct the CAA further to examine this matter.

## British Rail (Capital Projects)

**Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the total value of capital projects undertaken by British Rail since 1979 for *(a)* locomotives, *(b)* passenger coaches, *(c)* signalling and telecommunications and *(d)* premises; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** Information is not readily available in the form requested. Since 1979 the total invested by British Rail in the railways is:

| | *£ million cash* | *£ million 1989-90 prices* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 248 | 518 |
| 1980 | 304 | 529 |
| 1981 | 277 | 433 |
| 1982 | 243 | 352 |
| 1983 | 252 | 347 |
| [1]1984 | 280 | 368 |
| 1985-86 | 399 | 491 |
| 1986-87 | 399 | 475 |
| 1987-88 | 526 | 594 |
| 1988-89 | 570 | 601 |

[1] 1984-85 was a 15 month financial period. The figure shown for 1984 is the 12 month internally reported result.

The figures include investment in Freightliners, BRML and BREL but exclude the laying of continuous welded track which BR does not now classify as investment.

## Offshore Installations

**Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made with his review of standby vessels associated with offshore installations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** The review of the Department's publication "Instructions to Surveyors on the Assessment of the Suitability of Standby Vessels Attending Offshore Installations" is now almost complete and a draft incorporating the latest changes will be circulated for final comment before the end of August.

## Offshore Operators Association

**Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next intends to meet representatives of the United Kingdom Offshore Operators Association; and what matters are to be discussed.

**Mr. Portillo:** I have no plans to meet representatives of the United Kingdom Offshore Operators Association.

## M12

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the cost of building the M12; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The estimated works cost of the proposed new motorway from M25 to south of Chelmsford is £45 million, as set out in the recent White Paper "Roads for Prosperity".

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) on what basis a new M12 was preferred to widening and improving the existing A12; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what consideration was given to widening and improving the A12, before the M12 link between Chelmsford and the M25 was announced; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Consultants appointed by the Department to carry out a scheme identification study of the A12 considered a number of options including widening of the existing road. A road linking M25 with the A12 near Chelmsford was chosen because it represented the best option for relieving both routes, including the congested Brook street interchange.

## A12

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the cost of widening and improving the A12; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Widening the A12 on its present alignment between M25 and Chelmsford has been estimated to cost about £44·5 million.

## Minibus Driver Licensing

**Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress he has made in discussions with the European Commission on the treatment of minibus drivers in its proposal for a Council directive on driver licensing.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We have made good progress in direct discussions with the Commission about minibuses. The Commission's proposals in the second driver licensing directive would require new drivers of minibuses with more than nine seats to take a second test and meet higher fitness standards than for the ordinary car licence.

There is no case, on road safety grounds, for imposing these higher standards.

Commission officials have indicated that they would be prepared to recommend modification of the draft directive so as to allow ordinary car licence holders, including the deaf, to drive minibuses with up to 17 seats, under certain fairly wide-ranging circumstances.

The circumstances envisaged are when minibuses are used for charitable purposes by non-profit-making bodies. The driver should have held a full licence for at least two years, be aged 21 or over and be acting as driver on a voluntary basis. The minibus itself would be limited to a gross weight of 3·5 tonnes excluding any specialist equipment for the carriage of disabled persons.

This approach would allow the continuation of our valuable present arrangements for many services provided for the elderly, the disabled, the sick, youth and religious groups and use by education establishments for all ages. The approach thus covers many categories of real need.

Community bus services provided for these or similar purposes and driven by volunteers would also be unaffected, but other Community bus services and dial-a-ride services would not be covered. The approach would also exclude use by other amenity groups, such as sports clubs, non-charitable organisations and groups of individuals.

Such groups could continue to use minibuses of up to nine seats, but for larger minibuses a driver with the higher licence category would have to be found.

We recognise that this is not wholly satisfactory. It does strike a balance between the case for Community harmonisation and the need for flexibility in transport provision.

We should welcome comments from interested organisations and in particular on the extent of the difficulties which may be caused by the types of minibus use for which a change in licensing requirements would still be required.

We will shortly be issuing a consultation letter to interested organisations, asking for comments to be sent to Department of Transport, Driver and Vehicle Licencing Centre, POLD2, Room D9, Morriston, Swansea SA6 7JL, by Friday 15 September.

I am grateful to individuals, the voluntary groups and the media in the United Kingdom and other parts of the EC for helping to make the case clear through the EC.

### Rear Seat Belts

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what statistical evidence is available to support the view that it should not be made compulsory for car passengers in rear seats to wear seat belts.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Studies done in recent years, at TRRL and elsewhere, have shown that wearing seat belts saves lives, and leads to less serious injuries being sustained in many types of accident.

We encourage all car passengers to use seat belts at all times. Making rear seat belt wearing compulsory before a majority of cars are fitted with such belts could be premature. We have recently introduced legislation to ensure that new cars do have such belts fitted.

Legislation has recently been passed which, from 1 September, will require children to be restrained where appropriate restraints exist.

### Alcohol Abuse

**Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will announce details of the proposed experiment on the rehabilitation of excess alcohol offenders.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We announced proposals to carry out a major experiment in the use of rehabilitation courses designed to influence the attitudes of drunk drivers in the White Paper "The Road User and the Law" published on 7 February this year. In England and Wales, enabling powers will be required for the courts to order rehabilitation for those convicted of drink-drive offences. In Scotland, we are looking into the possibility of setting up a trial scheme employing the existing powers of the courts.

### Road Traffic Law Review

**Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research projects in line with the recommendations he accepted have been initiated by his Department following the publication of the road traffic law review.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We shall be monitoring the effects of the use of technology on compliance with speed limits and traffic light offences. The transport and road research laboratory will also be assessing the experiment in rehabilitation of drink drivers and monitoring the effects of other proposals including retesting and the expanded high risk offender scheme.

### Autoguide

**Mr. Wheeler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has selected a promoter for the installation and operation in London of the autoguide system of electronic route guidance for vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Channon:** I have decided that a licence to operate autoguide in the London area should be awarded to GEC, subject to successful negotiation on the terms of a licence and to the implementation of the Road Traffic (Driver Licensing and Information Systems) Bill.

Last January my Department invited the private sector to submit proposals for the installation and operation of a pilot autoguide scheme in the London area, which would be capable of being upgraded to a fully commercial system to which the public could subscribe.

We received proposals from GEC and from Aguide Services Limited, a joint venture company of which Plessey is the largest shareholder.

I have considered very carefully both sets of proposals, with advice from my financial consultants, Price Waterhouse.

In inviting proposals, I made clear my intention to select the firm or consortium which we believed would ensure that autoguide was developed to provide effective and efficient electronic route guidance to a wide market as soon as practicable without compromising road safety or the environment. Both sets of proposals were of extremely high quality; but I believe that overall those from GEC better meet my stated objectives.

This decision does not in itself confer on GEC a licence to operate autoguide in London. A licence will be subject to negotiation by the Department and GEC, and to the implementation of the necessary legislation.

If a licence is awarded it would give GEC the right to install and operate a pilot autoguide system in a specified part of the London-M25 area. The pilot scheme would be closely monitored by the Department. Our primary concern would be to assess the likely effect of a large scale autoguide system on road safety and traffic management. We have previously undertaken that the results of our evaluation would be presented to Parliament.

If the results of our monitoring showed that a large scale system would not prejudice road safety or good traffic management, the operator would have a right to enter into negotiations for a second licence. This would allow him to provide a fully commercial autoguide system throughout the London/M25 area. Commercial operations could begin by the end of 1993.

I am willing to consider the issue of a licence for a pilot scheme for a further area. The ASL proposal included a pilot scheme covering an area outside London. My Department would be willing to discuss these proposals further with that group if they so wish, and will welcome proposals from other groups also. One of my criteria in assessing proposals would be the extent to which they would promote competition in the development of autoguide. It would be a licensing requirement that a second scheme should be compatible with that being operated in London. This would offer motorists the prospect of continuous route guidance over a large area of the country.

I believe that autoguide has an important role to play in easing congestion and so making the best use of our roads. It is clear that private industry shares that view.

### Panama Canal

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many British-owned ships have used the Panama canal in each of the past two years; and if he will give details of matters relating to use of the canal discussed in the same period with British shipping interests.

**Mr. Portillo** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The number of United Kingdom flag vessels using the Panama canal in each of the past two years from October 1986 to September 1988 is as follows. British-owned vessels that do not fly the United Kingdom flag cannot be identified separately and are not included in the figures. The information is obtained from the annual reports of the Panama Canal Commission.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| October 1986 to September 1987 | 396 |
| October 1987 to September 1988 | 460 |

We continue to keep all matters relating to the canal under review, in close consultation with British shipping interests.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### White Papers

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, for each of the last three White Papers issued by his Department, for which legislation has been started, he will state the time elapsed between their publication and the First Readings of any Bills connected with them; and if he will do the same for the last three White Papers issued by his Department prior to May 1979.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** It is not always easy to establish a direct relationship between one set of published proposals and subsequent legislative provision. The last three White Papers published by this Department, in which legislation was proposed and has subsequently been started or completed, were:

"Special Needs in Education" published August 1980: Education Act 1981, First reading 22 January 1981;
"Better Schools" published March 1985: Education (No. 2) Act 1986, First reading 19 February 1986;
"Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge" published April 1987: implemented through the Education Reform Act 1988, First reading 20 November 1987.

It is not for me to answer for the record of the last Government in this matter, but the information requested should be available in the Library of the House and the *Official Report*.

### Teacher Recruitment

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has made an assessment of the Single European Act; and how it will assist local education authorities in recruiting teachers from the European Community.

**Mr. Butcher:** Freedom of movement for the professions is a key priority in the single market programme. On 21 December 1988 the Council of Ministers of the European Communities adopted a directive which will enable a range of professionals, including teachers, to have their professional qualifications recognized for the purposes of practice in member states other than their own. The directive must be implemented by 1991. My right hon. Friend proposes to make regulations according the benefits of the directive to members of the teaching profession qualified in other member states from September this year. This should assist local education authorities in their recruitment of teachers from other member states.

### Teacher Statistics

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the number of excess teachers in 1979; and what is the current number.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The number of students successfully completing courses of initial teacher training in England and Wales in the summer of 1979 who were known to be still seeking a teaching post at the end of that year was 3,020, or 13 per cent. of all those qualifying whose status was known. These figures include both those unemployed and those in alternative temporary employment.

In 1988 the figures were 700 newly qualified teachers known to be still seeking a teaching post at the end of the year, representing 5 per cent. of the total.

The two sets of data are not precisely comparable because in 1979 the employment status of about a third of those qualifying was assessed somewhat before the end of the year (in October).

### Soviet Studies

**Mr. Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Hamilton on Monday 10 July, *Official Report*, column *346*, on Soviet studies, he will provide a breakdown of the figures based on *(a)* home students and *(b)* overseas students.

**Mr. Jackson:** The further information requested is shown in the table.

*Students studying Russian language or Russian studies full time at British Universities*

| | *1979* | *1980* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Undergraduates* | | | | | | | | | |
| Home | 409 | 393 | 388 | 384 | 428 | 479 | 482 | 499 | 487 |
| Overseas | 23 | 17 | 17 | 19 | 25 | 43 | 34 | 40 | 37 |
| Total | [1]432 | 410 | 405 | 403 | 453 | 522 | 516 | 539 | 524 |
| *Postgraduates* | | | | | | | | | |
| Home | 53 | 60 | 47 | 50 | 38 | 46 | 44 | 57 | 37 |
| Overseas | 24 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 12 |
| Total | 77 | 71 | 55 | 57 | 50 | 52 | 50 | 65 | 49 |

[1] This includes eight students on first diploma or certificate courses not included in the answer given on 10 July.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1988-89.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The sum spent on official hospitality in 1988-89 was £33,813·30.

### National Curriculum

**Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what representations he has received about provision for Christian conscience relating to the elements of the national curriculum in respect of *(a)* the teaching of evolution, *(b* the teaching of sex and social education and *(c)* the use of computers;

(2) what are the implications of the statement in article 2 of the first protocol to the European convention on human rights that the state shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education or teaching in conformity with their own religious convictions for the requirements of the national curriculum relating to *(a)* the teaching of evolution, *(b)* the teaching of sex and social education and *(c)* the use of computers where parents of some children object to such teaching or use as a matter of deeply held religious conviction.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend has received some 600 letters from members of the Exclusive or Plymouth Brethren and other Christian sects seeking withdrawal of their children from such elements within the national curriculum. There is no right of withdrawal from the national curriculum in maintained schools. But parents remain free to educate their children outside the maintained sector, where the national curriculum is not a legal requirement.

### Computer Use

**Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what arrangements will be made to enable a child, whether at a state or non-maintained school, to obtain a recognised qualification by examination where he or she, as a matter of deeply held religious conviction, declines to use a computer, if GCSE examination questions are so set as to be answerable only by computer.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The administration of the GCSE is the responsibility of the independent GCSE examining groups. It is open to schools or individual parents to discuss the special needs of particular pupils with the groups.

### GCSE Examinations

**Mr. David Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress of the GCSE examinations.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** I replied today to a report on the progress of the GCSE examination submitted to me at my request by the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC). I am arranging for copies of SEAC's report and of my reply to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

### Research Grants

**Mr Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much of his Department's budget is devoted to research purposes; how much is given in grants for research; and what proportion of each figure has been devoted to near-market research *(a)* in the current financial year and *(b)* in each of the last three financial years.

**Mr. Jackson** *[holding answer 3 July 1989]:* Details of the Department's expenditure on research, together with that in respect of the research councils and the universities, for which the Secretary of State is also responsible, are given in the "Annual Review of Government Funding Research and Development 1988", copies of which are available in the Library.

Expenditure that might be described as "near market" research is not separately identified, but it is considered to be minimal.

**Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the research grants given for near-market research for which his Department is directly or indirectly responsible in the current financial year and each of the last two financial years.

**Mr. Jackson** *[holding answer 3 July 1989]:* No such grants have been made in the last three years.

### Teachers

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many incentive posts for teachers are currently available; what is the financial remuneration for each grade; what were the comparable figures three years ago, and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Butcher** *[pursuant to his reply, 17 July 1989]:* I regret that the answer previously given contained some inaccuracies. The correct information is as follows:

| | *October 1987 (the first year)* | | *September 1988* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Value (£)* | *Number* | *Value (£) (from 1 April 1989)* | *Number* |
| A | 501 | 25,000 | 858 | 43,000 |
| B | 1,002 | 69,000 | 1,284 | 59,600 |
| C | 2,001 | — | 2,568 | 9,300 |
| D | 3,000 | 28,500 | 3,426 | 27,000 |
| E | 4,200 | 6,500 | 4,710 | 8,000 |
| | TOTAL | 129,000 | | 147,000 |

There will be a further 23,000 A allowances and 10,900 C allowances from this September as a result of the recommendations of the interim advisory committee and plans already in the pipeline. With changes in the availability of other allowances, the net increase in the number of allowances this year is 27,600, taking the total up to 174,600.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Paris (Visit)

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Prime Minister what matters she raised with the secretary general of the United Nations during her recent visit to Paris.

**The Prime Minister:** I did not have a formal meeting with the United Nations secretary general during my recent visit to Paris. But we met in the margins of other events and discussed international issues of current concern.

### Nursing and Midwifery

**Mr. Leith:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement about the report of the review body for nursing staff, midwives, health visitors and professions allied to medicine on the pay of nursing and midwifery educational staff.

**The Prime Minister:** The report has been published today, and copies are available in the Vote Office. The Government are grateful to members of the review body for the work which has gone into the preparation of this additional report, which is supplementary to their sixth report on the pay of nurses and midwives in clinical and senior non-educational grades, published in February.

The review body has recommended pay scales, to take effect from 1 April 1989, for the new grading structure for nursing and midwifery educational staff, which was agreed between the two sides of the Nursing and Midwifery Staff Negotiation Council in March 1989. This follows on from the introduction last year of a new grading structure for nurses and midwives who do clinical work. Virtually all the staff concerned have now been regraded on the basis of the new structure. The amount of the pay increase individuals would receive under these recommendations depends on their grading under the old and now under the new structure.

Nearly 80 per cent. of the staff concerned were previously graded H or I under the clinical grading review. Most of these have been allocated to grades 1 or 2 under the new educational grading structure and would receive increases of between 6·8 per cent. and 7·1 per cent.

The review body has recommended proportionately higher increases for the minority of staff in the more senior grades who did not benefit from the introduction of the clinical grading structure in 1988. In addition, many senior tutors will benefit from the fact that the new structure provides for the correction of pay and grading anomalies which arose in 1988, under which some senior tutors were paid no more than, or less than, the tutors they were supervising.

Excluding employers' costs the recommendations are estimated to add some 2·4 per cent. for assimilation costs and an average 7·4 per cent. for the basic pay increase, approximately £11·6 million in total, to the 1989-90 paybill costs for nursing and midwifery education staff in Great Britain.

The Government have decided to accept in full the review body's recommendations, and a formal offer is being made to the staff side today. I hope it will be possible to put the new rates into payment as soon as possible.

The expected cost of the new pay scales for educational staff, including the cost of introducing the new grading structure has already been reflected in the extra allocation made to health authorities following the Government's acceptance in February of the review body's recommendations on the pay of other nursing and midwifery staff.

### Paris Summit

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister what action she has taken to help implement those passages of the Paris summit communiqué which pertain to the forgiveness of international debt and the preservation of the rain forest.

**The Prime Minister:** It has long been our policy to welcome debt for nature swaps agreed voluntarily between commercial banks, conservation organisations and debtors. The United Kingdom has taken the lead in forgiving ODA debt and had now cancelled nearly £1 billion worth of such debts worldwide.

### Overseas Travel

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Prime Minister what has been the total cost of her overseas travel, including her staff, for each year from 1979-80; and how many countries were visited in each year.

**The Prime Minister** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The cost of my overseas travel, and of those accompanying me every year[1] since 1979 and the number of countries visited in each year is as follows:

| | £ | Number of countries visited |
|---|---|---|
| [2]1979-80 | 151,864 | 9 |
| 1980-81 | 133,206 | 12 |
| 1981-82 | 556,000 | 16 |
| 1982-83 | 523,587 | 13 |
| 1983-84 | 216,146 | 11 |
| 1984-85 | 414,259 | 10 |
| 1985-86 | 457,483 | 16 |
| 1986-87 | 447,066 | 13 |
| 1987-88 | 341,880 | 11 |
| 1988-89 | 612,852 | 14 |

[1] Billing delays prevent some costs from being shown in the financial year in which the services were provided. The figures, therefore, do not necessarily reflect when the expenditure was actually incurred.

[2] From May 1979.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Local Telephone Calls

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list in rank order information available to him on the cost of local telephone calls for all countries within the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Forth:** There is no standard measure which enables comparisons to be made between the cost of local calls in different community countries. For example, the average local call area is particularly large in the United Kingdom, which means that many calls at local rates here would be charged at long distance rates in other countries. One recent survey, based on rates during an 8am-6pm working day, and averaging prices for BT and Mercury, found the prices in pounds sterling for a three minute call to be:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 0·098 |
| Germany | 0·072 |
| France | 0·056 |
| Italy | 0·054 |

Source: National Utility Services, February 1989.

However, Oftel has produced figures comparing costs of an average resident's telephone bill and the cost of an average business bill in the four European countries which in terms of population and size are most readily comparable. The figures are (as indices, excluding VAT):

| | Residential basket | Business basket |
|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 100 | 100 |
| France | 78 | 85 |
| Italy | 101 | 122 |
| West Germany | 103 | 106 |

OFTEL, January 1989.

### Regional Office

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether there are any plans for the Department of Trade and Industry to open a new regional office in eastern England.

**Mr. Newton:** Yes. The Secretary of State and I have decided to establish a full regional office in Cambridge, building on its existing presence there to provide an even better service to business in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. This new regional office continues the process we announced in the White Paper "DTI—the Department for Enterprise" in January 1988 of strengthening and extending the regional network, recognising the importance of contacts with business at a local level.

The DTI's regional offices are now handling over 500 applications each week for the enterprise initiative consultancy schemes, as well as dealing with hundreds of export inquiries, signposting firms towards help on the single European market, the enterprise and education initiative and the regional initiative. In all cases, our regional offices work closely with chambers of commerce, local enterprise agencies and other local business organisations.

The Cambridge office will continue to get support from the three existing satellite offices linked closely with local business organisations, in Norwich, Ipswich and Chelmsford. Those satellite offices have played a valuable role in offering an open doorway to DTI services in important East Anglian business centres.

### Motor Vehicles (Clocking)

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will detail the steps which his Department intends to take to protect the public from the fraudulent practice of clocking motor vehicles.

**Mr. Forth** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The fraudulent alteration of a car odometer is already an offence against the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 and carries a maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment or an unlimited fine, or both. The Act is enforced by local trading standards officers. I have no plans to introduce new legislation in this area.

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will estimate the extent of the illegal turning-back of car odometers by vendors of second-hand cars.

**Mr. Forth** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I do not have the information on which to base such an estimate. However, during 1988 there were 383 successful prosecutions by local trading standards departments relating to false mileage recordings on motor cars.

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will summarise his Department's inquiries into the possible production and potential cost of tamper-proof odometers to prevent fraudulent mileages being recorded; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Forth** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* My Department has made no such inquiries, although we have encouraged the motor industry to develop a British standard specification for tamper-resistant odometers.

### Objective 2 Support

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list all local authority areas in the United Kingdom which are to qualify for objective 2 support from the European Commission; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* My reply to the hon. Members for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton) and for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse), (*Official Report, Volume 153, no. 111,* columns *459-60*) listed all the areas of the United Kingdom designated as eligible for the European regional development fund.

The list of areas designated by the Commission under objective 2 was published in the official journal of the European Communities of 25 April 1989 (No. L112/19). The areas were defined by combined reference to local authority areas and travel-to-work areas. The hon. Member's constituency was designated in its entirety.

The list of objective 2 areas is generally very satisfactory, but I regret that a number of areas have been excluded by the Commission despite repeated representations by my right hon. Friend and others.

### Integrated Development Operation

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the total amount of financial support allocated by the European Commission for integrated development operation programmes for the latest date available in *(a)* Birmingham, *(b)* Bradford, *(c)* Yorkshire and Humberside, *(d)* Merseyside, *(e)* Manchester/Salford/Trafford and *(f)* Strathclyde; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The Commission has agreed to allocate the following sums to four of these programmes:—

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| Birmingham | 203 |
| Bradford | 56 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 309 |
| Strathclyde | 378 |

The figures include grants from the European regional development fund and the European social fund, and loans from the European investment bank and the European Coal and Steel Community. The other two programme applications have yet to be approved by the Commission.

### Post Office

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received from Neilston community council concerning the refusal of the chairman of the Post Office to meet the hon. Member for Eastwood; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* I have written both to the Secretary of Neilston community council, and to my hon. Friend.

### Odometers

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps his Department has taken over the past 10 years to persuade the motor trade to develop and install tamper-proof odometers in motor vehicles.

**Mr. Forth:** As yet a full tamper-proof odometer has not been developed, but my Department has sought to encourage the motor industry to develop a British Standard specification for tamper-resistant odometers.

### Investment

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what estimate he has made of investment by the German Government in industry and commerce during the period 1979 to 1988;

(2) what is the present level of investment by Government in industrial and commercial enterprises in Germany, France, Italy and Spain as a percentage of gross domestic product;

(3) what is the present level of investment by Her Majesty's Government in industrial and commercial enterprises as a percentage of gross domestic product.

**Mr. Lilley:** There are no data available on the level of Government investment in industry and commerce in Germany, France, Italy and Spain. In the United Kingdom direct Government investment in industry and commerce is confined to the nationalised industries.

## SCOTLAND

### Council House Sales

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of right to buy applications for *(a)* houses and *(b)* flats for each local authority in Scotland as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Prior to 1987, only the total number of right-to-buy applications was collected centrally from local authorities. The information available for 1987-88 and 1988-89 is given in the following table.

*Right to buy applications by dwelling type*

| | *1987-88* | | | *1988-89* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *District* | *Houses* | *Flats* | *Not known* | *Houses* | *Flats* | *Not known* |
| SCOTLAND | 18,724 | 8,214 | 7,251 | 27,994 | 16,027 | 4,098 |
| Berwickshire | 86 | 11 | — | 174 | 8 | — |
| Ettrick and Lauderdale | 144 | 55 | — | 200 | 52 | — |
| Roxburgh | 97 | 45 | 124 | 237 | 89 | — |
| Tweeddale | 48 | 13 | — | 75 | 21 | — |
| Clackmannan | 360 | 73 | — | 457 | 130 | — |
| Falkirk[1] | 609 | 143 | 636 | 1,470 | 411 | — |
| Stirling | 258 | 43 | 314 | 552 | 81 | 228 |
| Annandale and Eskdale | 139 | 14 | 85 | 297 | 29 | — |
| Nithsdale | 366 | 117 | — | 493 | 168 | — |
| Stewartry | 99 | 18 | — | 134 | 20 | — |
| Wigtown | 180 | 21 | — | 206 | 31 | — |

| | | 1987-88 | | | 1988-89 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District | Houses | Flats | Not known | Houses | Flats | Not known |
| Dunfermline | 851 | 240 | — | 1,146 | 410 | — |
| Kirkcaldy | 672 | 312 | — | 944 | 482 | — |
| North East Fife | 183 | 63 | 108 | n/a | n/a | 518 |
| Aberdeen | 641 | 286 | — | 1,154 | 465 | — |
| Banff and Buchan | 348 | 47 | — | 262 | 39 | 201 |
| Gordon | 144 | 9 | — | 169 | 6 | — |
| Kincardine and Deeside | 88 | 14 | — | 89 | 6 | — |
| Moray | 389 | 30 | — | 640 | 80 | — |
| Badenoch and Strathspey | 52 | 2 | 22 | 77 | 1 | — |
| Caithness | 144 | 11 | — | 106 | 3 | — |
| Inverness | 209 | 34 | — | 367 | 45 | — |
| Lochaber | 169 | 25 | — | 170 | 30 | — |
| Nairn | 25 | 1 | — | 42 | 3 | — |
| Ross and Cromarty | 119 | 2 | — | 194 | 4 | — |
| Skye and Lochalsh | 21 | 0 | — | 37 | 0 | — |
| Sutherland[1] | 59 | 0 | — | 56 | 0 | — |
| East Lothian | 339 | 98 | 496 | 939 | 412 | — |
| Edinburgh | 274 | 703 | 2,212 | 1,462 | 2,496 | — |
| Midlothian | 425 | 130 | 178 | 684 | 252 | — |
| West Lothian | 668 | 109 | — | 1,207 | 262 | — |
| Argyll and Bute | 64 | 15 | 199 | n/a | n/a | 422 |
| Bearsden and Milnavie[2] | 44 | 23 | — | 53 | 27 | — |
| Clydebank | 289 | 316 | — | 536 | 582 | — |
| Clydesdale | 419 | 25 | — | 524 | 55 | — |
| Cumbernauld and Kilsyth | 150 | 58 | — | 156 | 111 | — |
| Cumnock and Doon Valley[1] | 314 | 23 | 115 | n/a | n/a | 214 |
| Cunninghame | 857 | 222 | — | 1,167 | 316 | — |
| Dumbarton | 531 | 219 | — | 593 | 340 | — |
| East Kilbride | 69 | 20 | — | 91 | 44 | — |
| Eastwood | 73 | 25 | — | 89 | 27 | — |
| Glasgow | 1,861 | 2,474 | — | 3,070 | 4,732 | — |
| Hamilton | 594 | 121 | 281 | 1,101 | 357 | — |
| Inverclyde | 277 | 191 | — | 299 | 231 | — |
| Kilmarnock and Loudoun | 600 | 102 | — | 688 | 157 | — |
| Kyle and Carrick | 537 | 197 | 350 | 956 | 399 | — |
| Monklands[1] | 789 | 253 | — | 386 | 169 | 433 |
| Motherwell | n/a | n/a | 1,351 | n/a | n/a | 2,082 |
| Renfrew | 662 | 551 | 509 | 1,133 | 1,071 | — |
| Strathkelvin | 273 | 42 | 271 | 565 | 164 | — |
| Angus | 460 | 44 | — | 512 | 68 | — |
| Dundee | 1,051 | 470 | — | 1,208 | 900 | — |
| Perth and Kinross | 442 | 140 | — | 589 | 224 | — |
| Orkney Islands | 66 | 1 | — | 100 | 1 | — |
| Shetland Islands | 54 | 4 | — | 53 | 5 | — |
| Western Isles | 42 | 9 | — | 85 | 11 | — |

[1] Returns outstanding for Q4 1988 and Q1 1989.

[2] Return outstanding for Q1 1989.

n/a—Not available.

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many council dwellings sold under the right to buy were constructed *(a)* before 1900, *(b)* 1900 to 1910, *(c)* 1911 to 1920, *(d)* 1921 to 1930, *(e)* 1931 to 1940, *(f)* 1941 to 1950, *(g)* 1951 to 1960, *(h)* 1961 to 1970, *(j)* 1971 to 1980, *(k)* 1980 to 1981, *(l)* 1981 to 1982, *(m)* 1982 to 1983, *(n)* 1983 to 1984, *(o)* 1984 to 1985, *(p)* 1985 to 1986, *(q)* 1986 to 1987, and *(r)* 1987 to 1988.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Information on the age of council houses sold has been placed in the House Library. Prior to 1986, sales to sitting tenants were not subdivided into right to buy and on a voluntary basis.

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many dwellings were sold to *(a)* sitting tenants—right to buy, *(b)* sitting tenants—voluntary sale, *(c)* other individuals by each local authority in Scotland and for Scotland as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Information prior to 1986 does not differentiate between sales under the right-to-buy provisions and voluntary sales to sitting tenants. Tables giving the information available have been placed in the House Library.

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many sales other than the right-to-buy sales, were completed by each local authority in Scotland and for Scotland as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Information on sales other than to sitting tenants or other individuals is set out in the following table.

*Local Authority sales other than to sitting tenants and other individuals*

| | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-3* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scotland** | 257 | 911 | 388 | 1,066 | 127 | 788 | 315 | 1,214 | 263 |
| **Borders** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Berwickshire** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Ettrick and Lauderdale** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Roxburgh** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Tweeddale**[1] | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Central** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Clackmannan** | 0 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| **Falkirk** | 0 | 29 | 45 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| **Stirling** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Dumfries and Galloway** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Annandale and Eskdale** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Nithsdale** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Stewartry** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Wigtown** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Fife** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Dunfermline** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Kirkcaldy** | 0 | 0 | 2 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **North East Fife** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Grampian** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Aberdeen** | 37 | 2 | 0 | 11 | 19 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 15 |
| **Banff and Buchan** | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Gordon** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Kincardine and Deeside** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Moray** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Highland** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Badenoch and Strathspey** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Caithness** | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Inverness** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Lochaber** | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 27 | 33 |
| **Nairn** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Ross and Cromarty** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Skye and Lochalsh** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Sutherland** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Lothian** | | | | | | | | | |
| **East Lothian** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Edinburgh** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 734 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Midlothian** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| **West Lothian** | 13 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Strathclyde** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Argyll and Bute** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Bearsden and Milngavie** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Clydebank** | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Clydesdale** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Cumbernauld and Kilsyth** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Cumnock and Doon Valley**[1] | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Cunninghame** | 0 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Dumbarton** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **East Kilbride** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Eastwood** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Glasgow** | 108 | 776 | 172 | 279 | 77 | 769 | 48 | 1,187 | 152 |
| **Hamilton** | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Inverclyde** | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 216 | 0 | 0 |
| **Kilmarnock and Loudoun** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Kyle and Carrick** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Monklands** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Motherwell** | 0 | 61 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Renfrew** | 79 | 0 | 107 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Strathkelvin** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Tayside** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Angus** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Dundee** | 8 | 2 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Perth and Kinross** | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 56 |
| **Orkney Islands** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Shetlands Islands** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| **Western Isles** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

[1] Returns outstanding for 1988-89.

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of right-to-buy applications current at end of quarter, for which the information is available, for each local authority in Scotland and for Scotland as a whole.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The information requested is set out in the following table.

*Number of Current Applications at 31 March 1989*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Scotland | 32,918 |
| Berwickshire | 48 |
| Ettrick and Lauderdale | 104 |
| Roxburgh | 125 |
| Tweeddale | 65 |
| Clackmannan | 357 |
| Falkirk | 848 |
| Stirling[1] | 520 |
| Annandale and Eskdale | 197 |
| Nithsdale | 268 |
| Stewartry | 71 |
| Wigtown | 116 |
| Dunfermline | 819 |
| Kirkcaldy | 986 |
| North East Fife | 337 |
| Aberdeen | 1,030 |
| Banff and Buchan[2] | 409 |
| Gordon | 108 |
| Kincardine and Deeside | 30 |
| Moray | 311 |
| Badenoch and Strathspey | 37 |
| Caithness | 47 |
| Inverness | 284 |
| Lochaber | 131 |
| Nairn | 10 |
| Ross and Cromarty | 70 |
| Skye and Lochalsh | 9 |
| Sutherland[2] | 58 |
| East Lothian | 564 |
| Edinburgh | 3,013 |
| Midlothian | 613 |
| West Lothian | 886 |
| Argyll and Bute | 390 |
| Bearsden and Milngavie[1] | 88 |
| Clydebank | 821 |
| Clydesdale | 411 |
| Cumbernauld and Kilsyth | 173 |
| Cumnock and Doon Valley[4] | 255 |
| Cunninghame | 932 |
| Dumbarton | 1,040 |
| East Kilbride | 64 |
| Eastwood | 67 |
| Glasgow | 5,645 |
| Hamilton | 1,287 |
| Inverclyde | 406 |
| Kilmarnock and Loudoun | 637 |
| Kyle and Carrick | 856 |
| Monklands[3] | 942 |
| Motherwell | 1,528 |
| Renfrew | 1,414 |
| Strathkelvin | 364 |
| Angus | 257 |
| Dundee | 2,244 |
| Perth and Kinross | 463 |
| Orkney Islands | 54 |
| Shetland Islands | 36 |
| Western Isles | 73 |

[1] Latest available information at 31 December 1988

[2] Latest available information at 30 September 1988

[3] Latest available information at 30 June 1988

[4] Latest available information at 31 December 1987

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of loans from *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* other sources for right to buy purchasers by each local authority in Scotland and for Scotland as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Information collected centrally prior to 1986 did not differentiate between sales under the right-to-buy provisions and voluntary sales to sitting tenants. Copies of tables giving the information available have been placed in the House Library.

## Employment Training

**Mr. Dewar:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were receiving training under the employment training scheme in Scotland for each month from September 1988 till the latest date for which figures are available.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The number of people in Scotland who have participated in employment training in each month from September 1988 is set out in the table. These figures exclude those people who continued in employment training under community programme terms and conditions.

| *Date* | *In training* |
|---|---|
| *1988* | |
| September | 4,361 |
| October | 6,608 |
| November | 9,095 |
| December | 11,660 |
| *1989* | |
| January | 13,931 |
| February | 17,793 |
| March | 20,866 |
| April | 21,965 |
| May | 22,309 |
| June | 23,205 |

## Highland Health Board

**Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the names of members of the Highland health board appointed for the first time in 1989; and if he will give for each their experience, expertise and relevant background and the nominating body.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The information requested is as follows:

*Highland health board: members appointed for the first time in 1989*

| *Name* | *Background* | *Nominated by* |
|---|---|---|
| Mr. J. G. Ligertwood | Retired bank manager; treasurer of many charitable organisations a various times | Highland health board |
| Mr. C. Neilson | Self employed retail businessman; former member of Lochaber local health council since its inception; chairman since 1977; former chairman of Lochaber district council | Lochaber district council; Lochaber local health council |
| Mrs. S. G. H. Stone | Managing director of Highland Fine Cheeses Ltd.; founder, Ross-shire health protection trust | Ross and Cromarty district council |
| Miss I. Urquhart | Registered general nurse; member management committee of crossroads (Ross and Cromarty); member Highland nursing advisory committee | Highland health board |

### Radioactive Material

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all premises in Scotland *(a)* that are registered under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 and *(b)* that are authorised to accumulate and discharge radioactive material under the same Act.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** This information is not yet available in a form that is suitable for publication.

### Fresh Water Mussels

**Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will publish the information he has on the condition of the Scottish freshwater mussel population; what research he has commissioned; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has received about the survival of the Scottish fresh water mussel (Margaritifera Margaritifera) population.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The fresh water pearl mussel Margaritifera Margaritifera is widely distibuted in Scotland thanks to the generally high quality of our rivers. I am aware of concerns which have been expressed recently about the possible depletion of stocks by overfishing or killing of mussels by amateur pearl fishermen. I have received two letters recently about the threat to pearl mussel stocks.

No research project on Scottish fresh water mussels has been commissioned by the Department. Scientific advice on fresh water species is provided or obtained as necessary by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland's fresh water fisheries laboratory at Pitlochry. I am currently considering, with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, a proposal from the Nature Conservancy Council that increased protection should be afforded to the fresh water pearl mussel under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

### Baby Foods

**Sir Dennis Walters:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many prosecutions have been carried out in relation to contaminated baby foods in 1989 in Scotland.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** None.

**Sir Dennis Walters:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many reported contaminations of baby foods are currently being investigated by the police.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** There are no confirmed cases of malicious contamination of baby foods currently being investigated by the police in Scotland.

**Sir Dennis Walters:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on whether the most recent contaminations of baby foods, which have been prosecuted have taken place inside or outside the factories of the companies concerned.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Such information is not centrally collected.

### Alcohol and Drug Abuse

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was spent on the treatment of *(a)* alcohol abuse and *(b)* drug abuse in each of the past seven years.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Services within the NHS for alcohol misusers and drug misusers are generally provided as part of the range of community and hospital-based services. The cost of treatment in these particular areas is not separately identified. The Government have made substantial increases in resources available to health boards since 1979 and it is for individual boards to determine the level of expenditure on particular services from within their overall financial allocations.

In addition, in 1984 the Government set up a programme of grant support for a range of local drug projects run by health boards, local authorities and voluntary bodies. The size of this programme has steadily increased and in 1989-90 it is running at approximately £2 million per annum, double the figure for 1988-89.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was spent on official hospitality by his Department in 1988-89.

**Mr. Rifkind:** My Department spent £42,987 on official hospitality in 1988-89.

### Ministers (Travel)

**Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when was the last recorded journey to Scotland by a Government Minister travelling north via the M1/A1 roads.

**Mr. Rifkind:** For journeys between Scotland and London my ministerial colleagues and I do not normally travel by road.

## ENERGY

### Safe Integral Reactor Consortium

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) from which Government account money is provided for the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority commitment to the SIR consortium; and if the money is a grant or loan;

(2) how much research funding has been allocated for the years in which figures are available to the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority to support its role as a member of the Safe Integral Reactor consortium;

(3) how much the SIR consortium is bidding for from the United States Department of Energy; and for what purpose;

(4) what rate of return the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority is budgeting for in its commercial venture as part of the SIR consortium;

(5) when and where he expects the first SIR to be built;

(6) when the SIR consortium was established; who are its original and its current members; and how much each have contributed to its income.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** As I stated in my reply of 17 July at col. *52*, the UKAEA will be using some of its own pre-contract research funds to support its role as a member of the SIR consortium, whose other members are Rolls-Royce and Associates, Stone and Webster and Combustion Engineering. The terms of the UKAEA's involvement in the SIR consortium are commercially confidential.

### Nuclear Power Stations

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy further to his reply of 17 July, if he will list the consents and permissions, with the granting authority in each case, necessary to build a nuclear power station.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** In England and Wales, an electricity board needs to obtain the consent of my right hon. Friend under section 2 of the Electric Lighting Act 1909, as amended. When granting his consent under section 2 he may also direct that deemed planning permission be granted under section 40 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

Anyone else needs to obtain my right hon. Friend's consent under section 3 of the Energy Act 1983 and to obtain the necessary planning permission from the relevant planning authority.

In addition, a licence to install and operate a nuclear reactor must be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965. Under the licence the agreement of the HSE must be obtained at all stages of construction, leading up to consent to commence operation.

Other consents and permissions, which also apply to other types of development, may also be required from the appropriate authorities.

### Atomic Energy Authority

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what research funds he has allocated to the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority; and how much has been allocated in each of the last 10 years for *(a)* all research and *(b)* pre-contract research.

**Mr. Parkinson:** My Department's expenditure on its nuclear programmes over the last 10 years is set out in my answer of 10 July to the hon. Member for Sedgefield at column *380*. Since April 1986, when the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority began to operate as a trading fund, charges to the Department under the programme letters have been on a cost-plus basis. These charges include a contribution towards general authority overheads, one component of which is pre-contract research. The component is not separately identified in charges to the Department.

In the time available it has not been possible to provide figures for the Department's expenditure with the UKAEA on non-nuclear research.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1988-89.

**Mr. Parkinson:** The Department spent £57,000 on official hospitality in 1988-89.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Vocational Training for Mental Handicap (Conference)

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will place in the Library any papers arising from the first European national conference for vocational training for mental handicap held in Maastricht; and if he will take steps to ensure that the British Government is represented at future such conferences.

**Mr. Lee:** No papers resulting from the conference in Maastricht have been made available.

The conferences are organised by the co-operation of European firms, employment initiatives and co-operatives for the psychologically disabled (CEFEC) which is an independent organisation.

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total number employed in the United Kingdom by *(a)* local government and *(b)* the railways industry in 1978, 1983 and the latest date for which figures are available; and if he will indicate any significant changes of definition affecting the comparison of these statistics.

**Mr. Lee:** The total numbers employed in Great Britain by local government were as follows:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| June 1978 | 2,910,000 |
| June 1983 | 2,853,000 |
| June 1988 | 2,967,000 |
| December 1988 | [1]2,964,000 |

[1] Latest available.

(Data for Northern Ireland is not comparable and therefore not included.)

*Source:* Department of the Environment.

The abolition of the metropolitan counties and Greater London council and the change in status of local authority bus and municipal airport staff during 1986 and 1987 will have had a significant downward influence on the figures.

The number employed in the railways industries in the United Kingdom were as follows:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| June 1978 | 185,000 |
| June 1983 | 161,000 |
| June 1988 | 133,000 |
| March 1989 | [1]131,000 |

[1] Latest available.

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish for the information given in the answer of 14 November 1988, *Official Report*, columns *418-19*, concerning the latest new earnings survey, the estimated numbers from whom the sample was taken; and if he will add his estimate for the number of full-time as well as part-time workers.

**Mr. Lee** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The estimated numbers for 1988 are as follows:

| | *million* |
|---|---|
| Full-time employees in employment | 16·2 |
| Part-time employees in employment | 3·4 |

### Construction Training

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many construction training places on the ET scheme are training to a fully skilled standard.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The information requested is not available. Information on the types of training being undertaken by people on employment training will be available in the autumn.

### Deptford Skill Centre

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were trained on the Construction Industry Training Board (ATS) adult training scheme at Deptford skill centre; how much it cost for trainees qualified and placed in employment; and what was the national average cost of training a skilled construction worker.

**Mr. Nicholls:** In the financial year 1988-89, 61 people were trained on CITB-sponsored adult training programmes at Deptford skill centre. The national average cost of training a skilled construction worker in a skill centre is £130 per trainee week. Skill centres are not involved in placing CITB-sponsored trainees and therefore figures on placing costs are not held.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many trainees were trained under the new JTS at Deptford skill centre during 1987-88; how many achieved skilled status; and how many were placed in employment at the end of training.

**Mr. Nicholls:** In the financial year 1987-88, 20 trainees successfully completed their new job training scheme training plans at Deptford skill centre. No figures are available on the destinations of those completing, therefore the numbers of those moving on to achieve either skilled status or employment is not known.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the development value of the site of Deptford skill centre.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Government have appointed King and Company, surveyors, to value the Skills Training Agency (STA) estate, prior to the sale of STA to the private sector. King and Company's assessment of the value of individual skill centres is commercially sensitive until sale negotiations are complete. The whole of STA will be offered for sale and the Government are interested in bids from those who want to run a training business. Should there be any development gains, my right hon. Friend has made clear that he will make provision for the Government to share in any such gains in the years immediately after sale.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment within the catchment area of Deptford skill centre how many skilled construction workers are needed to meet the demand of employers; how many skilled workers were trained in these trades in this area in 1988; and to what extent this meets the placement figure for each trade.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Deptford skill centre attracts trainees from all over London.

The Construction Industry training board estimates that in 1988, between 4,500 and 8,500 replacement manual construction employees (excluding those in the unskilled operative category) were required.

The London Research Centre's 1988 director of construction training estimates that 4,500 training places were provided by public and private sector organisations, and 5,000 college places.

Placement figures for construction trades are not available.

### Rehabilitation

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if pursuant to the reply to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe, on 3 July, *Official Report*, column 71, he will list the numbers of people who have completed: *(a)* rehabilitation courses and *(b)* courses of assessment and guidance at employment rehabilitation centres in each of the last five years.

**Mr. Lee:** The numbers of people completing assessment courses and rehabilitation courses provided by the employment rehabilitation service in each of the last five years is as follows:

| | *Number of assessment courses* | *Number of rehabilitation courses* |
|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 2,500 | 14,500 |
| 1985-86 | 8,100 | 12,900 |
| 1986-87 | 11,000 | 12,400 |
| 1987-88 | 13,400 | 12,200 |
| 1988-89 | 25,300 | 11,800 |

### Wages Councils

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what research he has conducted into the implications of abolishing wages councils.

**Mr. Nicholls:** A large body of evidence exists on the implications for pay and jobs of the abolition of wages councils. This includes studies undertaken or commissioned by the Department which have been listed in previous parliamentary answers (*Official Report* 21 February 1985, col. *516* and 18 June 1985, col. *92*). Virtually all of the research work on this subject conducted in the 1980s and known to the Department supports the view that removing statutory minimum wage provisions can be expected to have beneficial effects on employment.

### Industrial Accident Hazards (Bexley)

**Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many sites within the London borough of Bexley are subject to the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** In the London borough of Bexley one site has been notified to the Health and Safety Executive under the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1984. This is Rhone Poulenc Ltd., Crabtree Manor way, Belvedere.

### Disabled Persons

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will update the table on employment of severely disabled persons given in his answer of 27 May 1988, *Official Report*, columns 395-6.

**Mr. Lee:** Information on the number of severely disabled workers employed in each employment service region on 31 March 1987, 31 March 1988 and 31 March 1989 is set out in the table.

| | *31 March 1987* | *31 March 1988* | *31 March 1989* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *(a) Remploy* | | | |
| South East | 329 | 325 | 950 |
| London | 687 | 665 | |
| South West | 521 | 516 | 515 |
| West Midlands | 672 | 646 | 608 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 650 | 653 | 647 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 1,125 | 1,104 | 1,019 |
| North West | 1,644 | 1,647 | 1,595 |
| Northern | 909 | 920 | 873 |
| Wales | 1,504 | 1,492 | 1,450 |
| Scotland | 1,029 | 1,072 | 1,019 |
| *(b) Local Advisory Sheltered Provision* | | | |
| South East | 301 | 322 | 1,077 |
| London | 640 | 639 | |
| South West | 1,034 | 1,072 | 1,018 |
| West Midlands | 565 | 617 | 596 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 672 | 758 | 788 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 556 | 567 | 685 |
| North West | 666 | 699 | 785 |
| Northern | 228 | 235 | 276 |
| Wales | 504 | 532 | 551 |
| Scotland | 754 | 833 | 912 |

### Sheltered Employment

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will update the table on sheltered employment given in his answer of 16 June 1988, *Official Report*, columns 313-4.

**Mr. Lee:** The information is not readily available. I will write as soon as possible.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much was spent on official hospitality by his Department in 1988-89.

**Mr. Cope:** £44,100.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Panama

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice is currently being offered to British citizens resident in or travelling to Panama.

**Mr. Eggar:** We are advising British citizens intending to travel to Panama to consider whether their journey is necessary and, if so, to contact the embassy on arrival. We are not aware of any difficulties involving the resident British community, but the embassy maintains close contact with them.

### EC Directives

**Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what procedures are adopted, and what public record is kept, by the Commission or Council of the European Community of the appropriate legal instruments, existing or specially introduced, in each member state which are activated to implement directives agreed by the Council of Ministers; if comprehensive publication occurs of such directives and respective legislation in each member state or on a community wide basis, and what relevant information is published by Her Majesty's Government, or other body, in respect of the United Kingdom.

**Mrs. Chalker:** We are not aware of any public record kept by the Commission or the Council. Details of directives and other instruments adopted by the Council are given in the *Official Journal* of the European Communities. The major measures adopted are also given in the six-monthly White Papers on developments in the European Community, but comprehensive information on national implementing legislation is not published by the Community or United Kingdom Government.

### Human Rights

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in Aruba;

(2) how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in Benin;

(3) how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in Ecuador;

(4) how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in St. Pierre and Miquelan.

**Mr. Eggar:** None.

### Nicaragua

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will now assign a full-time ambassador to Nicaragua; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** We have no plans to make further appointments to Her Majesty's embassy in Managua for the time being, but diplomatic staffing levels at all our posts overseas are kept under review.

### Ministerial Visits

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many official visits abroad he has made during his tenure of office; how many officials on average accompanied him on each trip; and what was the total cost.

**Mr. Eggar** *[pursuant to his reply, 5 July 1989, c. 171]*: The reply omitted support staff (communications, secretarial and security) who accompany my right hon. and learned Friend on his official visits overseas. The average number of officials accompanying the Foreign Secretary, including support staff, has been nine.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Baby Foods

**Sir Dennis Walters:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prosecutions have been carried out in relation to contaminated baby foods in the current year in England and Wales;

(2) how many reported contaminations of baby foods are currently being investigated by the police;

(3) what information he has on whether the recent contaminations of baby foods which have been prosecuted have taken place inside or outside the factories of the companies concerned.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that there are two incidents of malicious contamination of baby food which are at present under investigation. There is no evidence that these or the other incidents reported earlier in the year occurred in the factory. None of these incidents has so far resulted in a prosecution for contamination under section 38(1) of the Public Order Act 1986.

### Police, Leicestershire

**Mr. Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has yet received the report prepared by assistant chief constable Don Dovesston into Leicestershire police.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand that the investigation into allegations of improper disclosure of information by officers of the Leicestershire constabularly, which is being supervised by the Police Complaints Authority, has not yet been completed. When it is completed it will be for the police authority and the chief officer as appropriate to consider what further action should be taken. Home Office Ministers have no role in these procedures.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent on official hospitality by his Department in 1988-89.

**Mr. Hurd:** Final figures are not yet available. The provisional outturn figure is £43,379.

### Domestic Violence

**Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what conclusions the ministerial group on women's issues has reached on the Home Office research study on domestic violence.

**Mr. John Patten:** The ministerial group discussed the study at its meeting yesterday and considered that it provides a good basis for examining and determining policy. The group has set in hand:

futher work on the use of the criminal and civil law and the response to domestic violence by the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the courts;

an examination of the ways in which social services departments and health services could give more effective help to victims of domestic violence and their families;

an examination of guidance and materials currently available to schools in this area and a consideration of the role of personal and social education in helping to prevent domestic violence.

The results of these initiatives and others already in progress will be reported to future meetings of the group.

### Traffic Regulation Enforcement

**Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to introduce type approval machinery for technological aids to traffic regulation enforcement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Type approval requirements already apply in many areas of road traffic law. The White Paper "The Road User and the Law" (Cm. 576), set out proposals to apply such requirements to automatic detection devices to be used in the enforcement of speeding and traffic light offences. Legislation to implement these proposals will be introduced when parliamentary time permits.

### Prisoners' Petitions

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has had regarding making the submissions of prisoners' petitions easier.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The House of Commons authorities have been in touch with my Department about improving the guidance given to prisoners for presenting petitions to Parliament, and this is being done.

No representations have been received regarding petitions to the Secretary of State which though generally made on a form provided for the purpose are not required to be in any specific format.

### Police National Computer

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accesses were made to each category of stolen and suspect vehicle index of the police national computer over the last year; and what has been the percentage growth in the use of these categories over the year.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Though the index of vehicles comprises vehicles in various categories, the records are not kept in these separate categories, but are indexed by vehicle registration number. It is not therefore possible to give the information in the form requested, but, in all, there were 19,313,501 accesses to the stolen and suspect vehicle and vehicle owners index of the police national computer in the year to 30 June 1989, an increase of 0·95 per cent. over the previous year.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accesses were made to each category of the wanted and missing persons index of the police national computer over the last year; and what has been the percentage growth in use of these categories over the year.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Though the wanted and missing persons' index of the police national computer comprises records of persons in various categories, the records are not kept in these categories, but are indexed by name. It is not therefore possible to give the information in the form requested but, in all, there were 1,987,155 accesses to the wanted and missing persons' index of the police national computer in the year to 30 June 1989. This is an increase of 7·2 per cent. over the previous year.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accesses were made to each index of the police national computer over the last year; whether he will include in these statistics an indication of the number of access requests that could search more than one index.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The total number of accesses to each of the indices of the police national computer in the year to 30 June 1989 was as follows:

| *Index* | *Number of Accesses* |
|---|---|
| 1. Stolen and Suspect Vehicles | 19,313,501 |
| 2. Vehicle Owners | |
| 3. Chassis/Engine Numbers | 354,337 |
| 4. Fingerprints | 192,416 |
| 5. Fingerprints (Scene of Crime) | 14,608 |
| 6. Criminal Names | 1,083,116 |
| 7. Wanted/Missing Persons | 1,987,155 |
| 8. Disqualified Drivers | 811,960 |
| 9. Convictions | 758,270 |
| 10. Major Investigations | 21,328 |
| 11. Crime Pattern Analysis | 371,684 |
| *There have also been the following joint accesses:* | |
| To indices 6 and 9[1] | 1,083,116 |
| To indices 6, 7 and 9 | 1,738,002 |
| To indices 6, 7, 8 and 9 | 7,654,267 |
| To indices 4, 6 and 9 | 615,754 |

[1] All accesses to the criminal names index will in addition automatically generate information from the convictions application.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current size of each category found in the stolen and suspect vehicle index of the police national computer; and whether he can include in these statistics an indication of the minimum and maximum size of each category in the index over the year.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information is as follows:

| *Category* | *Current* | *Minimum* | *Maximum* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Confirmed lost or obtained by deception | 387,822 | 372,611 | 387,822 |
| Lost or stolen | 395,171 | 378,478 | 395,171 |
| Obtained by deception | 157 | 251 | 157 |
| Found | 26,188 | 24,860 | 27,996 |
| Removed | 13,045 | 12,667 | 20,346 |
| Street to street | 118 | 109 | 200 |
| Repossessed by finance | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Company | — | — | — |
| Suspect | 787 | 787 | 1,095 |
| Police Vehicle | 3,862 | 3,593 | 3,862 |
| Blocked | 5,779 | 5,255 | 5,779 |
| Information | 17,620 | 15,454 | 17,620 |
| Seen | 7,014 | 6,812 | 8,012 |

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current size of each category found in the wanted and missing persons index of the police national computer; and whether he can include in these statistics an indication of the minimum and maximum size of each category in the index over the year.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information is as follows:

| *Category* | *Current* | *Minimum* | *Maximum* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wanted | 35,466 | 34,749 | 37,194 |
| Fails to appear | 28,646 | 27,066 | 28,646 |
| Suspect | 2,325 | 2,325 | 4,891 |
| Impending prosecution | 68 | 68 | 95 |
| Deserter | 1,722 | 1,440 | 1,819 |
| Locate | 37,800 | 33,324 | 37,800 |
| Missing | 2,346 | 1,977 | 2,346 |
| Found | 22 | 10 | 24 |
| Absconder: | | | |
| from care | 504 | 410 | 524 |
| from hospital | 55 | 34 | 58 |
| from detention | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| from youth custody | 107 | 89 | 117 |
| from prison | 746 | 609 | 746 |
| from remand | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| from school | 32 | 28 | 53 |
| Recall: | | | |
| from detention | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| from youth custody | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| from prison | 283 | 262 | 297 |

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current size of each index of the police national computer; and whether he can include in these statistics an indication of the minimum and maximum size of each index over the last year.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information is as follows:

| *Index* | *Current* | *Minimum* | *Maximum* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vehicle owners | 41,386,599 | 39,948,809 | 41,386,599 |
| Stolen vehicles | 475,199 | 461,234 | 478,104 |
| Chassis-engine numbers | 791,850 | 755,425 | 792,028 |
| Wanted/missing persons | 112,384 | 107,707 | 112,384 |
| Cross reference | 963,010 | 939,279 | 963,010 |
| Disqualified drivers | 368,214 | 361,716 | 368,214 |
| Convictions | 2,929,865 | 2,539,276 | 2,929,865 |
| Criminal names | 5,457,187 | 5,301,962 | 5,457,187 |
| Fingerprints | 4,004,441 | 3,881,363 | 4,004,441 |
| Crime pattern analysis | 13,394 | 11,786 | 13,394 |
| Extremists crime index | 142 | 112 | 142 |
| Major investigation | 326,362 | 301,787 | 326,362 |

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has information as to the number of accesses made to the police national computer by each constabulary over the last year; and whether he can give the proportion of access requests made to the vehicle indexes of the police national computer.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** This information is collected on the basis of occasional monthly samples and annual totals are not therefore available. The last sample was taken in Febrary 1989. In that month, the number of transactions made to the police national computer (PNC) by each constabulary, and the proportion of these transactions which were made to the vehicle indices on the PNC, were as follows:

| *Constabulary* | *Nos. of transactions in February 1989* | *Proportion of transactions made to vehicle indices* |
|---|---|---|
| Avon and Somerset | 76,595 | 60·3 |
| Bedfordshire | 32,180 | 61·1 |
| British Transport Police | 11,083 | 33·3 |
| Cambridgeshire | 29,254 | 61·9 |
| Central | 9,733 | 52·6 |
| Cheshire | 39,560 | 57·4 |
| City of London | 8,580 | 60·9 |

| *Constabulary* | *Nos. of transactions in February 1989* | *Proportion of transactions made to vehicle indices* |
|---|---|---|
| Cleveland | 27,478 | 60·2 |
| Cumbria | 31,387 | 59·0 |
| Derbyshire | 37,040 | 67·5 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 54,430 | 59·1 |
| Dorset | 28,779 | 58·5 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 8,681 | 50·2 |
| Durham | 30,236 | 57·4 |
| Dyfed-Powys | 17,435 | 46·6 |
| Essex | 73,061 | 62·0 |
| Fife | 10,992 | 56·6 |
| Gloucestershire | 24,595 | 62·9 |
| Grampian | 18,651 | 57·0 |
| Greater Manchester | 178,420 | 56·6 |
| Guernsey | 888 | 15·3 |
| Gwent | 13,122 | 58·4 |
| Hampshire | 69,840 | 52·4 |
| Hertfordshire | 30,679 | 58·1 |
| Humberside | 40,351 | 57·9 |
| Isle of Man | 2,820 | 76·1 |
| Jersey | 3,509 | 16·8 |
| Kent | 104,167 | 59·2 |
| Lancashire | 88,280 | 57·1 |
| Leicestershire | 30,345 | 55·8 |
| Lincolnshire | 17,553 | 64·3 |
| Lothian and Borders | 51,489 | 53·3 |
| Merseyside | 76,081 | 54·0 |
| Metropolitan | 612,032 | 51·0 |
| Norfolk | 28,181 | 68·3 |
| North Wales | 21,922 | 48·5 |
| North Yorkshire | 38,095 | 67·4 |
| Northamptonshire | 26,033 | 63·6 |
| Northern | 9,174 | 51·9 |
| Northumberland | 81,803 | 63·8 |
| Nottinghamshire | 52,149 | 69·9 |
| South Wales | 68,189 | 64·6 |
| South Yorkshire | 58,966 | 67·6 |
| Staffordshire | 32,507 | 58·1 |
| Strathclyde | 114,162 | 38·8 |
| Suffolk | 22,104 | 57·8 |
| Surrey | 31,849 | 57·4 |
| Sussex | 67,668 | 53·8 |
| Tayside | 22,575 | 55·4 |
| Thames Valley | 84,200 | 57·0 |
| Warwickshire | 19,495 | 65·7 |
| West Mercia | 34,955 | 60·3 |
| West Midlands | 165,088 | 65·0 |
| West Yorkshire | 94,156 | 52·7 |
| Wiltshire | 24,473 | 66·6 |

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place a copy of the consultants' report on the future of the police national computer organisation in the Library.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Grant) on 14 July at column *661*.

### Summertime

**Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list in the *Official Report* the names of all organisations and individuals who submitted representations to him for a change in summertime arrangements prior to the decision to go out to consultation in 1987, for each of the last five years indicating the date when such representations were made.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** In the year before the first departmental survey on summertime arrangements, which was undertaken at the end of 1987, my Department was receiving about six to eight letters from hon. Members per month along with 12 to 15 letters from the public, and representations from Lords Vinson and Mountgarret and the Policy Studies Institute, among others. The rest of the information required is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Horseracing

**Mr. Terry Fields:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what figures he has for arrests and resultant convictions arising out of incidents at horse racing meetings, for each of the past five years as totals and as a proportion of attendances.

**Mr. John Patten:** This information is not available centrally.

### Murderers

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons are currently detained at Her Majesty's pleasure under the terms of the Children and Young Persons Act 1983; and what was the average length of sentence for those convicted of murder who were released or paroled in the last five years.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Information about the time detained in institutions other than prison service establishments is not readily available. The average time spent under sentence in prison service establishments by persons detained during Her Majesty's pleasure was between nine and a half and 10 years for those first released on licence in the years 1984 to 1988.

### Consultants

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which firms of consultants his Department has employed; and at what cost, for each year since 1979.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The following contracts were awarded to firms of consultants during the period 1986-88:

Communications Studies and Planning International—Study on subscription television.
Concurrent Computer Corporation—Survey of Home Office Accounts Branch.
Coopers and Lybrand Associates—Evaluation of the use of computers in Magistrates Courts: Funding and procurement of systems.
Coopers and Lybrand Associates—Study into future provision of training for Magistrates Courts staff.
Data Logic—Review study on police national computer project.
Deloitte, Haskins and Sells—Development of a financial management information system for the Probation Service.
Ernst and Whinney—Support for automatic fingerprinting recognition planning.
Express Computer Consultants—Performance study of Home Office Finance Division 1.
Gilpin black Associates; The Grubb Institute—Management training for the Probation Service.
Hay—MSL—Monitoring the performance bonus scheme.
KMG Thomson McLintock—Office automation study for Home Office.
PA Computers and Telecommunications—Study of network migration to police national computer project.
PA Computers and Telecommunications—Future developments of computer system in Magistrates Courts.
Pearn Kandola Associates—Formal qualifications and ethnic minority recruitment to white collar jobs.

Price Waterhouse—Implementation of computer systems in Home Office Prison Department.

Purchasing Index (UK) Purchasing management information system.

RIPA Services—Evaluation of the use of computers in Magistrates Courts training needs.

Smith Associates—An analysis of the likely costs and benefits of introducing a mobile data terminal system in police vehicles.

Sound Techniques—Evaluation of the use of computers in Magistrates Courts: Use of Computers in courtrooms.

Systems Designers—Interim systems options study for police national computer project.

Systems Designers—Feasibility study into the use of expert systems for multi-ethnic names matching.

Systems Designers Scientific—A review of emergency communications services.

Touche Ross Management Consultants—Study on scientific support for the police service in England and Wales.

White Waghorn—Computerisation of Home Office Scientific Research and Development Branch accountancy system.

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Admiral Computing Ltd.—Automatic Handwriting Recognition—technical support.

Arthur Young—Manpower Division—financial strategy review.

Arthur Young—Police National Computer Upgrade—user requirement survey.

Arthur Walton and Partner—Procurement in Home Office Science and Technology Group.

Artificial Intelligence—Crime Auto Index—technical support.

Atkins MC—Rental invoicing.

Bechtel UK Ltd.—Assist in WARC purchasing.

Bell Software Systems—Bootle Bureau Computer—technical support.

BIS Applied Systems—Bootle Bureau Computer disaster-planning report.

CAP Industry Ltd.—Automatic Fingerprint Recognition—design support.

Claymore Services—Area Mapping System—technical support.

Computer Services Company—Policy National Computer upgrade technical/management support.

Coopers and Lybrand—Study on the future provision of staff training in the magistrates court service.

Coopers and Lybrand—Staff training in Prison Service.

Data Logic—Crime Auto Index—technical support.

Roston Ltd.—Assist in WARC purchasing.

Scientific Business Systems—Police Staff College Computer-technical support.

Smith Associates—Automatic Fingerprint Recognition-technical support.

Software Sciences—Immigration Service-technical support.

Systems Designers—Intelligent Knowledge Based Systems-technical support.

Systems Designers—Facial Recognition System-technical support.

Systems Designers—PNCO Interim system arrangement study.

Technical Support Consultants Ltd.—File transfer MCS facility project.

Touche Ross MC—General Ledger System design and implementation.

Touche Ross MC—Police National Computer Upgrade-project management support.

Touche Ross MC—Police Administration Support Unit-business analysis.

VNG Professional Services—Bootle Bureau Computer-technical support.

White Waghorn—Financial Management System-technical support.

Electronic Facilities Design—Automatic Fingerprint Recognition-operational requirement support.

Ernst and Whinney ML—Procurement and Charging review.

Ewbank Preece Ltd.—Survey for Fire Service.

Express Computers—Financial Management System-tech-nical support.

Fraser Williams—Bootle Bureau Compuer-technical support.

Huddart Security Consultancy—Research into major crime investigation.

Mr. A. Iliffe—Writing new test material for CSSB.

International Computers Ltd—Private Office Correspondence-technical support.

IO Research—Electronic Facial Recognition-technical support/development.

JSB—Immigration Service-SSADM support.

Lear Month and Burchett—Bootle Computer Bureau-SSADM support.

Logica Space and Defence—Automatic Fingerprint Recognition-design support.

McPherson Associates—Research on reliability of a new personality test.

MOM International—Project Management-technical support.

PA Management Consultants—Assist with implementation of "Fresh Start" to Prison Service.

PA Consultants—WARC Project.

Procom Ltd—WRAC Project.

RIPA Consultancy Services—Probation Information Service-technical support.

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Aberdeen University—Technical support for Scientific Research and Development Branch.

Ampex—Videofile testing.

Batalas—Police National Computer Office, Quality Assurance support.

BBN—Technical support for Scientific Research and Development Branch.

BIS—Magistrates Court contingency study.

BIS—Financial Systems support.

Cooper and Lybrand—Assistance with training seminars in Prison Service.

Computer Search and Selection—Immigration programming support.

CCTA—IT Division Post Implementation Review.

Data Logic—Local Area Networks study.

Dataflex—Programming support for Prison Service.

Deloitte Haskins and Sells—Improving Clerical Support Services to HM Prison forms.

Deloitte Haskins and Sells—Study of potential feasibility of private sector involvement in the remand system.

Digitus—IT Division technical support.

Eosys—Police Requirements Network study.

Ewbank Preece—Microwave study.

Express Computer Consultants—Software development for Financial Division.

Grafton—Benchmark preparation for Police National Computer.

Grafton—Software support for Police National Computer.

Hunterskill—Programming support for Prison Service.

ICL—Systems analysis for Immigration and Nationality Department.

ICL—Bootle Computer Bureau Network Support.

ICL—System sizing for Immigration and Nationality Department

IN2—Post Administration programming support

JSB—Database support for computerisation of central records

Kerman Associates—IT Division technical support

Logica—Fire Department Brigade requirements study

Logica—Local Area Network study for Immigration and Nationality Department

Metier—Bootle Computer Bureau project management tool support

Oasis—Intelligency Knowledge Based Systems study

Oracle—Bootle Computer Bureau software support

PA Management Consultants—WARC project management

PA Consulting—Investment Appraisal support for Immigration and Nationality Department

PA Consulting—Police National Computer Office project

management support
PA Technology—Proposal Evaluation: Automatic Fingerprint Recognition
P-E Computer Services—Bootle Computer Bureau programming support
Peat Marwick McLintock—Review of laundry service
Peat Marwick McLintock—IND Relocation Study
SIA—Fire Statistics Section hardware sizing trial
Software AG—Police National Computer Office; Software support (2 contracts).
St. George's Medical School—Technical support from Forensic Science Service.
Touche Ross—Management systems strategy for prison industries.
TSC Ltd.—Police National Computer Office; Operating System Support.
Thornhill Computer Services—Bootle Computer Bureau programming support.
Dr. R. L. Williams—Reviewing fingerprint evidence.
Yale Data—IT Division technical support.

The Home Office spent approximately £2,665,000 on consultancy services for 1986-87. Equivalent estimated payments for the calendar years 1987 and 1988 were £3,316,000 and £3,572,000 respectively. These payments include VAT as well as fees.

Information for the years before 1986 is not readily available.

## Racial Harassment

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many perpetrators of racial harassment have been charged by the police *(a)* under section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 and *(b)* under section 47 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, in the years 1987 and 1988, respectively.

**Mr. John Patten:** Information on whether prosecutions under section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 and under section 47 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 were for offences which were racially motivated is not collected centrally.

## Child Abuse

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have been convicted of child cruelty in courts in England and Wales in each of the last five years;

(2) how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have been sent to prison for cruelty to children in each of the last five years.

**Mr. John Patten:** Information held centrally for 1983 to 1987 on the specific offence of child cruelty is given in the table. Data for 1988 are not yet available. Many other convictions take place each year for offences of violence against children or sexual offences against children.

*Persons found guilty and sentenced to immediate custody for offences relating to cruelty to children*

| | *Total found guilty* | *Immediate custody* |
|---|---|---|
| 1983 | | |
| Males | 47 | 16 |
| Females | 42 | 7 |
| 1984 | | |
| Males | 52 | 18 |
| Females | 53 | 7 |
| 1985 | | |
| Males | 40 | 17 |
| Females | 54 | 13 |
| 1986 | | |
| Males | 59 | 20 |
| Females | 68 | 10 |
| 1987 | | |
| Males | 68 | 20 |
| Females | 76 | 19 |

## Life Sentences

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of inmates serving a life sentence were reviewed for possible parole during 1988.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** In 1988, the parole board considered the cases of 444 life sentence prisoners for release on life licence.

## Scottish Television Producers

**Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of United Kingdom network programming is currently achieved by Scottish television producers.

**Mr. Renton:** Programmes by Scottish producers comprise the following percentages of United Kingdom television network transmissions:

| | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| BBC | 1·55 |
| ITV | 2·2 |
| Channel 4 | 1·8 |

The ITV and Channel 4 figures do not include output from Border television.

## Lotteries

**Mr. Ken Hargreaves:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what reply he has received from the authorities in the Federal Republic of Germany to his request to explore means of stopping the posting to the United Kingdom of promotional and entry material for lotteries based in West Germany.

**Mr. John Patten:** The authorities in the Federal Republic have expressed their readiness to co-operate in this exploration and, via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, relevant information is being exchanged between them and the Home Office.

## Horserace Totalisator Board

**Mr. Page:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether future developments on the privatisation of the Horserace Totalisator Board, the allocation of shares in SIS and mergers within the off-course bookmaking market will be frozen pending an announcement of an inquiry into racing finances.

**Mr. John Patten:** My right hon. Friend will announce his conclusions on the case for an inquiry into the long-term funding of racing when consideration is completed. The advice on the possible privatisation of the

Horserace Totalisator Board which we have received from Lloyds merchant bank is relevant to that consideration. The allocation of shares in Satellite Information Services is a matter for that company. There are no powers for the Secretary of State to make a general prohibition on merger activity in a particular sector, including the bookmaking industry.

## Orange Badge Scheme

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on the frequency with which the £400 fine has been imposed by different authorities for the unauthorised use by a non-disabled person of an orange badge issued to a person with a disability.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I refer the right hon. Member to the reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Mr. Nicholson) on 13 July at column *643*. The highest fine recorded for these offences was £50.

## West Midlands Police

**Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the west midlands as to on how many occasions complaints have been received against detective sergeant Michael Hornby; and what action has been taken in each case;

(2) if, pursuant to his answer on 5 July, he will call for a report from the chief constable of the west midlands as to how many complaints have been received against detective sergeant Michael Hornby since 1974; what action was taken in 1980 on the one occasion he was disciplined; and what was the nature of the complaint against him.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[pursuant to his replies of 5 and 11 July 1989, columns 190 and 425]:* I now understand from the chief constable of the West Midlands police that the information provided by the force that detective sergeant Michael Hornby had been the subject of disciplinary proceedings in 1980 is incorrect. Detective sergeant Hornby has never faced disciplinary charges.

I regret any inconvenience or embarrassment which this incorrect information may have caused.

## Child Custody

**Ms. Gordon:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many mothers in prison, on remand or convicted for offences unrelated to their children's welfare, have been prevented from exercising their legal child custody rights by local authorities which have put their children into care without informing or consulting their mothers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Mellor:** We do not hold this information centrally. It is normal social work practice for all mothers to be informed or consulted about their children being taken into care.

## THE ARTS

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Minister for the Arts how much was spent on official hospitality by his Department in 1988-89.

**Mr. Luce:** The Office of Arts and Libraries spent £7,943 on official hospitality in 1988-89.

### Horniman Museum and Library

**Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what discussions he has had with the director of the Horniman museum and library, about its future structure and funding; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]:* I met the director of the Horniman museum on 10 July and had a useful and informative discussion on the future of the museum. I was pleased to hear of progress achieved so far and asked to be kept in touch with developments in the transition to independent charitable status. The director is aware that the level of resources for the museum will be decided later in the year alongside OAL's other client institutions. The museum will naturally be encouraged to take full advantage of all sources of funding available to charitable institutions.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Countryside Commission

**Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Countryside Commission; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Ryder:** I met the chairman of the Countryside Commission on 7 November when we discussed many issues relating to the countryside. I am always ready to discuss matters of mutual concern with the Countryside Commission.

### Irradiated Food

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the numbers of representations he has received concerning the European Economic Community directive on food irradiation.

**Mr. Ryder:** I have received about 70 letters making representations on this subject. Careful consideration will be given to the points raised.

### Code of Good Agricultural Practice

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list all the documents comprising the code of good agricultural practice; what is the price of each; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** The main code of good agricultural practice booklet, originally a priced publication, was made available free of charge in June 1988. The following more detailed publications also form part of the code.

RB 209—Fertiliser Recommendations (revised 1988) £5·00
RB 500—Pesticides 1989 £8·95
Leaflet P441—Nitrogen fertilisers (1987)
Leaflet P593—Sheep scab (1986)
Leaflet 719—Sheep dipping and spraying (reprinted 1984)
Leaflet P767—Farm chemical stores (1988)
Booklet 2078—Guidelines for the use of herbicides on weeds in or near watercourses and lakes (revised 1985) £2·50
Booklet 2081—Farm waste management: Profitable use of farm manures (revised 1986) £2·00
Booklet 2198—Guidelines for the disposal of unwanted pesticides and containers on farms and holdings (reprinted 1986)
Booklet 2200—Farm waste management: Advice on avoiding pollution from farm manures and other slurry wastes (revised 1985) £2·00
Booklet 2272—Guidelines for applying crop protection chemicals: Ground crop sprayers for agriculture (reprinted 1986).
Booklet 2409—The use of sewage sludge on agricultural land (revised 1987) £2·50.
Booklet 2429—Farm waste management: Silage avoiding pollution (reprinted 1985)
Booklet 2449—Guidelines for applying crop protection chemicals: Spraying fruit and hops with insecticides and fungicides (reprinted 1989).
Leaflet P3042—Farm waste management: Storage of farm manures and slurries—Choosing a storage system.
Leaflet P3043—Farm waste management: Storage of farm manures and slurries—Above ground circular slurry stores.
Leaflet P3045—Farm waste management: Storage of farm manures and slurries—Weeping-wall slurry stores.
Leaflet P3046—Farm waste management: Storage of farm manures and slurries—Stores for traditional farmyard manure.
Leaflet P3047—Farm waste management: Storage of farm manures and slurries—Effluent tanks
Leaflet P3122—Farm pollution: Dirty water-sources and volumes
Leaflet P3123—Farm pollution: Dirty water-systems for disposal
Leaflet P31[illegible]—Farm pollution: Dirty water-low rate irrigation systems.
CAP 414—The Aerial Application Certificate: Information on requirements to be met by applicators and holders.

Where no price is mentioned, the publications are available free of charge.

### Regional Panels

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the names of his regional panels, the names of the people represented on each panel, their occupations and the interest they represent; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** The five regional panels in England are non-statutory bodies which help to ensure that the ministry and the farming industry are each aware of the other's attitudes and policies and to hear representations against decisions by officials. Membership of the regional panels is drawn mainly from farmers, farmworkers and landowners. Membership is undertaken in a personal capacity. Regional panel members do not act in a representational capacity for any organisation to which they may belong.

There is an agriculture advisory panel for Wales which fulfils the same functions; this is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Wales.

The names of the people who currently serve on the regional panels in England are as follows:

*Midlands and Western Regional Panel*
*Chairman* H. Salwey TD

*Members:*
W. H. Bainbridge
C. Briscoe
A. R. Chadwi[illegible]
T. Clowes
Mrs. J. Davies
R. B. Garwell
D. Harper
A. T. C. Haywood
A. A. Hignett
J. S. Molyneux
D. R. Penrose
W. J. B. Taylor
M. E. Twidale
Dr. S. M. Williams

*Eastern Regional Panel*
*Chairman* - R. C. Bloomfield
*Members:*
J. Adams JP
D. Bareham
D. Black
D. A. V. Cox
Mrs. R. Eady
E. W. Fause
J. F. Goodge
R. H. Kerkham
J. Kerr JP
B. E. Newton
R. W. Patrick
D. A. Read
P. E. Richardson
M. Thomasin-Foster
R. J. Watts

*Northern Regional Panel*
*Chairman* - J. W. Raine CBE
*Members:*
C. H. Armstrong
W. D. Avery
C. A. F. Baker-Cresswell OBE
R. H. Bosomworth
J. C. Cooke
J. H. Dixon
J. M. Dearlore
H. Duckett
H. E. Morphet
M. P. Pollard
S. P. W. Kedgate
A. P. Shirley
J. Walby
I. S. Watson

*South Eastern Regional Panel*
*Chairman* - K. J. Cyster OBE
*Members:*
B. Doble
A. Gould
J. E. Harrison
J. Lington
P. Lowater
J. P. Martin
I. D. Mcdowall
D. G. L. Monnington
H. Oliver-Bellasis
A. E. Redsell
D. Sword
Mrs. S. Ward

*South Western Regional Panel*
*Chairman* - Sir Peter Mills
*Members:*
J. M. Eustace
B. R. Jones
R. Jones
R. Lawton
N. P. Morris
M. Retallick
D. Scott
G. Trehane
Mrs. E. R. Wheatley-Hubbard
J. Whetman
H. B. Wright
M. C. Yeo

### Nature Conservation

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he takes to ensure, in exercising his responsibilities in relation to fisheries, that due regard is paid to nature conservation.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Fisheries in British Waters are managed and conserved as renewable natural resources. This may be through either national measures or those coming under the European Community's common fisheries policy. These are designed to keep fish stocks at healthy levels based on the available scientific advice. At the same time, my Department has regard for wider considerations on nature conservation, liaising with statutory and voluntary conservation bodies.

### Food Legislation

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he intends to publish a White Paper on amendments to the food legislation.

**Mr. Ryder:** I intend to make a statement in the near future.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much was spent on official hospitality by his Department in 1988-89.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** £48,875.

### Cereal Circles

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant [illegible] his reply of 11 July, *Official Report*, column *451*, if he has received any scientific or other advice on the causes of the flattening of cereal circles.

**Mr. Ryder:** I am advised that this phenomenom is most likely to result from a combination of wind and local soil fertility conditions in cereals which are prone to lodging.

### Farmers

**Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farmers previously in full-time activity have left the industry during the last five years as a consequence of direct financial pressure or bankruptcy.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Records are not kept of the reasons why individual farmers leave the industry, and such information is not therefore available. However, in 1987, the last year for which information is available, there were 172 bankruptcies and 126 company insolvences in England and Wales among businesses which were primarily agricultural and horticultural.

### Pesticides Data Education Unit

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he intends to increase the number of staff employed at his pesticides data education unit; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Yes. Extra staff are being recruited this year to fill existing vacancies at the pesticide data evaluation unit and future staffing levels are under review.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he intends to increase the financial resources available to his pesticides data education unit, in *(a)* 1989-90 and *(b)* 1990-91; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The financial resouces available to the pesticides data evaluation unit form part of central funds and cannot be quantified separately. However, extra staff are being recruited this year to fill existing vacancies and future staffing levels are under review.

### Fisheries Inspectors

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the number of fisheries inspectors employed by his Ministry for each year since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* The information requested is as follows:

*On 1 April in each year the numbers of inspectors, including fishery officers grades I and II, in post in my Department were:*

| | *Chief inspector* | *Deputy chief inspector* | *District inspector* | *Fishery officer I* | *Fishery officer II* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 8 | — | 20 |
| 1980 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 13 | — | 27 |
| 1981 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 13 | — | 27 |
| 1982 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 12 | — | 26 |
| 1983 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 13 | — | 27 |
| 1984 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 15 | — | 25 |
| 1985 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 14 | — | 24 |
| 1986 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 11 | — | 24 |
| 1987 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 11 | 10 | 33 |
| 1988 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 15 | 38 | 67 |
| 1989 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 15 | 35 | 65 |

The recent increase in numbers was mainly the result of a restructuring exercise which involved certain staff being regraded as fishery officer IIs.

### Alar

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in view of the new evidence of levels of Alar in apples, whether he will now ban its use in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Ryder** *[holding answer 18 July 1989]:* I assume that the hon. Gentleman is referring to information about residue levels of daminozide which was publicised recently by "Parents for Safe Food". These levels result from a method of analysis which is known to be non-specific and, therefore, liable to give false positives. Even if they were found by confirmatory analysis to be correct, they are still within the range considered to be safe by the independent advisory committee on pesticides.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Tropical Hardwood

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much tropical hardwood has been used in each of the years from 1979 to 1988 by the Property Services Agency.

**Mr. Chope:** This information is not available, and could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

### Pop Festivals

**Mr. Robert Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the number and names of local authorities which have passed resolutions under the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 to license pop festivals and other open-air entertainments, and have subsequently refused to license a specific event; and if he will list these applications.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]:* I have been asked to reply.

This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Mixenden Parents Resource Centre

**Mrs. Mahon.:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when his Department intends to reply to the letter written in March by the Mixenden parents resource centre on the issue of direct funding.

**Mr. Trippier:** The Department can find no trace of the hon. Lady's constituent's letter on this subject. If the hon. Member would like to write enclosing a copy, a response will be made as soon as possible.

### Rechem International, Pontypool

**Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution proposes to publish the report arising from the investigation it carried out jointly with the university of East Anglia three years ago into background level of PCBs and dioxins and including an investigation into the area surrounding Rechem International (Pontypool); and whether the preliminary findings are now available.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The results of HMIP's investigations into background levels of PCBs and dioxins across the United Kingdom were published in summary form in HWI's third annual report (chapter 10). The full details of the study together with details of the analytical method are shortly to be published in a HMIP technical report.

## Hazardous Wastes

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the facilities available for the disposal of wastes of the type formerly disposed through the Harwell hazardous materials service.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The hazardous materials service from Harwell operates on a commercial basis and offers a range of waste management services, including the sorting, packaging and labelling of waste chemicals. These have been and still are disposed of at a number of licensed disposal facilities in England and Wales. Limitation as to the type of wastes acceptable at a site is generally a matter for the waste disposal authorities.

## Radiation

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the causes of radiation dose rates in certain non-granite areas being higher outdoors than indoors.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Dose rates from cosmic rays are usually lower indoors than outdoors because of the shielding provided by building materials. Dose rates from terrestrial gamma rays are occasionally lower indoors than outdoors because the activity of natural radionuclides in the building materials is lower than in the ground on which the building stands.

## Unleaded Petrol

**Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of new cars can now run on unleaded petrol without adjustment.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Seventy per cent. of new cars registered in May could run on unleaded petrol without the need for adjustment. This compares with one third a year previously.

## Radioactive Waste

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those sites in Yorkshire, and Humberside, for which he has given authorisation for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste during the last five years.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I refer the hon. Member to the Department's "List of Premises in England and Wales currently authorised under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 to dispose of radioactive waste", a copy of which is in the Library of the House. In addition to the listed premises the following have been authorised to dispose of low-level radioactive waste since April 1988;

*South Yorkshire*

Sheffield Health Authority, Lodge Moor Hospital, Redmires road, Sheffield

*West Yorkshire*

Dewsbury Health Authority (DHA), Dewsbury District Hospital, Healds road, Dewsbury

DHA, Dewsbury General Hospital, Moorlands road, Dewsbury

DHA, Staincliffe Hospital, Healds road, Dewsbury

Immunoscope, Deacon House, Seacroft avenue, Leeds

Leeds Western Health Authority, The General Infirmary, Great George street, Leeds

## Landfill Gas

**Mr. Robert B. Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much of the extra £5 million capital allocations to enable local authorities to tackle the problems of landfill gas has been taken up.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The £5 million reserve capital allocation is to cover urgent and unforeseen expenditure in 1989-90. None of it has yet been used.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many explosions have occurred at landfill gas sites in England and Wales in the past 10 years.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution has details of three explosions associated with landfill gas over the last three years but does not hold comprehensive records over the past decade.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many landfill gas sites have been identified as being currently in existence in England and Wales.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** All landfills taking putrescible waste may give rise to some landfill gas. Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution estimates that 1,709 landfills in England and Wales accept such waste.

The inspectorate has issued guidance for landfills taking putrescible waste. Licensing of landfills is the responsibility of the waste disposal authorities, who should ensure that suitable conditions are imposed.

## Unlisted Buildings

**Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give consideration to the case for the planning legislation which would enhance local authority controls over the discretionary demolition of unlisted buildings.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend has considered this carefully, but he does not believe that there is a need to extend controls over demolition.

## Housing Action Trust (Southwark)

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he had made of how often the working party considering the possible creation of a housing action trust in Southwark should meet.

**Mr. Trippier:** The consultants, PIC. Ltd., are responsible for arranging meetings with residents and other local interests on the North Peckham and Gloucester grove estates.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what precedents of ownership co-operatives exist for the working party to *(a)* examine and *(b)* visit at the end of the operating period of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark, when considering the future management of the Gloucester grove and North Peckham Estates.

**Mr. Trippier:** The Housing Corporation can put tenants in touch with ownership co-operatives now operating, and give them information about other local authority estates where tenants are thinking of forming such co-operatives.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the minimum number of meetings held annually by the proposed housing action trust board in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** It will be for individual trusts to decide how many meetings to hold each year.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would happen to all existing council employees working on the North Peckham and Gloucester grove estates, and in particular resident caretakers, in the event of the proposed housing action trust being created in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier:** A trust would give first consideration to council staff already working on the estates concerned when considering its staffing needs.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether a firm and detailed management plan would be agreed prior to any ballot concerning the creation of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* We are currently seeking tenants' views on how the estates could be improved, including the way in which they are managed. We shall draw on these views to prepare a statement of what a trust might do. Tenants would then be able to consider this before they vote in a ballot. If established, a trust would have to take the statement into account in deciding the best way to manage its estates. It would also consult residents under section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 and section 64 of the Housing Act 1988.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether all the meetings of the proposed housing action trust board in Southwark and documentation of meetings would be open to the public.

**Mr. Trippier:** We intend to ensure that trusts open their board meetings to the public except in specified circumstances, for example where confidential information relating to individual people or commercially sensitive matters are under discussion.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much was spent on official hospitality by his Department in 1988-89.

**Mr. Ridley:** Expenditure on hospitality in my Department (including the PSA) in 1988-89 was £84,000.

### Nature Conservancy Council

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the extra costs involved in splitting up the Nature Conservancy council.

**Mr. Ridley** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* If there are any savings or additional costs resulting from the reorganisation of the NCC, they will be estimated in due course, in discussions with the NCC and the other bodies affected by the Government's proposals. These discussions have already commenced, and the outcome will be taken into account in determining the level of grant-in-aid to be given to the NCC in 1990-91 and to the successor bodies.

### Nature Reserves

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what instructions he has given to the Nature Conservancy Council in respect of purchasing land for nature reserves.

**Mr. Ridley** *[holding answer 11 April 1989]:* The Government's general policy is that land should be purchased by public bodies only where this is essential in order for the body concerned to perform its functions. I have made this clear to the Nature Conservancy Council on several occasions. The council's current policy is to purchase land for nature reserves only as a last resort, where sites of key conservation value cannot be protected by other methods (such as management agreements).

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Hillsborough

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if any tax will be levied on funds paid into or out of the Hillsborough disaster fund.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The tax consequences for a disaster fund depend on what form the trustees decide the fund should take.

I understand that the Hillsborough disaster fund has been set up as a non-charitable discretionary trust. Cash donations to the fund are not liable to income tax or capital gains tax. Donations of assets other than cash may give rise to a capital gains tax charge for the donor, but there are provisions permitting deferment of the tax charge. For inheritance tax purposes, the normal rules for discretionary trusts will apply, but in practice it is unlikely that any inheritance tax will actually be payable.

If the donations are invested, the fund will be liable to income tax on any interest or other investment income it receives. Beneficiaries will, however, be given credit for the tax already paid by the fund, so that a beneficiary who is a non-taxpayer can claim repayment of the tax in full. There will be no capital gains tax charge when money is distributed to beneficiaries, and again, although the normal inheritance tax rules apply, it is unlikely that, in practice, any inheritance tax will actually be payable.

### Tender Laws

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to abolish the operation of United Kingdom tender laws; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lilley:** No. The designation of certain currency of the realm as legal tender provides a safeguard for both creditors and debtors. A creditor may insist on payment in legal currency; and, in the absence of a prior contractual agreement regarding payment, a debtor can offer a "legal tender", that is, the exact amount of a debt (no change can be required) in legal currency. If refused, its subsequent payment into court prevents any further legal action against the debtor.

### Sterling Investments

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money is invested in sterling which could be withdrawn at *(a)* one day's notice or less, *(b)* one week's notice or less and *(c)* a longer period than one week.

**Mr. Lilley:** Data are not available to answer this question and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Pound Sterling

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much of the reserves were spent in June in supporting the pound.

**Mr. Lilley:** The underlying fall in the reserves in June was $2,236 million but this was the result of a variety of transactions including, for example, transactions for Government Departments, with other central banks, and interest receipts and payments as well as intervention. It has never been the practice of the Government to publish figures of how much it has intervened in the foreign exchange markets in support of its exchange rate objectives.

### Public Sector Debt

**Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current value in real terms of the public sector debt interest payments for each year since 1979 *(a)* in money terms and *(b)* as a proportion of gross domestic product; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lilley:** The table shows figures for general Government gross debt interest payments.

| *Year* | [1]*Real terms £ billions* | *Percentage of money GDP* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 16·5 | 4·5 |
| 1980-81 | 16·8 | 4·8 |
| 1981-82 | 17·9 | 5·1 |
| 1982-83 | 17·4 | 4·9 |
| 1983-84 | 17·5 | 4·7 |
| 1984-85 | 18·4 | 4·9 |
| 1985-86 | 19·1 | 4·9 |
| 1986-87 | 18·4 | 4·5 |
| 1987-88 | 17·7 | 4·2 |
| 1989-89 | 16·8 | 3·8 |

[1] 1987-88 prices, using the GDP deflator.

Over the whole period general Government debt interest payments are broadly unchanged in real terms. As a proportion of GDP interest payments have fallen significantly from their 1981-82 peak and have fallen every year for the last four years. Interest payments are forecast to fall further over the next four years in both real terms and relative to GDP. The declining burden of debt interest has made room for more spending on priority services within a given total for public spending.

### Inflation

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing the rate of inflation in the United Kingdom and in other European Community states in each year since accession; and if he will indicate against their names those countries who joined the ERM, and the year of doing so.

**Mr. Lilley:** The OECD "Economic Outlook" published in June 1989 gives the annual rate of inflation in each of the European countries since 1973. Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands joined the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system at its inception on 13 March 1979. Spain joined on 19 June 1989.

### Alcohol Taxes

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the yield in the current year by way of tax on alcohol from Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, respectively; and if he will express the Scottish figures as a percentage of the United Kingdom total.

**Mr. Lilley:** The forecast yield from excise and value added tax on alcohol for the United Kingdom in 1989-90 is £7·3 billion. A regional breakdown of receipts is not available.

### Inflation and Interest Rates

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out the inflation rate and level of real interest rates in each European Community country since January 1988.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 30 June 1989]*: Inflation rates, excluding owner-occupier housing costs in order to put the figures on a more comparable basis, are given in the table. There is no agreed definition of real interest rates. The table shows the average short term money market rate in January 1988 and in the most recent month for which figures are available, deflated by the 12-month inflation rate in that month.

*"Real" short term interest rates and 12 month inflation rates in the European Community countries based on inflation rates which exclude owner occupier housing costs*

| | *January 1988* | | [3]*Latest* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Inflation rate* | *Real interest rate* | *Inflation rate* | *Real interest rate* |
| Germany | 0·5 | 2·9 | 3·0 | 3·9 |
| France | 2·3 | 5·9 | 3·6 | 5·2 |
| United Kingdom | 3·7 | 5·0 | 5·9 | 7·8 |
| Italy | 5·0 | 5·2 | 7·0 | 5·2 |
| Spain | 4·4 | 8·0 | 6·6 | 7·7 |
| Netherlands | −0·2 | 4·6 | 0·7 | 6·1 |
| Belgium | 0·9 | 5·6 | 3·0 | 5·1 |
| Portugal | 8·6 | 4·8 | 13·2 | −0·4 |
| Greece | 14·2 | 2·2 | 13·0 | 6·2 |
| Denmark | 4·4 | 4·3 | 4·9 | 3·8 |
| Ireland[1] | 2·3 | 6·5 | 3·2 | 5·0 |
| Luxembourg[2] | 0·7 | 5·9 | 3·2 | 4·9 |

[1] Figures for Ireland are for February 1988 and February 1989.

[2] Real interest rate figures for Luxembourg use Belgian interest rates.

[3] Latest figures are June for the United Kingdom, France and Italy; May for Germany and Spain; February for Ireland and April for the other countries.

### Hoylake (Bermuda) Ltd.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will review the activities of offshore investment companies in the light of recent activites of Hoylake (Bermuda) Ltd.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* No.

### Endangered Species

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what happened to the live creatures and articles derived from endangered species imported or exported in contravention of national and international agreements and seized by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in 1988-89.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave him on Friday 26 May at cols. *810-11*. The disposal of seized live creatures and articles derived from endangered species takes place within the arrangements outlined in that reply.

### Ivory

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps have been taken by his Department to enforce the ban on trade in ivory recently declared by Her Majesty's Government.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The necessary instructions have been issued to Customs officers at points of entry into the United Kingdom.

### Money Measurement

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he now treats as his main measure of money in the economy.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The Government set a target range for narrow money MO and pays particular attention to it in assessing monetary conditions. The broad money aggregate M4 is also taken into account, though the interpretation of broad money, or liquidity, requires considerable judgment.

## DEFENCE

### Low Flying

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many complaints have been received about low flying from *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales in each month since January;

(2) how many low-flying sorties took place over the United Kingdom in each month since January 1989.

**Mr. Neubert:** I will write to the hon. Member.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those low-range danger areas within which military aircraft are permitted to descend below 250 ft minimum separation distance during the run-in to a simulated target; and if he will list the minimum permitted height in each case.

**Mr. Neubert:** The information requested is being collated. I will write to the hon. Member with a substantive reply before the House rises for the summer recess.

### Wootton Creek

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what defence interests are served by the Royal Navy's responsibility for Wootton creek.

**Mr. Neubert:** The Royal Navy has no specific defence interest in Wootton creek. However, because it lies within the dockyard port of Portsmouth, the Queen's harbourmaster retains responsibility for navigational matters there.

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any estimate of the total redevelopment value of *(a)* operational and *(b)* non-operational service land in London and south-east England.

**Mr. Neubert:** No. Sites are valued individually as the need arises.

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state the total area of *(a)* operational and *(b)* non-operational service land in Great Britain, broken down by standard planning region.

**Mr. Neubert:** Records are not held precisely in the form requested, but the following tables give a breakdown of the defence estate, including freehold and leasehold land and foreshore, as at 1 April 1989 *(a)* by function, and *(b)* by standard planning region.

| | *Acres* |
|---|---|
| *By function* | |
| Airfields | 72,657 |
| Naval bases | 3,088 |
| Training areas and ranges | 397,300 |
| Barracks and camps | 26,434 |
| Storage and supply depots | 24,861 |
| Research establishments | 48,760 |
| Telecommunications stations | 15,592 |
| Miscellaneous | 7,573 |
| TOTAL | 596,265 |
| *By standard planning region* | |
| Northern | 58,074 |
| North West | 32,768 |
| Isle of Man | 22 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 36,950 |
| East Midlands | 33,688 |
| West Midlands | 14,527 |
| Eastern | 90,581 |
| South East | 79,476 |
| South West | 137,611 |
| Scotland | 51,064 |
| Wales | 52,038 |
| Northern Ireland | 9,466 |
| TOTAL | 596,265 |

### Bases (Relocation)

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans for the relocation of south-eastern military bases to less expensive regions of the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Neubert:** We are continually seeking opportunities to rationalise the defence estate and to concentrate activities on lower-value sites, where there is a clear advantage of doing so in operational, management and financial terms. Present relocation plans include the move of the directorate general of defence quality assurance from Woolwich to Teesside, the officer and aircrew selection centre from Biggin Hill to Cranwell and some RAF units at Halton to Cosford.

## Polo

**Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take action to ensure that the career prospects of cavalry officers who indicate to their adjutant or commanding officer their disclination to subscribe to the regiment polo fund are not adversely effected.

**Mr. Neubert:** I do not believe that any action is necessary. Promotion in the Army is based entirely upon an individual's performance in his job. In addition, I made clear in my answer of 6 July at column *266* that no officer is required to subscribe towards his regimental polo team.

## Beer Rations

**Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the beer ration allowed to ratings in nuclear submarines per week; what advice his medical officers give about the safe levels of consumption for men on nuclear submarines; and if he will institute a review of the Royal Navy's policy on the issue of alcohol to ratings.

**Mr. Neubert:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answers I gave on 3 May at column *127* concerning limits on alcohol consumption by ratings on board RN vessels, and on 12 April at columns *610* and *611* on instituting a policy review.

Advice on sensible levels of alcohol consumption is given in group situations, and to individuals where a medical officer considers it appropriate. But it would be wrong to impose further restrictions on service personnel which are not justified by operational or safety considerations.

## US Maritime Prepositioning

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the port and anchorage facilities in the United Kingdom which have been designated for use for United States maritime prepositioning ships.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Discussions on the possibility of providing port and anchorage facilities for United States maritime prepositioning ships are continuing on a confidential basis, but no decisions have been taken.

## Navy Support Vessels

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the total number of Royal Navy support vessels and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels in each year since 1979.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The details requested are shown in the table for 1 April in each year:

| *Year* | *Royal Navy Support Vessels* | *Royal Fleet Auxiliary Vessels* | *Royal Maritime Auxiliary Vessels* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 3 | 29 | 714 |
| 1980 | 3 | 29 | 660 |
| 1981 | 3 | 28 | 635 |
| 1982 | 2 | 24 | 623 |
| 1983 | 2 | 25 | 540 |
| 1984 | 2 | 27 | 540 |
| 1985 | 3 | 28 | 523 |
| 1986 | 3 | 27 | 516 |
| 1987 | 4 | 26 | 510 |
| 1988 | 3 | 28 | 529 |
| 1989 | 2 | 26 | 483 |

The vessels in the third column have a number of support functions: research, mooring and salvage, tugs, range safety, ammunition and sullage, transportation, torpedo recovery and tank cleaning.

## NATO Forces

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish figures showing the percentage contribution of European nations to ready North Atlantic Treaty Organisation forces in each year since 1979 in the following categories *(a)* manpower, *(b)* tanks, *(c)* artillery, *(d)* combat aircraft stationed in Europe and *(e)* major warships, applying the same definitions and bases of calculation as used for the figures in the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989, page 2.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The figures quoted on page 2 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989" were produced by NATO specifically for use in the December 1988 defence planning committee report "Enhancing Alliance Collective Security: Shared roles, risks and responsibilities in the Alliance". Figures for each year since 1979 are not available on the same definitions and bases of calculation.

## F111 Aircraft

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the reason for the decline of four F111 aircraft in the figures for North Atlantic Treaty Organisation LRINF aircraft in the chart on page 51 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989, compared to the equivalent table in the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The figures presented in successive editions of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates" provide an overall picture of the number of USAF F111 aircraft that are operationally deployed. The actual number available at any time changes due to a number of factors including attrition and maintenance work. The figure given in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989" reflects a reduction in the numbers of aircraft generally available.

## HMS Chatham and Norfolk

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the frigates HMS Chatham and HMS Norfolk were listed on page 53 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989 as being operational on 1 April.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) on 26 June 1989 at column *366*.

### Nuclear Submarines (Disposal)

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what studies have been made on behalf of his Department of the implications in international law, of the disposal of nuclear-powered submarines once their operational lives have been completed *(a)* within international waters, and *(b)* within United Kingdom territorial waters.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Studies have been carried out into the disposal of reactor compartments from decommissioned nuclear submarines. One option includes the disposal of the intact submarine at sea, but no decisions have been made on the method of disposal. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is responsible for the interepretation of international law and has been regularly consulted by the MOD about the international implications of disposing of decommissioned nuclear submarines at sea. The London dumping convention (LDC), which is the international convention having worldwide scope in the field of dumping, makes no differentiation between international and territorial waters.

### Falkland Islands

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the total campaign and garrison costs associated with the security of the Falkland Islands and their subsequent maintenance; and what is this cost expressed as a per capita sum for the permanent population of the Falkland Islands.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The total extra cost of the Falklands commitment, including both campaign and garrison costs, from 1982-83 to the end of the last financial year, is estimated to be £3,368 million in cash terms, or about £1,750,000 per Falkland Islander. Once our spending on replacement equipment is complete, we expect the overall extra costs to level out at around £55 million to £60 million a year, at today's prices.

### Birkbeck College

**Sir Barney Hayhoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contact his officials had on Saturday 1 July with *The Sunday Times* about Birkbeck college; if the contents of the article printed in the newspaper on Sunday 2 July were made known to his officials; and what response they made.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** I have nothing to add to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) on 17 July 1989 at column *67*.

### Environmental Pollution

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will introduce legislation to require new facilities for the production of nuclear warheads, nuclear fuels for military use and naval bases for nuclear capable ships and submarines to be subject to mandatory environmental impact assessments before permission is granted for construction.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* No. The Ministry of Defence follows the procedures set out in Department of the Environment circulars 18/84 and 15/88.

## HEALTH

### Benzodiazepines

**Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been conducted into the advisability of prescribing *(a)* hypnotic benzodiazepines and *(b)* benzodiazepine tranquillisers to children; and what conclusions have been drawn relative to each.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Department has not commissioned research in the specific areas referred to by the hon. Member.

### Eye Tests

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Southport of 4 July, *Official Report,* column *150,* when information about the increase in the number of patients referred to hospital ophthalmology departments for eye tests since the introduction of charges for eye tests, will be held centrally.

**Mr. Mellor:** Information about the number of cases seen by hospital eye departments since April 1989, when the sight test charge was introduced, will be available centrally only towards the end of next year.

### NHS Reform

**Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on those of his proposals in "Working for Patients" designed to reduce waiting times for patients; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The proposals in the White Paper to improve the quality of service including the reduction of waiting times have been generally welcomed.

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many meetings of medical and non-medical staff he has addressed at those hospitals about which health authorities have expressed interest in opting out of the existing National Health Service management structure; and what plans he has to address such meetings in the near future.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have held a national conference in London and seven regional conferences for NHS staff from units which have expressed an interest in self-government. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has addressed five of these meetings and I have addressed three. My right hon. and learned Friend has also spoken to staff on an ad hoc basis in a number of individual hospitals and will continue to do so over the coming months.

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will name the medical organisations which have been critical of his proposals for hospitals to opt out of the existing National Health Service management structure; and if he will further set out the substance of their criticism.

**Mr. Mellor:** Many of the medical organisations who have commented on the White Paper have questions or concerns about the possible effects of hospitals becoming self governing within the National Health Service. These relate to the mechanisms for achieving high quality medical education and research, the means of ensuring the provision of comprehensive services and the effects of the hospitals's freedom to set pay and conditions. We believe these are based on groundless misapprehensions about our intentions.

On 10 July my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State spoke to an audience of senior doctors and gave assurances about the safeguarding of medical education and research. We intend to take reserve powers to ensure that undergraduate, post graduate and continuing medical education are provided in self-governing hospitals. We have already announced that the service increment for teaching (SIFT) will be enhanced to meet the costs of hospitals which support undergraduate medical education and the service costs of research.

District health authorities will have the responsibility of providing a comprehensive and cohesive range of conveniently sited, high quality services for their resident population. In doing this they will make full use of available facilities whether in health authority-managed hospitals, self-governing hospitals or the private sector. Health authorities will therefore ensure that there is no fragmentation of services.

Self-governing hospitals will be able to set their own pay and conditions but the discipline of contract funding is likely to ensure that they offer rates of pay which are broadly in line with those in the Health Service as a whole.

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will receive a deputation concerning proposals for opting out of hospitals in the borough of Walsall.

**Mr. Mellor:** No. This would not be helpful at this early stage. But I shall take into consideration the views of all those with an interest when assessing applications for hospitals to become self-governing.

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will request the Electoral Reform Society to conduct ballots in those areas where it is suggested that hospitals should opt out of the existing National Health Service management structure;

(2) if the Government will ask local authorities to conduct ballots on the same basis as in local and national elections in order to determine the level of support for hospitals to opt out of the existing National Health Service management structure.

**Mr. Mellor:** No.

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out the future timetable when it is suggested by health authorities that hospitals may opt out of the existing National Health Service management structure; and when he expects to make the first decisions on opting out.

**Mr. Mellor:** We intend that, subject to the passage of the necessary legislation, the first self-governing hospitals will be established in April 1991. The Department will issue further information about the application process later this year.

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if those hospitals which opt out of the existing National Health Service management structure will be under the same obligation to admit patients as at present.

**Mr. Mellor:** A decision by an individual NHS hospital to opt for self-governing status, will not alter in any way its obligations to admit patients requiring treatment. It will be in no sense different in this respect to a directly-managed hospital. Emergency treatment and admissions will be provided by all hospitals with the requisite facilities. Elective admissions will be provided within the contractual frameworks that have been agreed.

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received proposing that balloting should occur before hospitals opt out of the existing National Health Service management structure.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have received representations on this subject from a number of hon. Members, community health councils and other representative organisations and from individual members of the public.

### General Practitioners

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many representations in total he has received from the general public about the proposal to allocate a prescribing budget to each general practitioner.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have received 219 letters from the general public specifically referring to our proposal to introduce an indicative prescribing budget scheme for general practitioners. In addition to these we have received almost 6,500 letters from the general public about the White Paper proposals, the majority of which have raised questions about, amongst other things, indicative prescribing budgets.

### NHS Premises (Retailing)

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what income was received by the Northern regional health authority, or its component districts, in 1988 from retailing activities on Health Service premises.

**Mr. Freeman:** The net income received by the health authorities within the Northern regional health authority, from retailing activities on their premises during the tax year 1988-89, was £105,000.

### Meningitis

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list from 1 January to the latest date for which he has figures for the Doncaster health authority *(a)* the number of cases of meningitis recorded and *(b)* the number of deaths from meningitis, showing the ages of the patients concerned.

**Mr. Freeman:** Meningitis can be caused by a number of different organisms. The data show the number of notifications of *(a)* all forms and *(b)* meningococcal meningitis for Doncaster district health authority for the period 31 December 1988 to 7 July 1989. Mortality data for this period are not yet available.

| | *Meningitis (all forms)* | *Meningococcal meningitis* |
|---|---|---|
| Doncaster district health authority | 14 | 10 |

### Resuscitation Units (Doncaster Royal Infirmary)

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the wall-mounted resuscitation units in the maternity wing of the women's hospital at Doncaster royal infirmary were installed; and when he expects them to become operative.

**Mr. Freeman:** Installation and use of hospital equipment is a matter for the district health authority concerned and I suggest the hon. Member contacts the chairman of Doncaster health authority for the information he seeks.

### Coronary Disease

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give, for each special health authority and district health authority the expenditure on coronary heart prevention *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* as a proportion of the total revenue budget of the authority in the manner of the February 1989 National Audit Office report.

**Mr. Freeman:** I regret that the information requested is not available.

As the February 1989 NAO report explained:

> "Health departments are unable to estimate the extent of expenditure on the prevention of coronary heart disease because of the notoriously difficult problem of costing health promotion activities."

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library the guidance being issued to district health authorities about the prevention of coronary disease.

**Mr. Freeman:** Work is currently under way in the Department to develop guidance for regional and district health authorities on the organisation of health promotion services generally. The guidance will include specific references to coronary heart disease, building on experience from the first two years of the "Look After Your Heart" campaign, as well as other major areas of health education activity. When the guidance has been prepared, I will place it in the Library.

### Profiles

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the profiles requested by his Department in HC (88)43.

**Mr. Freeman:** The profiles mentioned in appendix 4 of HC (88)43 are epidemiological overviews of the health status of health authorities' populations. As they are being compiled by health authorities for their own purposes, not for submission to the Department of Health, decisions about publication rest with the health authorities themselves.

### NHS Administrators

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to either *(a)* reduce the number of administrators in the National Health Service or *(b)* place a numerical cap on the total of such administrators.

**Mr. Mellor:** As with all staff groups administrative and clerical staff groups make a necessary and vital contribution to the running of the National Health Service. All health authorities are asked to exercise restraint on A and C staff numbers.

This group is continuing to stabilize following the introduction of the management arrangements advocated by the Griffiths' report. Any growth is now occurring among clinically related A and C staff—that is, those who work in direct support of those providing patient care. Between 1982 and 1987, such staff increased by 65 per cent. from 22,700 to 37,400. Non-clinically related staff declined by over 10 per cent. during the same period from 86,100 to 77,200.

### Health Aids (Old People)

**Mr. Fry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to ensure that all health authorities make necessary health aids which are supplied free to patients in their own homes also available free to those in residential and nursing homes.

**Dame Jill Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out the criteria under which residents in private old person's homes are entitled to National Health Service treatment.

**Mr. Freeman:** People in residential care homes retain the right to National Health Service treatment as if they were in their own homes. The person responsible for a private nursing home must provide adequate facilities and services for those accommodated and we would expect the fees charged to reflect this. Nursing home patients retain the right to National Health Service general medical, dental and hospital services.

### Medical Accidents

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases have been lost, and with what value of damages and costs, by regional health authorities in England as a result of medical accidents in each year since 1980.

**Mr. Freeman:** This information is not held centrally. Health authorities are required to notify the Department of all compensation payments in excess of £100,000 made as a result of court orders or out of court settlements.

The following awards/settlements resulting from medical accidents by National Health Service region were notified in each of the financial years 1980-81 to 1988-89.

| *Year and region* | *Amount of award/ settlement £* |
|---|---|
| *1980-81* | |
| North East Thames | 240,000 |
| Oxford | 160,000 |
| *1981-82* | — |
| *1982-83* | |
| North East Thames | 195,000 |
| *1983-84* | |
| South West Thames | 250,000 |
| Wessex | 534,000 |
| Mersey | 160,000 |
| *1984-85* | |
| North West Thames | 220,760 |
| North East Thames | 235,000 |

| *Year and region* | *Amount of award/ settlement £* |
|---|---|
| *1985-86* | |
| Yorkshire | 385,000 |
| Trent | 270,000 |
| Wessex | 275,000 |
| West Midlands | 250,000 |
| *1986-87* | |
| Trent | 115,000 |
| | 130,000 |
| | 375,000 |
| East Anglian | 151,222 |
| | 600,000 |
| South West Thames | 150,498 |
| Wessex | 175,000 |
| Oxford | 550,000 |
| West Midlands | 175,000 |
| | 260,000 |
| North Western | 207,000 |
| *1987-88* | |
| North East Thames | 430,000 |
| South Western | 350,000 |
| Mersey | 375,000 |
| *1988-89* | |
| Trent | 625,000 |
| North East Thames | [1]535,000 |
| | 380,000 |
| | 546,000 |
| | 220,000 |
| South East Thames | [1]225,000 |
| Oxford | 465,000 |
| South Western | 290,000 |
| Mersey | 375,000 |
| | 140,000 |

[1] Provisional figures.

*Note.* The figures shown represent the total amount of the award/settlement excluding costs which are not generally known at the time of the settlement and, therefore, are not notified to the Department. The figures do not take account of the fact that the health authority's liability may have been reduced by a contribution from a medical defence organisation.

## Cardiac Staff

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the number of *(a)* cardiologists and *(b)* cardiac technicians in each regional health authority, expressed as an absolute figure, and per 100,000 population of the regional health authority for the latest available year.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information is shown in the table.

*NHS staff[1] in post at 30 September 1987*

| | *Hospital consultants—cardiology* | | *Physiological measurement technicians—cardiology* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Region* | *whole-time[2] equivalent* | *WTE per 100,000 population[3]* | *whole-time[2] equivalent* | *WTE per 100,000 population[3]* |
| Northern | 8 | 0·3 | 49 | 1·6 |
| Yorkshire | 7 | 0·2 | 80 | 2·2 |
| Trent | 6 | 0·1 | 137 | 2·9 |
| East Anglia | 3 | 0·1 | 23 | 1·1 |
| North West Thames | 8 | 0·2 | 60 | 1·7 |
| North East Thames | 7 | 0·2 | 59 | 1·6 |
| South East Thames | 11 | 0·3 | 26 | 0·7 |
| South West Thames | 6 | 0·2 | 37 | 1·2 |
| Wessex | 5 | 0·2 | 24 | 0·8 |
| Oxford | 6 | 0·2 | 14 | 0·6 |
| South Western | 1 | 0·0 | 40 | 1·2 |
| West Midlands | 9 | 0·2 | 102 | 2·0 |
| Mersey | 8 | 0·3 | 86 | 3·6 |
| North Western | 12 | 0·3 | 111 | 2·8 |
| England total[4] | 116 | 0·2 | 876 | 1·8 |

*Source:*

Department of Health (SMI3) annual censuses of NHS medical and non-medical manpower and the Office of Population Censuses and Survery.

[1] Includes permanent paid and honorary staff, including locums and agency locum staff.

[2] Figures rounded to the nearest whole-time equivalent but unrounded figures used for calculations.

[3] Based on mid-1987 population estimates.

[4] England totals include staff employed in London post graduate special health authorities.

## Electrocardiograms

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the number of *(a)* electrocardiograms, *(b)* exercise electrocardiograms, *(c)* echocardiograms and *(d)* ambulatory recordings per 100,000 population carried out (i) in England and (ii) in each regional health authority area for the latest available year.

**Mr. Freeman:** The available information is given in the table.

*Electrocardiogram requests, NHS hospitals, per 100,000 population, England, 1987-88*

| | *Group A[1] Routine Electrocardiograms (per 100,000 population[2])* | *Group B[1] Ambulary and Exercise ECG's (per 100,000 population[2])* |
|---|---|---|
| England[3] | 6,384 | 695 |
| Northern | 7,012 | 523 |
| Yorkshire | 7,748 | 837 |
| Trent | 6,671 | 330 |
| East Anglian | 5,819 | 575 |
| North West Thames | 5,900 | 659 |
| North East Thames | 7,783 | 1,031 |

| | *Group A*[1] *Routine Electrocardiograms (per 100,000 population*[2]*)* | *Group B*[1] *Ambulary and Exercise ECG's (per 100,000 population*[2]*)* |
|---|---|---|
| South East Thames | 5,488 | 911 |
| South West Thames | 4,005 | 475 |
| Wessex | 4,139 | 672 |
| Oxford | 4,489 | 432 |
| South Western | 5,177 | 476 |
| West Midlands | 6,004 | 528 |
| Mersey | 7,960 | 966 |
| North Western | 7,942 | 972 |

[1] *Source:* KH13.

[2] OPCS 1987 mid-year population estimates.

[3] England figure includes Special Health Authority.

## Medical Scientific Officers

**Mr. Churchill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Davyhulme of 4 July, what has been the percentage increase in average earnings from April 1980 to 1988 in respect of medical scientific officers.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not hold this information centrally. Pay rates for NHS scientists and clinical psychologists have increased by an average of 113 per cent. between April 1980 and April 1988.

## Residential Care

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will define the circumstances in which local authorities and health authorities meet the full cost of the care of an individual placed in private or voluntary residential care; and whether these circumstances apply equally when the claimant is over pensionable age;

(2) what access to residential care an individual enjoys if the statutory services are unwilling or unable to make provision.

**Mr. Mellor:** Statutory responsibility for the provision of residential care rests with local authorities. Under section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948 and directions issued by the Secretary of State, local authorities have a duty to make arrangements for providing residential accommodation for persons ordinarily resident in their area who, by reason of age, infirmity or other circumstances are in need of care and attention which is not otherwise available to them. Local authorities may themselves provide such accommodation. Alternatively they may under section 26 of that Act, sponsor residents in voluntary or private residential care homes, in which case the local authority pays the full fees and the resident pays the authority in accordance with his or her means.

## Cook-chill Food

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will ensure that all National Health Service hospital in-patients are able to obtain a cooked alternative to cook-chill food if they request it;

(2) what advice his Department has given to health authorities concerning the feeding of individual patients in hospitals providing only cook-chill meals where the patients concerned refuse to eat food produced by this method.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on Tuesday 17 January at columns *113-14*.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what information he has received regarding the Yorkshire regional health authority's proposals to adopt the use of four central production units within the private sector for the purpose of the introduction of the cook-chill catering throughout the Yorkshire region;

(2) what is the position of the current in-house cook-chill production units following the decision of the Yorkshire regional health authority to privatise hospital catering provision;

(3) what recent consultation has taken place between the Yorkshire regional health authority and *(a)* the district health authorities, *(b)* the community health councils and *(c)* trade unions, concerning their future plans for hospital catering within the region.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Yorkshire regional health authority consulted widely on its catering strategy and continues to do so when appropriate. Questions about its implementation are a local matter and not for me. The hon. Member may wish to contact the regional chairman for the particular information he is seeking.

## Irradiated Food

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance his Department has issued concerning the introduction of irradiated food into National Health Service catering; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Government's announcement of their intention to permit food irradiation was made by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on 21 June. New enabling powers are required to impose conditions and controls necessary for its introduction. It follows that any advice to the NHS must await the application of those new powers when available.

## Infant Mortality

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he intends to introduce to improve Britain's standing in the infant mortality league of the European Economic Community nations.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 18 July to my hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) at columns *138-39* announcing the Government's response to the first report from the Social Services Select Committee, Session 1988-89 on perinatal, neonatal and infant mortality.

## Private Ambulances

**Mr. Higgins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what regulations exist to ensure that private ambulances are roadworthy and safe to operate as ambulances; what regulations exist to require those operating private ambulances to be qualified to deal with sick or injured people; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** There is no statutory control over private ambulances or private ambulance operators who are free to operate subject to the provisions of common law and traffic legislation. The onus is on those buying private ambulance services to ensure that they are able to provide the appropriate facilities and staff to meet the standards required.

### Anthony Porter

**Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to reply to the question from the hon. Member for Stockton, South relating to the death of Anthony Porter after receiving treatment at North Tees hospital, originally tabled for answer on 7 July.

**Mr. Freeman:** I replied to my hon. Friend's letter on 19 July.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on official hospitality by his Department in 1988-89.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply which my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Social Security gave today.

### Advertising

**Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide as much information as possible which does not breach commercial confidentiality about his Department's expenditure on commercial television advertising for each of the past five years.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 15 May 1989]:* The figures are as follows:

| *Campaign* | *1984-85*<br>£ | *1985-86*<br>£ | *1986-87*<br>£ | *1987-88*<br>£ | *1988-89*<br>£ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Drugs | Nil | 700,281 | 707,319 | Nil | 400,137 |
| AIDS | Nil | Nil | 948,605 | 1,631,598 | Nil |
| Anti-teenage smoking | Nil | 266,975 | 261,918 | Nil | Nil |
| Nursing | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil | 319,412 |

Health education campaigns are conducted by the Health Education Authority which now has responsibility for AIDS and anti-teenage smoking campaigns, amongst others.

### Radiation

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, pursuant to his answer of 11 July, *Official Report,* column *472-3,* to the hon. Member for Gower (Mr. Wardell), he will publish the general comments made in the last five years about the facilities available to clinicians administering radioactive substances referred to him by Her Majesty's inspector of pollution; and if he will list those clinics, hospitals and health authorities where his Department has pursued its concerns with the health authority.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* I regret that this information could not be supplied except at disproportionate cost.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Vaccine Damage (Compensation)

**Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much compensation is paid to brain-damaged victims following vaccinations who are deemed to be 75 per cent. disabled.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** No payments under the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 are made for disablement assessed at less than 80 per cent. However, anyone who believes they are disabled as a result of vaccination may seek compensation through the courts.

### Income Support

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people claim the lowest level of income support in each of its three categories.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The latest estimate is that some 610,000 single people and 15,000 couples draw income support at the basic personal allowance rates only.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people have no other source of income other than income support.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The latest estimate is that some 725,000 single people and 43,000 couples drawing income support have no other source of income, (including other social security benefits).

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what tests his Department carries out to see if it is possible for income support claimants to survive on the various levels of support where no other income is received.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Information is available from a variety of sources, including the "Annual Statistical Enquiry", the "Family Expenditure Survey", the "General Household Survey", individual research studies carried out over a period of time, and representations from outside organisations. It is also relevant that the real value of the benefit has increased very substantially over the period since 1948.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has any proposals to increase any of the three grades of income support.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The personal allowance for certain 16 to 17-year-olds who, of necessity, have to live away from home was increased from 10 July, and there will be increases this October in the premiums for pensioners over 75, and for disabled pensioners. Further increases in the income support rates will be considered later this year as part of the annual uprating.

**Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any plans to increase the level of income support for people in nursing homes and residential care.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The maximum amounts payable under income support to people in independent residential care and nursing homes are reviewed annually at the same time as the general uprating of social security benefits.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what action is taken by his Department when the nearest relatives of an income support claimant over pension age in residential or nursing care refuse requests to top up the claimant's fees for care where the claimant's total income does not meet the full cost of care;

(2) which agency is responsible for meeting the difference between the fees for private residential and nursing care and the total income of an income support claimant over pensionable age when his or her resources fall short of the costs of residence.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 4 July at column *140*. Local authorities can only meet the full cost of care for people over pension age, they cannot "top-up" income support. The funding arrangements for new residents of homes are of course to change following the announcement on the funding of community care made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health on 12 July at columns *975-79*.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his policy regarding the payment of income support for longer than six months to a claimant in private residential or nursing home care when the claimant's house is for sale but has not been sold, and where the claimant has no resources to meet the costs of the home.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Income support can continue to be paid after 26 weeks, provided that the adjudication officer is satisfied that all reasonable steps to sell the property are being taken.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his policy regarding the realisation of the sale of the former home of an applicant for income support in private residential care where such a sale would render the resident's previous carer homeless, and where the carer is neither the partner of the claimant nor a relative over the age of 60 years, nor is incapacitated.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 4 July at columns *139-40*.

## Grants and Loans

**Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the total number and percentage of *(a)* budgeting loans and *(b)* community care grants awarded to the 15 client groups defined by his Department for (i) Great Britain, (ii) the Northern Department of Social Security region and (iii) each of the Department of Social Security local offices of Redcar, Eston, Middlesbrough, Stockton and Hartlepool for the financial year 1988-89.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd** *[holding answer 10 July, 1989]:* The information requested is set out in the table.

*Budgeting loans and community care grants nationally, regional and for local offices by client group 1988-89*

*Per cent.*

| | *(00)* | *(01)* | *(02)* | *(03)* | *(04)* | *(05)* | *(06)* | *(07)* | *(08)* | *(09)* | *(10)* | *(11)* | *(12)* | *(13)* | *(14)* | *(15)*[1] | *Total awards* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Great Britain* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Budgeting Loans** | 0·5 | 0·3 | 0·6 | 3·9 | 0·4 | 3·6 | 3·6 | 43·9 | 0·7 | 2·1 | 16·7 | 18·8 | 1·0 | 3·8 | 0·0 | n.a. | 504,629 |
| **Community Care Grants** | 0·4 | 4·5 | 3·7 | 14·3 | 0·9 | 3·4 | 10·0 | 25·2 | 0·7 | 1·5 | 9·5 | 16·4 | 2·0 | 6·3 | 0·0 | 1·1 | 152,574 |
| *North East Region* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Budgeting Loans** | 0·3 | 0·3 | 0·7 | 4·1 | 0·4 | 2·7 | 3·0 | 42·8 | 0·8 | 2·2 | 20·9 | 17·6 | 0·9 | 3·3 | 0·0 | n.a. | 101,558 |
| **Community Care Grants** | 0·4 | 3·7 | 3·7 | 14·5 | 1·0 | 3·2 | 9·3 | 26·2 | 0·7 | 1·3 | 11·7 | 16·3 | 1·8 | 5·9 | 0·0 | 0·8 | 278,824 |
| *Eston ILO* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Budgeting Loans** | 0·0 | 0·2 | 0·8 | 2·0 | 0·3 | 3·1 | 4·1 | 52·0 | 0·3 | 1·1 | 25·6 | 7·5 | 0·6 | 2·5 | 0·0 | n.a. | 1,316 |
| **Community Care Grants** | 0·3 | 1·3 | 2·3 | 5·8 | 0·0 | 2·3 | 5·8 | 28·2 | 0·6 | 3·2 | 30·2 | 14·0 | 0·6 | 4·9 | 0·0 | 0·3 | 319 |
| *Hartlepool ILO* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Budgeting Loans** | 0·6 | 0·3 | 0·7 | 3·1 | 0·6 | 2·5 | 3·4 | 40·3 | 0·3 | 2·4 | 26·8 | 15·4 | 1·4 | 2·3 | 0·0 | n.a. | 1,662 |
| **Community Care Grants** | 1·3 | 3·0 | 1·7 | 8·3 | 0·3 | 3·0 | 6·0 | 30·3 | 0·3 | 1·3 | 18·3 | 18·0 | 0·3 | 4·3 | 0·0 | 2·7 | 321 |
| *Middlesbrough ILO* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Budgeting Loans** | 0·2 | 0·5 | 0·8 | 3·6 | 0·6 | 2·5 | 3·3 | 45·9 | 0·6 | 2·1 | 24·2 | 12·8 | 0·6 | 2·2 | 0·0 | n.a. | 4,023 |
| **Community Care Grants** | 0·0 | 3·6 | 4·1 | 12·0 | 1·3 | 3·7 | 8·0 | 32·1 | 0·4 | 1·2 | 9·4 | 16·4 | 1·4 | 5·2 | 0·0 | 1·2 | 951 |
| *Redcar ILO* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Budgeting Loans** | 0·1 | 0·0 | 0·5 | 4·1 | 0·9 | 12·0 | 2·3 | 37·0 | 0·9 | 1·5 | 20·6 | 16·6 | 0·7 | 2·9 | 0·0 | n.a. | 1,369 |
| **Community Care Grants** | 0·0 | 3·0 | 3·6 | 14·3 | 2·4 | 9·6 | 7·5 | 22·4 | 2·4 | 0·9 | 10·3 | 14·3 | 1·9 | 6·6 | 0·0 | 0·9 | 503 |
| *Stockton ILO* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Budgeting Loans** | 0·3 | 0·3 | 1·1 | 4·3 | 0·6 | 2·5 | 3·5 | 44·0 | 0·6 | 2·1 | 22·3 | 15·1 | 0·9 | 2·5 | 0·0 | n.a. | 2,720 |
| **Community Care Grants** | 0·3 | 3·2 | 4·0 | 11·2 | 0·9 | 3·6 | 6·4 | 36·5 | 0·3 | 1·4 | 11·9 | 13·9 | 1·1 | 4·2 | 0·0 | 1·3 | 799 |

[1] *Key to client groups*

| *Code* | *Meaning* |
|---|---|
| 00 | unallocated or unidentified |
| 01 | over 80—with Income Support higher pensioner premium |
| 02 | aged 60-79—disabled with higher pensioner premium |
| 03 | aged 60-79—with ordinary pensioner premium, or over 60 without pensioner premium |
| 04 | lone parent with Income Support disability premium |
| 05 | family with disability premium |
| 06 | other with disability premium |
| 07 | lone parent without disability premium |
| 08 | signs at UBO quarterly with Income Support family premium |
| 09 | signs at UBO quarterly without family premium |
| 10 | signing unemployed or with training allowance with family premium |
| 11 | signing unemployed or with training allowance without family premium |
| 12 | others with family premium |
| 13 | others without family premium |
| 14 | involved in trade dispute |
| 15 | applicant not in receipt of Income Support—not applicable for budgeting loans |

### Benefits

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the reasons for the delay experienced by Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, of the Rodney road centre, Leeds, in hearing the outcome of their claim for family credit; what are the grounds for the refusal of (i) family credit and (ii) income support in that case; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Mrs. Elliot was notified on 3 November 1988 that her claim for family credit made on 22 September 1988 had been disallowed on the ground that neither she nor her husband were normally engaged in remunerative work within the terms of section 20(5)(b) of the Social Security Act 1986 and regulation 5(2) of the Family Credit (General) Regulations 1987. The delay was caused by the need to make inquiries of Mr. Elliot's employers to establish details of his employment. Mr. Elliot's claim for income support made on 14 November 1988 was disallowed on the ground that he was engaged in remunerative work of 24 hours or more within the terms of section 20(3)(c) of the Social Security Act 1986 and regulation 5 of the Income Support (General) Regulations 1987.

As I said in my reply to the hon. Member on 6 July at column *247*, we are considering ways of minimising the risk of families failing to qualify for either benefit.

### Computerisation

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list the items of personal data held in the new computerised departmental central index, the size of the index, and how many accesses were made to the index over the last two months.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 15 June 1989 at column *531*.

### Social Fund

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what statistical information he has as to the reasons given to applicants by social fund officers at the local office in Durham city for the refusal in respect of an application for social fund loans.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The information requested is shown in the table.

*Reasons for refusal of Social Fund loans 1988-89*

| | *number of times reason given* | *As per cent. of total times reason given* |
|---|---|---|
| Office: Durham City | | |
| Savings over £500 sufficient to meet cost | 1 | 0·2 |
| Not in receipt of IS | 47 | 8·4 |
| Not in receipt of IS for 26 weeks | 171 | 30·4 |
| Excluded items | 29 | 5·2 |
| Excluded persons | 1 | 0·2 |
| Amount < £30 (not travelling expenses) | 13 | 2·3 |
| Total debt of £1,000 | 1 | 0·2 |
| Previous application and decision for the item | 24 | 4·3 |
| No serious damage or risk to health or safety | 12 | 2·1 |
| Inability to repay | 14 | 2·5 |
| Help available from another source | 15 | 2·7 |
| Insufficient SF funds, priority too low | 174 | 31·0 |
| Suitable alternative available | 19 | 3·4 |
| Loan refused because CCG awarded | 23 | 4·1 |
| Other | 18 | 3·2 |
| Total | 562 | |

*Note:* the proportions have been calculated as percentages of the total number of reasons for refusal. The total number of reasons for refusal may equal or exceed the total number of refusals because the social fund officer can give more than one reason for refusing an application.

### Students and Trainees

**Mr. Lester:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security in what circumstances *(a)* full-time students/trainees and *(b)* part-time students/trainees would be eligible for (i) income support and (ii) housing benefit.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Students who are disabled, or lone parents, are eligible for income support while attending full, or part-time courses. Other full-time students can claim only during the summer vacation. Those attending part-time courses can claim income support providing they are available for employment.

All trainees exempt for the requirement to be available for work, including those in receipt of a Government training allowance, are eligible for income support. Other trainees aged 18 or over may qualify for income support only if they are available for work.

Students and trainees may claim housing benefit throughout the year for the home which they occupy, as long as it is not rented from their education establishment. Students and trainees receiving income support are eligible for maximum housing benefit for their rent and rates.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much was spent on official hospitality by his Department in 1988-89.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The total expenditure on hospitality by the Departments of Social Security and Health in 1988-89 was around £100,000.

Separate figures are not available for 1988-89 because the Departments operated a joint administration vote.

### Computer Centre, Livingston

**Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has for the staffing of his Department's new computer centre in Livingston.

**Mr. Moore:** The area computer centre at Livingston is the first of three new, purpose-built computer centres which will handle the payment of income support and pension claims. In accordance with the Government's policy of testing the market, I have examined whether the centre could better be operated by my Department along the lines of its other major computer installations, or by the private sector on my behalf.

The examination has taken account of a range of considerations including the need to provide a secure service to the public, the benefits to be gained from introducing competitive pressure into the Department's operations and the value of having a predictable cost profile over future years.

On the basis of an evaluation of competitive tenders, I have concluded that the advantage lies with contracting out the operation of the centre and I intend to award a contract to Electronic Data Systems, a company with extensive experience of setting up and running operations involving the production of large volumes of secure items. The contract will run for five years. The company will work under the supervision and direction of the Department's information technology services directorate and will be subject to strict control and monitoring to ensure adherence to the statutory requirements for the protection of information supplied by claimants and to the agreed standards of service.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Monday 24 July 1989*

## PRIME MINISTER

### Single European Market

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Prime Minister what is her estimate of the number of jobs likely to be lost in the United Kingdom arising from the Single European Market of 1992; and what are the estimates available from the European Community.

**The Prime Minister:** The European Commission's own estimates last year predicted that United Kingdom employment would rise by around 1·5 per cent. as a result of completing the single market. This country's success in creating new jobs will depend on how well and how quickly individual firms respond to the new challenges which will face them. Under this Government's policies of enterprise, deregulation and incentive, there has been sustained economic growth and record business investment. British industry is thus well placed to take advantage of the opportunities which the single market will offer.

### Attorney-General

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Prime Minister what is her policy as to whether the Attorney-General should possess a legal qualification; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** The Attorney General is the principal legal adviser to the Crown in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the statutory duty to superintend the two Directors of Public Prosecutions and the director of the Serious Fraud Office. The Attorney-General appears personally on behalf of the Crown in appropriate cases. Accordingly, it is essential that he should be legally qualified, and the Attorney-General is a member of the Bar of England and Wales. He is given by statute, by virtue of his membership of the Bar of England and Wales, the same rights of audience in Northern Ireland as members of the Bar of Northern Ireland.

### Colin Wallace

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister how many documents were received in relation to Colin Wallace and sent by or on behalf of Colin Wallace to No. 10 Downing street for onward transmission to the Hughes inquiry into the Kincora boys' home; how many were sent on to Judge Hughes; and what are the reasons for the difference between the two figures.

**The Prime Minister:** A file of papers relating to Mr. Colin Wallace was submitted to my office on 1 November 1984, but was returned to the sender on 24 November. No complete record of the documents was retained. No question arose at that stage of the papers being intended for onward transmission to the Hughes inquiry. When it was subsequently requested that the papers should be sent to the inquiry, such documents as had been copied and retained were duly made available.

### Mr. Derrick Gregory

**Mr. Amos:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make one last urgent appeal to the Malaysian Government not to carry out the execution of Mr. Derrick Gregory.

**The Prime Minister:** As I am sure my hon. Friend is aware, Mr. Derrick Gregory was executed in the early hours of 21 July. I regret that the Malaysian Government were not able to accept the plea for clemency we made on humanitarian grounds.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### National Union of Teachers

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the National Union of Teachers; and what was discussed.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend met representatives of the National Union of Teachers on 11 July to discuss future pay determination machinery.

### School Leavers

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many pupils with five or more good GCEs left school last year at 16 years of age and did not continue in full-time education.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** In the academic year 1987-88, some 22,500 16-year-old pupils left school in England with five or more grades A-C in the GCSE (including any equivalent grades gained at O-level and CSE previously), with no intention of continuing their full-time education.

### Teacher Numbers

**Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to ensure that there will be sufficient teachers qualified in all the necessary subjects to teach the national curriculum in its further stages from September 1990.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend is taking the requirements of the national curriculum fully into account in setting the intakes to initial teacher training, in revising the criteria for initial teacher training courses, in planning the LEA in-service training grant scheme and education support grants and in managing the action programme on teacher supply.

### Teacher Shortages (Leicestershire)

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what measures he is taking to provide himself with an accurate picture of teacher shortages in Leicestershire.

**Mr. Butcher:** The Department collects data on vacant posts from local education authorities each January. Consultations are continuing on information to be collected regularly from authorities and schools to monitor the national curriculum and other policies. Proposals on information about teachers, their deployment and movements will emerge from these consultations.

### Nursery Schools

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to increase the funding for local education authority-run nursery school places.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 4 July to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr Taylor) at column *121*.

### Student Loans

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects the top-up loans for students scheme to make a cumulative net saving.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what he estimates will be the first year in which the top-up loans scheme for students will make a cumulative net saving in public expenditure, assuming *(a)* 80 per cent., *(b)* 90 per cent. and *(c)* 100 per cent. take-up of the loans scheme and allowing for all costs of defaults, write-offs, and all administrative costs of the loans administration vehicle and his Department, the start-up costs of the loans administration vehicle; and his estimate of the costs of the interest subsidy to students.

**Mr. Jackson:** My answer on 21 March, *Official Report*, columns *497-99*, showed the costs and savings associated with top-up loans on the basis of 80, 90 and 100 per cent. take-up. Those figures took account of default and write-off. They also showed the effect of the interest subsidy; if higher interest were charged, repayments would be larger, depending on the rate selected. Those figures did not include administrative costs.

On that basis, the scheme will show savings for the taxpayer as follows:

| | *take-up*<br>*80 per cent.* | *90 per cent.* | *100 per cent.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Savings first exceed outgoings | 2002 | 2006 | 2010 |
| Cumulative saving first arises | 2013 | 2018 | 2022 |

Administrative costs have not been estimated beyond 1995. However, on the illustrative assumption that they average 20 million a year, savings would first accrue in 2003, 2009 and 2010 on 80, 90 and 100 per cent. take-up respectively, and cumulative savings would arise in 2014, 2021 and 2026 respectively. Inclusion of administrative costs will have only a marginal effect on the date at which the scheme breaks even.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science by how much he expects the recurring costs of student loans administration to rise *(a)* in total and *(b)* per account, in each year beyond 1995.

**Mr. Jackson:** The preparatory work on the administration of top-up loans has not so far included an assessment of operating costs after 1995; as is the case before 1995, I would expect costs to rise less fast than the total number of accounts with which the company will be dealing.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has accepted the conclusion of the Price Waterhouse study on student loans that 1995 is typical of the scheme in full operation.

**Mr. Jackson:** By 1995 the loans scheme will have been fully established, and it will be in the state of steady expansion which will be typical of its operation for a substantial number of years; so the choice of 1995 as a basis for calculating operating costs was entirely reasonable.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he expects to complete the detailed analysis and cost-time estimates scheduled for August 1989 in the Price Waterhouse study on student loans.

**Mr. Jackson:** The next stage of detailed analysis on the administration of the top-up loans scheme is now under way; it is due to be completed by the end of September.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will estimate the costs of *(a)* marketing to counter a poor take-up rate, *(b)* incentives and enthusiastic debt collection to counter a default rate, and *(c)* providing arm's-length return on investment to counter a poor level of participation or high level of exit, to counter the operational risks to the student loans scheme set out in the Price Waterhouse study;

(2) if he will estimate the costs of *(a)* reimbursement of nugatory expenditure if legislation is not passed or delayed, *(b)* marketing of the student loans scheme to counter student opposition and *(c)* protection of banks participating in the event of a change of Government policy or change of Government; and by how much he expects the latter cost to rise by 1991-92, to counter the external risks to the student loans scheme set out in the Price Waterhouse study.

**Mr. Jackson:** The Price Waterhouse initial feasibility study identified these items as potential risks. More detailed work on the administration of the top-up loans scheme is now under way: that work, and the associated negotiations with the financial institutions, will no doubt address at least some of the items listed, but it is too early to say what conclusions will be reached.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will estimate the number of accounts in default in each year from 1990 to 2027, assuming the Government's estimates of student numbers rising to 1·15 million by 1995 and to at least 2·5 million by 2027, and a default rate of 10 per cent.;

(2) if he will estimate the total numbers of repayments, defaults and deferrals on the top-up loans scheme for students in each year from 1991 to 1995 and for each year afterwards for which figures are available on the basis of the table in appendix VII, statement 3 of the Price Waterhouse study;

(3) if he will publish the basic statistical data and working assumptions about student take-up, default rates and repayment profiles which he provided for the Price Waterhouse study on student loans.

**Mr. Jackson:** The following tables were supplied to Price Waterhouse. They show respectively estimated numbers of accounts, and the sums involved in 1990 prices. Table 1 shows in addition estimated numbers of accounts in default, deferring and making repayments. The tables are based on the same assumptions as annex E of Cm. 520, including estimates of graduate incomes based on historic data; faster growth in graduate incomes will reduce the level of deferment.

*Table 1*
*Top-up loans: number of accounts (thousands)*

| *Academic year* | *Drawing loan* | *of which: New* | *Due to repay* | *of which:* | | | *Total number of accounts* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | *(1) Making repayment* | *(2) Defaulting* | *(3) Claiming deferral* | |
| 1990 | 427·6 | 427·6 | 0·0 | 0·0 | 0·0 | 0·0 | 427·6 |
| 1991 | 424·2 | 148·5 | 152·8 | 55·0 | 6·1 | 91·7 | 577·0 |
| 1992 | 415·2 | 145·6 | 305·6 | 110·1 | 12·2 | 183·4 | 720·8 |
| 1993 | 406·9 | 143·6 | 458·9 | 192·7 | 21·4 | 244·8 | 865·8 |
| 1994 | 400·4 | 141·7 | 607·2 | 273·6 | 30·4 | 303·2 | 1,007·5 |
| 1995 | 395·5 | 140·1 | 752·2 | 374·0 | 41·6 | 336·6 | 1,147·6 |
| 1996 | 394·6 | 143·0 | 834·9 | 418·1 | 46·5 | 370·3 | 1,229·5 |
| 1997 | 402·8 | 150·2 | 915·8 | 461·1 | 51·2 | 403·4 | 1,318·6 |
| 1998 | 414·3 | 153·4 | 965·8 | 489·1 | 54·3 | 422·3 | 1,380·1 |
| 1999 | 424·1 | 153·6 | 1,019·8 | 519·0 | 57·7 | 443·1 | 1,443·9 |
| 2000 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,057·4 | 530·9 | 59·0 | 467·5 | 1,484·8 |
| 2001 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,157·4 | 596·9 | 66·3 | 494·2 | 1,584·8 |
| 2002 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,257·9 | 664·0 | 73·8 | 520·1 | 1,685·4 |
| 2003 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,315·5 | 693·6 | 77·1 | 544·8 | 1,742·9 |
| 2004 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,374·3 | 724·9 | 80·5 | 568·9 | 1,801·7 |
| 2005 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,425·9 | 743·5 | 82·6 | 599·8 | 1,853·3 |
| 2006 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,477·7 | 762·1 | 84·7 | 631·0 | 1,905·1 |
| 2007 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,506·2 | 759·8 | 84·4 | 662·0 | 1,933·6 |
| 2008 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,601·1 | 817·3 | 90·8 | 693·0 | 2,028·5 |
| 2009 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,694·9 | 873·9 | 97·1 | 723·9 | 2,122·3 |
| 2010 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,811·0 | 950·5 | 105·6 | 754·9 | 2,238·4 |
| 2011 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,865·7 | 971·9 | 108·0 | 785·8 | 2,293·1 |
| 2012 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,942·9 | 1,013·7 | 112·6 | 816·5 | 2,370·3 |
| 2013 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 1,996·7 | 1,041·5 | 115·7 | 839·4 | 2,424·1 |
| 2014 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,050·3 | 1,069·2 | 118·8 | 862·2 | 2,477·7 |
| 2015 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,088·8 | 1,083·3 | 120·4 | 885·1 | 2,516·2 |
| 2016 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,112·1 | 1,097·5 | 121·9 | 892·7 | 2,539·5 |
| 2017 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,135·6 | 1,111·7 | 123·5 | 900·4 | 2,563·0 |
| 2018 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,151·2 | 1,118·9 | 124·3 | 907·9 | 2,578·6 |
| 2019 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,167·1 | 1,126·0 | 125·1 | 916·1 | 2,594·5 |
| 2020 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,190·7 | 1,139·7 | 126·6 | 924·4 | 2,618·1 |
| 2021 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,207·3 | 1,153·4 | 128·2 | 925·8 | 2,634·7 |
| 2022 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,224·1 | 1,167·2 | 129·7 | 927·3 | 2,651·5 |
| 2023 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,225·7 | 1,167·2 | 129·7 | 928·8 | 2,653·1 |
| 2024 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,227·1 | 1,167·2 | 129·7 | 930·2 | 2,654·5 |
| 2025 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,227·6 | 1,167·2 | 129·7 | 930·7 | 2,655·0 |
| 2026 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,227·6 | 1,167·2 | 129·7 | 930·7 | 2,655·0 |
| 2027 | 427·4 | 152·6 | 2,227·6 | 1,167·2 | 129·7 | 930·7 | 2,655·0 |

*Table 2*
*Top-up loans: Grants and repayments*

*(£ million, 1990 prices)*

| *Academic year* | *Gross loan outlay* | *Repayments* | | | *Actual repayments* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *No deferral/ default* | *Deferral, no default* | *Allowing for 10 per cent. default* | |
| 1990 | 167·4 | 0·0 | 0·0 | 0·0 | 0·0 |
| 1991 | 193·2 | 6·0 | 2·4 | ·2 | 2·2 |
| 1992 | 215·2 | 24·0 | 9·6 | 1·0 | 8·6 |
| 1993 | 235·8 | 54·4 | 23·0 | 2·3 | 20·7 |
| 1994 | 255·7 | 94·2 | 42·5 | 4·2 | 38·2 |
| 1995 | 275·2 | 138·9 | 67·4 | 6·7 | 60·6 |
| 1996 | 296·7 | 174·5 | 92·2 | 9·2 | 83·0 |
| 1997 | 324·6 | 194·3 | 113·7 | 11·4 | 102·3 |
| 1998 | 355·6 | 204·4 | 131·4 | 13·1 | 118·3 |
| 1999 | 385·5 | 208·4 | 145·5 | 14·5 | 130·9 |
| 2000 | 409·6 | 211·7 | 157·2 | 15·7 | 141·5 |
| 2001 | 430·0 | 233·0 | 173·4 | 17·3 | 156·1 |
| 2002 | 449·8 | 272·8 | 196·0 | 19·6 | 176·4 |
| 2003 | 469·1 | 296·4 | 213·3 | 21·3 | 191·9 |
| 2004 | 487·8 | 302·4 | 225·1 | 22·5 | 202·6 |
| 2005 | 505·8 | 307·7 | 234·7 | 23·5 | 211·2 |
| 2006 | 523·4 | 311·7 | 241·7 | 24·2 | 217·5 |
| 2007 | 540·4 | 313·2 | 244·9 | 24·5 | 220·4 |
| 2008 | 540·4 | 339·2 | 256·5 | 25·7 | 230·9 |
| 2009 | 540·4 | 392·0 | 279·4 | 27·9 | 251·5 |
| 2010 | 540·4 | 445·6 | 306·0 | 30·6 | 275·4 |
| 2011 | 540·4 | 480·3 | 328·6 | 32·9 | 295·8 |
| 2012 | 540·4 | 494·6 | 346·8 | 34·7 | 312·2 |
| 2013 | 540·4 | 506·8 | 366·2 | 36·6 | 329·5 |
| 2014 | 540·4 | 516·9 | 382·5 | 38·3 | 344·3 |
| 2015 | 540·4 | 525·2 | 396·3 | 39·6 | 356·6 |

| Academic year | Gross loan outlay | Repayments<br>No deferral/ default | Deferral, no default | Allowing for 10 per cent. default | Actual repayments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2016 | 540·4 | 531·5 | 407·4 | 40·7 | 366·7 |
| 2017 | 540·4 | 536·0 | 417·3 | 41·7 | 375·6 |
| 2018 | 540·4 | 538·7 | 425·0 | 42·5 | 382·5 |
| 2019 | 540·4 | 539·9 | 430·5 | 43·0 | 387·4 |
| 2020 | 540·4 | 540·3 | 436·3 | 43·6 | 392·7 |
| 2021 | 540·4 | 540·4 | 442·8 | 44·3 | 398·5 |
| 2022 | 540·4 | 540·4 | 448·9 | 44·9 | 404·0 |
| 2023 | 540·4 | 540·4 | 452·8 | 45·3 | 407·6 |
| 2024 | 540·4 | 540·4 | 454·5 | 45·5 | 409·1 |
| 2025 | 540·4 | 540·4 | 455·9 | 45·6 | 410·3 |
| 2026 | 540·4 | 540·4 | 457·0 | 45·7 | 411·3 |
| 2027 | 540·4 | 540·4 | 457·8 | 45·8 | 412·0 |

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate the numbers of students repaying loans in each year from 1990 to 2027 on the basis of 80, 90, and 100 per cent. take-up, assuming an increase in the numbers of students from 1·15 million in 1995 to 2·5 million by 2027 and repayment periods of five, 10 and 15 years, respectively.

**Mr. Jackson:** Estimated numbers of graduates making repayments are shown in the table, for the take-up rates specified. In other respects the table is based on the assumptions used in annex E of Cm 520, including the assumption that the repayment period increases progressively from five to 10 years.

*Loan repayment numbers (thousands)*

| Year | 80 per cent. take-up | 90 per cent. take-up | 100 per cent. take-up |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1990 | 0·0 | 0·0 | 0·0 |
| 1991 | 55·0 | 61·9 | 68·8 |
| 1992 | 110·1 | 123·9 | 137·6 |
| 1993 | 192·7 | 216·8 | 240·9 |
| 1994 | 273·6 | 307·8 | 342·0 |
| 1995 | 374·0 | 420·8 | 467·5 |
| 1996 | 418·1 | 470·4 | 522·6 |
| 1997 | 461·1 | 518·7 | 576·4 |
| 1998 | 489·1 | 550·2 | 611·4 |
| 1999 | 519·0 | 583·9 | 648·7 |
| 2000 | 530·9 | 597·3 | 663·6 |
| 2001 | 596·9 | 671·5 | 746·1 |
| 2002 | 664·0 | 747·0 | 830·0 |
| 2003 | 693·6 | 780·3 | 867·0 |
| 2004 | 724·9 | 815·5 | 906·1 |
| 2005 | 743·5 | 836·4 | 929·4 |
| 2006 | 762·1 | 857·4 | 952·6 |
| 2007 | 759·8 | 854·8 | 949·8 |
| 2008 | 817·3 | 919·5 | 1,021·6 |
| 2009 | 873·9 | 983·1 | 1,092·4 |
| 2010 | 950·5 | 1,069·3 | 1,188·1 |
| 2011 | 971·9 | 1,093·4 | 1,214·9 |
| 2012 | 1,013·7 | 1,140·4 | 1,267·1 |
| 2013 | 1,041·5 | 1,171·7 | 1,301·9 |
| 2014 | 1,069·2 | 1,202·9 | 1,336·5 |
| 2015 | 1,083·3 | 1,218·7 | 1,354·1 |
| 2016 | 1,097·5 | 1,234·7 | 1,371·9 |
| 2017 | 1,111·7 | 1,250·7 | 1,389·6 |
| 2018 | 1,118·9 | 1,258·8 | 1,398·6 |
| 2019 | 1,126·0 | 1,266·8 | 1,407·5 |
| 2020 | 1,139·7 | 1,282·2 | 1,424·6 |
| 2021 | 1,153·4 | 1,297·6 | 1,441·8 |
| 2022 | 1,167·2 | 1,313·1 | 1,459·0 |
| 2023 | 1,167·2 | 1,313·1 | 1,459·0 |
| 2024 | 1,167·2 | 1,313·1 | 1,459·0 |
| 2025 | 1,167·2 | 1,313·1 | 1,459·0 |
| 2026 | 1,167·2 | 1,313·1 | 1,459·0 |
| 2027 | 1,167·2 | 1,313·1 | 1,459·0 |

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate the total cost of defaults and the cost per defaulting account on student loans in 1995 on the basis of the estimates set out in appendix VI, statement 1 of the Price Waterhouse study.

**Mr. Jackson:** On the basis of the assumptions set out in annex E of the White Paper "Top-up Loans for Students" (Cm 520), including a default rate of 10 per cent., the cost of default in 1995 would be £6·7 million. That is equivalent to £161 per defaulting account.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate the total number of student loan deferrals and write-offs in each year from 1991 to 1995 and for each year thereafter for which figures are available on the basis of the table in appendix VIII, statement 3, of the Price Waterhouse study.

**Mr. Jackson:** I refer the hon. Member to my other replies today showing estimated numbers claiming deferment of repayments. For the costings in Cm 520, no allowance was made for write-offs of debts arising from death. Numbers of loans written off because deferment continues for 25 years are estimated as follows:

*Number of write-offs*

| Year | Number |
|---|---|
| 2016 | 15,300 |
| 2017 | 15,300 |
| 2018 | 15,300 |
| 2019 | 14,800 |
| 2020 | 14,500 |
| 2021 | 21,600 |
| 2022 | 21,300 |
| 2023 | 21,300 |
| 2024 | 21,600 |
| 2025 | 22,400 |
| 2026 | 22,900 |
| 2027 | 22,900 |

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will estimate, and give an itemised breakdown of *(a)* marketing and publicity costs, *(b)* university administration costs and *(c)* other costs to his Department in each year up to 2027, which were excluded from the cost estimates in the Price Waterhouse study on student loans;

(2) if he will publish an equivalent to table 2 on page 12 of the Price Waterhouse study on student loans for each year from 1990 to 2027.

**Mr. Jackson:** This information is not available.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the occasions on which his officials participated in the Price Waterhouse study on student loans, specifying the nature of their contributions.

**Mr. Jackson:** Officials from the Department provided the Price Waterhouse team with a variety of information on both the Government's policy on top-up loans—as set out in the White Paper "Top-up Loans for Students"—and the analyses underlying the costings set out in that White Paper. Officials also discussed the findings of the study with the consultants. There were frequent contacts while the study was being carried out.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will place in the Library the independent assessments contributed by the banks which provided the basis for the students loans administration vehicle costings set out in the Price Waterhouse feasibility study on top-up loans for students.

**Mr. Jackson:** The feasibility study by Price Waterhouse drew on a variety of sources of information.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the table summarising start-up and recurring running costs of the student loans administration vehicle on page 11 of the Price Waterhouse study, and estimate the cost per account, for each year from 1990 to 2027, taking into account the statement in the Price Waterhouse study that annual costs will increase as the number of students repaying loans increases.

**Mr. Jackson:** Following is a copy of the table referred to.

*Table 1—Summary of Costs*[1]

| Cost category | *Start-up costs* *Low* £ | *High* £ | *Recurring costs* *Low* £ | *High* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Systems | 1,580,000 | 2,656,000 | 1,577,000 | 2,249,000 |
| Staff | 250,000 | 370,000 | 3,300,000 | 4,860,000 |
| Professional fees | 1,300,000 | 1,700,000 | 200,000 | 250,000 |
| Premises | 3,275,000 | 4,250,000 | 750,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Branch costs | — | — | 2,500,000 | 3,000,000 |
| Other | 1,862,000 | 2,533,000 | 2,039,000 | 2,649,000 |
| Operating costs | 8,267,000 | 11,509,000 | 10,366,000 | 14,008,000 |
| | | | £ | £ |
| Depreciation on start-up costs | | | 827,000 | 1,151,000 |
| Interest on initial investment | | | 537,000 | 748,000 |
| Debt collection agency fees | | | 2,780,000 | 4,480,000 |
| Total vehicle-related cost to government | | | 14,510,000 | 20,387,000 |

[1] All figures in 1989 £'s.

It should be noted that certain of the costs indicated, for example those identified as depreciation on start-up costs and interest on initial investment, will not arise if start-up funding is provided by grant rather than loan; and that the reference to debt collection agency fees is to the possible use—which will be the subject of further discussion—of debt collection agencies to collect repayments from graduates who are in default. The cost of normal loan recovery is included in the £10·4 million to £14 million estimate of recurring costs.

On the basis of the estimates of operating costs included for the years 1990-1995 in the Price Waterhouse report, and excluding the depreciation, interest and debt collection agency items, the operating cost per account would be as follows:

| *Year* | *Operating costs (£ million)* | *Estimated number of accounts* | *Operating cost per account £* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1990 | 8·5-11·5 | 430,000 | 20-27 |
| 1991 | 8·8-11·6 | 577,000 | 15-20 |
| 1992 | 9·1-11·7 | 721,000 | 13-16 |
| 1993 | 9·5-11·9 | 866,000 | 11-14 |
| 1994 | 9·9-13·3 | 1,008,000 | 10-13 |
| 1995 | 10·4-14·0 | 1,148,000 | 9-12 |

Figures for the years after 1995 are not yet available.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if the same repayment regime will apply to graduates whose banks opt to leave the proposed loans administration vehicle in the Price Waterhouse study on student loans.

**Mr. Jackson:** I would not expect any banks to cease to participate, but a graduate's obligation to repay, together with the opportunity for deferment in the case of low income, will remain in force in any case.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what commitments in respect of bearing all credit risk he has entered into, or plans to enter into, as set out in section 1(3) of the Price Waterhouse study on student loans.

**Mr. Jackson:** The Government have made it clear that they are ready to stand behind the cost of default on the top-up loans scheme: that cost was explicity taken into account in the costings published in the White Paper "Top-up Loans for Students". We envisage that the company administering the loans scheme will receive, as part of its fee, an incentive to maximise repayments.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guarantees of reimbursement of start-up costs he has given, or plans to give, to the banks in the event of legislative defeat or substantial alteration of the forthcoming student loans Bill.

**Mr. Jackson:** My right hon. Friend said in his statement on 19 June that the Government would meet the costs of detailed preparatory work by the Committee of London and Scottish Bankers and by the company.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to have secured the agreements for ownership of the loans administration vehicle, cost reimbursement and the participation of the banks scheduled for May-June 1989 in the Price Waterhouse study on student loans.

**Mr. Jackson:** My right hon. Friend announced in his statement on 19 June that a scheme had been designed which was agreed to be a cost-effective and feasible means of introducing top-up loans in September 1990; and that it was clear that, subject to the satisfactory outcome of the contractual negotiations, a sufficient number of financial institutions would wish to participate from the outset to ensure that the company would be viable.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he plans to accept the criteria *(a)* that loans be kept off the balance sheets of participating banks and *(b)* that loans be funded by the Government, including default liability, for devising a loans administration vehicle as set out in the Price Waterhouse study.

**Mr. Jackson:** The White Paper "Top-up Loans for Students" made it clear that the cost of funding top-up loans, allowing for default, would fall to the Exchequer. The formation of a separate company to administer the loans scheme, as described in my right hon. Friend's statement on 19 June, means that there is no question of loans figuring on the balance sheet of participating financial institutions.

### Institute of Horticultural Research

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the sources of funds for the Institute of Horticultural Research distinguishing between statutory work grants, grant-in-aid, and contributions from the Agriculture and Food Research Council in each year since 1982 both in current and standard prices.

**Mr. Jackson:** Details of the sources of funding of the Institute of Horticultural Research are as follows:

*£ million*

| | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Cash* | | | | | | | | |
| AFRC | 9·7 | 10·3 | 10·1 | 9·5 | 9·5 | 8·9 | 8·8 | 9·9 |
| Other | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·7 | 0·7 | 1·0 | 1·5 | 2·0 | 2·2 |
| Total | 10·3 | 10·9 | 10·8 | 10·2 | 10·5 | 10·4 | 10·8 | 12·1 |
| *1988-89 prices* | | | | | | | | |
| AFRC | 14·0 | 13·9 | 13·0 | 11·7 | 11·1 | 10·1 | 9·4 | 9·9 |
| Other | 0·9 | 0·8 | 0·9 | 0·9 | 1·2 | 1·7 | 2·1 | 2·2 |
| Total | 14·9 | 14·7 | 13·9 | 12·6 | 12·3 | 11·8 | 11·5 | 12·1 |

Grants from the AFRC are in respect of both recurrent and capital expenditure and consist of both grant-in-aid from the DES Science Budget and commissions from MAFF.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the employment at each site of the Institute for Horticultural Research in each year since 1982; and what is his estimate of the effect of the Barnes review implementation on employment at each site.

**Mr. Jackson:** The Institute of Horticultural Research came into existence in 1986 and was based on four former institutes of the Agricultural and Food Research Council. The numbers of staff employed at the four sites on 1 April in the years 1982-85 were as follows:

| | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| East Malling | 338 | 340 | 329 | 299 |
| Littlehampton | 261 | 261 | 253 | 233 |
| Wye College | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| Wellesbourne | 223 | 224 | 220 | 197 |

Figures are not available for each site for the years 1986-88, but the total number of staff of the institute were:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1986 | 630 |
| 1987 | 579 |
| 1988 | 562 |

Currently the numbers of permanent staff are:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| East Malling (including Wye) | 236 |
| Littlehampton | 182 |
| Wellesbourne | 169 |

The number employed at each site in future will depend on the organisation of horticultural research. This has been considered by a working group which put forward a number of options to my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Secretary of State for Scotland and the chairman of the AFRC. These are at present under consideration.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** It is estimated that during 1988-89 the Department purchased goods to the value of £6·1 million (£3·8 million previous year) of which some £2·4 million benefited small firms (£1·3 million previous year).

Approximately 40 per cent. of our services—minor works, cleaning, transportation and so on—continue to be provided by small firms.

Performance indicators and a computerised procurement monitoring system are currently being developed. Meantime the Department continues to operate a policy of including small firms on tender lists whenever an appropriate opportunity arises.

### General Teaching Council

**Mr. Speed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what discussions he has recently had with the teaching unions about the setting up of a general teaching council for England and Wales.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** No such discussions have been held with the teacher unions.

### Medical Research

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* the information he has as to the amounts spent by *(a)* private companies and *(b)* charities on medical research in each of the last 10 years, or the latest periods for which figures are available; and what is his estimate of the United Kingdom proportion of spending on medical research this represents.

**Mr. Jackson** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* Information is not collected centrally on the spending of private companies or charities on medical research. The majority of larger medical charities are members of the Association of Medical Research Charities, and I understand from the association that spending on medical research by their member organisations in recent years has been as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1982-83 | 72·6 |
| 1983-84 | 76·8 |
| 1984-85 | 86·6 |
| 1985-86 | 108·8 |
| 1986-87 | 110·2 |
| 1987-88 | 137·6 |
| 1988-89 | 148·2 |

### Assessment

**Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has received advice from the Schools Examinations and Assessment Council about assessing and reporting achievement in the light of national curriculum requirements.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker** *[pursuant to his reply, 5 May 1989, c. 258]:* The School Examinations and Assessment Council has offered advice about the development, implementation and operation of the national curriculum assessment system. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I welcome the council's outline proposals, and look forward to receiving its more comprehensive proposals in December 1989.

I have placed copies of the council's letter and my reply in the Libraries of both Houses.

## WALES

### Residential Education

**Dr. Marek:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many children are receiving out-of-county special residential education in Wales, and if he will give the per capita cost to each county over the past 10 years.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Information about children receiving out-of-county special residential education is not collected centrally. However the number of Welsh children receiving out-of-county special residential and non-residential education in maintained and independent schools in England and Wales over the past 10 years is as follows:

| | *Maintained schools*[2] | *Independent schools*[1 2] |
|---|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 497 | 225 |
| 1979-80 | 549 | 155 |
| 1980-81 | 443 | 190 |
| 1981-82 | 461 | 179 |
| 1982-83 | 380 | 194 |
| 1983-84 | 419 | 98 |
| 1984-85 | 391 | 129 |
| 1985-86 | 360 | 93 |
| 1986-87 | 327 | 131 |
| 1987-88 | 207 | 144 |

[1] Includes those children educated otherwise than at school.

[2] Includes both children who are the subject of a statement and those who have not been statemented.

Corresponding expenditure figures are not available.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** This Department continues to attach a high priority to the promotion of enterprise and to helping small businesses. General economic policies at a national level, national enterprise support policies and initiatives that are unique to Wales are all helping to make Wales a place where small businesses can flourish. Performance indicators including job creation and costs appear in the Government's public expenditure White Paper and the annual reports of the relevant sponsored bodies concerned. In Wales the latest available figures show that by 1987 the total number of businesses registered for VAT was 78,719; an increase of 11·8 per cent. on 1979. The Department's specific policies to encourage enterprise in Wales are:

*Gateway Network*

Launched in 1987 to provide a high quality advice and information service. Gateway network was expanded in 1988 with the inclusion of all of the main banks in Wales to make the service available from an even greater number of organisations. Evaluation by officials indicates a high level of use and customer satisfaction while identifying potential areas for improvement and expansion.

*Support for Local Enterprise Agencies*

Three local enterprise agencies have been approved in Wales during the last 12 months bringing the total to 23. Grants towards their running costs under the grants for local enterprise agencies in Wales scheme totalled £330,000 in 1988-89 (£116,000 in 1987-88).

*Enterprise Wales*
Launched in January 1988, the consultancy initiatives have proved extremely popular. More than 1,600 companies have already applied and this equates to about 6 per cent. of the United Kingdom's share: for higher than would be expected given the size of the Welsh economy. In 1988-89 we exceeded our targets for both business reviews (by 65 per cent.) and applications referred to scheme contractors (by 42 per cent.).

*Regional Selective Assistance, Regional Enterprise Grant*
Small businesses continue to take advantage of the help available under regional selective assistance. In the year to the end of June 1989, 145 small firms (employing less than 200 people) accepted offers of RSA totalling £11·5 million. This compares with 68 small firms accepting offers of £4·9 million in the previous 12 months. Since April of last year firms employing fewer than 25 people have been eligible for regional enterprise grant; to date 265 offers have been made worth £2·2 million.

*WDA Advisory Services*
In 1988-89 the WDA's business development unit handled 12,000 requests for advice; 12 per cent. up on 1987-88. Overall the Unit handled over 52,000 general inquiries, an increase of 20 per cent. over the previous year.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### Afghan Refugees

62. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make further funds available for Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** We have just agreed a further contribution of £3 million to international relief work for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. This brings our contribution to the support of Afghan refugees to a total of £15 million over the last 18 months.

### Brazil

63. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to help Brazil with its tropical rain forest problems.

66. **Mr. Wood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last visited Brazil; and if he will make a statement.

68. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the outcome of the recent visit of the right hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Patten) to Brazil; and if he will make a statement.

69. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has for a programme of environmental co-operation with Brazil.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** I visited Brazil from 4 to 9 July and signed a memorandum of understanding on a programme of technical co-operation in environmental matters, including rain forest conservation. We are now pressing ahead with various specific proposals which the Brazilians have put to us.

### Sri Lanka

64. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what amount of overseas aid is being given to Sri Lanka for 1989.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** On the assumption that there is no further deterioration in the security situation, we expect to spend around £18 million in 1989.

### Aid (Developing Countries)

65. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the United Kingdom's current aid investment in developing countries; and what is the comparable figure for other major countries.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** In 1988 United Kingdom official development assistance totalled £1,485 million and private direct investment in developing countries is provisionally estimated at £1,400 million. Comparable figures for 1988 are not yet available for other major countries. The following table contains the 1987 figures for all member countries of the development assistance committee of the OECD.

*Net official development assistance and direct investment in developing countries from all DAC member countries: 1987*

*£ million*

| *DAC member countries* | *oda* | *Direct investment* |
|---|---|---|
| Australia | 383 | 372 |
| Austria | 123 | n/a |
| Belgium | 418 | 145 |
| Canada | 1,150 | −50 |
| Denmark | 524 | 65 |
| Finland | 264 | 18 |
| France | 3,982 | 425 |
| Germany | 2,679 | 403 |
| Ireland | 31 | n/a |
| Italy | 1,596 | 229 |
| Japan | 4,548 | 4,528 |
| Netherlands | 1,278 | 158 |
| New Zealand | 53 | 16 |
| Norway | 543 | 6 |
| Sweden | 839 | 56 |
| Switzerland | 334 | −99 |
| United Kingdom | 1,160 | 1,802 |
| United States of America | 5,458 | 4,891 |
| Total | 25,363 | 12,965 |

*Source:* DAC Chairman's Report 1988 with United Kingdom figures (and hence totals) slightly revised.

### Zimbabwe

67. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the level of economic aid to Zimbabwe.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Zimbabwe has received more than £200 million in British aid since independence. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister pledged further project aid totalling £25 million during her meetings with President Mugabe last October and her visit to Zimbabwe in March.

### Rain Forests

70. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what ways he is working with other Governments to prevent depletion of the world's tropical rain forests.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Both the European Council meeting in Madrid and the recent Paris summit acknowledged the serious problems posed by tropical deforestation. The summit participants, whilst recognising the sovereignty of developing nations, urged sustainable use of tropical forests; recommended greater and quicker implementation of the tropical forestry action plan; appealed to members of the International Tropical Timber Organisation to join their efforts to ensure conservation of the forests; and pledged financial and technical co-operation to conserve forests.

### Soft Loans

71. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to announce the conclusions of the review into the future of the soft loan facility scheme.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** I expect to announce the conclusions of this review in the autumn, following the public expenditure survey.

### IDA (Replenishment)

**Miss Lestor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current negotiations for the replenishment of the World Bank's International Development Association.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** The third meeting of the IDA deputies on the ninth replenishment of IDA resources was held in Copenhagen on 6 and 7 July. Further meetings are scheduled for Washington in September and Kyoto in November. The Paris summit communiqué stressed the importance which participants attached to a substantial replenishment of IDA resources.

### Aid (Annual Review)

**Mr. Terry Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much it cost to publish the annual review of British overseas aid in 1988.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** A total of 5,000 copies of "British Overseas Aid 1987" were produced in 1988 at a unit cost of £5·89.

## TRANSPORT

### Rear Seat Belts

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many serious injuries were sustained by rear seat passengers in road accidents in 1986, 1987 and 1988.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Too many.

The following table shows the number of casualties in cars, how many of these were recorded as being in the rear seat, and how many rear seat passengers were recorded as wearing seat belts, for 1986 and 1987. Only those casualties who were killed or seriously injured (KSI) are included. The figures for 1988 are still provisional, and cannot be disaggregated in this way.

*Casualties in cars or vans: Great Britain 1986, 1987*

| | *1986* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|
| Total killed | 2,364 | 2,279 |
| Total KSI | 30,902 | 30,346 |
| In rear seat: | | |
| Killed | 363 | 362 |
| KSI | 4,998 | 4,696 |
| Wearing seat belt: | | |
| Killed | 14 | 18 |
| KSI | 229 | 260 |

### Rail Electrification

**Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of railway line, including underground service, there are in England, Wales and Scotland, respectively; and how many miles of these have so far been electrified.

**Mr. Portillo:** British Rail maintains the relevant statistics on the basis of railway regions, so separate figures for Wales and England are not available.

Route mileages at 31 March 1989 were as follows (electrified portion shown in brackets):

| | *Route mileage* | *Electrified portion* |
|---|---|---|
| *England and Wales* | | |
| British Rail | 8,616 | (2,443) |
| London Regional Transport | 245 | (245) |
| Docklands Light Railway | 7 | (7) |
| Tyne and Wear Metro | 35 | (35) |
| Total | 8,903 | (2,730) |
| *Scotland* | | |
| British Rail (Scottish Region) | 1,698 | (276) |
| Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive | 7 | (7) |
| Total | 1,705 | (283) |

British Rail plans to electrify a further 245 route miles by October 1992.

### Road Signs

**Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress he is making with the Road Traffic Signs Regulations with regard to more realistic tolerances of design, construction and maintenance.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1981 (SI 1981 No. 859) are currently being reviewed. Representations received in consultation to date do not suggest difficulties in meeting the requirements of the current regulations. If my hon. Friend has any specific points in mind, perhaps he will write with the details so that they can be considered in the review.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Overall responsibility for helping small businesses rests with the Department of Employment, which provides a range of measures to stimulate their development.

The Department of Transport is concerned to ensure that transport infrastructure is adequate and to lift the burden on businesses caused by unnecessary regulation so that all businesses can flourish.

## A2-M2

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has concerning delays experienced by motorists on the A2-M2 in the last month; what were the comparable figures for delays in the five previous years; and what proposals he has to reduce those delays in future years.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The information is as follows:

Delays within last month

| | |
|---|---|
| *M2* | |
| Junctions 3-4 | Minor delays |
| Junctions 5-7 | |
| Peak period (6-9.30 am) | Tailbacks 3-4 miles |
| London-bound carriageway | Usually clear within 1 hour |
| Evening peak | At times 2 mile tailback |
| Coastbound carriageway | |

*A2*

During the last two weeks of June there were four instances of the carriageway of A2 near Bean breaking up due to heat; emergency repairs caused serious congestion.

*Longest delays*

The worst incidence of queuing has occurred on fine weekends when tailbacks have reached seven miles.

*Previous five years*

The only information readily available is:

1987-88 Junctions 5-7—Peak hour delays of up to 20 minutes. No delays off peak.

1988-89 Junctions 5-7—Peak hour delays up to about 20 minutes. Off peak three to four minutes.

Weekend delays for traffic returning from the coast have involved tailbacks of up to four to five miles.

*Proposals to reduce delays in future years*

- *(a)* Current five-year programme of major maintenance on M2 will be completed by 1992; on A2 west of M2 by 1993, and on A2 east of M2 by 1994.
- *(b)* Contracts which will result in delays will be let on lane rental basis to minimise construction periods.
- *(c)* Greater use will be made of advance signing.
- *(d)* Every effort is, and will continue to be employed on designing works to avoid delays consistent with safety.

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his estimate of the cost of widening the carriageway of the A2-M2 section north of Canterbury to three lanes.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** There are no present plans to widen the A2 south of Canterbury to dual three-lanes, so estimated costs are not available.

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the cost of the current maintenance work being carried out on the A2-M2 two-lane section north of Canterbury.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The figure is £8·7 million.

## A20

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current position with regard to the A20 proposed road improvements between Dover and Folkestone.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The scheme for the improvement of the A20 from the M20 at Folkestone to the Eastern docks at Dover is being prepared in two sections.

Authority for the western section from M20 to Court Wood is provided by the Channel Tunnel Act. Authority for the eastern section from Court Wood to Dover is being sought by orders under the Highways Act which were the subject of public inquiries held in 1988. The inspector's report is being carefully considered. It is hoped to announce decisions on these by the early autumn this year.

Subject to the satisfactory completion of the outstanding statutory procedures, the aim is to complete both sections in time for the opening of the Channel tunnel in 1993.

## Drivers (Probationary Plates)

**Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received seeking the introduction in Great Britain of probationary plates for qualified but inexperienced drivers.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Various suggestions for probationary number plates are put to us from time to time. There is no evidence that such schemes reduce casualty rates.

A number of schemes were introduced in other countries during the 1960s. None has so far been successfully evaluated. In New Zealand, for instance, the scheme has now been abandoned.

A P plate system is in use in Northern Ireland, where the legal system for road traffic law enforcement is different. The casualty rate in Northern Ireland over the last five years has been consistently higher than in Great Britain, despite the P plate scheme.

## Dock Workers

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many registered dock workers have accepted redundancy following abolition of the national dock labour scheme; and what is *(a)* the number and *(b)* the percentage of registered dock workers (i) at each port and (ii) nationally.

**Mr. Portillo:** At 21 July 1989, 2,288 former registered dock workers had been made redundant or been given notice of redundancy following the abolition of the dock labour scheme. This represents 25 per cent. of the number of RDWs at 3 July 1989, when the scheme was abolished. I understand that at some ports some former registered dock workers made redundant have been re-employed by a different employer; and at other ports dock work is now being carried out by existing employees who were not registered dock workers. The position in each port is as follows.

| *Ports* | *Number of registered dock workers made redundant* | *Percentage of registered dock workers in the port* |
|---|---|---|
| Aberdeen | 149 | 100 |
| Ayr | 14 | 100 |
| Barry | 20 | 31 |
| Bristol | 2 | 0·4 |
| Cardiff | 157 | 96 |
| Charleston | 1 | 100 |
| Fleetwood | 4 | 9 |
| Fowey | 44 | 100 |
| Garston | 79 | 73 |
| Goole | 72 | 44 |
| Grimsby and Immingham | 442 | 60 |
| Hull | 242 | 36 |
| Ipswich | 32 | 27 |
| Kings Lynn | 40 | 75 |

| *Ports* | *Number of registered dock workers made redundant* | *Percentage of registered dock workers in the port* |
|---|---|---|
| Liverpool | 69 | 5 |
| London | 393 | 23 |
| Lowestoft | 27 | 90 |
| Manchester | 42 | 26 |
| Newport | 82 | 42 |
| Par | 28 | 100 |
| Plymouth | 11 | 37 |
| Sharpness | 2 | 4 |
| Southampton | 210 | 31 |
| Swansea | 78 | 89 |
| Tees and Hartlepool | 37 | 7 |
| Wisbech | 11 | 92 |

## Irradiated Fuel

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if the flasks used for transportation of irradiated fuel from the reactors at United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Harwell, fully meet the International Atomic Energy Authority's impact and thermal standards; if he will make public the results of tests performed to confirm the safety of these transport flasks; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The flasks used by UKAEA Harwell have been assessed and certified by experts in this Department as fully complying with the IAEA design and test requirements. The test results are the property of the UKAEA, and are supplied to the Department on a commercial-in-confidence basis.

## Scottish Lowlands Airports

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he has considered the implications for Scottish lowland airports policy of the proposals by United Airlines for flights between Washington, Chicago and Glasgow; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he has considered the implications for Scottish lowlands airports policy of the announcement by United Airlines that it has no intention of proposing flights from the United States of America to Prestwick airport.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Scottish lowland airports policy remains as set out in the 1985 White Paper "Airports Policy" and most recently confirmed in my right hon. Friend's announcement on 8 May, *Official Report*, column 343.

## Abbotsinch Airport

**Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many airlines have applied to operate transatlantic flights to and from Glasgow Abbotsinch airport; and if he will list the names of such airlines.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Civil Aviation Authority at present has applications from two airlines, Air Europe and Air 2000, for such licences. The Department does not have any outstanding requests from foreign carriers for permits to operate transatlantic services to and from Glasgow.

## M1

**Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will instruct his Department's contractors to take immediate steps to improve traffic flow and reduce inconvenience to road users arising out of the road works on the north bound carriageway of the M1 between junctions 11 and 12.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The maintenance work taking place on the M1 is divided into several phases. The current phase involves offside lane closures. Throughout this phase there will be three lanes available to southbound traffic. Northbound traffic will have two lanes available except on Fridays, when three lanes will be made available between 12 noon and 10 pm. Future phases of the work will involve the use of contraflow during which there will be two lanes available in both directions. The traffic management arrangements use the minimum road space necessary for the safe and efficient working on the site.

## A1

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many man hours have been spent by his officials dealing with proposals to improve the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth with orders 198; and what have been the costs involved.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The information requested is not readily available.

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of his officials have been handling the proposed improvements under orders 198 for the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth; and where they are located.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Department's work on this scheme has been handled primarily in the Leeds regional office where 18 staff have been involved at some stage.

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the delay in reaching decisions about improvements to the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth as they relate to orders 198.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The joint decision by the Secretaries of State for Transport and for the Environment took longer than usual to make because the independent inspector recommended a substantial change to the published proposals. This was for the addition of discontinuous hard shoulders not in compliance with normal departmental standards for all-purpose trunk roads.

The outcome is that the scheme is to be revised to incorporate not only hard shoulders but other design changes, with the intention of bringing this stretch of road up to near-motorway standard.

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the safety of motorists using the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We are conscious of the need to make conditions as safe as possible for motorists. On this length of trunk road, special attention has been paid to eliminating potentially hazardous turning movements. Over the past two years 13 gaps in the central reserve have been closed and three overbridges provided.

Central reserve safety fencing has also been erected recently over most of this stretch. The final section will be installed later this year as part of the Dishforth interchange scheme.

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out evidence of the volume of traffic using the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The recorded annual average daily flow of traffic using the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth is as follows:

| *Year* | *Traffic Flow (vehicles per day)* |
|---|---|
| 1981 | 28,500 |
| 1982 | 30,400 |
| 1983 | 28,600 |
| 1984 | 33,600 |
| 1985 | 33,970 |
| 1986 | 34,100 |
| 1987 | 37,800 |
| 1988 | 43,100 |

The information on earlier years is not readily available.

The traffic flows substantiate the Department's proposals for widening to a dual three-lane carriageway.

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects that the improvements to the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth will now be completed.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Subject to the satisfactory completion of the outstanding statutory and other processes, we hope that these improvements can be completed in the mid-1990s. The works will need to be staged over a four-year period to limit the traffic disruption over this 16-mile stretch of road.

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the inspector's report on the public inquiries held between 17 November and 11 December 1987 into orders 198 for the improvement of the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth was received in his office.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The inspector's report was received in March 1988.

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether tendered prices were received by contractors for previously proposed works of improvement to the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth under orders 198; and what was the cost of providing tender documents.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** This scheme has not been developed to a point where tenders could be invited. This is because the compulsory purchase order had still to be published before acquisition of the necessary land. No tender costs have, therefore, been incurred.

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the dates orders 198 proposing improvements to the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth were published, the number of hours the public inquiries held between 17 November and 11 December 1987 were in session and the costs.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Draft orders were published for this scheme in May and July 1987. The public inquiry sat for approximately 98 hours. Details necessary to give the cost of the inquiry is not available.

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the number and description of reported accidents on the length of the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth in each of the last 10 years.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The reported accidents along this length of the A1 since 1981 are:

| *Year* | *Fatal* | *Serious* | *Slight* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1981 | 5 | 23 | 18 |
| 1982 | 2 | 22 | 35 |
| 1983 | 0 | 21 | 17 |
| 1984 | 2 | 17 | 26 |
| 1985 | 0 | 24 | 34 |
| 1986 | 6 | 20 | 28 |
| 1987 | 3 | 23 | 21 |
| 1988 | 3 | 13 | 35 |

Information before that date is not readily available.

## Trunk Road Improvements

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has any proposals for speeding up the implementation of improvements to main trunk roads.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We have set targets for reducing the average time taken to progress a scheme from entering the road programme to opening for traffic by the order of a quarter. In introducing the changes we have taken care to ensure that the rights of interested parties will not be affected.

## Cycleways

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out his proposals for improving the number of cycleways; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Cycleways and cycletracks can be important elements in creating safer routes for cyclists.

Responsibility for improving conditions for cyclists rests with individual highway authorities.

The Department offers technical advice on the design and construction of cycling facilities, based on a continuing programme of research.

Comprehensive guidance from the Department was contained in a local transport note published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in June. Entitled "Making Way for Cyclists" it covers a wide range of planning, design and legal issues.

## East London River Crossing

**Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he is now able to announce the result of the review of the design for the Thames bridge for the East London river crossing scheme.

**Mr. Channon:** Yes. The consultants for the scheme were asked to investigate whether there is an alternative design for the bridge which would be practicable, acceptable within the broad order of costs of the bridge originally proposed by the Department, would satisfy the objectives of the scheme and keep options open for the future use of London city airport. The consultants have recommended that a box girder bridge with a shorter main span of 240 metres would satisfy all these requirements. Having considered the consultants' report on the review which I initiated, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and I agree with their recommendation. A letter announcing this decision is being sent to interested parties.

We take particular note of the Royal Fine Art Commission's comment that the design of this bridge should be of the highest quality. We shall be consulting the commission further on the design.

The decision to review the bridge design followed our consideration of the report from the inspector who conducted the local inquiries between September 1985 and December 1986. The inspector considered that a dual three-lane standard would eventually be needed. With the bridge design originally proposed, it would not have been possible to provide three full-width lanes. With the new bridge design it will be possible to do so.

The inspector recommended that a cycleway be provided across the bridge. With the new bridge design this will be included. Objections were also received concerning the implications for the future use of London city airport of the height of the towers of the original bridge. The new bridge design should avoid this difficulty.

Draft orders will shortly be published to put the new proposals into effect. There will be the usual opportunity for people to make representations or object to these proposals and if necessary a further public inquiry into the new bridge proposals will be held.

Without prejudice to any decisions that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and I may be called upon to take in the future, and subject to the completion of the statutory procedures, it is hoped the bridge will be in place by the mid-1990s.

Copies of the consultants' report on the review of the design of the bridge, together with our decision letter, are being placed in the Library.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Grants

**Mr. Batiste:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many companies in receipt of a cash grant from his Department to establish a business in a particular place have discontinued such business within five years of establishment.

**Mr. Trippier:** Two companies who received urban development grants for the regeneration of inner-city sites have since ceased their business operations. This represents less than 1 per cent. of all completed schemes.

### Water Supply (North Sheffield)

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider lifting the ceiling on capital investment currently operating in the Yorkshire water authority in order to help it improve the quality of water supply to parts of north Sheffield; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has received no requests from the Yorkshire water authority to increase its capital ceiling for this year. The authority has a substantial investment programme aimed at improving the water supply to all its customers. One of the advantages of privatisation is that my right hon. Friend will no longer set any ceilings on capital investments. Once in the private sector, Yorkshire Water will be able to spend whatever is needed to achieve the necessary standards for its customers.

### Empty Properties (Wandsworth)

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of empty properties in the London borough of Wandsworth on 1 July.

**Mr. Trippier:** The latest available information was provided by the London borough of Wandsworth in its April 1988 housing investment programme return (HIP1), a copy of which is in the Library.

### Housing Associations

**Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list the housing associations in the London area which have signed a programme agreement to go onto tariff arrangement; and what assessment he has made of how the procedure is working.

**Mr. Trippier:** It is for the Housing Corporation to enter into such agreements, and I have asked it to provide the hon. Member with a list. It is too early to make a detailed assessment of the new procedures, but the corporation will continue to keep them under review.

### Workington Enterprise Zone

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment from what date amendments relating to the prohibition of housing development in the Workington enterprise zone were effective.

**Mr. Trippier:** The modification to the planning scheme to bring housing back under full planning control in zones 2, 4 and 5 took effect on 14 March 1989.

### Planning Inspectorate

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his proposals to create an independent planning inspectorate on an agency basis.

**Mr. Howard:** As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 21 December last year, he is considering whether the planning inspectorate should become an executive agency. As an agency, the inspectorate would continue to be part of the Department of the Environment accountable to the Secretary of State. The change in status would not alter the inspectorate's functions nor the Secretary of State's statutory responsibilities for the planning system.

### Planning Appeals

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of planning appeals lodged each year since the implementation of sections 36 and 37 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

**Mr. Howard:** The information requested is listed in the table.

*Section 36 and 37 planning appeals*

| *Year* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1971 | 9,818 |
| 1972 | 14,408 |
| 1973 | 18,326 |
| 1974 | 13,324 |
| 1975 | 11,690 |
| 1976 | 11,656 |
| 1977 | 10,833 |
| 1978 | 11,609 |
| 1979 | 12,990 |
| 1980 | 16,208 |
| 1981 | 16,637 |
| 1982 | 13,900 |
| 1983 | 13,699 |
| 1984 | 16,192 |
| 1985 | 17,053 |
| 1985-86 | 17,839 |
| 1986-87 | 19,856 |
| 1987-88 | 22,482 |
| 1988-89 | 28,659 |

*Note:* From April 1985 the Department's published figures on appeal performance have covered financial rather than calendar years.

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning appeals have been *(a)* allowed and *(b)* refused by his Department for each year since 1979.

**Mr. Chope** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The information requested is listed in the table:

| | *Planning Appeals* | |
|---|---|---|
| *Year* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* |
| 1979 | 2,602 | 6,331 |
| 1980 | 4,044 | 9,086 |
| 1981 | 4,721 | 9,730 |
| 1982 | 4,003 | 8,912 |
| 1983 | 3,633 | 7,588 |
| 1984 | 3,773 | 7,870 |
| 1985 | 5,477 | 9,162 |
| 1985-86 | 5,581 | 8,549 |
| 1986-87 | 6,208 | 9,405 |
| 1987-88 | 6,955 | 11,519 |
| 1988-89 | 7,734 | 13,327 |

*Note:*—From April 1985 the Department's published figures on appeal performance have covered financial rather than calendar years.

## Architects

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has received any representations concerning the definition of the word architect in the context of the Architects (Registration) Act 1931 and the Architects Registration Act 1938.

**Mr. Trippier:** The subject has been discussed informally with my officials by representatives of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will initiate discussions with relevant parties, including the Office of Fair Trading with a view to reviewing the various Acts of Parliament under which architects can practice in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Trippier:** My noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry recently issued a White Paper "Opening Markets: New Policy on Restrictive Trade Practices" which proposes new legislation to prevent such practices. The new legislation would extend to professional bodies including those representing architects. My Department will co-operate fully with the Department of Trade and Industry and with the Office of Fair Trading in any review of the architectural profession.

## Direct Labour Organisation

**Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each financial year between 1983-84 and 1986-87 the number of local authority direct labour organisations which undertook *(a)* general highway works and works in connection with the construction or maintenance of a sewer, *(b)* new construction, other than general highway or sewer works the cost of which in the estimation of the authority or development body exceeded £50,000, *(c)* new construction, other than general highway or sewer works, the cost of which in the estimation of the authority or development body did not exceed £50,000 and *(d)* building maintenance within the meaning of the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970, other than in connection with highways or the maintenance of a sewer.

**Mr. Gummer:** The number of local authority direct labour organisations which undertook each category of work between 1983-84 and 1986-87 is indicated in the following table. Authorities exempted from the legislation on de minimis grounds are excluded.

| | *I* | *II* | *III* | *IV* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1983-84 | 268 | 72 | 86 | 301 |
| 1984-85 | 280 | 67 | 81 | 320 |
| 1985-86 | 290 | 84 | 105 | 315 |
| 1986-87 | 287 | 81 | 98 | 304 |

I — General Highways/Sewer Works
II — New Construction over £50,000
III — New Construction under £50,000
IV — Building Maintenance

## Ozone Layer

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions are taking place with Governments of eastern European countries to promote co-operation to protect the ozone layer; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** International co-operation to protect the ozone layer is primarily through the Vienna convention on the protection of the ozone layer and the Montreal protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer. Although not all eastern European countries are parties to these agreements, all are invited to meetings of the parties, and all attended the recent Helsinki meeting of the parties to the Montreal protocol. They were invited to the saving the ozone layer conference in London in March, and all but one attended.

## Acton Town Centre

**Sir George Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will announce his decision on the public inquiry into Acton town centre.

**Mr. Chope:** I hope that the decision will be issued before the end of July.

### World Bank Environment Programme

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to meet with the director of the environment programme of the World Bank.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** No. The director of the environment programme of the World Bank called on the Overseas Development Administration on 19 July.

### Super-insulated Houses

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has made any study of the application of super-insulated houses developed in Canada and Scandinavia for construction in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Trippier:** In conjunction with the Building Research Establishment, my Department keeps under review the cost-effectiveness of developments in low-energy housing in other countries, including Canada and Scandinavia. The use of very high levels of insulation in these countries is related both to the severe external climate and to the relatively high levels at which internal temperatures are normally maintained. In general, this would be unlikely to be cost-effective in the different conditions which exist in this country.

### United Nations Environment Programme

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of the governing council of the United Nations environment programme meeting held between 15 to 26 May in Nairobi, in terms of decisions which affect *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the European Community.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** At the governing council of UNEP in May the opening ministerial statement was made by my noble Friend the Minister for Housing, Environment and Countryside, who led the United Kingdom delegation. His calls for a framework convention on climate change and for the strengthening of UNEP to undertake this and other important global environmental tasks were generally endorsed by the other Ministers attending. A number of countries agreed to increase their financial support of UNEP following the lead of the United Kingdom which has more than doubled its contribution this year. The main governing council decisions of importance to both the United Kingdom and the European Community concerned future work on climate change, including our proposal for a framework convention, agreement on a convention to safeguard genetic diversity, an improved understanding of the concept of sustainable development, and constructive proposals to the General Assembly on preparations for a major United Nations conference on environment and development in 1992.

### Domestic Rates

**Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimates he has for the total amounts raised by domestic rates in *(a)* Somerset, *(b)* Dorset, *(c)* Devon and *(d)* Wiltshire in the last three financial years for which comparable figures are available.

**Mr. Gummer:** The figures sought are:

*£ million*

| | *1987-88* | *1988-89* | *1989-90* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Somerset | 67 | 76 | 85 |
| Dorset | 109 | 120 | 129 |
| Devon | 135 | 154 | 172 |
| Wiltshire | 78 | 86 | 95 |

*Note:* Figures are net of rate relief grant and gross of rebates. The figures for 1989-90 are based on budgets.

### Travellers (Permanent Sites)

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether there have been any changes to Government policy on the provision of permanent sites for gipsies and travellers since his answer to the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) of 6 February, *Official Report*, columns *856-58;* and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** No. We are concerned to assist and encourage authorities to fulfil their duties under the Caravan Sites Act 1968. In two cases, Hertfordshire and Surrey, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has used his powers under the Act to direct that such provision should be made as quickly as possible.

### Carnwath Report

**Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to implement part or all of the Carnwath report on enforcing planning control.

**Mr. Howard:** I refer my hon. Friend to my reply on 24 May to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) *Official Report*, volume 153, column 942.

### Local Government Finance, Lambeth

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what element of the poll tax in Lambeth would represent rent arrears assuming no change in the current level of rent arrears in Lambeth and assuming repayment of those housing rent arrears from the general rate fund will spread over a period of five years.

**Mr. Gummer:** I assume that the hon. Gentleman is referring to the community charge. The latest available information from the council shows its housing rent arrears were some £12·6 million at 31 March 1988. It is the authority's responsibility to collect those arrears. But if it does not, we estimate the cost to the community charge payer would be some £13 per annum if spread over five years.

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to enable local authorities to purchase recycled paper at a price higher than that for equivalent non-recycled paper without incurring financial or other penalties.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** No. Local authorities have a duty to their ratepayers to obtain the best value for money in their purchasing of all supplies, including paper. This duty does not preclude them from purchasing recycled paper, or paper with a significant proportion of recycled fibre. Many people who have changed to them have found that such products fully meet their requirements and are cheaper, or no more expensive, than those which they used before.

### Rent Arrears, Corby and East Northamptonshire

**Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the total rent arrears at the latest convenient date, and the number of current and former tenants in arrears in the districts of *(a)* Corby and *(b)* East Northamptonshire.

**Mr. Trippier:** A list of local authorities showing reported cumulative rent arrears at 31 March 1988 was placed in the Library on 1 March 1989. Corresponding information for the position at 31 March 1989 is not yet available.

Information about the number of current and former tenants in arrears with rent, rates or other charges, where reported, is contained in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy publication "Housing Rents Statistics at April 1988", a copy of which is in the Library.

### Right to Buy, Corby and East Northamptonshire

**Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of accepted right-to-buy applications being dealt with, but not yet completed, at the end of March in the districts of *(a)* Corby and *(b)* East Northamptonshire.

**Mr. Trippier:** The latest return received from Corby district shows 1,075 applications in the pipeline at the end of June 1988; East Northamptonshire has reported 182 such applications at the end of March 1989.

### Green Belt

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many acres of countryside now have green belt status; and what was the comparable figure for 10 years ago.

**Mr. Chope:** In 1979 there were about 1·8 million acres of approved green belt in England. Today there are around 4·5 million acres.

**Sir Rhodes Boyson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) on 19 April, *Official Report*, columns 36-7, he will indicate the policy he now intends to apply when considering applications from local authorities under section 5 of the Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938 for his consent to their disposal of property held under that Act in cases where disposal arises under other legislation.

**Mr. Chope** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]*: Since 1984 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's policy on the use of his powers under the 1938 Act has been based on a statement made in November 1984 by the former Secretary of State for the Environment about the future ownership of land held under the 1938 Act by the former Greater London council.

At the time of the 1984 statement, the Secretary of State considered that transfer of a 1938 Act property from local authority to private ownership under the right-to-buy provisions of the Housing Act 1980, and subsequently of the Housing Act 1985, did not require his consent under section 5 of the 1938 Act. In March 1988, however, the High Court ruled that the provisions of section 5 continued to operate notwithstanding that other legislation also applied to the transfer. My right hon. Friend has reconsidered the policy expressed in the 1984 statement in the light of the High Court judgment and of his further experience in the consideration of applications under the 1938 Act.

My right hon. Friend now takes the view that the policy of enabling council tenants to buy their own homes, as given effect by the Housing Acts, is a matter which he can properly take into account when considering applications under section 5 of the 1938 Act. He takes the same view in respect of the right of leaseholders to acquire the freehold of their homes under the Leasehold Reform Act 1967.

In determining applications under the 1938 Act my right hon. Friend's primary concern will continue to be to ensure that the land concerned continues to fulfil the objectives of the 1938 Act and of green belt policy as set out in planning policy guidance note 2. Bearing in mind the safeguards provided by strict planning controls over development in the green belt, and the need to consider each case on its individual merits, my right hon. Friend is confident that his ability to secure these objectives will be unaffected by his acceptance that the aims of right-to-buy and leasehold reform legislation may contribute to the factors that he will accept as justifying the granting of his consent under section 5 of the 1938 Act.

### Rating Reform

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received on the effects of the poll tax registration procedures on personal privacy.

**Mr. Gummer:** The Government have no plans to introduce a poll tax and there are no poll tax registration procedures.

I have received a number of representations about the extent of information requested by registration officers in compiling their community charges registers. It is clear that many registration officers have not followed the detailed advice sent to them on this matter. This may well require some change to their procedures if they are to comply with the Data Protection Act 1985. I have every confidence that the community charge arrangements fully protect the personal privacy of all citizens.

### Local Authorities (Housing Stock Transfers)

**Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the local authorities currently in process of transferring their housing stock to housing associations under the Housing Act 1985.

**Mr. Trippier:** Broadland district council has applied to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for consent to dispose of its housing to a housing association.

I understand that Newbury district council and South Wight borough council have conducted ballots of their tenants about proposals to transfer housing to housing associations, but we have not received applications from those authorities. I am also aware that Medina borough council and Rochester-upon-Medway city council are in the process of balloting their tenants about proposals to transfer housing, in the latter case to an industrial and provident society.

**Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the local authorities currently in process of transferring their housing stock under the tenants' choice provisions of the Housing Act 1985.

**Mr. Trippier:** Since April, one tenants' choice application has been served, on Westminster city council. Many other tenants' groups and potential new landlords are in preliminary discussions with the Housing Corporation.

## Mortgage Arrears

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last discussed the question of mortgage arrears with the major banks and building societies.

**Mr. Trippier:** Ministers and officials at the Department of the Environment frequently meet representatives of the banks and building societies and discuss a range of issues, including arrears.

## Local Government Finance

**Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) of 19 July, concerning illustrative figures on the community charge, what was the cost of compiling the figures under *(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)*.

**Mr. Ridley:** The information needed to produce the tables was already available within the Department. The cost of the computer runs to produce the three tables was less than £50.

## Project Funding (Tottenham)

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list by department all amounts granted in Government and European Community funds to projects in Tottenham, together with the name of the organisation receiving funds and the purpose for which it was granted; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** I will write to the hon. Member.

## Council Rents

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will place in the Library due documents showing projected rents for council tenants throughout the United Kingdom arising from setting rents according to property capital values; what rents were projected for tenants of Bradford metropolitan district council; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** The Department of Environment has made no such projections. The Government have as yet made no decision on the overall national guidelines for rent income and management and maintenance expenditure which would be an essential part of any such projection.

## Rifle Range (House of Lords)

**Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the cause of the delay in completing the programme of work to the rifle range under the House of Lords; and when this will be available for use.

**Mr. Chope:** I regret that this work has taken so long but it is now almost complete. Subject to a satisfactory inspection by the safety authority, the rifle range should be ready for use again by the middle of August.

## Seals

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the research projects on the effect of pollution on seals, and on the links between pollution and seal health; if he will give the spending on each; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 18 July 1989]:* Within the past year, the Department of the Environment has commissioned three new research projects which examine the impact of contamination on seals, including possible effects on immuno-competence, as part of its North sea research programme with values in 1988-89 as follows:

contaminant effects monitoring using seals (£10,000)
possible links between environmental pollutants and seal disease (£35,000); and
thymulin in seals (£10,000).

The Department is also commissioning further work on contaminants and the marine food chain which will cost over £450,000 this year.

Other relevant aspects of seal research including monitoring, analysis of contaminants and diet are contained in the research programmes of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the sea mammal research unit of the Natural Environment Research Council.

## HIP Allocations

**Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what have been the housing investment programme allocations in each of the last 12 years for *(a)* Basildon, *(b)* Cambridge, *(c)* Chelmsford, *(d)* Ipswich, *(e)* Luton, *(f)* Norwich, *(g)* Peterborough and *(h)* Stevenage.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* The information requested is listed in the table. Since 1981-82 local authorities have been able to supplement their allocations by expenditure financed from capital receipts. Nationally, two thirds of local authorities' spending power on housing in 1989-90 is expected to come from capital receipts.

*Total housing investment programme allocations: £ thousands*

| | *1978-79* | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* | [1]*1989-90* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Luton | 5,084 | 5,430 | 4,139 | 3,992 | 5,579 | 4,247 | 4,396 | 4,021 | 3,129 | 3,304 | 2,904 | 2,110 |
| Norwich | 11,396 | 9,884 | 9,360 | 6,661 | 9,085 | 8,500 | 7,640 | 6,868 | 5,981 | 5,837 | 4,606 | 3,569 |
| Stevenage | 3,284 | 3,592 | 2,687 | 2,353 | 2,935 | 2,881 | 2,604 | 2,320 | 2,020 | 1,894 | 1,383 | 1,152 |
| Cambridge | 4,226 | 3,742 | 2,969 | 2,511 | 4,290 | 5,124 | 3,845 | 3,336 | 3,029 | 2,669 | 2,359 | 1,747 |
| Peterborough | 4,254 | 3,778 | 3,191 | 2,941 | 4,352 | 3,596 | 3,875 | 3,372 | 2,823 | 2,849 | 2,171 | 1,739 |

| | 1978-79 | 1979-80 | 1980-81 | 1981-82 | 1982-83 | 1983-84 | 1984-85 | 1985-86 | 1986-87 | 1987-88 | 1988-89 | [1]1989-90 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ipswich | 5,393 | 5,414 | 4,562 | 4,397 | 6,551 | 6,991 | 6,314 | 5,384 | 4,528 | 4,331 | 3,877 | 2,843 |
| Basildon | 5,414 | 6,114 | 4,972 | 2,438 | 3,672 | 2,742 | 3,399 | 2,580 | 1,975 | 1,988 | 1,505 | 1,222 |
| Chelmsford | 2,900 | 3,002 | 2,244 | 1,831 | 2,624 | 2,759 | 2,690 | 2,478 | 2,185 | 1,978 | 1,685 | 1,223 |

[1] Allocations issued to date.

## Homelessness

**Mr. Lester:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the number of homeless single people in London; and what action he has taken to tackle the problem.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* Information on the number of single homeless is not collected centrally. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is reviewing the homelessness legislation and hopes to announce conclusions soon.

## Community Charge

**Mr. Lester:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to ensure that everybody in full-time education or training will be treated alike for the purposes of the community charge.

**Mr. Gummer** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* Full-time students will pay only 20 per cent. of the personal community charge while those in training who are on low incomes will be eligible to claim rebates of up to 80 per cent.

## Algae

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he is taking to deal with harmful blooms of algae in the Thames, Humber, Tyne and Forth estuaries; what steps he is taking to prevent further eutrophication in British waters; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* The authorities responsible for the Thames, the Humber, the Tyne and the Forth have informed the Department that there are no problems from harmful algal blooms in the estuaries of these rivers. Further, a recent survey carried out by water authorities and river purification boards has confirmed that eutrophication is not a problem in United Kingdom coastal waters and estuaries and where algal blooms have historically occurred there is no increase in their frequency. However, the responsible authorities are keeping the situation under review.

## Landfill Gas Sites

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the implications for the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect of discharges of gases from landfill sites; and what steps he is taking to mitigate these effects.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* From reviews and research work commissioned by the Department, it can be concluded that methane has a secondary stratospheric role, tending to reduce ozone in the upper stratosphere, but to increase it in the lower stratosphere. Methane is a strong greenhouse gas which currently contributes about 14 per cent. globally to the greenhouse effect. Additionally methane contributes to ozone formation in the lower atmosphere which in turn also contributes to the greenhouse effect.

Landfill sites are estimated to contribute about 20 per cent. of total United Kingdom emissions of methane from both natural and manmade sources. Combustion of methane produced carbon dioxide which is much less potent than methane as a greenhouse gas on a molecule-for-molecule basis.

There are 26 schemes already using methane from landfill in operation with another 13 in the offing. In addition the Department is carrying out research on inhibition of methane production and oxidation of methane at landfill sites.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will announce the commencement date of the review he is proposing into methane in landfill.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution commenced a review into the extent of methane generation in current and closed landfills on 18 December 1987. The report is expected soon.

## Dog Registration, Manchester

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what study his Department has made of Manchester city council's proposals for a dog registration scheme, details of which have been sent to him by the city's director of environmental health; if there is any action he will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I will consider the letter to which the hon. Member refers when I receive it. We do not believe, however, that a national dog registration scheme is the answer to problems of dog control. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State recently announced proposals for giving local authorities new powers and duties for dealing with these problems. We will be issuing a consultation paper shortly.

## Footpaths

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he intends to provide extra funding for the Countryside Commission to bring all footpaths into good order.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Decisions on funding for 1990-91 have not yet been taken.

## Fiddlers Ferry

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent figures he has on sulphur emissions from Fiddlers Ferry power station.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I am advised by the CEGB that emissions of sulphur dioxide for 1988 were about 150,000 tonnes.

### Nature Conservancy Council

**Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) where the scientific work on estuaries, heathlands, woodlands, peatland and ornithology will be based once the proposed re-organisation of the Nature Conservancy Council is completed;

(2) whether he intends to keep intact the Nature Conservancy Council's chief scientist's directorate.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Detailed discussions are now taking place to determine the organisation, complement and geographical location of the bodies which will succeed the Nature Conservancy Council. The Government will ensure that each of the bodies has access to appropriate scientific expertise and hopes that it will be possible for all members of NCC's existing permanent staff to be offered posts by the successor bodies.

### Community Charge, Nottingham

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of what the community charge in Nottingham will be in May 1990.

**Mr. Gummer:** The level of the community charge in Nottingham in 1990 depends on the expenditure levels set by both Nottingham city council and Nottinghamshire county council. I have made no estimate of these and cannot forecast what the community charge might be. Illustrative estimates of charges had the new system been in operation this year were placed in the Library on 19 July.

### Consultative Council on Local Government Finance

**Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy in respect of smoking by participants at meetings of the consultative council on local government finance.

**Mr. Ridley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* My policy is freedom within the law.

### Departmental Working Hours

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment during what hours his office is normally open to inquiries from hon. Members and others.

**Mr. Ridley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* My office is always open to inquiries during normal working hours —and often well beyond.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment why the office of the Minister for Housing, Environment and Countryside was unmanned on Friday 14 July from 12 noon until 3.30 pm.

**Mr. Ridley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I understand that my noble Friend is writing to my hon. Friend.

### Royal Parks

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has concerning the numbers of applications for permission to use royal parks property for filming, photography and sound recordings which are dealt with each week by the press office facilities officer of his Department.

**Mr. Ridley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* My Department's press office facilities officer—in consultation with the parks and police authorities—deals with about 14 requests a week to use the royal parks, Trafalgar Square, Parliament square and Grosvenor square for the purposes of filming cinema and television dramas, documentaries, commercials and outside broadcasts; and about 30 applications a month for fashion and advertising photography which includes requests for annual passes.

Major news companies, based in London, hold annual passes for frequent news features and commentaries on camera, mainly on Abingdon street gardens.

Sound broadcasts are infrequent.

### Bottle Banks

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the proportion of bottle banks per head of population for each London borough.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I understand from the British Glass Manufacturers' Confederation that at the end of March the position was as follows:

| | *Population per bottle bank (000)* |
|---|---:|
| Barking | 16·6 |
| Barnet | 60·92 |
| Bexley | 110 |
| Brent | 36·41 |
| Bromley | 59·2 |
| Camden | 11·47 |
| Croydon | 20·63 |
| Ealing | 22·49 |
| Enfield | 11·52 |
| Greenwich | 15·4 |
| Hackney | 26·7 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 16·49 |
| Haringey | 8 |
| Harrow | 19·92 |
| Havering | 15·87 |
| Hillingdon | 39·27 |
| Hounslow | 33·16 |
| Islington | 11 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 68 |
| Kinston upon Thames | 16·72 |
| Lambeth | 20·42 |
| Lewisham | 9·67 |
| Merton | 20·68 |
| Newham | 21 |
| Redbridge | 19 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 8·51 |
| Southwark | 27·12 |
| Sutton | 18·9 |
| Tower Hamlets | 21 |
| Waltham Forest | 26·94 |
| Wandsworth | 26·8 |
| Westminster | 8·8 |

### Clinical Hospital Waste

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether his Department has taken any action on the recommendation by the Environment Select Committee's second report on toxic waste that landfill sites no longer be used to dispose of clinical hospital waste.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Government response (Cm. 679 April 1989) to the Environment Committee report indicated that clinical wastes should be managed in accordance with guidelines in waste management paper No. 25 which advises that landfill is suitable for only a restricted range of clinical wastes. This advice is currently under review.

### African Elephants

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the intention of Her Majesty's Government as regards entering a reservation on behalf of Hong Kong at the CITES meeting in October when consideration is given to appendix I listing of African elephants.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The Government support the case for the transfer of the African elephant to appendix I. We are in discussion with Hong Kong on the effect of such listing. All relevant issues will be discussed at the conference of the parties to CITES at Lausanne in October.

### Inland Waters (Jet-skis)

**Mr. Onslow:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultation he has had with the Nature Conservancy Council, the Countryside Commission, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the National Anglers' Council and other interested bodies on the environmental impact of the use of jet-skis and similar devices on rivers and other inland waters; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* No consultation has taken place with these bodies on the use of jet-skis.

### Housing Starts

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table showing housing starts in each region in the quarter to April, showing the percentage change in starts from the quarter ended April 1988.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* Housebuilding starts for regions in England in the three months to April 1989 and the corresponding period a year earlier are given in the table.

*Housebuilding starts in thousands*

| | *February to April* *1988* | *1989* | *Percentage change* |
|---|---|---|---|
| North | 2·4 | 2·5 | +2 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 4·4 | 4·2 | −4 |
| East Midlands | 5·8 | 4·7 | −19 |
| East Anglia | 4·4 | 3·5 | −19 |
| South East: | | | |
| Greater London | 3·5 | 4·0 | +13 |
| Rest of South East | 16·5 | 12·0 | −27 |
| South West | 6·9 | 5·4 | −22 |
| West Midlands | 5·5 | 4·0 | −28 |
| North West | 4·7 | 4·8 | +1 |
| England | 54·1 | 45·1 | −17 |

### Housing Action Trust (Southwark)

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the policies of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark on rent arrears.

**Mr. Trippier:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on Wednesday 19 July at column *213.*

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if the proposed housing action trust in Southwark would be able to accept transfer applications from Southwark council tenants;

(2) what effect would the creation of the proposed housing action trust in Southwark have on the rehousing, if places became available, of those tenants of the North Peckham and Gloucester grove estates, currently on Southwark council waiting lists.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* These would be matters for discussion between Southwark council and a trust.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment in the event of a housing action trust being created, what requirement would be placed on the trust to accept a share of homeless cases in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* Where a local housing authority requested a trust's assistance in discharging certain of its responsibilities towards the homeless, section 70 of the Housing Act 1988 would require the trust to co-operate in rendering reasonable assistance.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of the membership of the proposed housing action trust board in Southwark would be tenants from either the Gloucester grove or North Peckham estates.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 19 July, at column *213.*

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he intends to take to ensure the independence of action of the members of the proposed housing action trust board in Southwark.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* The trust would itself be responsible for day-to-day decisions. Members will also be appointed for a number of years, fixed in advance. I would expect all of them to play a full part in helping to achieve a trust's objectives.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether there will be any limitations on the time the proposed housing action trust in Southwark could continue to exist.

**Mr. Trippier:** Section 88 of the Housing Act 1988 requires a housing action trust to use its best endeavours to secure that its objects are achieved as soon as practicable.

### Council Rents

**Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list the estimated council rent rises assessed by his Department on the formula relating them to local house values.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* The policy announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 14 June concerned a proposed mechanism for determining annual rent guidelines for local authorities by reference to the value of their housing stock. The mechanism does not in itself imply any particular levels of rents.

### Gipsy Sites

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many designated gipsy sites there are in England and Wales; and if he will list them by county area.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* The number of local authorities in England which are designated under the Caravan Sites Act 1968 is as follows: 94 shire districts, 10 metropolitan districts and 22 London boroughs. In these areas local authorities currently provide 130 sites for gipsies. There are a further 128 gipsy sites provided by local authorities in areas that have not been designated under the Caravan Sites Act. There are also some authorised privately operated sites in some areas, but information is not available on numbers of these.

My Department publishes a list of gipsy sites provided by local authorities in England and I will send a copy to the hon. Member. Gipsy sites in Wales are the responsibility of the Welsh Office.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Recycled Paper

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if, pursuant to his answer of 4 July, *Official Report*, column 154, he will make it his policy to take into account environmental considerations when deciding what is to qualify as first-class stationery; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wakeham:** The Accommodation and Administrative Sub-Committee is already fully aware of the need to take into account the environmental implications of decisions concerning the type of paper used in the House. Apart from its instructions to Her Majesty's Stationery Office and the authorities of the House to be kept informed of developments in relation to the use of recycled paper, the Sub-Committee is also engaged in consultations with the Department of Trade and Industry about the suitability of using paper containing recycled material for first class stationery.

### Green Card Requests

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will look into ways of shortening the time it takes for green card requests for personal interviews to reach hon. Members.

**Mr. Wakeham:** The Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee recently agreed to a revised form of green card which is designed to facilitate speedier handling. Responsibility for the day-to-day management of this service lies, however, with the Serjeant at Arms and if the hon. Member has any specific complaint or suggestion to make he is advised in the first instance to consult the Serjeant at Arms.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Director of Public Prosecutions

60. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Attorney-General when he last met the Director of Public Prosecutions; and what matters were discussed.

**The Solicitor-General:** On 10 July. We discussed a matter of departmental interest.

### European Court of Human Rights

61. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Attorney-General when he last visited the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

**The Attorney-General:** I represented the Government at the oral hearing of the Soering case on 24 April this year.

### Legal Profession (Reform)

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Attorney-General (1) if he has received any representations from the Leicestershire Law Society concerning the effects on the network of national solicitors' offices of the proposals in "The Future of the Legal Profession"; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he has received any representations from the Leicestershire Law Society concerning the takeover rate by insurance companies, building societies and other such institutions of estate agent firms; and if he will make a statement.

**The Attorney-General:** The Lord Chancellor has received representations from the Leicestershire Law Society in connection with his Green Papers on the future of the legal profession. The White Paper "Legal Services: A Framework for the Future" (Cm 740) published on 19 July describes the Government's decisions on the proposals in the Green Papers and its plans for legislation.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the organisations which have responded to the document entitled "The Future of the Legal Profession"; which organisations *(a)* favour and *(b)* oppose the proposals; and if he will make a statement.

**The Attorney-General:** The Lord Chancellor's three Green Papers published in January—"The Work and Organisation of the Legal Profession", "Contingency Fees" and "Conveyancing by Authorised Practitioners" —have been treated collectively as his papers on the future of the legal profession. They contained a variety of proposals and options. Over 2,000 responses were received from individuals and organisations. They included comments for and against some or all of the points raised. There would therefore be little benefit to be gained from seeking to construct a list of those for and against them as a whole. The White Paper "Legal Services: A Framework for the Future" (Cm. 740) published on 19 July contains a synopsis of the responses. The Lord Chancellor has also arranged, where authors have consented, for copies of all responses (except those which dealt only with personal cases) to be made available for inspection in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament, in the Supreme Court library and on written application, in his Department's headquarters.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**The Attorney-General:** As the Government's principal legal adviser, I should regard it as my duty to provide ministerial colleagues with legal advice relating to small businesses if required. However, my Department, in the nature of its work, has no direct or particular responsibility towards small businesses as such.

### Malicious Communications Act 1988

**Mr. Janner:** To ask the Attorney-General how many prosecutions were brought under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 in the London metropolitan area; and what was their outcome.

**The Attorney-General:** I regret that such information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number and proportion of 16 and 17-year-olds in the northern region and Durham in full-time employment or recognised training schemes or unemployed.

**Mr. Cope:** Data for each of the groups requested, on a comparable basis, is available only from the labour force survey. Preliminary estimates from the 1988 LFS are shown in the following table:

*16 and 17 year olds—Northern region*

*Spring 1988, thousands and percent*

| | *000's* | *Per cent.*[3] |
|---|---|---|
| (i) employees and self-employed in full-time[1] employment | 15 | 16·2 |
| (ii) on government employment and training programmes | 16 | 17·2 |
| (iii) unemployed[2] | 11 | 11·8 |

[1] Based on respondents own assessments, not on the number of hours worked.

[2] ILO/OECD definition.

[3] As percentage of all 16 and 17 year olds.

*Source:* 1988 LFS, Preliminary results.

The LFS is a survey of private households based on a sample large enough to provide estimates at national and regional level. However, it cannot provide estimates for smaller areas, such as Durham.

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number and percentage increase or decrease in employment in the United Kingdom and the European Community as a whole between 1979 and the latest year for which figures are available, giving the total, full-time employment and part-time employment separately.

**Mr. Lee:** Employment estimates are not yet available for many EC countries after 1987. The changes in total civilian employment for the United Kingdom and the EC as a whole between 1979 and 1987 are shown in the table. A breakdown of these figures between full-time and part-time employment is not available.

*Change in Civilian Employment: 1979 to 1987*

| | *Thousand* | *per cent.* |
|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | −19 | −0·1 |
| EC12 | +701 | +0·6 |

*Sources:* United Kingdom (ED), Other EC countries (EUROSTAT)

### Youth Training Scheme

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give, for Great Britain and each training agency area or employment service or careers service area, the number of people of YTS eligible age, at the latest available date, registered with jobcentres or the careers service who were awaiting an offer of a YTS place.

**Mr. Lee:** Only local careers services hold information on the total number of young people awaiting the offer of a YTS place. There is no central record.

### Training and Enterprise Councils

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if training and enterprise councils may vary the financial terms and conditions of trainees on (i) ET or (ii) YTS; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** The detailed arrangements for ET and YTS under training and enterprise councils are currently under consideration. Announcements will be made in due course.

### Construction Training

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the average earnings for construction workers in the various trades in the south-east London area over the last five years.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Information is not available at the level of detail requested.

### Training (Accidents)

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the accident rate per 100,000 trainees on employment training.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The provisional rate for all accidents in employment training is 556 per 100,000 trainees.

### TVEI

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has for the expansion of the technical and vocational education initiative scheme.

**Mr. Cope:** The extension of the technical and vocational education initiative (TVEI) was announced in July 1986, setting aside £900 million over a ten-year period. Since 1987, 48 education authorities have already begun to introduce TVEI into their schools and colleges. Another 32 authorities will join this September and by the early 1990s, all schools and colleges will be participating and all pupils aged 14-18 should be influenced by TVEI.

## Tourist Attractions (Cornwall)

**Mr. Mudd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the top 20 tourist attractions in Cornwall in numbers visiting or attending; and if he will indicate the numbers, in each instance, for the previous comparable year.

**Mr. Lee:** The English Tourist Board's annual survey of visits to attractions gives the following figures for Cornwall in 1987 and 1988:

*Number of visits*

| | *1987* | *1988* |
|---|---|---|
| Truro Cathedral | 250,000 | 250,000 |
| Mount Edgcumbe Country Park | — | 200,000 |
| St. Agnes Leisure Park | 200,000 | 200,000 |
| World in Miniature, Goonhavern | 195,000 | 200,000 |
| Dobwall's Theme Park | 135,000 | 190,000 |
| Newquay Zoo | 143,482 | 186,000 |
| St. Michael's Mount | 172,975 | 175,815 |
| Tintagel Castle | 135,935 | 134,386 |
| Tescan Ltd (Tannery) Redruth | — | 112,000 |
| Cotehele House | 79,937 | 81,456 |
| Trelissick Garden, Nr Truro | 69,522 | 75,244 |
| Pendennis Castle, Falmouth | 63,412 | 70,739 |
| Goonhilly Satellite Earth Station | 56,684 | 63,000 |
| Dairyland, Newquay | 60,000 | 56,940 |
| Tintagel Old Post Office | 49,673 | 55,048 |
| Trerice | 53,241 | 52,250 |
| Callestock Cider Farm, Penhallow | 21,544 | 50,000 |
| Monkey Sanctuary, Looe | 53,700 | 48,000 |
| Padstow Tropical Bird Garden | 30,000 | 43,000 |
| Charlestown Visitor Centre | 38,700 | 40,250 |

## Health and Safety

**Mr. Terry Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he intends to make any regulations to provide for annual reports published under the Companies Act 1967 to contain information about the arrangements for securing the health, safety and welfare at work of employees of a company and its subsidiaries as provided in section 79 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend has asked the Health and Safety Commission to advise him whether regulations should be made under section 235 of the Companies Act 1985 which replaced the 1967 Companies Act and section 79 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

## Employment Training

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what organisations have been granted ET training agent contracts; what were the planned volumes of trainees between September 1988 and March 1989; what are the planned volumes between April 1989 and August 1989; how many trainees have been referred to ET training agents; and how many action plans have been agreed at the end of each month since September 1989, for each Training Agency area.

**Mr. Nicholls** *[pursuant to his reply, 12 June 1989, c. 285-90]:* I regret that there was an error in the original reply. The error is in table 2—Action plans completed by Employment Training training agents: September 1988 to March 1989. The figures provided for Northern region were monthly cumulative figures rather than in-month totals. The correct figures for the table are as follows:

*Action Plans completed by ET Training Agents: September 1988 to March 1989*

| *Area Office* | | | | *Agreed Action Plans* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *September 1988* | *October 1988* | *November 1988* | *December 1988* | *January 1989* | *February 1989* | *March 1989* |
| *South East Region* | | | | | | | |
| Berkshire and Oxfordshire | 242 | 798 | 0 | 922 | 514 | 450 | 418 |
| Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire | 219 | 294 | 763 | 411 | 429 | 520 | 500 |
| Essex | 227 | 550 | 525 | 1,051 | 632 | 748 | 989 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | 411 | 487 | 679 | 409 | 717 | 670 | 772 |
| Kent | 32 | 610 | 1,159 | 488 | 714 | 652 | 596 |
| Surrey | 102 | 223 | 174 | 615 | 190 | 0 | 196 |
| Sussex | 0 | 682 | 900 | 470 | 555 | 652 | 695 |
| *London Region* | | | | | | | |
| Inner London North | 505 | 1,196 | 1,545 | 1,606 | 1,651 | 1,799 | 2,090 |
| Inner London South | 510 | 655 | 616 | 539 | 645 | 718 | 736 |
| London East | 793 | 735 | 805 | 670 | 972 | 1,117 | 1,092 |
| London North | 732 | 857 | 935 | 846 | 858 | 970 | 996 |
| London South | 280 | 320 | 479 | 340 | 423 | 542 | 543 |
| London West | 591 | 867 | 811 | 676 | 900 | 912 | 952 |
| *South West Region* | | | | | | | |
| Avon | 238 | 361 | 411 | 327 | 453 | 506 | 489 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 665 | 692 | 1,244 | 795 | 1,294 | 615 | 1,192 |
| Dorset and Somerset | 418 | 478 | 386 | 332 | 342 | 516 | 471 |
| Gloucester and Wiltshire | 357 | 546 | 560 | 433 | 390 | 479 | 536 |
| *West Midlands Region* | | | | | | | |
| Birmingham and Solihull | 935 | 1,026 | 1,201 | 756 | 1,553 | 1,685 | 1,382 |
| Coventry and Warwickshire | 378 | 617 | 576 | 322 | 638 | 812 | 748 |
| Dudley and Sandwell | 818 | 769 | 899 | 1,021 | 978 | 1,059 | 1,416 |
| Staffordshire | 541 | 906 | 434 | 1,145 | 1,128 | 929 | 1,192 |
| The Marches, Hereford/Worcester | 0 | 710 | 677 | 954 | 406 | 613 | 1,330 |
| Wolverhampton and Walsall | 0 | 1,055 | 1,913 | 308 | 706 | 821 | 754 |

| Area Office | Agreed Action Plans September 1988 | October 1988 | November 1988 | December 1988 | January 1989 | February 1989 | March 1989 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *East Midlands and Eastern Region* | | | | | | | |
| Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire | 502 | 484 | 520 | 331 | 400 | 426 | 362 |
| Derbyshire | 704 | 742 | 743 | 501 | 582 | 677 | 743 |
| Leicestershire and Northamptonshire | 499 | 607 | 604 | 551 | 718 | 719 | 736 |
| Lincolnshire | 192 | 251 | 267 | 154 | 296 | 359 | 313 |
| Norfolk and Suffolk | 586 | 625 | 652 | 426 | 753 | 641 | 961 |
| Nottinghamshire | 602 | 909 | 853 | 669 | 937 | 923 | 851 |
| *Yorkshire and Humberside Region* | | | | | | | |
| Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees | 758 | 944 | 1,439 | 911 | 1,123 | 1,186 | 1,316 |
| Humberside | 858 | 821 | 791 | 847 | 949 | 970 | 938 |
| North Yorkshire and Leeds | 621 | 826 | 752 | 743 | 777 | 1,035 | 1,002 |
| Sheffield and Rotherham | 1,078 | 1,387 | 1,382 | 961 | 1,459 | 1,236 | 1,043 |
| Wakefield, Doncaster and Barnsley | 861 | 1,154 | 1,296 | 990 | 1,501 | 1,547 | 1,265 |
| *North West Region* | | | | | | | |
| Cheshire | 809 | 826 | 901 | 588 | 773 | 951 | 699 |
| Cumbria | 267 | 280 | 406 | 269 | 315 | 377 | 373 |
| Lancashire | 937 | 1,050 | 955 | 943 | 1,090 | 1,164 | 1,279 |
| Central Manchester | 597 | 685 | 945 | 936 | 954 | 984 | 837 |
| Greater Manchester North | 395 | 699 | 711 | 423 | 821 | 834 | 894 |
| Greater Manchester East | 484 | 904 | 784 | 488 | 604 | 875 | 913 |
| Merseyside | 630 | 1,386 | 1,715 | 1,504 | 1,995 | 2,315 | 2,220 |
| *Northern Region* | | | | | | | |
| Cleveland | 1,404 | 1,229 | 1,141 | 799 | 1,624 | 1,764 | 1,503 |
| County Durham | 1,027 | 894 | 897 | 626 | 1,014 | 1,254 | 1,060 |
| Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle | 602 | 962 | 1,104 | 849 | 1,086 | 1,258 | 1,275 |
| Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead | 1,356 | 1,266 | 1,325 | 1,323 | 1,349 | 1,536 | 1,488 |
| *Wales* | | | | | | | |
| Dyfed and West Glamorgan | 524 | 759 | 922 | 749 | 909 | 930 | 949 |
| Gwent | 268 | 348 | 536 | 282 | 747 | 779 | 681 |
| Gwynned, Clwyd and Powys | 309 | 458 | 545 | 546 | 573 | 679 | 497 |
| Mid and South Glamorgan | 826 | 935 | 1,073 | 856 | 951 | 1,302 | 1,301 |
| *Scotland* | | | | | | | |
| Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway | 550 | 706 | 895 | 832 | 802 | 1,003 | 826 |
| Central and Fife | 429 | 459 | 710 | 603 | 594 | 832 | 573 |
| Glasgow City | 828 | 958 | 1,263 | 1,160 | 1,198 | 1,463 | 1,915 |
| Grampian and Tayside | 937 | 817 | 825 | 726 | 918 | 1,018 | 1,267 |
| Highlands and Islands | 158 | 207 | 301 | 351 | 397 | 400 | 308 |
| Lanarkshire | 301 | 649 | 710 | 480 | 639 | 800 | 803 |
| Lothian and Borders | 604 | 766 | 1,269 | 757 | 805 | 824 | 940 |
| Renfrew, Dumbarton and Argyll | 339 | 397 | 607 | 576 | 770 | 1,000 | 1,122 |

*Note:* Some months show no agreed action plans because of computer difficulties. Action plans agreed in the months are recorded in subsequent months.

## Child Care

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, what measures he is taking to encourage the provision of child care facilities in the work place; and what information he has on how many firms and Government offices currently provide such facilities.

**Mr. Nicholls** *[holding answer 5 July 1989]:* My right hon. Friend takes every opportunity to encourage employers to help employees combine work and family responsibilities. Work place nurseries are one possible way of helping parents with childcare although it will not necessarily be the most appropriate in all cases. Other possibilities include help with childcare costs in the local home area and rearrangement of working hours and holidays to fit in with school hours and terms.

My right hon. Friend does not have comprehensive information on the extent of employer-assisted childcare outside Government Departments but the indications are that such provision is growing. In the Civil Service 15 departments provide holiday play schemes for the children of their staff. Two new inter-departmental schemes began in Westminster during the spring 1989 half-term. In addition two schemes were launched by the DSS during the Easter holidays: one at the Elephant and Castle and one, with the Department of Employment, in Coventry. The Departments of Employment and Social Security have set up "care-parents" schemes and the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office are both developing nursery schemes for the under-fives.

I also take a full part in the ministerial group on women's issues which is currently considering the whole question of childcare provision and which recently issued a five-point plan designed to pave the way for the provision of childcare to suit family needs.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Army-Police Operations

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many helicopter flying hours were available during June in support of army police operations from Newtownbutler and Rosslea Royal Ulster Constabulary stations in south-east Fermanagh.

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many helicopter flying hours were required in support of the operation to dismantle the Lacky bridge permanent vehicle checkpoint.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** It is not the practice to comment on operational matters of this sort.

### Terrorist Activity (Fermanagh)

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have died as a result of terrorist activity in south-east Fermanagh since 1970.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** Since 1970, 30 persons are believed to have died as a result of terrorist activity in the south-east Fermanagh area.

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many terrorists have been convicted of murders in south-east Fermanagh since 1970.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** Two.

### Helicopters (Fermanagh)

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if there are any plans to increase the number of helicopter flying hours available for army-police operations to be carried out from Newtownbutler and Rosslea Royal Ulster Constabulary stations.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** This is an operational matter for local security force commanders, in the light of the current terrorist threat and security force operations to meet that threat. If the threat increases in any given area, additional helicopter hours can be allocated to that area.

### Lacky Bridge Checkpoint

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the opinion of elected representatives or the community leaders in south-east Fermanagh was sought before dismantling the Lacky bridge permanent vehicle checkpoint.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** Operational security matters are not normally the subject of advance public consultation but this matter was given careful consideration and consultation between the chief constable and the general office commanding in the light of all available information.

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consultation was carried out with the Royal Ulster Constabulary concerning the dismantling of the Lacky bridge permanent vehicle checkpoint; and what was the Royal Ulster Constabulary's response to the decision to dismantle.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** As in all security issues this matter was the subject of careful consideration between the chief constable and the general office commanding. It is not the practice to comment on the details of consultations on security matters.

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what was the cost *(a)* to the Army and *(b)* to the Royal Ulster Constabulary of the operation to dismantle the Lacky bridge permanent vehicle checkpoint;

(2) what would be, at current prices, the cost of re-establishing the Lacky bridge permanent vehicle checkpoint.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** It is not the practice to comment on the cost of security operations. But there was no significant additional cost incurred by the Army during the operation to dismantle the Lacky bridge permanent vehicle checkpoint. The Royal Ulster Constabulary was not involved.

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Lacky bridge permanent vehicle checkpoint was dismantled; and which elected representatives in Fermanagh and South Tyrone were notified from the Northern Ireland Office by letter or otherwise of the intention to do so.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** The permanent vehicle checkpoint at Lacky bridge was dismantled between 4 and 7 July. It was my intention to speak to the hon. Gentleman prior to this happening but he became aware of it in advance from another source.

### Checkpoints (Fermanagh)

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when permanent vehicle checkpoints were erected in south-east Fermanagh; and how many terrorist murders have been committed in that area since that time.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** Permanent vehicle checkpoints were erected in the south-east Fermanagh area in October 1980; since that time six murders are believed to have been carried out by terrorists.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Viggers:** The Government are committed to maximising the contribution that small firms can make to strengthening the Northern Ireland economy. A major priority is to help the Province's small businesses to prepare for the completion of the single European market. The publicly funded local enterprise development unit (LEDU) offers support to firms employing up to 50 who are establishing or expanding their businesses. For the year ended 31 March 1989, LEDU achieved record levels of activity, surpassing for the eighth successive year the performance of previous years in terms of jobs promoted.

The main performance indicators used, and the results achieved for the past two years, are as follows—

| | 1987-88 | 1988-89 |
|---|---|---|
| Number of jobs promoted | 4,570 | 5,004 |
| Cost per job promoted | £4520 | £4518 |
| Percentage public contribution to total project cost | 36 per cent. | 32 per cent. |

## Trading Standards Officers

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many trading standards officers there are in each local authority area.

**Mr. Viggers:** The trading standards service in Northern Ireland is a central Government function and is the responsibility of the Department of Economic Development.

Branch headquarters are located at Newtownbreda near Belfast and there are local offices in Armagh, Ballymena, Coleraine, Enniskillen, Londonderry and Newry. The inspectorate, known as trading standards officers, comprises 20 qualified staff including the chief inspector. Of these, 13 are located at headquarters and the remainder at the outstations.

## Permanent Secretaries (Correspondence)

**Rev. Ian Paisley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the people whom he does not permit to correspond with the permanent secretaries of the various Northern Ireland departments.

**Mr. Tom King:** None. I should however be grateful if, in accordance with the normal well-understood practice, hon. Members who wish to raise with Northern Ireland departmental headquarters matters for which Ministers are responsible to Parliament would correspond with the appropriate Minister rather than with an official. I have requested permanent secretaries to draw this to the attention of an hon. Member if he is not following the usual procedure and to ask him to correspond directly with the responsible Minister. This will ensure that matters which are raised by constituents through their Members of Parliament receive the most prompt and proper attention.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

## Immigration

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list for each of the past five years, and the figure for the current year to date, of refusals to enter the United Kingdom in which primary purpose is part or the whole reason for *(a)* husbands, *(b)* wives, *(c)* fiancées and *(d)* fiancés seeking entry to join their partners with existing rights of stay in the United Kingdom, for each immigration post abroad.

**Mr. Renton:** The information requested is available only for posts in the Indian subcontinent and is given in the following table. Where the numbers are small, the figures for individual posts have been combined. Information on refusals which takes account of successful appeals is not compiled for periods shorter than 12 months.

*Spouses and fiance(e)s in the Indian sub-continent refused[1] entry clearance to the United Kingdom solely or partly because the primary purpose of the marriage was to obtain admission to the United Kingdom*

*Number of persons*

| | [1] 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *New Delhi (including Calcutta)* | | | | | |
| Husbands | 80 | 50 | 120 | 110 | 100 |
| Fiances | 320 | 230 | 270 | 190 | 170 |
| Wives | — | — | [2]— | [2]— | 10 |
| Fiancees | — | — | 20 | 40 | 50 |
| *Bombay (including Madras)* | | | | | |
| Husbands | 60 | 50 | 110 | 120 | 100 |
| Fiances | 120 | 150 | 210 | 160 | 160 |
| Wives | — | — | [2]— | 10 | 10 |
| Fiancees | — | — | [2]— | 20 | 20 |
| *Dhaka* | | | | | |
| Husbands | 20 | 50 | 30 | 30 | 80 |
| Fiances | [2]— | [2]— | 10 | [2]— | 10 |
| Wives | — | — | — | — | 20 |
| Fiancees | — | — | [2]— | — | [2]— |
| *Islamabad (including Karachi)* | | | | | |
| Husbands | 70 | 50 | 120 | 270 | 480 |
| Fiances | 310 | 320 | 350 | 320 | 430 |
| Wives | — | — | [2]— | [2]— | 10 |
| Fiancees | — | — | [2]— | 20 | [2]— |
| *Total Indian sub-continent* | | | | | |
| Husbands | 230 | 190 | 370 | 530 | 760 |
| Fiances | 750 | 710 | 840 | 680 | 770 |
| Wives | — | — | 10 | 20 | 40 |
| Fiancees | — | — | 30 | 80 | 80 |

[1] Data for 1984 relate to person refused initially; data for subsequent years take account of successful appeals.

[2] Five or fewer.

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigration inspectors are employed by his Department and where each is based; what is the comparable rank of *(a)* an immigration inspector and *(b)* officials taking decisions on deportation or leave to remain (i) in Lunar house and (ii) elsewhere within the Home Office; and what grade officer was required to take a decision to make a deportation order before he delegated his deportation decision-making functions to immigration inspectors.

**Mr. Renton** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]*: On 30 June 1989, 52 immigration inspectors were in post at the following locations:

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Immigration Service Headquarters | 10 |
| Heathrow Terminal 1 | 4 |
| Heathrow Terminal 2 | 4 |
| Heathrow Terminal 3 | 4 |
| Heathrow Terminal 4 | 4 |
| Intelligence Unit, Harmondsworth | 3 |
| Technical Unit, Harmondsworth | 1 |
| Appeals Unit, Harmondsworth | 1 |
| Training Unit, Harmondsworth | 1 |
| Gatwick | 4 |
| Gatwick North | 2 |
| Isis House | 2 |
| Glasgow | 1 |
| Leeds Bradford Airport | 1 |
| Manchester | 1 |
| Birmingham | 1 |
| Harwich | 1 |
| Dover East | 3 |
| Dover West | 2 |
| Southampton | 1 |

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Cardiff | 1 |
| Total | 52 |

The level at which decisions are taken in immigration cases varies according to the complexity of the type of case. However, decisions to issue a notice of intention to deport under section 3(5)(a) of the Immigration Act 1971 may be taken by officials of at least inspector level in the immigration service (whose grade equivalent is senior executive officer) or at least higher executive officer level in the deportation section. Similar decisions under section 3(5)(b) and (c) may be taken at not less than senior executive officer level in the deportation section. Decisions to grant further leave to remain may be taken by officials of at least administration officer level in the Immigration and Nationality Department; and decisions to refuse leave to remain may be taken at not less than executive officer level. The levels at which decisions are taken in the deportation section remain the same as they were before the decision to delegate certain functions to immigration inspectors.

## Privacy Committee

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what factors influenced the decision to limit the Privacy Committee's terms of reference to the problems of privacy caused by the press and media; what areas indicated in his original announcement of the Committee on 21 April, *Official Report*, column *593*, are not included; and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** As I made clear in the debate on 21 April at column 593 the precise terms of reference of the committee to review privacy and related matters were then still under consideration. They have been limited to the press because it is the activities of some sections of that industry that have caused such wide concern recently, and because the Government considered that the review should be carried out speedily.

## HIV (Prisons)

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are known to be HIV positive; and in which prisons they are held.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** On 30 June 1989, 63 prisoners were known to be HIV antibody positive from tests carried out before or after they came into custody. Of these prisoners, nine were located in establishments in the north region, 10 in the Midland region, five in the south-west region and 39 in the south-east region. For reasons of medical confidentiality, it is not our practice to disclose the number of current cases in individual establishments.

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many tests for HIV antibodies were carried out in prisons in England and Wales in the last year for which figures are available; and how many were positive;

(2) what steps are taken to encourage prisoners to volunteer for HIV antibody testing;

(3) what steps are taken to safeguard the confidentiality of the results of HIV positive antibody tests in prisons.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** HIV antibody tests are freely available to prisoners, as they are to people in the outside community. Whether a test is advised in an individual case is a matter for the clinical discretion of the prison medical officer. In the 12 months ended 30 June 1989, 30 positive results were reported from tests carried out after the prisoners concerned came into custody. Negative results are not reported. Medical officers and their health care staff apply the normal rules of medical confidentiality to the test results and related diagnoses.

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times the AIDS videos for *(a)* prison staff and *(b)* prisoners have been shown in each prison establishment in England and Wales since they have been available.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Information in the form requested is not available. The staff training video is shown to all new entrant prison officers, and governors have been set a target for the training year ending March 1990 of showing it to all operational staff who have not attended a showing previously. The minimum target for the same year for showing the educational video for prisoners to those who wish to see it is to arrange at least one showing to every prisoner who has been or is expected to be in custody for four weeks or longer.

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if it is his policy to restrict the location and activities of HIV positive prisoners; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the purpose of current viral infectivity restrictions in Her Majesty's prisons in England and Wales.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Our policy is to enable identified HIV antibody positive prisoners who are well to play as full a part in prison life as possible. However, having regard to the responsibilities of the prison service towards other prisoners and to staff, it has been thought right in the circumstances obtaining in England and Wales to enable medical officers to take precautions which may limit access to some regime activity. The main recommended restriction is location in single accommodation or communal accommodation shared with other identified HIV antibody positive prisoners. The medical officer may also restrict participation in activities which run the risk of physical injury such as work with machinery or sharp objects, and physical contact sports.

The system of viral infectivity restrictions (VIR), which is also applied to prisoners with other infective conditions, has a secondary purpose of enabling local management to disclose a prisoner's VIR status, but not the actual diagnosis, to operational staff who are considered to have a "need to know". Experience in England and Wales is that this practice has been valuable in giving psychological reassurance to staff.

Further guidance on the application of VIR is planned to encourage local management to place more VIR prisoners in non-specialised locations and to widen opportunities for participation in normal regime activity.

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what arrangements are made for clinical and psychological monitoring and care of HIV positive prisoners in England and Wales;

(2) what arrangements are made for the continuing care of HIV positive prisoners after their release from prison;

(3) what counselling is available for HIV positive and AIDS prisoners.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The health care management of HIV antibody positive prisoners, including arrangements to ensure as far as possible that appropriate health care continues after release, is a responsibility of prison medical officers which they exercise in consultation with appropriate NHS specialists taking account of broad policy guidelines from the director of prison medical services. For the provision of counselling services they have access both to prison service staff who have been trained in HIV counselling and to outside agencies which provide such services.

The director of prison medical service plans to issue further guidance on the clinical care of HIV infected prisoners. The importance of psychological monitoring will be stressed.

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his policy for the provision of care and support units for prisoners with AIDS-related illness.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The need is recognised for medical facilities in each prison service region which will be capable of giving short or longer-term care and support to prisoners with AIDS, AIDS-related illness or other infectious illness, whose condition does not require admission to the specialised facilities of the National Health Service. A purpose-designed unit is planned for Brixton prison. Hospital accommodation with suitable facilities at other establishments will also be used to fulfil the care and support function.

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current programme for training of prison staff at all levels in relation to their responsibilities for the care of prisoners who have been diagnosed HIV positive, including those who may have developed AIDS-related illness.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Locally organised training programmes directed at operational staff provide basic health and safety information and ana understanding of the nature of AIDS and HIV infection at a level appropriate to their task of managing infected prisoners with no signs or symptoms of illness. Most training of health care staff is also arranged locally but will often include attendance at external courses and detachments to local NHS hospitals. External AIDS counselling courses have been attended by prison service staff from a variety of disciplines.

The director of prison medical services plans to develop further training programmes for medical officers and other health care staff tailored to their specific needs.

## Immigration Offences

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suspected immigration offenders against whom action was taken by officers in each month since January 1988, at *(a)* Isis house and *(b)* Harmondsworth were (i) alleged illegal entrants, (ii) the subjects of deportation orders, (iii) seaman deserters, (iv) overstayers, (v) people working in breach of conditions and (vi) claimed British nationality; and how many in each category were served with notices of intention to deport (1) by officers within the immigration service and (2) by officials within the immigration and nationality department.

**Mr. Renton:** The available information is set out in the table:

*Isis House*

| | *(i)* *Illegal entrants* | *(ii)* *Deportation orders served* | *(iii)* *Seaman deserters* | *(iv)* *(v)* *Overstayers and workers in breach* | *(vi)* *Notices of intention to deport served on those in (iv and v)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1988* | | | | | |
| January | 97 | 19 | — | 48 | 27 |
| February | 83 | 12 | 1 | 50 | 33 |
| March | 82 | 19 | — | 61 | 33 |
| April | 82 | 8 | 1 | 42 | 25 |
| May | 103 | 22 | 3 | 53 | 42 |
| June | 82 | 17 | — | 52 | 33 |
| July | 56 | 5 | 1 | 49 | 33 |
| August | 68 | 13 | — | 55 | 49 |
| September | 57 | 21 | — | 65 | 59 |
| October | 70 | 16 | — | 79 | 69 |
| November | 93 | 16 | 2 | 134 | 128 |
| December | 72 | 12 | — | 119 | 106 |

| | *(i)* *Illegal entrants* | *(ii)* *Deportation orders served* | *(iii)* *Seaman deserters* | *(iv)* *Overstayers* | *(v)* *Workers in breach* | *(vi)* *Notices of intention to deport served on those in (iv) and (v)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | *(iv)* | *(v)* |
| *1989* | | | | | | | |
| January | 48 | 19 | 2 | 61 | 39 | 61 | 36 |
| February | 96 | 12 | 1 | 68 | 71 | 66 | 68 |
| March | 78 | 17 | — | 81 | 28 | 76 | 27 |
| April | 99 | 20 | 2 | 70 | 30 | 69 | 28 |
| May | 67 | 19 | — | 59 | 27 | 58 | 22 |
| June | 63 | 17 | — | 46 | 20 | 46 | 15 |

*Immigration Service intelligence and investigation unit*

| | *(i) Illegal entrants* | *(ii) Deportation orders served* | *(iii) Seaman deserters* | *(iv) Overstayers* | *(v) Workers in breach* | *(vi) Notices of intention to deport served on those in* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | *(iv)* | *(v)* |
| *1988* | | | | | | | |
| January | 73 | 13 | 0 | 24 | 25 | 72 | 0 |
| February | 72 | 11 | 0 | 21 | 36 | | |
| March | 99 | 12 | 1 | 27 | 34 | | |
| April | 253 | 27 | 0 | 66 | 63 | 53 | 0 |
| May | | | | | | | |
| June | | | | | | | |
| July | 208 | 16 | 1 | n/a | n/a | 94 | (iv+v) |
| August | | | | | | | |
| September | | | | | | | |
| October | 271 | 20 | 1 | n/a | n/a | 185 | (iv+v) |
| November | | | | | | | |
| December | | | | | | | |
| *1989* | | | | | | | |
| January | 108 | 5 | 0 | 37 | 57 | 153 | 109 |
| February | 107 | 7 | 1 | 63 | 47 | | |
| March | 146 | 8 | 0 | 54 | 43 | | |
| April | 123 | 8 | 1 | 35 | 21 | 99 | 40 |
| May | 76 | 13 | 2 | 41 | 14 | | |
| June | 101 | 10 | 1 | 27 | 23 | | |

n/a = Not available.

*Notes:*

No figures are available to show the number of offenders who may have claimed British nationality.

*Column (ii)* Some of those served with a deportation order may also have been served with a notice of intention to deport previously but no details are available.

*Column (vi)* All notices were served by members of the Immigration Service either before 1 August 1988 on the authority of an official in the Immigration and Nationality Department (IND), or after 1 August 1988 on the authority of an Immigration Inspector or an official within IND. The breakdown of information on a port basis is not available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times in each month since January 1988, immigration officers at *(a)* Isis house and *(b)* Harmondsworth took action as a result of (i) police call-outs, (ii) denunciations, (iii) Home Office file inquiries, (iv) information provided by other Government agencies, (v) information arising from a major or middle tier operation and (vi) information arising as a consequence of another inquiry.

**Mr. Renton:** The available information is set out in the table:

*Isis House*

| | *Offenders identified from the following sources:* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *(i) Police call-outs* | *(ii) Denunciations* | *(iii) Home Office files* | *(iv) Other inquiries and Government agencies* | *(v) Major or middle tier operations* |
| *1988* | | | | | |
| January | 80 | 46 | 17 | 21 | — |
| February | 80 | 51 | 15 | — | 4,320 |
| March | 90 | 67 | 17 | — | 12 |
| April | 71 | 47 | 11 | 4 | — |
| May | 70 | 35 | 20 | 11 | 45 |
| June | 85 | 50 | 16 | — | — |
| July | 55 | 30 | 10 | 6 | — |
| August | 73 | 43 | — | 20 | — |
| September | 100 | 30 | 7 | 6 | — |
| October | 100 | 40 | 15 | 10 | — |
| November | 170 | 49 | 20 | 6 | — |
| December | Information not available | | | | |
| *1989* | | | | | |
| January | 111 | 13 | 21 | 3 | 21 |
| February | 156 | 38 | 18 | 2 | 37 |
| March | 118 | 29 | 21 | 36 | 3 |
| April | 137 | 26 | 21 | 40 | — |
| May | 105 | 34 | 25 | 15 | — |
| June | 108 | 19 | 23 | 12 | — |

*Notes:*

Column (iv)—This column relates to both information derived from other Government agencies and from other inquiries.

Column (v)—Some of these cases were referred for action by the Immigration and Nationality Department headquarters—eg the figure of 4,320 relates to students enrolled at a college under investigation in February 1988.

*Immigration service intelligence and investigation unit, Harmondsworth*

| | *Offenders identified from the following sources* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *(i) Police call-outs* | *(ii) Denunciations* | *(iii) Home Office files* | *(iv) Other Government agencies* | *(v) Major or middle tier operations* | *(vi) Other enquiries* |
| *1988* | | | | | | |
| January | 87 | 24 | 53 | n/a | 20 | 0 |
| February | 69 | 27 | 40 | n/a | 18 | 2 |
| March | 75 | 23 | 55 | n/a | 18 | 3 |
| April<br>May<br>June | 203 | 58 | 113 | n/a | 34 | 1 |
| July<br>August<br>September | 216 | 61 | 131 | n/a | 41 | 3 |
| October<br>November<br>December | 270 | 75 | 102 | n/a | 60 | 0 |
| *1989* | | | | | | |
| January | 95 | 40 | 15 | n/a | 28 | 16 |
| February | 134 | 36 | 24 | n/a | 3 | 18 |
| March | 94 | 30 | 24 | n/a | 54 | 9 |
| April | 117 | 14 | 18 | n/a | 0 | 27 |
| May | 83 | 21 | 20 | n/a | 3 | 7 |
| June | 97 | 12 | 15 | n/a | 20 | 9 |

## Asylum-Seekers

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how often and in what circumstances the immigration and nationality department discloses information held on computer about asylum-seekers and their families to *(a)* past, current or prospective employers and employees, *(b)* other members of their families, *(c)* advisers and advice workers, *(d)* the Department of Social Security, *(e)* other Government Departments, *(f)* police forces, *(g)* judges, magistrates and the courts, *(h)* the prison and probation services, *(i)* education establishments, *(j)* public libraries, the press and media, *(k)* the registrar general and *(l)* hon. Members of the House of Lords; and whether asylum-seekers are told that information collected from and about them is liable to be disclosed in this way.

**Mr. Renton:** Information on individual asylum seekers is treated in strict confidence. Information which is held on the refugee index is used for statistical purposes and as an aid to case workers in the Home Office's refugee unit. There is no disclosure from it outside Government of information on individual cases.

## Toxteth (Policing)

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of Merseyside as to what action he is taking in response to the report of Lord Gifford, concerning police involvement in drug trafficking.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No formal allegations concerning the involvement of police officers in drug trafficking are made by Lord Gifford in his report.

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he intends to take in the light of the findings of Lord Gifford's inquiry into policing in Toxteth, a copy of which has been sent to him.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** My right hon. Friend does not consider that Lord Gifford's report presents an objective and balanced assessment of the considerable progress made in improving police community relations in Liverpool 8 since 1981. Nor does he consider that there is a case for the establishment of an official inquiry into policing of the area.

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he expects any prosecutions to arise in the light of Lord Gifford's allegations concerning trafficking of drugs in Toxteth.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The question of whether a prosecution should be brought in any particular case is entirely one for the Crown prosecution service in the light of the evidence obtained by the police.

## Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Over the past 12 months, the Home Office has helped small firms by improving the information, access and opportunities necessary to enable them to tender for our business. We have issued a booklet entitled "Selling to the Home Office", which provides details of our typical purchasing needs and guidance for potential suppliers on where and how to make the initial approach. The purchasing powers of local offices throughout England and Wales have also been increased; minimising procedures and extending opportunities for small firms.

Home Office performance indicators on purchasing are directed at getting better value for the money we spend, and do not differentiate between the size of firms to which contracts are awarded or provide statistical information about business placed with small firms.

### Telephones (Prisoners' Access)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department at what times of day grant of access to telephones is made at *(a)* each open prison, *(b)* each category C prison and *(c)* designated female and young offender establishments; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Cardphones for inmates' use have so far been generally installed only at open establishments. The times at which inmates have access to them are a matter for the governors concerned, but the main periods during which they can be used *(a)* on weekdays and *(b)* at weekends are as follows:

HMP Askham Grange *(a)* 6 pm—9 pm *(b)* 9 am—9 pm; HMP/YOI Drake Hall *(a)* 5.45 pm/9.30 pm—*(b)* 8 am—9.30 pm; HMP/HMYOI East Sutton Park *(a)* 11.50 am—1.05 pm, 4.30 pm—9.00 pm *(b)* 8.00 am—9.00 pm; HMYOI Finnamore Wood *(a)* 6.15 pm—8.15 pm *(b)* 12 noon—4.45 pm; HMP Ford: all times other than midnight—7.45 am and periods of employment; HMP Foston Hall *(a)* 5.30 pm—8.30 pm *(b)* 10.30 am—8.30 pm; HMYOI Guys Marsh *(a)* and *(b)* 5.30 pm—8.30 pm; HMYOI Hatfield *(a)* 6.00 pm—8.45 pm; *(b)*. times differ according to location within establishment; HMYOI Hewell Grange *(a)* 5.30 pm—8.00 pm *(b)* (Saturday) 10.30 am—12 noon, (Sunday) 5.30 pm—8.00 pm; HMP Highpoint *(a)* 6.00 pm—11.00 pm *(b)* all day; HMYOI Hollesley Bay Colony *(a)* and *(b)* 6.00 pm—8.00 pm; HMP Kirkham *(a)* and *(b)* 12 noon—12.45 pm, 5.00 pm—8.45 pm; HMP Leyhill *(a)* and *(b)* 7.30 am—9.00 pm; HMP Lindholme *(a)* and *(b)* all day to 10.45 pm, excluding periods of employment; HMYOI Lowdham Grange *(a)* 5.00 pm—8.30 pm *(b)* all day; HMP Morton Hall *(a)* and *(b)* 11.30 am—1.15 pm, (Monday—Thursday) 4.30 pm—10.15 pm, (Friday—Sunday) 4.30 pm—11.00 pm; HMP North Sea Camp *(a)* 5.30 pm—8.30 pm *(b)* 8.30 am—8.30 pm; HMP Rudgate *(a)* 5.30 pm—8.30 pm *(b)* 12.30 pm—4.00 pm, 5.00 pm—8.30 pm; HMP Spring Hill *(a)* 12 noon—1.00 pm, 5.00 pm—10.00 pm, *(b)* 9.00 am—10 pm; HMP Standford Hill *(a)* and *(b)* 7.40 am—8.20 am, 12 noon—1.00 pm, 4.00 pm—9.00 pm; HMYOI Thorn Cross *(a)* 6.00 pm—8.00 pm *(b)* plus (Friday) 9.00 am—12 noon, 6.00 pm—8.00 pm, (Friday only) 2.00 pm—5.30 pm; HMYOI Usk *(a)* 6.00 pm—8.30 pm *(b)* 10.30 am—11.45 am.

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the maximum value of phonecard permitted for purchase by prisoners, and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The maximum value is £2. All inmates may however hold two cards, or more at the discretion of the governor.

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the ratio of telephones to prisoners at *(a)* each open prison, *(b)* each category C prison and *(c)* designated female and young offender establishments; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Cardphones for the use of inmates have so far been generally installed only at open establishments. The average numbers of inmates to each cardphone is approximately as follows:

HMP Askham Grange 59; HMP/HMYOI Drake Hall 75; HMP/HMYOI East Sutton Park 75; HMYOI Finnamore Wood 293; HMP Ford 89; HMP Forston Hall 207; HMYOI Guys Marsh 145; HMYOI Hatfield 221; HMYOI Hewell Grange 133; HMP Highpoint (Category D only) 71; HMYOI Hollesley Bay Colony 465; HMP Kirkham 168; HMP Leyhill 189; HMP Lindholme 51; HMYOI Lowdham Grange 127; HMP Morton Hall 85; HMP North Sea Camp 220; HMP Rudgate 125; HMP Spring Hill 102; HMP Standford Hill 72; HMYOI Thorn Cross 116; HMYOI Usk 75.

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which prisons are eligible to install telephones for prisoners do not yet have them; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The following establishments are due to install cardphones for the use of inmates before the end of this year:

HMP Acklington; HMP Aldington; HMP Blantyre House; HMYOI Buckley Hall; HMP/HMYOI Bullwood Hall; HMP Camp Hill; HMYOI Campsfield House; HMP Channings Wood; HMP Cookham Wood; HMYOI Deerbolt; HMYOI Dover; HMYOI Eastwood Park; HMP Erlestoke; HMYOI Everthorpe; HMP Featherstone; HMYOI Feltham; HMYOI Glen Parva; HMP Gloucester (Cat C Unit Only); HMP Haverigg; HMP Highpoint; HMYOI Huntercombe; HMYOI Kirklevington Grange; HMP Lancaster; HMP Littlehey; HMYOI The Mount; HMP/HMYOI New Hall: HMYOI Northallerton; HMP Northeye; HMP Norwich (Britannia Training Prison); HMYOI Onley; HMYOI Portland; HMP Ranby; HMP/HMYOI Rochester; HMP Send; HMP Stafford; HMP Stocken; HMYOI Stoke Heath; HMP/HMYOI Styal; HMP Thorp Arch; HMP Wayland; HMYOI Wellingborough; HMYOI Werrington; HMYOI Wetherby; HMYOI Whatton; HMP Wymott.

### Malicious Communications

**Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints have been made in the London metropolitan area under the Malicious Communications Act 1988; and what was their outcome.

**Mr. John Patten:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on 13 July 1989 at column *644*.

**Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement about publicity given to the effect of the Malicious Communications Act 1988;

(2) what sums he has spent on publicity to draw the attention of the public to the effects of the Malicious Communications Act 1988;

(3) whether he will take steps to increase public awareness of the provisions of the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** We issued a press notice on 29 July 1988, when the Malicious Communications Act 1988 received Royal Assent, drawing attention to the Act's provisions. A Home Office circular was issued on 1 September 1988 to the courts, the police and the Crown prosecution service to explain the provisions of the Act and to advise of its commencement on 29 September. It is not possible to calculate the costs of issuing the press notice and circular without incurring disproportionate cost. The Government continue to take opportunities to keep members of the public informed about developments in the criminal law.

### Bail Hostels, Leeds and Bradford

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many bail hostels exist in the Leeds and Bradford area; what other forms of accommodation are available for persons on bail; what plans there are for increasing the number of hostels; and what advice is given to magistrates on the use of bail hostels.

**Mr. John Patten:** There are six approved hostels in the Leeds and Bradford area which take bailees—four in Leeds, one in Cleckheaton and one in Bradford amounting to 113 places in all. We have agreed in principle to outline proposals for two more hostels and additional places at existing hostels in West Yorkshire by April 1990 which will provide a further 50 to 52 beds.

There is a wide range of other housing agency hostels and self-contained accommodation available for bailees including supported lodgings.

The presumption in favour of bail was firmly established by the Bail Act 1976. More recently guidance on bail, including accommodation, was issued to magistrates courts on 11 May 1988 in Home Office circular 25/1988. A list of all approved hostels and their catchment areas is issued to courts by the Home Office from time to time; local probation areas notify courts when a new hostel opens.

We are also encouraging the development of bail information schemes which give courts better information on which to take decisions about bail. A new scheme is due to start in Leeds on 31 July and a feasibility study is under way in Bradford.

### Armley Prison

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hospital officers and medical officers work on the hospital wing of Armley prison during the day and during the night as distinct from the total number of staff employed to provide a service, for 1988 and 1989.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Because staffing levels vary from day to day it is not possible to make comparisons between whole years. The following information gives the situation at the mid-point of each year, that is, 30 June.

On 30 June 1988 four full-time and two part-time medical officers attended during the day, one of the latter also attending in the evening. The same pattern occurred on 30 June 1989 except that five full-time medical officers attended on that day. On both dates one doctor was on call at night.

The number of hospital officers working during the day on both dates ranged at different times between four and 10, and one officer on duty at night.

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the staff-prisoner ratio on B wing of Her Majesty's Armley prison; and what training is given to staff in suicide prevention and dealing with young persons now and in 1988.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** There were 227 inmates on B wing on 21 July, and 23 staff are generally assigned to work on the wing. Training for prison staff in how best to identify and help suicidal inmates was introduced in 1987. Fifty-one staff at Leeds prison had been so trained by February 1989; 125 staff have now been trained, and weekly training courses are to take place throughout the autumn with the intention of training all staff by the end of the year.

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of persons on remand as a percentage of the total number of prisoners in custody in Her Majesty's prison Armley in 1988 and 1989 to date.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information is given in the table.

*Remand population as a percentage of the total population of Leeds prison: January 1988 to May 1989*

| *Month end* | *Untried* | *Convicted unsentenced* | *Total population number* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Per cent.* | *Per cent.* | *(100 per cent.)* |
| *1988* | | | |
| January | 49 | 6 | 1,380 |
| February | 50 | 7 | 1,350 |
| March | 46 | 6 | 1,340 |
| April | 48 | 6 | 1,320 |
| May | 49 | 4 | 1,350 |
| June | 48 | 6 | 1,370 |
| July | 44 | 6 | 1,390 |
| August | 48 | 6 | 1,400 |
| September | 46 | 8 | 1,310 |
| October | 49 | 9 | 1,260 |
| November | 48 | 8 | 1,280 |
| December | 46 | 6 | 1,210 |
| *1989* | | | |
| January | 48 | 6 | 1,290 |
| February | 46 | 6 | 1,290 |
| March | 47 | 5 | 1,270 |
| April | 43 | 5 | 1,240 |
| May | 45 | 5 | 1,280 |

### Attempted Suicides, Armley and Hull

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the numbers of incidents classified as suicide attempts and self mutilations at Armley and Hull prisons in 1988 and 1989.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Five incidents of self-injury were reported by the medical officer at Leeds during the year ending 31 March 1988, and 39 in the subsequent year. The corresponding figures at Hull were 53 and 93.

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who is responsible for deciding to classify an incident as a self mutilation or an attempted suicide at Armley prison; and what criteria are used.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** At all prison service establishments medical officers are responsible for distinguishing acts of non-fatal self-injury which are considered to have been committed with suicidal intent from those which appear not to have been so motivated. The categorisation of individual cases is a matter for clinical judgment on the part of the doctor.

### Suicides (Hull Prison)

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suicides there were in Hull prison among *(a)* young people and *(b)* remand prisoners during 1988 and 1989.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** There were no inmate suicides at Her Majesty's prison Hull during the period in question.

## Leeds Prison

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the functions of Leeds prison; and how many category A prisoners are held there now and in 1988.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Her Majesty's prison Leeds is a local prison. As such its main function is to keep unsentenced prisoners in custody for the courts and to present them for trial or sentence; and to receive sentenced prisoners from the courts, keeping them in custody until they are categorised and allocated to training prisons or until they become due for release.

Six category A prisoners were held in Leeds prison on 30 June this year, and 10 on 30 June 1988.

## Everthorpe

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the proposed plans for the site at Everthorpe; and when it will be completed.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** It is proposed to build a remand centre for 300 inmates next to HM young offenders institute Everthorpe. Detailed designs are now being prepared. Construction is planned to begin towards the end of this year, with the establishment opening early in 1992.

## Strip Cells

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is prison policy on the use of strip cells for persons who have attempted suicide; and if counselling is available for those who last attempted suicide.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Guidelines on the use of stripped rooms for suicidal inmates are set out in paragraph 33 of circular instruction 20/1989, a copy of which is in the Library. Counselling is normally available to all inmates from prison staff, particularly medical officers, chaplains and seconded probation officers; the help of Samaritans is also now available to prisoners at a substantial number of establishments.

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the usage of strip cells in Armley and Hull prisons in 1988 and 1989; how many cells exist; for what purpose they are used; and how long each person is held.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and deposit a copy of the reply in the Library.

## Remand Prisoners, Leeds

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans exist for building recreational or other facilities for the exclusive use of young persons on remand at Leeds.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The expansion and modernisation of Leeds prison currently in progress includes the provision of a new sports hall, outdoor sports areas and a library and educational block. Association and education facilities will also be provided in the two new living wings which are being built to house remand prisoners. Work on these wings is due to begin in March 1990. The whole programme of work is scheduled for completion in 1997, but many of the supporting facilities will be in use by the early 1990s. It will be for the governor to decide the arrangements for the use of these facilities by young persons on remand in the light of operational needs.

## Armley and Hull Prisons

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average daily intake of prisoners at Armley and Hull, including the maximum and minimum figures for May, June, August, November 1988 and May and June of the current year.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information requested is given in the table.

*Her Majesty's Prison, Leeds*

| *Month* | *Average daily intake* | *Daily maximum* | *Daily minimum* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1988* | | | |
| May | 64 | 131 | 0 |
| June | 70 | 123 | 1 |
| August | 60 | 112 | 0 |
| November | 74 | 130 | 1 |
| *1989* | | | |
| May | 61 | 117 | 1 |
| June | 67 | 120 | 0 |

*Her Majesty's Prison, Hull*

| *Month* | *Average daily intake* | *Daily maximum* | *Daily minimum* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1988* | | | |
| May | 55 | 97 | 2 |
| June | 53 | 88 | 8 |
| August | 53 | 96 | 2 |
| November | 56 | 90 | 3 |
| *1989* | | | |
| May | 50 | 83 | 6 |
| June | 50 | 105 | 5 |

## Dyfed-Powys Police

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the following statistics for the Dyfed-Powys police force for each year since 1974 *(a)* the number of police officers, *(b)* the number of civilian staff employed, *(c)* the total population and *(d)* the ratio of population to police officers.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information requested is set out in the table.

*Dyfed Powys*

| *At 31 December* | *Police officers* | *Civilians*[1] | *Population*[2] | *Police-population ratio* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1974 | 850 | 168 | 420,300 | 505 |
| 1975 | 912 | 190 | 422,500 | 461 |
| 1976 | 908 | 190 | 424,600 | 464 |
| 1977 | 908 | 190 | 425,100 | 464 |
| 1978 | 907 | 190 | 430,000 | 469 |
| 1979 | 918 | 194 | 431,000 | 461 |
| 1980 | 929 | 194 | 433,000 | 464 |
| 1981 | 925 | 197 | 433,000 | 464 |
| 1982 | 930 | 200 | 443,000 | 474 |
| 1983 | 924 | 204 | 444,000 | 475 |
| 1984 | 922 | 208 | 446,000 | 478 |
| 1985 | 924 | 210 | 446,000 | 478 |
| 1986 | 929 | 198 | 447,000 | 477 |
| 1987 | 929 | 209 | 451,000 | 482 |
| 1988 | 927 | 215 | 457,000 | 489 |

[1] Part-time civilians are included on a 2 for 1 basis.
[2] As at 30 June.

### Prisons (Catering Costs)

**Mr. Bendall:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the approximate cost of the daily main meal for prisoners in Her Majesty's prisons; and what is the weekly food budget per prisoner.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The average weekly notional cost of food per prisoner in Her Majesty's prisons, including items supplied from prison farms and gardens, is £6·10; the approximate cost of food for the daily main meal is 44p.

### County Fire Service, Wales

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many section 19 applications he has received during each of the last five years in respect of the county fire service in Wales; and what was the outcome in each case.

**Mr. John Patten:** The information requested is not immediately available: I will reply as soon as possible.

### Mr. Xu Hai Ning

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the entry and resident status in the United Kingdom of Mr. Xu Hai Ning, a citizen of China; and if he has received any information from the immigration services concerning the circumstances of his departure.

**Mr. Renton:** Mr. Xu applied for asylum in Hong Kong. He arrived in the United Kingdom on 30 June and was given leave to enter for 12 months. On 17 July he contacted his embassy in London and said he wished to return to China. Immediately before his departure on 18 July the immigration service took steps to interview him privately and he told them that he was leaving voluntarily.

### Chinese Citizens

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to protect Chinese citizens who are in the United Kingdom from pressure and threats to return to China.

**Mr. Renton:** Any Chinese national who feels at risk in the United Kingdom should contact the police. If the immigration service has reason to believe that someone is leaving the United Kingdom under pressure it will take steps to offer him a private interview before his departure.

### Overseas Students (Vacation Employment)

**Mrs. Roe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Home Department when he expects to be able to give a substantive reply to the hon. Member for Broxbourne in relation to correspondence from Mr. Baxendale of Cuffley, on the subject of paid employment during vacations for full-time overseas students, forwarded to the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Renton) on 30 November1988, 5 January, 7 February, 22 March, 12 April and 17 May; what are the reasons for the delay; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** My right hon. Friend wrote to my hon. Friend on 21 July. I am very sorry for the delay in dealing with this correspondence which was due to oversights on the part of the officials dealing with the matter.

### Chlorofluorocarbons

**Sir Hugh Rossi:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans exist to ensure the safe disposal of both chlorofluorocarbon refrigerant material and chlorofluorocarbon II in the foam in refrigeration and air-cooling equipment under the control of his Department.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]*: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley), on 13 July at column *631*.

### Abbey National Shares

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the disqualification of widows from the free allocation of Abbey National shares as a consequence of the terms of section 116 of the Building Societies Act 1962; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lilley:** I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) on 18 July 1989, *Official Report*, column *86*.

## SCOTLAND

### HIV (Prisons)

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many tests for HIV antibodies were carried out in prisons in Scotland in the last year for which figures are available; and how many were positive.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Comprehensive figures are not available for past years. So far this year, at least 222 inmates in Scottish penal establishments have been tested for HIV antibodies. Of those tests, 18 proved positive.

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what arrangements are made for clinical and psychological monitoring and care of HIV positive prisoners in Scotland.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Clinical monitoring and care of HIV positive prisoners is in the hands of prison medical officers, who consult outside colleagues and specialists as they judge necessary. If such prisoners require for clinical purposes to visit NHS facilities, appropriate arrangements are made. In some establishments regular clinics for HIV positive prisoners are run by NHS specialists. Full psychological services are provided within prisons, and on the counselling side staff are given specific training in dealing with HIV positive prisoners. Additionally, expert external counsellors are increasingly being made use of in prisons.

### Viral Infectivity Restrictions (Prisons)

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to introduce viral infectivity restrictions in Her Majesty's prisons in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** My right hon. and learned Friend has not thought it appropriate to introduce viral infectivity restrictions in Scottish penal establishments, nor are there any plans for their introduction.

### Births

**Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of sets of *(a)* twins, *(b)* triplets, *(c)* quadruplets, *(d)* quintuplets and *(e)* sextuplets, born in Scotland in each year since 1980; and what was the total number of maternities in each of these years.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The information is as follows:

*Multiple births and maternities, Scotland, 1980-1988*

| | *Twins* | *Triplets* | *Quadruplets* | *Quintuplets* | *Sextuplets* | *Maternities* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 658 | 4 | — | — | — | 68,689 |
| 1981 | 611 | 7 | — | — | — | 68,865 |
| 1982 | 607 | 6 | — | — | — | 65,963 |
| 1983 | 677 | 2 | — | — | — | 64,776 |
| 1984 | 665 | 10 | — | — | — | 64,800 |
| 1985 | 682 | 9 | — | — | — | 66,342 |
| 1986 | 721 | 10 | — | — | — | 65,456 |
| 1987 | 721 | 10 | — | — | — | 65,839 |
| [1]1988 | 706 | 8 | 1 | — | — | 65,842 |

[1] Provisional figures.

### Youth Unemployment

**Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the latest available figures for youth unemployment, as calculated under the juvos scheme, for each of the six wards within the Glasgow, Central constituency.

**Mr. Lang:** The number of unemployed claimants under the age of 25 for each of the six wards in the Glasgow, Central parliamentary constituency on 13 April 1989 (the latest date for which information is available) is set out in the table.

| *Ward* | *Unemployed claimants under 25* |
|---|---|
| Calton | 311 |
| Central | 275 |
| Crosshill | 318 |
| Hutchesontown | 327 |
| Kingston | 240 |
| Queen's Park | 231 |
| Total | 1,702 |

This information is available in the Library.

### Trading Standards Officers

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many trading standards officers there are in each local authority area.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** This information is not held centrally.

### Southern General Hospital, Glasgow

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what reports the Solicitor-General has received of unauthorised entry being made to the Southern General hospital, Glasgow; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** I understand that the procurator-fiscal, Glasgow, has received and is considering a report from the police concerning a person who gained unauthorised entry to the Southern general hospital, Glasgow. It is not proposed that a statement will be made.

### Elder Cottage Hospital

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will instruct the Greater Glasgow health board to extend its deadline for an off-market sale of Elder cottage hospital and the adjacent nurses' home to Linthouse Housing Association in order to give the housing association and Scottish Homes sufficient time to discuss with the board the arrangements involved in a successful transfer of the property to the housing association.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The Greater Glasgow health board has extended its deadline to 3 August 1989 to enable the association to submit an offer.

### Mortgage Defaults

**Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many homes have been repossessed in the last year for default on mortgage payments in the last year; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The Building Societies Association publishes statistics on the number of repossessions by building societies in the United Kingdom as a whole; but no corresponding information is available for Scotland only. No information is held centrally on other mortgage lenders.

### Dundee High School

**Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many places are available at Dundee high school under the assisted places scheme; and how much public expenditure this incurred, in the last year and in each year since its inception.

**Mr. Lang:** Expenditure at Dundee high school since the inception of the scheme is as follows:

| School year | £ |
|---|---|
| 1981-82 | 52,690 |
| 1982-83 | 110,612 |
| 1983-84 | 142,685 |
| 1984-85 | 185,286 |
| 1985-86 | 235,525 |
| 1986-87 | 270,669 |
| 1987-88 | 309,400 |
| 1988-89 | [1]340,000 |

[1] Provisional figure.

## Warrant Sales

**Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many warrant sales have been carried out in the Dundee area in the last year; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** There were 11 warrant sales reported to Dundee sheriff court in 1988. The number of reports to that court of warrant sales from 1979 to 1987 are set out in the table.

| | Reports of sale |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 10 |
| 1980 | 4 |
| 1981 | 6 |
| 1982 | 6 |
| 1983 | 10 |
| 1984 | 2 |
| 1985 | 10 |
| 1986 | 4 |
| 1987 | 9 |

## Community Charge

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will consider introducing legislation to reimburse those people who have stated that they are over 18 years, but have suffered civil penalties for refusing to divulge their date of birth on the community charge registration forms.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** No.

## Local Health Councils

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to announce plans for the reorganisation of local health councils.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** I discussed this matter with health board chairmen on 30 June and I hope to announce my plans very soon.

## Health Service

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to announce the appointment of the new chief executive of the Scottish Health Service.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I hope to do so shortly.

## Care of Gardens Schemes

**Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many district councils in Scotland run care of gardens schemes for the elderly and disabled in Scotland.

(2) how many district councils in Scotland stopped care of gardens schemes after the termination of the community programme.

**Mr. Lang:** This information is not available centrally.

**Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many district councils run care of garden schemes for the elderly and disabled under the employment training scheme.

**Mr. Lang:** This information is not collected by the Training Agency and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on the care of gardens of the elderly and disabled.

**Mr. Lang:** This is a matter for local authorities to decide in the light of the resources available to them.

**Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the revenue support grant for district councils includes any imputed amount for care of garden schemes for the elderly and disabled.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Revenue support grant is paid in support of authorities' income generally. It is not attributed to particular services.

## Electricity Disconnections

**Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many disconnections were made by the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board in the last year; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

**Mr. Lang:** I am advised that the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board carried out 4,343 disconnections in the calendar year ended 31 December 1988. The figures for each year since 1979 are as follows:

| | Numbers |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 2,869 |
| 1980 | 3,373 |
| 1981 | 3,764 |
| 1982 | 2,830 |
| 1983 | 1,904 |
| 1984 | 1,893 |
| 1985 | 2,434 |
| 1986 | 3,104 |
| 1987 | 4,538 |
| 1988 | 4,343 |

## NHS Reform

**Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what additional financial resources he has made available to health boards in Scotland in 1989-90 to meet the cost of implementing the proposals outlined in the White Paper "Working for Patients", Cm 555.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Some of the resources already allocated to boards this year are being spent on initiatives such as the development of information technology systems, on which implementation of the White Paper will build. However a further £3·95 million is to be made available to health boards in 1989-90 to help them meet the additional costs this year of taking forward the proposals in the White Paper. The resources will cover development work by health boards in the following areas: hospital contracts, self-governing hospitals, and revised accounting arrangements; information systems and resources management; development of capital asset registers; development of GP practice budgets; medical audit; and pilot work on prescribing budgets. The Department will be advising health boards of the individual amounts they will each receive.

### Health Boards

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Eastwood of 22 June, *Official Report*, columns *205-6*, he will provide more detailed information on the contracts awarded by Argyll and Clyde, Ayrshire and Arran, Fife, Forth Valley, Grampian, Lanarkshire and Lothian health boards; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The information is as follows:

*Argyll and Clyde*

As at 30 June 1989 the board had awarded six contracts. All of these have been awarded in-house and are for domestic and catering services. The savings realised from the contracts awarded to date are:

| *Contract* | *Total savings*[1] £ |
|---|---|
| Royal Alexandra: domestic | 16,160 |
| Inverclyde Royal: domestic | 21,200 |
| Dumbarton Group: catering | 18,000 |
| Lochgilphead: catering | 35,055 |
| Dumbarton: domestic | 15,102 |
| Renfrew Community-Gilmour House-Westward House: domestic | 13,449 |

[1] Per annum on previous budget.

*Ayrshire and Arran*

As at 14 July 1989 Ayrshire and Arran health board had awarded 13 contracts. All of these were won by the inhouse operator and no staff have been made redundant. Any VAT payments made have been refunded. The estimated administrative costs are £60,000. Future plans include the board's painting maintenance programme for its estate and hospital hotel services for a number of its hospitals, health centres and clinics. Costs and savings are as follows:

| *Contract* | *Total price of successful Bid* (£) | *Total savings per annum on previous budget* (£) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Head Office: Domestic | 13,987 | 11,280 |
| 2. Head Office: Catering | 25,153 | 7,728 |
| 3. South Ayrshire Clinics: Domestic | 34,954 | 18,315 |
| 4. North Ayrshire Clincs: Domestic | 38,296 | 8,973 |
| 5. Kilmarnock Maternity Hospital: Catering | 35,060 | 1,204 |
| 6. Brooksby House Hospital: Domestic | 24,186 | 4,223 |
| 7. Brooksby House Hospital: Catering | 29,960 | (368) |
| 8. Kilmarnock Maternity Hospital: Domestic | 26,340 | 10,177 |
| 9. Crosshouse Hospital: Catering | 779,000 | [1]91,000 |
| 10. Ayrshire Central Hospital: Catering | 516,000 | [1]41,000 |
| 11. Crosshouse Hospital: Domestic | 765,170 | [1]242,000 |
| 12. Ayrshire Central Hospital: Domestic | 401,000 | [1]140,000 |
| 13. Vehicle Maintenance and Repair | 120,930 | 15,193 |

[1] In addition to the savings achieved in the tendering exercise these figures include savings realised in the efficiency exercise carried out by managers in the run up to tendering as part of the overall competitive tendering/efficiency programme.

*Fife*

As at 11 July Fife health board had let four contracts—three inhouse and one to a private contractor. Further catering services, general ancillary services, gardens, laboratory, laundry and pharmacy are among the other areas the board is looking at for the future. Costs and savings are as follows:

| *Contract details* | *Total price of successful bid* £ | *Calculated savings* £ | *VAT payment to Treasury* £ | *VAT refund* £ | *Number of staff redundant head count* | *Redundancy payments from government* £ | *Annual pension and lump sum payments* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cameron Hospital (Catering) | 301,083 | 33,819 | Nil | Nil | 3 | [3]— | [3]— |
| Victoria, Forth Park, Hunter Hospitals | | | | | | | |
| (Domestic) | [1]754,192 | 102,386 | 7,900 | (7,900) | 244 | 230,431 | 70,984 |
| (Catering) | 850,377 | 10,673 | Nil | Nil | 2 | [3]— | [3]— |
| Stratheden (Domestic) | 538,795 | [2]— | 4,500 | (4,500) | None | Nil | Nil |

[1] Unsuccessful in-house bid £864,989.

[2] A higher specification was drawn up for this exercise with a view to improving the standard of service.

[3] Figures where numbers of staff involved are small are not disclosed to protect confidential information.

*Forth Valley*

As at 16 June the board had awarded four contracts, all won by the inhouse team. Costs and savings are set out in the table.

| Contract details | Total price of successful bid £ | Calculated savings £ | VAT payment to Treasury £ | VAT refund £ | Number of staff redundant head count | Redundancy payments from government £ | Annual pension and lump sum payments £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Cleaning* | | | | | | | |
| Clackmannan County | 21,283 | 658,084 | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Falkirk Unit | 684,925 | | | | | | |
| Stirling Unit | 866,911 | | | | | | |
| *Catering* | | | | | | | |
| All hospitals except Bonnybridge | 2,594,367 | | | | | | |

*Grampian*

As at 6 July 1989 Grampian health board had let 11 contracts, four to private contractors. Costs and savings are as follows:

| Contract details | Total price of successful bid £ | Calculated savings £ | VAT payment to Treasury £ | VAT refund £ | Number of staff redundant head count | Redundancy payments from Government £ | Annual pension and lump sum payments £ | Accrued holiday payments £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Geriatric and specialist services unit | | | | | | | | |
| Domestic[1] | 804,838 | 209,074 | 50,498 | (50,498) | 241 | 169,152 | 48,499 | 54,792 |
| Catering | 878,872 | 119,046 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Mental health unit | | | | | | | | |
| Domestic[2] | 885,045 | 75,430 | 56,097 | (56,097) | 138 | 119,348 | 36,370 | 54,531 |
| Catering | 939,853 | 137,312 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Portering | 146,962 | 23,385 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Community unit | | | | | | | | |
| Domestic[3] | 473,241 | 64,950 | [5]Nil | Nil | 99 | 47,330 | 51,970 | 30,632 |
| Catering | 564,253 | 100,057 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| West unit | | | | | | | | |
| Domestic | 468,511 | 61,531 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Catering | 540,872 | 60,467 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Area HQ | | | | | | | | |
| Domestic[4] | 21,471 | 12,310 | [5]Nil | Nil | 17 | 9,118 | 2,648 | 2,551 |
| Foresterhill unit | | | | | | | | |
| Hotel | 3,475,485 | 825,740 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |

Price of unsuccessful in-house bid:

[1] £1,110,913

[2] £960,475

[3] £510,463

[4] £31,628

[5] Contract not commenced.

*Lanarkshire*

As at 3 July 1989 Lanarkshire health board had awarded eight contracts. All of these were won by the inhouse operator. The preparation and evaluation of tenders now forms part of the normal duties of the administrative and support staff within the board and as such the duties are not costed separately. Costs and savings are as set out in the table.

| Contract details | Total price of successful bid £ | Calculated savings £ | VAT payment to Treasury £ | VAT refund £ | Number of staff redundant head count | Redundancy payments from Government Annual Equivalent £ | Pension and lump sum payments Annual Equivalent £ | Accrued holiday payments £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coathill Hospital (Domestic) | 150,161 | 9,198 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Stonehouse Hospital (Domestic) | 286,131 | 20,133 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Law Hospital (Domestic) | 729,324 | 115,199 | 7,574 | (7,574) | 38 | 27,348 | 13,418 | 6,692 |
| (Catering) | 643,351 | 112,076 | 2,130 | (2,130) | 10 | 6,827 | 8,338 | 2,313 |
| Hartwood Hospital (Domestic) | 858,250 | 148,900 | 5,348 | (5,348) | 26 | 11,500 | 10,681 | 5,067 |
| Hairmyres Hospital (Domestic) | 420,433 | 316,317 | 5,450 | (5,450) | 44 | 28,310 | 17,828 | 9,498 |

| *Contract details* | *Total price of successful bid* £ | *Calculated savings* £ | *VAT payment to Treasury* £ | *VAT refund* £ | *Number of staff redundant head count* | *Redundancy payments from Government Annual Equivalent* £ | *Pension and lump sum payments Annual Equivalent* £ | *Accrued holiday payments* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bellshill Hospital (Domestic) | 231,895 | 71,905 | 2,800 | (2,800) | 9 | 9,069 | 3,882 | 1,272 |
| Cleland, Wishaw and Roadmeetings Hospitals (Domestic) | 360,000 | 77,600 | 3,522 | (3,522) | 13 | 7,570 | 2,730 | 2,402 |

*Lothian*

As at 12 July Lothian health board had let eight contracts—six in house and two to private contractors. Costs and savings are as set out in the table.

| *Contract details* | *Total price of successful bid* £ | *Calculated savings* £ | *VAT payment to Treasury* £ | *VAT refund* £ | *Number of staff redundant head count* | *Redundancy payments from government* £ | *Annual pension and lump sum payments* £ | *Accrued holiday payments* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Royal Infirmary and Associated Hospital Unit (Domestic)[1] | 1,384,699 | 634,666 | 207,705 | (207,705) | 420 | 326,680 | 206,560 | 90,000 |
| Mental Health Unit (Domestic)[2] | 1,155,943 | 342,874 | 173,391 | (173,391) | 412 | 362,744 | 135,960 | 75,000 |
| Royal Victoria/Northern/Corstorphine/Beechmount (Catering) | 841,631 | 29,519 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| East Unit (Catering) | 1,054,412 | 117,058 | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| St. John's Hospital, Howden (Pre-clean Domestic) | 8,273 | New service | Nil | Nil | None | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Grounds and Gardens (Maintenance) | 242,316 | 199,825 | Nil | Nil | Between 2 and 12 | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| St. John's and Bangour (Domestic) | 700,016 | 328,892 | Nil | Nil | Not yet known | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| St. John's (Catering) | 631,096 |  | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil |

[1] Total value of in-house bid £1,595,522.

[2] Total value of in-house bid £1,550,524.

### Forests

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what incentives he is considering to protect the forested areas of the United Kingdom.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The forested areas of Britain are generally well protected. The felling of trees is controlled by the Forestry Commission in exercise of its powers under the Forestry Act 1967; the commission is also active in protecting the health of trees.

The protection of forests in Northern Ireland is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Professional Liability

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects to announce the conclusion of his Department's study to establish the nature, scope, extent and implications of professional liability problems.

**Mr. Maude:** We have received the report of the professional liability review under the chairmanship of Professor Andrew Likierman which covered selected professions: auditors, construction industry professions and surveyors. We are making arrangements for it to be published in October, and we shall make a statement at that time.

### White Papers

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, for each of the last three White Papers issued by his Department, for which legislation has been started, he will state the time elapsed between their publication and the First Readings of any Bills connected with them; and if he will do the same for the last three White Papers issued by the Department of Trade and Industry prior to May 1979.

**Mr. Newton:** The last three White Papers published by my Department, in which legislation was proposed and has been subsequently started or completed were: "Intellectual Property and Innovation" (Cm. 9712), "Financial Services in the UK" (Cm. 9432) and "Safety of Goods" (Cm. 9302). These were published on 15 April 1986, 29 January 1985 and 12 July 1984 respectively and the First Readings of the Copyright Designs and Patents, Financial Services and Consumer Protection Bills resulting from them took place on 28 October 1987, 18 December 1985 and 19 November 1986. It is not for me to answer for the record of the last Government in this matter, but the information requested should be available in the Library of the House and the *Official Report*.

### Research Clubs

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many *(a)* research clubs and *(b)* research club members there have been in each of the past five years; what has been the extent of Government support to research clubs; and how many *(a)* clubs and *(b)* members there are in each standard region.

**Mr. Forth:** The information is not available in the form requested.

My Department supports a wide variety of research clubs. Some of these are managed by DTI's own research establishments. Currently 44 clubs, with 1,981 members, are associated with DTI research establishments. Of these 15 are run by the national engineering laboratory in Scotland and 29 by laboratories in the south-east region. The members are firms and research organisations from all parts of the United Kingdom and some from overseas.

Last year my Department published an evaluation report covering 104 clubs current in October 1987 which at that time had 2,430 members (including multiple memberships). The report is available from my Department's library. I will send the hon. Member a copy.

### Computers

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether his Department has investigated the implications for privacy that arise from the itemised billing computer systems of BT and Mercury when they have a warrant from a court; and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins:** Provisions about customer privacy are already incorporated in the licences which have been granted by the Secretary of State to British Telecom and Mercury under section 7 of the Telecommunications Act 1984. The licences require each company to observe the terms of a code of practice on the confidentiality of customer information, approved by the Director General of Telecommunications, which regulate the disclosure of information about a customer.

### Girobank

**Miss Hoey:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps he is taking to review the decision to sell Girobank to the Alliance and Leicester building society in view of the refusal of the Building Societies Commission to permit the Alliance and Leicester to keep Girobank's leasing and commercial lending business.

**Mr. Newton:** The Government were aware that Girobank's leasing and commercial lending business would be ultra vires for a building society and took this into account in endorsing the Post Office board's decision to grant the Alliance and Leicester a period of exclusive negotiations. Appropriate arrangements in respect of these activities are among the matters covered in those negotiations, the details of which are confidential.

### Post Office Counters

**Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is his assessment of by how much the amount which would be realised from the sale into the private sector of Post Office Counters would exceed the book value of its property assets.

**Mr. Newton:** We have no estimate of the possible sale value of Post Office Counters Ltd. The net book value of its land and buildings at 29 March 1989 was shown as £70·8 million in its 1988-89 accounts.

### Beer

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan), 21 June, *Official Report*, column *177*, if he will list those representations he has received in favour and those against the recommendations of the report, "The Supply of Beer," Cm. 651.

**Mr. Maude:** I have received a considerable number of representations from many different organisations and individuals, including 1,980 letters. Of these, some were in favour of all of the MMC's recommendations; some were against the recommendations; and others were in favour of some recommendations and against others.

In some instances, correspondents have written several times, amending their views following statements in the House and another place. In other cases correspondents have asked that their letters be treated in confidence.

It is not possible, in these circumstances, to give a precise answer.

### Trading Standards Officers

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many trading standards officers there are in each local authority area in England and Wales.

**Mr. Forth:** Information on the number of trading standards officers employed in each local weights and measures authority is contained in "Trading Standards Statistics" published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, a copy of which is held in the House of Commons Library.

### Fireworks

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish details of firework injuries for 1988 by type of injury and in each geographical region.

**Mr. Forth:** The firework injury statistics given in a written answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes) on 20 April, at columns *256-58* included a breakdown by severity of injury and separated eye injuries from the total. No further details of the type of injury involved is available.

The table contains an analysis of fire accidents by type of firework and regional health authority.

*Great Britain*
*Analysis of Firework Accidents 1988 by Type of Firework and Regional Health Authority*

| *Regional Health Authority* | *Banger* | *Rocket* | *Roman Candle Etc.* | *Sparkler* | *Other Proprietary Firework* | *Home-made or Extracted Powder* | *Unspecified Type* | *Totals* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern | 10 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 25 | 65 |
| Yorkshire | 21 | 15 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 0 | 16 | 76 |
| Trent | 14 | 14 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 16 | 63 |
| East Anglia | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 20 |
| North West Thames | 4 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 18 | 44 |
| North East Thames | 6 | 12 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 26 | 52 |
| South East Thames | 15 | 17 | 6 | 5 | 12 | 3 | 28 | 86 |
| South West Thames | 7 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 17 | 40 |
| Wessex | 2 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 13 | 42 |
| Oxford | 7 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 33 |
| South Western | 9 | 12 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 46 |
| West Midlands | 20 | 16 | 13 | 17 | 11 | 0 | 31 | 108 |
| Mersey | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 14 | 35 |
| North Western | 20 | 22 | 12 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 18 | 86 |
| Board of Governors | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Scotland | 9 | 11 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 16 | 50 |
| Wales | 9 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 30 |
| Total | 162 | 164 | 83 | 102 | 86 | 17 | 263 | 877 |

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations have been made to him by *(a)* trading standards officers and *(b)* the Health and Safety Executive concerning proposals to change the procedures to test fireworks.

**Mr. Forth:** Trading standards officers have complained that there are too few test houses capable of testing fireworks for safety, and that those local authorities doing the most testing will face a financial burden. The Health and Safety Executive is concerned that it is not its proper function to test fireworks and that it is the proper responsibility of trading standards departments. My Department is looking into the arrangements for the testing of fireworks.

## Holidaymakers

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is his policy towards the recent EEC Commission proposals to provide increased consumer protection for holiday makers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Forth:** The United Kingdom shares the concerns expressed by many member states at the Tourism Council on 14 December about the draft directive on package travel, particularly the provisions on liability. The Council concluded that the draft needed to be re-examined in the light of the debate and taking into account the views of the European Parliament. We are disappointed that the revised proposals submitted on 6 July do not reflect the concerns expressed at the Council. We will continue to negotiate firmly but constructively in Brussels.

## Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Newton:** The Government's general policy towards small businesses is to create a climate in which they can flourish and to provide measures that support and help stimulate their development.

The enterprise initiative was launched by my Department on 13 January 1988 with the aim of encouraging the process of wealth creation by stimulating individual initiative and enterprise. It comprises a number of individual initiatives covering the consultancy initiatives, research and technology, enterprise and education, regional assistance and the recently relaunched export initiative. All share the objectives of encouraging enterprise, developing management skills, promoting best practice and thereby improving competitiveness.

The consultancy initiatives form a major element of the enterprise initiative. They offer financial support to small and medium-sized firms for between five and 15 days of consultancy in the following key management areas: design, marketing, manufacturing systems, quality, business planning and financial and information systems. Independent firms with less than 500 employees in most manufacturing and service sectors in England, Scotland and Wales may benefit from up to two of the consultancy initiatives.

By 30 June 1989, a total of 29,800 applications had been received, 26,600 business reviews had been completed and 20,200 projects for assisted consultancy had been approved.

One of the main objectives of the export initiative is to assist small companies to develop their export potential. New support for small companies includes the introduction of a national network of export development advisers targeted specifically at companies in the £1 million to £10 million turnover range. It is too early to access the impact of these new measures.

Regional enterprise grants (REG) were introduced as part of the regional initiative in April 1988. They are aimed specifically at small businesses in the development areas and South Yorkshire employing fewer than 25 people, and are designed to support their investment and innovation projects. In 1988-89, the first year of the scheme, my Department received 1,637 applications, and made 922 offers of grant with a total value of £7·7 million. The DTI, together with the Welsh and Scottish Offices, has established a rolling evaluation programme for the scheme to assess the cumulative effect on recipient businesses and on the economy of eligible areas.

Yearly figures for the work of the inner cities initiative are not available. However from the time the initiative began in 1986 until the 31 March 1988, it is estimated that the task forces have, in meeting their objective of encouraging enterprise, provided support for more than 3,800 businesses the majority of which are small ones. This assistance has taken a variety of forms including loans and grants from the task force development funds.

The small firms merit award for research and technology (SMART) encourages small businesses to engage in high-risk projects in the fields of advanced manufacturing techniques, advanced materials, biotechnology and information technology.

In 1988 a total of 140 cash awards were made out of a total of 930 applications. It is too early to judge the long term effects of the scheme, but it is hoped that the eventual success rate will exceed 50 per cent. of the firms that have been supported by the scheme.

Our White Paper "Releasing Enterprise" lists nearly 120 deregulation achievements across all Departments, with around 80 new proposals in the coming year. Although not targeted specifically at small businesses, these matters will be of particular benefit to them.

### Inner City Regeneration

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the impact of urban development corporations on the regeneration of inner cities, indicating inter alia *(a)* the amount of grants made, *(b)* the amount of private investment attracted, *(c)* the number of acres retained and *(d)* other benefits achieved in each of the urban district councils in England and Wales.

**Mr. Trippier:** I have been asked to reply.

Urban development corporations are making a significant impact on the problems of dereliction and decay at the heart of several of our inner cities. The specific figures for each English urban development council, up to 31 March 1989, are as follows:

| | *(a)* *Grants received (external financing limits)* *(£ million)* | *(b)* *Estimated private investment attracted*[1] *(£ million)* | *(c)* *Land reclaimed* *(Acres)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Black Country development corporation | 25·4 | 99·0 | 104·0 |
| Bristol development corporation | 0·3 | — | — |
| Central Manchester development corporation | 2·5 | 35·0 | 2·5 |
| Leeds development corporation | 2·7 | 0·2 | — |
| London Docklands development corporation | 512·4 | 6,857·0 | 1,571·0 |
| Merseyside development corporation | 189·0 | 44·0 | 704·0 |
| Sheffield development corporation | 8·0 | 0·4 | 5·0 |
| Teesside development corporation | 26·0 | 39·0 | 84·0 |
| Trafford Park development corporation | 25·5 | 201·0 | 44·0 |
| Tyne and Wear development corporation | 28·0 | 45·0 | 54·0 |

[1] In addition to the figures quoted, there are various major investments currently in the pipeline.

### English Estates

**Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will make a statement on English Estates' future development strategy.

**Mr. Newton:** In his statement of 27 July 1988, my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State set out a new strategy for English Estates' operations in the assisted areas. The statement recognised that English Estates would continue to be an important instrument of Government regional policy, but that the significant improvement in the property market in some parts of the assisted areas meant that a major change of emphasis in the corporation's role was necessary in order to encourage the emerging private sector interest in providing industrial and commercial floor space in those areas. In particular it was envisaged that English Estates' role as a facilitator would assume much greater significance through the marketing of development opportunities, the preparation and disposal of serviced sites, and joint ventures; and that English Estates would itself only provide premises in the areas and of a type where private sector provision remained inadequate and was likely to remain so in the foreseeable future.

The property market in the assisted areas has continued to improve, with rental levels rising strongly in many parts of the country. English Estates will shortly be publishing brochures setting out its future development strategy region by region, with emphasis on proposals to be started during 1989-90.

For the current financial year, I have asked the corporation to aim for an assisted areas programme of up to £44 million. In addition, English Estates has started work on a special programme for the provision in Sunderland of some £7·5 million for factory space over and above its existing commitment in the north-east. We expect £4 million of that special programme to fall within 1989-90, producing a total capital expenditure programme in the assisted areas this year of up to £48 million, compared to £45 million in 1988-89.

Our intention is to give a clear signal to the private sector of the opportunities that exist or are becoming available for private investment in parts of the country which have previously been served by direct provision by public sector agencies, while at the same time reaffirming the Government's commitment to areas where, for the time being, the private sector is not providing the new industrial and commercial floor space needed for the promotion of viable new economic activity and employment opportunities.

In addition to the assisted areas programme, English Estates has reached an agreement with a private sector company, London Industrial, to co-operate in a joint venture for a substantial programme to provide managed work space in inner city areas of London. Other managed work space projects will be undertaken within the assisted areas in Manchester and Rochdale and there is a further project in Derby.

### Industrial Location

**Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what form of monitoring is under way on the net job changes which have arisen or which are projected to arise as a result of the impact of the Channel tunnel and 1992 on industrial location;

(2) what form of monitoring is under way on the relocation of investment by British-based companies in mainland Europe arising out of the impact of the Channel tunnel and 1992.

**Mr. Newton** *[holding answer 11 July 1989]:* Changes in unemployment between and within regions are regularly monitored. Information about direct investment by United Kingdom companies overseas is collected annually as part of the overseas transactions inquiry and published in the *Business Monitor* (MA4 overseas transactions). The latest information available relates to 1987. Information on cross-border acquisitions and mergers is published quarterly by my Department. Figures for the first quarter of 1989 were published on 15 July.

### National Engineering Laboratories

**Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what further steps are to be taken to facilitate the privatisation of the national engineering laboratory.

**Mr. Newton:** We made it clear on 17 May that, following advice from Touche Ross management consultants and the NEL supervisory board, successful privatisation of NEL required restructuring and a new commercially oriented approach to business. Privatisation of NEL remains the Government's objective so that it can best respond to the needs of its customers in industry.

It is vitally important that a stable management framework be put in place so that the necessary changes to the laboratory can be introduced. To do this as quickly as possible we have decided that the laboratory should become a next steps agency with the objective of achieving commercial viability prior to privatisation.

### BAT Bid

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will refer the recent bid for BAT to the Director General of the Office of Fair Trading with a view to an inquiry by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maude** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* The bid by Hoylake for BAT is currently under consideration by the Director General of Fair Trading who will advise my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in the normal way on whether the proposed acquisition should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. It would not be appropriate to comment in detail on this case in advance of the director general's advice.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Water Quality

**Mr. Speller:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on what dates the last two water quality or pollution checks were made in the Bristol channel; at which locations these were made; and what were the results.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The two most recent shipboard surveys in the Bristol channel carried out by my Department were conducted in October 1987 from the research vessel Clione. On the first of these, 65 stations were occupied over the length of the Bristol channel. The objectives were to study the distribution of trace elements in the waters of the channel and to recover a number of fish from the area for trace metal analysis. The second cruise focused on a grid of 75 stations around the sewage sludge disposal ground. Sediment samples were recovered for trace metal and microbiological analysis as well as investigations of sediment-dwelling organisms.

In addition to shipboard study, my scientists also collected samples of mussels from Minehead, Porthcawl and Lynmouth in 1988 for cadmium analysis.

The results of these surveys wil be published as soon as possible.

### Environmentally Sensitive Areas

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had on the issue of access as part of the conditions for farmers receiving grants for designated environmentally sensitive areas.

**Mr. Ryder:** I have had no discussions on the matter because access is not a condition for farmers receiving environmentally sensitive area payments. These are paid to encourage the adoption of environmentally beneficial agricultural practices.

### Meat Tenderisers

**Mrs. Ann Clwyd:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research his Department is conducting into meat tenderisers.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** My Department is funding no current studies.

### Cereals Co-responsibility Levy

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement giving details of the operation of the cereals co-responsibility levy for the current year, including the total cost of administration of the scheme and the average length of time taken to make repayments of the levy.

**Mr. Ryder:** The cereals co-responsibility levy is collected from first buyers of grain, who are required to register with the intervention board for agriculture produce. The first buyers collect the levy from growers and submit it with their returns to the Home Grown Cereal Authority who act as the board's agents for this purpose. All registered first buyers are given full details of the operation of the scheme by the intervention board.

The total intervention board costs of collecting the levy in 1988-89, including £105,000 for the development of a computer system, were £430,000. Administration costs connected with the levy were also incurred by the four United Kingdom Agriculture Departments but these are not identifiable separately from other costs incurred in implementing policy in the cereals sector.

The necessary information is not collected to produce an average period for the time taken to make repayments of part of the additional levy in 1988-89. However, distribution of repayment claims started in mid-December 1988 and the deadline laid down in Community legislation for the repayments to be made is 31 July 1989.

### Bovine Somatotropin

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recommendations he has received from the veterinary products committee on Elancom's application for a product licence for bovine somatotropin following its April and May meetings.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have received no such recommendations. At these two meetings the Committee considered that it needed further information and the company has been afforded the opportunity to provide it.

### Anthrax

**Mr. Martin Jones:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many cases of anthrax have been recorded in the last 12 months.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** In the past 12 months there have been three outbreaks of anthrax in Great Britain involving a total of 19 animals.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when a product licence was granted for anthrax vaccine; if it is still valid; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** A product licence for an anthrax vaccine was issued on 21 November 1972; it expired on 31 August 1988, when the company concerned did not seek to renew it.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under what statutory authority anthrax vaccine being produced at his Department's central veterinary laboratory is to be used; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The use of this vaccine would be subject to the terms of an animal test certificate or a product licence issued under the Medicines Act 1968, and to the agreement of the farmer concerned.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for South Shields of 18 July on monitoring procedures for anthrax, how he identifies suspect and non-suspect animals under the Anthrax Order 1938; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The Anthrax Order 1938 requires anyone who suspects the presence of anthrax in a carcase or live animal to notify that fact to the Ministry. If, after initial veterinary investigation, anthrax cannot be ruled out, the carcase is destroyed and blood or tissue samples are sent to the central veterinary laboratory for final diagnosis.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields of 18 July, whether the anthrax vaccine to be manufactured at his central veterinary laboratory is an autogenous one; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The vaccine is not autogenous.

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what further action has been taken by his Department with regard to the outbreak of anthrax in Wales.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** I have been asked to reply.

The producer has accepted my offer of compensation for the slaughter of the whole herd.

### Animal Medicines

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the product licences for animal medicines which have been granted without reference to the veterinary products committee in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Each year a number of licences (174 in 1986, 99 in 1987 and 198 in 1988) are issued for new products. All applications relating to previously unlicensed ingredients, or to ingredients which though previously licensed are proposed for new routes of administration or to treat additional diseases, or which otherwise raise problems of assessment are reported to the veterinary products committee. Others, including applications for licences for products identical to other products already licensed, are assessed by officials. In addition several hundred licences are issued each year to renew expiring licences, without reference to the VPC.

A record of licences issued without reference to the VPC is not maintained separately and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Farm Animals (Deaths)

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the total number of *(a)* cows, *(b)* pigs and *(c)* sheep which received post-mortem inspections to investigate the cause of death for each year since 1982; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Yes. Information is as follows:

| | *Cattle* | *Sheep* | *Pigs* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1982 | 3,044 | 6,366 | 3,992 |
| 1983 | 3,376 | 7,052 | 3,868 |
| 1984 | 3,253 | 7,413 | 3,578 |
| 1985 | 3,404 | 7,141 | 3,272 |
| 1986 | 3,264 | 7,568 | 3,014 |
| 1987 | 2,871 | 6,293 | 2,417 |
| 1988 | 2,891 | 6,057 | 2,107 |

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will introduce a requirement to record the deaths of farm animals and the movement thereof, in the animal movement book; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have no plans to do so.

### Veterinary Products Committee

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many members there are on his veterinary products committee; and if he will give the numbers attending each of its last 12 meetings.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The numbers of VPC members fluctuates as appointments are made and resignations occur. Including the chairman, the numbers of members at the times of each of the last 12 meetings and the members which attended are as follows:

| | *Number of members* | *Number attending* |
|---|---|---|
| June 1988 | 21 | 14 |
| July 1988 | 21 | 14 |
| September 1988 | 14 | 14 |
| October 1988 | 14 | 9 |
| November 1988 | 14 | 11 |
| December 1988 | 14 | 9 |
| January 1989 | 17 | 14 |
| February 1989 | 17 | 16 |
| March 1989 | 17 | 15 |
| April 1989 | 17 | 15 |
| May 1989 | 16 | 13 |
| June 1989 | 16 | 11 |

### Nuvan

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for how long a product licence was granted by the veterinary products committee in respect of Nuvan's use on fish farms.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** In accordance with the veterinary products committee's recommendation, a product licence for one year has been issued for Aquagard sea-lice treatment.

### Cauliflower Florets

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the number of plant trials and tests carried out in each year since 1982 into the colour and solidity of cauliflower florets.

**Mr. Ryder:** I understand that trials were first carried out by the National Institute of Agricultural Botany in 1984. The number of trials undertaken by the institute in each year is as follows:

| *Year* | *Autumn harvest* | *Spring harvest* |
|---|---|---|
| 1984 | 2 | 1 |
| 1985 | 2 | [1]0 |
| 1986 | 2 | 2 |
| 1987 | 1 | 2 |
| 1988 | 1 | 1 |
| 1989 | 1 | 1 |

[1] Trial failure.

The colour, as such, of florets is not recorded, only off-colours.

### Plant Testing

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what are the sources of funds for plant variety testing and seed certification in each year since 1982 both gross and net of fee income, and in both current and standard prices;

(2) if he will list the sources of finance for the National Institute of Agricultural Botany in current and standard prices for each year from 1982 to 1988-89 distinguishing between Government grants for statutory work and grant-in-aid.

**Mr. Ryder:** Details of public funding for the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) and other bodies engaged in plant variety testing and certification work are published in the appropriation accounts, copies of which are available in the Library of the House. Final outturn figures for 1988-89 are not yet available—provisional figures are given in supply estimates. The relevant references are:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1982-83 | Vol III Class III Agriculture Fish & Forestry 88-III |
| 1983-84 | Vol III Class III Agriculture Fish & Forestry 614-III |
| 1984-85 | Vol III Class III Agriculture Fish & Forestry 592-III |
| 1985-86 | Vol III Class III Agriculture Fish & Forestry 586-III |
| 1986-87 | Vol III Class IV Agriculture Fish & Forestry including IBAP and FC107-III |
| 1987-88 | Vol III Class IV Agriculture Fish & Forestry including IBAP and FC7-7-III |
| 1988-89 | Supply Estimates Class IV MAFF including IBAP and FC339-IV |

Details of NIAB private funding are published in the Institute's annual reports, copies of which are also available in the Library of the House.

### Pre-packed Salads

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) in which year charges were introduced for tests on pre-packed crisp salad; and what income is derived from such charges;

(2) what is the number of tests carried out on pre-prepared packs of crisp salad, together with the numbers of test failures in each year since 1983.

**Mr. Ryder:** Charges for microbiological and other laboratory tests undertaken by ADAS farm and countryside service were introduced in 1972. The results of such tests and the testing criteria are confidential to the customer paying for such work. There are no specific composition standards or definitions of "pre-packed crisp salad material". It is for the customer therefore to specify the material he wishes to be tested under this description and the tests to be applied. Information on the number of tests and the income from them cannot be reliably estimated in view of the range of materials and tests which could be involved.

### Seed Standards

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food at what date Britain became the technical co-ordinator for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development work on seed standards; and at which agency this work is carried out.

**Mr. Ryder:** The National Institute of Agricultural Botany has acted since 1954 as co-ordinating centre for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development seed certification schemes. The service is provided under direct contract.

### Post-mortems

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list all the animals, farmed, domestic and wild on which his veterinary investigation centre will carry out post-mortem examinations, giving for each type of animal the current cost of each examination and whether the cost is borne by *(a)* farmers, *(b)* the Ministry or *(c)* some other party; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]*: The Ministry's veterinary investigation service carries out post-mortem examinations for a range of animals for different purposes. The cost of examining a particular carcase varies according to its size and the detail of the examination required. Indicative costs, however, can be taken as those shown in the table for chargeable laboratory diagnosis.

*(a) Chargeable Laboratory Diagnosis*

A diagnosis service is provided for veterinary surgeons in private practice. Species covered include any farmed species of bird, fish or mammal. Charges are made to the veterinary surgeon or, in the case of fish or birds, the owner. Current charges, based on average costs and excluding VAT, are:

| | *Per carcase* £ | *Per batch* £ |
|---|---|---|
| Birds, small mammals and fish | 10·00 | 15·00 |
| Calves, sheep, goats and pigs | 17·00 | 25·00 |
| Yearling and adult cattle | 30·00 | — |

Other animals would be charged according to size.

*(b) Statutory measures to protect the health of livestock*

This covers the Ministry's work in preventing and controlling disease. Species examined could include any bird, fish or mammal except man. Costs are borne by the Ministry.

*(c) Measures to protect public health*

As part of our work in protecting public health from zoonoses, examinations may be carried out on any kind of mammal (except man), any four-footed beast which is not a mammal or birds of any species. Costs are borne by the Ministry.

*(d) Post registration surveillance of agricultural chemicals*

Under the wildlife incident investigation scheme any free living bird, mammal (except man) or companion animal (that is, dogs, cats etc.) may be submitted for examination for the presence of chemical residues. Costs are borne initially by the Ministry and recovered from chemical manufacturers from fees paid for pesticide registration.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### China

**Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take steps to make it clear to the Chinese ambassador that citizens of China now in the United Kingdom are not to be subject to any pressure or threats to return to China.

**Mr. Eggar:** As I informed the House on 16 June, we have already raised with the Chinese chargé d'affaires press reports of harassment of Chinese students in this country. The chargé assured us that these reports were a complete fabrication. We would be concerned at any evidence of attempts to induce Chinese citizens here to return to China against their own free will. If such evidence is available, we would of course raise the matter with the Chinese authorities.

### Mr. Salman Rushdie

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will issue instructions to all British posts overseas that no questions concerning Mr. Salman Rushdie or "The Satanic Verses" should be put at interviews with those, including priests, applying for visas to visit the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** No. Entry clearance officers must have discretion in establishing the purpose and bona fides of those applying to visit the United Kingdom.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Eggar:** In 1988-89, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office continued to place a part of its requirements for goods and services with small businesses. The value of this business over the last two financial years was:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1987-88 | 15·06 |
| 1988-89 | 16·38 |

These figures represent 15·9 per cent. of the total expenditure in the last financial year compared to 12·5 per cent. the previous year.

A number of FCO departments are involved in the purchasing function. Each department monitors and records its own expenditure with small firms. New systems are being introduced into the main purchasing centres to enable the information to be recorded by computer.

The FCO director of purchasing disseminates to purchasing departments information and guidance on procurement from small firms. He ensures that, whenever possible, such firms are included in invitations to tender and that they are awarded contracts if their offer is the best on a value-for-money basis.

The FCO also provides assistance to small firms through the export promotion services available at posts overseas.

## HEALTH

### Leukaemia Clusters

47. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence he has on alleged links between instances of leukaemia clusters and nuclear power stations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** Two studies have been published which looked at leukaemia and cancer rates in the vicinity of nuclear power stations (as well as other nuclear installations) in England and Wales. The first study[1] was published in 1987 by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. The second study[2] was published earlier this year. Copies of this material are in the Library.

Both studies have been referred to the independent committee on medical aspects of radiation in the environment (COMARE), which provided a preliminary assessment of this work in its third report to Government[3] published last month, a copy of which is in the Library. For a summary of COMARE's findings, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) on 21 June 1989 at column *151-52*.

### NHS Funding

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the figure in real terms for the increase in funding *(a)* for the National Health Service as a whole and *(b)* for the Harrogate district health authority since May 1979.

**Mr. Freeman:** Harrogate health authority was established on 1 April 1982. Prior to that date Harrogate formed part of the North Yorkshire area health authority and district based figures were not collected centrally.

The table shows the real terms increase in gross revenue expenditure between 1982-83 and 1987-88 (the latest year for which figures are available):

*£ million*

| | *1982-83* | *1987-88* | *Real terms percentage increase*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| All RHAs and SHAs | 8,141·2 | 10,243·5 | 10·1 |
| Harrogate health authority | 20·1 | 25·3 | 13·2 |

[1] Using the GDP deflator.

Since then health authorities have received further real terms increases bringing the total estimated increase over the period 1982-83 to 1989-90 nationally, and in Harrogate health authority to over 14 per cent.

### Small Shops (Licensing)

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans to introduce a licensing system aimed at smaller shops, to ensure that they are fit and responsible enough to sell eggs and other produce.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Government have been consulting a large number of organisations on a thorough review of food legislation, including proposals for the registration of food premises. We shall be bringing forward legislation as soon as the parliamentary timetable permits.

### Community Health Councils

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what reviews or surveys are being carried out or planned into community health councils in England and Wales; with what terms of reference; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** No such review is being carried out or planned by the Department. I understand that the Association of Community Health Councils in England and Wales has recently endorsed a report from a panel of inquiry into the role and organisation of community health councils, and we will be considering the report carefully.

### Child Migrant Schemes

**Mr. Michael J. Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children were sent to New Zealand and Australia by voluntary organisations under the child migrant schemes in each year since 1964.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not hold this information centrally.

### Community Care

**Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, in drawing up his White Paper on community care, he will take account of the views expressed to him by CARE, Kibworth, Leicester, about funding an individual when a local authority declines to top up its proportion of the cost involved.

**Mr. Mellor:** We are pleased to receive views from all interested parties about our proposals for community care and will take them into account in preparing the White Paper to be published in the autumn. I am afraid that we are unable to trace the correspondence from CARE in Kibworth referred to by my hon. Friend, and I would be grateful if he could arrange for a copy to be sent to me.

### Swimming

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many fatalities have occurred in each of the last 10 years as a result of members of the public swimming in reservoirs and other waters not designated for recreational use in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* North West England, and *(c)* Bolton; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested based on details recorded at time of death registration could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Nurses and Midwives (Grading)

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will break down the information given in his answer to the hon. Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman), on 11 July at column *468*, about bids by district health authorities for additional financial allocations from the sum available in 1988-89 for flexible pay settlements for nursing and midwifery staff to show the number of bids in respect of midwifery staff, the grades of the posts concerned, and the number of such bids which were accepted.

**Mr. Mellor:** Four bids were received in respect of posts clearly designated as midwifery, covering 152 staff. Of these three were accepted, covering 146 staff graded at D, E and F, and one was rejected, covering six staff at grade I.

A further 10 bids were received in respect of units related to maternity where the greater proportion of the posts may be filled by midwives. These were all accepted, and covered 267 staff at grades C to G.

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[1] 'Cancer incidence and mortality in the vicinity of nuclear installations. England and Wales, 1959-80'. Office Population Censuses and Surveys. Studies on Medical and Population Subjects No. 51. (HMSO 1987).

[2] 'Geographical variation in mortality from leukaemia and other cancers in England and Wales in relation to proximity to nuclear installations, 1969-78'. British Journal of Cancer *59* 476-485.

[3] 'Report on the incidence of Childhood Cancer in the West Berkshire and North Hampshire area, in which are situated the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston and the Royal Ordnance Factory, Burghfield'. (HMSO 1989).

## Cholesterol Tests

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what guidelines his Department issues for the use of over-the-counter tests for blood cholesterol levels;

(2) if his Department has any plans to regulate the sale and use of over-the-counter cholesterol tests.

**Mr. Freeman:** We have not issued any guidelines on the use of over-the-counter tests for blood cholesterol levels and there are no current plans to regulate the sale and use of such tests.

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department has taken to establish the accuracy of over-the-counter tests for blood cholesterol levels.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Department is funding an evaluation of the two most commonly used machines for measuring blood cholesterol levels in the United Kingdom, involving testing both under laboratory conditions and in GP clinics. The work is being carried out by Mr. Peter Broughton of Wolfson research laboratories in Birmingham, and includes accuracy testing, and investigation of performance variation when carried out by skilled and non-laboratory trained operatives. The final report will be available by the end of the year.

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to introduce nation wide blood cholesterol level screening for adults; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** We have invited the Standing Medical Advisory Committee to advise on the cost-effectiveness of wider cholesterol testing in the prevention and treatment of heart disease.

## Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Department received 1,165 letters from, and despatched 1,176 letters to, hon. Members in January. In the whole of this session up to 1 July 14,348 letters were received and, by that date 10,615 replies sent.

## NHS Reform

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many community health councils have made representations to his Department opposing the Government's White Paper "Working for Patients"; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have received a number of representations from community health councils. These generally welcome the proposals in the White Paper aimed at enhancing standards of patient care. Some express support for other proposals or raise questions on specific issues. I regret that it is not possible to quantify the representations in the way the hon. Member requests.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his proposals for medical audit announced in "Working for Patients" will be extended to professional groups other than doctors; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* Obviously in the care of the patient a number of professions are involved and it is important that work on developing audit measures is complementary. Whilst "Working for Patients" focused mainly on the care and treatment provided by doctors, work to establish audit in other health professions is taking place. For example, an important part of the Department's project "Making Best Use of Nursing Skills" is concerned with developing a nursing audit package.

## Waiting Lists, Hampstead

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the waiting list figures for June 1988 and June 1989 in respect of the Hampstead health authority.

**Mr. Mellor:** The latest published figures, for September 1988, show 4,386 patients on Hampstead health authority's waiting list. The figure for September 1987 was 3,706. Provisional figures for March 1989 suggest a substantial reduction, to below the September 1987 level.

## Food Poisoning

**Mr. Alan Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of botulism, salmonella enteriditis, salmonella typhimurium, listeriosis and other types of food poisoning have been detected and reported since 1983 for each month of each year.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information is not readily available in the form requested. Annual figures for 1983 to 1988 are given in the tables. It is not known how many of the campylobacter infections are food-borne.

| | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Number of cases of principal types of food poisoning detected or reported 1983-88 (England and Wales)* | | | | | | |
| Clostridium botulinum | — | — | — | — | 1 | — |
| Salmonella enteriditis | 1,774 | 2,071 | 3,096 | 4,771 | 6,858 | 15,427 |
| Salmonella typhimurium | 7,785 | 7,264 | 5,478 | 7,094 | 7,660 | 6,444 |
| Other salmonellas | 5,596 | 5,392 | 4,756 | 5,111 | 6,014 | 5,607 |
| Listeriosis | 115 | 115 | 149 | 137 | 259 | [1]291 |
| *Number of incidents (outbreaks and isolated cases) of other types of food poisoning reported 1983-88 (England and Wales)* | | | | | | |
| Clostridium perfringens | 68 | 68 | 64 | 61 | [1]51 | [2]— |
| Staphylococcus aureus | 17 | 10 | 13 | 11 | [1]13 | [2]— |
| Bacillus sp | 24 | 28 | 22 | 26 | [1]24 | [2]— |
| Laboratory reports of campylobacter infections | 17,299 | 21,049 | 23,619 | 24,844 | 27,415 | [1]28,761 |

[1] Provisional

[2] Not yet available

*Source:* PHLS

### Regional Secure Units

**Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he intends to seek to amend section 66(1) of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 in order to include visitors to patients in regional secure units.

**Mr. Freeman:** There are no plans to amend this section of the 1968 Act.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Freeman:** A booklet has been produced and a series of seminars held on how to do business with the NHS. Other initiatives include the issuing of a mission statement on electronic data interchange which encourages small firm involvement and progress has been made on harmonisation of European standards of equipment, which will assist small businesses in their future trading in Europe. Equal opportunity to trade on a value for money basis underpins all contracts with non-NHS organisations, the details of these are not collected centrally.

### Cigarette Advertisements

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether cigarette advertisements which contain only the warning that smoking when pregnant can injure the baby and cause premature birth, and not a more general health warning linking smoking to lung cancer and other respiratory illnesses, are treated as being in breach of the current code of practices in relation to cigarette advertising; whether he has any plans to strengthen the current arrangements; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The warning "Smoking when pregnant can injure your baby and cause premature birth" is one of the six agreed warnings included in the voluntary agreement with the tobacco industry on tobacco products' advertising and promotion, and health warnings. This warning contains important information and we have no plans to discontinue its use. It is used in rotation with five other warnings which highlight the other health risks associated with cigarette smoking. On the question of re-negotiating the current voluntary agreements with the industry, officials have had some preliminary discussions with the Tobacco Advisory Council, and we are considering the way forward.

### Salomons Science Theatre

**Sir Barney Hayhoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to ensure that the covenants concerning the Salomons Broomhill estate are being fully honoured, and that the science theatre and its fixtures, fittings and contents are being properly maintained and protected against vandalism.

**Mr. Freeman:** These are matters for which the South East Thames regional health authority is responsible.

**Sir Barney Hayhoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when Mr. Frank Holland, MBE, director of the British Piano Museum Educational Charitable Trust, may expect a reply to his letter of 27 April to Mr. K. Lau, regional liaison division of his Department, about the David Salomons science theatre.

**Mr. Freeman:** A letter was sent to Mr. Holland on 22 May. Officials will write again to Mr. Holland, enclosing a copy of this, in case he did not receive it.

### Scientific Staff

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the extent of current shortages of National Health Service physicists, biochemists, other scientists and clinical psychologists;

(2) what is the latest available information on the turnover of National Health Service physicists, biochemists, other scientists and clinical psychologists.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not hold the information centrally.

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set up an independent inquiry into the determination of the salaries of National Health Service physicists, biochemists, other scientists and clinical psychologists.

**Mr. Mellor:** No. The negotiation of pay for these groups is a matter for the appropriate Whitley Council.

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received concerning the re-establishment of the link between the pay of scientific civil servants and that of National Health Service physicists, biochemists, other scientists and clinical psychologists; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have received numerous letters from hon. Members enclosing letters from constituents who make reference to the pay of scientific civil servants.

### Cook-chill Catering

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will commission an independent study of the comparative nutritional values of cook-chill methods of hospital catering and the implications for the diet and health of short-stay and long-stay hospital patients and make public the results.

**Mr. Freeman:** No. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 10 July at column *372*.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his policy on the size of portions of food to be served to patients when district health authorities are introducing cook-chill meals.

**Mr. Freeman:** The provision of catering services is the responsibility of local health authorities.

### Abortions

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many abortions were performed under ground 6 of the Abortion Act 1967 in each year since 1968.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested is shown in the table.

*Abortions performed under ground 6 of the 1967 Abortion Act, which allows an abortion in an emergency to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman, 1968-88*

| Year | Total |
|---|---|
| 1968 | 45 |
| 1969 | 31 |
| 1970 | 36 |
| 1971 | 12 |
| 1972 | 15 |
| 1973 | 12 |
| 1974 | 6 |
| 1975 | 2 |
| 1976 | 9 |
| 1977 | 8 |
| 1978 | 7 |
| 1979 | 10 |
| 1980 | 3 |
| 1981 | 9 |
| 1982 | 5 |
| 1983 | 3 |
| 1984 | 8 |
| 1985 | 11 |
| 1986 | 4 |
| 1987 | 4 |
| [1]1988 | 5 |

[1] Provisional data.

## Mental Health Act Commission

**Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many special hospitals there are in the area covered by the Liverpool office of the Mental Health Act Commission; and if he will list them.

**Mr. Freeman:** Two; Moss Side and Park Lane hospitals.

**Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he has any plans to close the Liverpool office of the Mental Health Act Commission;

(2) if he has plans to review the work of the Mental Health Act Commission; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what plans he has to centralise the work of the Mental Health Act Commission.

**Mr. Freeman:** We shall be considering shortly the Commission's review of its functions, organisation, staffing and finance. Centralisation is one of the issues being considered as part of that review. We expect to reach decisions well before the end of the year.

**Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last held discussions with the Mental Health Act commissioners in the north-west; and what subjects were discussed.

**Mr. Freeman:** We are in regular contact with the Commission chairman and secretariat, but it has not been the practice to meet commissioners on a regional basis.

**Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health why no Mental Health Act commissioners in the north-west were re-appointed this year; and what is the position with regard to re-appointments in other regions.

**Mr. Freeman:** The normal length of appointment as a commissioner is now four years, though some are invited to serve for longer because of the exceptional contributions they make. Twenty-nine commissioners appointed by my predecessors complete at least four years in office this autumn, and five have been invited to serve for a further period because of their individual contributions. Two of these are based in the southern region and three in the north eastern region.

## Child Protection Registers

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial resources have been made available to local authorities in the last five years for which figures are available to alleviate the problem of unallocated cases on child protection registers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The overall level of central Government's contribution to expenditure by local authorities takes into account services authorities are required to provide. It is however for the authorities themselves to determine how to allocate the funds available to them in the light of local circumstances and overall legislative requirements.

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to the number of children on the child protection registers of each London borough and the number in each London borough who have not been allocated to a social worker.

**Mr. Mellor:** The available information is in the table.

| *Local Authority* | *Number*[1] |
|---|---|
| Camden | 279 |
| Greenwich | 467 |
| Hackney | 176 |
| Hammersmith | 226 |
| Islington | 280 |
| Kensington | 146 |
| Lambeth | 565 |
| Lewisham | 412 |
| Southwark | 873 |
| Tower Hamlets | 238 |
| Wandsworth | 283 |
| Westminster | 138 |
| City of London | 0 |
| Barking | 77 |
| Barnet | 181 |
| Bexley | 205 |
| Brent | 212 |
| Bromley | 203 |
| Croydon | 170 |
| Ealing | 182 |
| Enfield | 106 |
| Haringey | 296 |
| Harrow | 70 |
| Havering | 53 |
| Hillingdon | 147 |
| Hounslow | 118 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 75 |
| Merton | 118 |
| Newham | 317 |
| Redbridge | 134 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames | 76 |
| Sutton | 95 |
| Waltham Forest | 208 |

[1] Children on Child Protection Registers.

We do not hold information about unallocated cases centrally and it could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

## Foster Care Placements

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to the number of foster care placements by each London borough which are outside the boundaries of those boroughs; and whether any local authorities have reported to him any difficulties in recruiting foster carers.

**Mr. Mellor:** The latest available information is as follows:

*Children in care at 31 March 1987[1] boarded out by London authorities in the area of other authorities who were not boarded out with a relative or friend and were not living in a relative's household*

| *Local authority* | *Number[3]* |
|---|---|
| Camden | 137 |
| Greenwich | 49 |
| Hackney | 204 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 103 |
| Islington[2] | — |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 75 |
| Lambeth | 244 |
| Lewisham[2] | — |
| Southwark | 248 |
| Tower Hamlets | 177 |
| Wandsworth | 147 |
| Westminster | 78 |
| City of London | 3 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 30 |
| Barnet | 13 |
| Bexley | 50 |
| Brent | 91 |
| Bromley | 34 |
| Croydon | 41 |
| Ealing | 92 |
| Enfield | 44 |
| Haringey | 96 |
| Harrow | 20 |
| Havering | 28 |
| Hillingdon | 18 |
| Hounslow | 59 |
| Kingston Upon Thames | 18 |
| Merton | 44 |
| Newham | 103 |
| Redbridge | 58 |
| Richmond Upon Thames | 12 |
| Sutton | 34 |
| Waltham Forest | 56 |

[1] Figures for 1987 are provisional and subject to revision.

[2] Figures for Islington and Lewisham were not available.

[3] Children in care who were boarded out in the area of another local authority and were not boarded out with a relative or friend.

We understand that some local authorities are not successful in recruiting within their own areas a sufficient number and range of foster parents for children requiring placements.

## Indicative Prescribing Budgets

**Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health by what means general practitioners will monitor their indicative prescribing budgets; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The Government indicated in working paper 4 of the NHS review series ("Indicative Prescribing Budgets for General Medical Practitioners") that the ideal way of providing information at all levels to operate the indicative prescribing budget scheme was an enhancement of the existing prescribing analyses and cost system known as PACT.

Our feasibility studies have confirmed that PACT can be speeded up, and made more frequent and more comprehensive. I have therefore asked the Prescription Pricing Authority and my Department to develop PACT to provide all general practitioners with monthly budgetary statements from April 1991. These budgetary statements will normally be provided no more than four weeks after the month in which the relevant prescriptions were dispensed. Existing PACT reports will continue to be provided.

I will continue to hold discussions with interested parties before deciding upon the detailed content and format of these reports and other associated improvements to PACT. I shall also be making available PACT data aggregated at family practitioner committee level to all family practitioner committees and regional health authorities from 1 August 1989 to enable them to prepare for indicative prescribing budgets.

My decision will take away from general practitioners the burden of paperwork which might otherwise be associated with the introduction of indicative prescribing budgets. An enhanced PACT will also provide regional health authorities and family practitioner committees with information they need both to set and to monitor budgets.

Indicative prescribing budgets will take full account of the fact that some patients and groups of patients, for example elderly people, diabetics and patients on home dialysis, need a greater volume of drugs or more expensive drugs than others. The scheme will ensure that budgets fully reflect these costs. There will be no disincentive to practices to accept such patients or to begin to prescribe expensive medicines to existing patients, if there is a clinical need to do so.

## Overseas Visitors (Fees)

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health in what circumstances British citizens may be charged fees as overseas visitors for treatment within the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** Residence in the United Kingdom, not citizenship, is the measure of qualification for hospital treatment without charge under the National Health Service. British citizens not ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom will be charged as overseas visitors for NHS hospital treatment.

General practitioners have the discretion whether to accept a visitor as a NHS patient. If a visitor is unable to find a GP willing to accept him onto the GP's list, he can apply to the family practitioner committee which will allocate him to a GP who must then accept him as a NHS patient.

## Disability

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health on how many occasions in 1989 meetings to discuss the implementation of section 7 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 have been held between his Department and *(a)* the local authority associations and *(b)* the National Association of Health Authorities; on how many occasions meetings have been arranged but subsequently cancelled at the request of his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* Officials had arranged to meet representatives of the local authorities associations and the National Association of Health Authorities in February but this was deferred to March to allow further preparatory work to be done. The National Association of Health Authorities was invited but did not send a representative. At that meeting it was agreed that officials would work on identifying the processes likely to be required for assessment purposes and costings before another meeting is held. No further meeting has yet been arranged.

### Magnetic Resonance Scanners

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the locations at which nuclear magnetic resonance scanners are available within the National Health Service.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Nuclear magnetic resonance scanners are located on the following National Health sites in the United Kingdom:

Royal Infirmary, Aberdeen
Southern General, Glasgow
Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh
Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham
Hammersmith Hospital, London (RPMS)(2)
National Hospital, London (2)
St. Bartholomew's, London
National Heart, London
Mount Vernon, London
Guy's, London
Camden Children's, London
John Ratcliffe, Oxford
Addenbrookes, Cambridge
Frenchay, Bristol
Walsgrave, Coventry
Royal Marsden, Sutton

### Castle Hill Hospital, Cottingham

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health from where the proposed finishing kitchen at Castle Hill hospital, Cottingham, will receive its supplies of prepared food.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* This is a local matter and not for me. We have no doubt however that the district health authority will seek to use the most cost effective and efficient source of supply available. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the East Yorkshire health authority for such information as may be available at this time.

### Cyclotron Machines

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if, before making funds available for the purchase of a cyclotron machine for St. Thomas's hospital, he took into account evidence of the use and success rate of cyclotron machines in other European Economic Community countries;

(2) what evidence he had about existing cyclotron machines' performances in the United Kingdom before providing funds of the purchase of the cyclotron for St. Thomas's hospital.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 17 February 1989 at column *419*.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Inland Revenue (Relocation)

**Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to announce a decision on the proposal to relocate over 2,000 Inland Revenue head office posts to Nottingham; and whether there are any plans to relocate the remaining pay-as-you-earn tax work currently carried on in tax offices in the London area.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Following an internal review of its London headquarters accommodation, the Board of Inland Revenue published on 21 April this year a working party report which recommended that, in view of the continuing problems which faced the Department on its accommodation and staffing in the London area, over 2,000 posts in headquarters and other specialist officers should be relocated from south-east England.

After full consultations with the appropriate Civil Service unions, with senior management and with staff, the board has concluded, with my agreement, that some 2,100 posts should be relocated. The great majority of these posts will move to Nottingham provided that a suitable site for a new office development can be obtained on satisfactory terms. As well as headquarters staff, it is envisaged that the capital taxes office, the superannuation funds office and the office of the inspector of foreign dividends will be included in the move to Nottingham. Depending on progress, it is hoped that the main relocation of work to Nottingham will take place from 1992.

As for the PAYE tax work, my hon. Friend will be aware that the majority of this work in the London area was transferred to offices in other parts of the country in the 1960s and 1970s. It has now been decided to move the PAYE work of some further 400 clerical and executive staff in late 1989 to Cardiff, Bootle, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Livingston, and the Department is looking at the possibility of moving the work of a further 1,200 or so PAYE posts, including all of the remaining London posts, away from the London area in the period from mid-1990 to mid-1992.

While work is being moved the Department will try to ensure that any inconvenience to the public is kept to a minimum. For the longer term, in order to maintain a service for those who need to make a personal visit to discuss their tax affairs, the existing network of local inquiry offices in the London area will be strengthened and enlarged where necessary.

The moves will secure a good and cost-effective service for the taxpayer. Better recruitment prospects outside the south-east will result in a more experienced and stable work force.

### Life Assurance

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what respects investment-linked life assurance policies are taxed differently from endowment-linked mortgage policies; and what would be the saving to the revenue from treating the latter on the same basis as authorised unit trusts.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** For the life office, in no respects. For the policy holder, no distinction is drawn between investment-linked policies, as such, and endowment policies associated with mortgages. For any sort of policy, the tax treatment will depend on the terms of the policy (in particular, whether it is a "qualifying" policy); the circumstances in which policy benefits are paid out; and the overall tax position of the policy holder. Most endowment policies associated with mortgages are not investment-linked and therefore cannot be treated on the same basis as unit trusts: no estimate can accordingly be made of the revenue effect of doing so.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate for 1989-90 of the figures quoted in paragraphs 6.9 and 5.16 of the recent consultation paper on the taxation of life assurance.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** There is no paragraph 5.16 in the consultative document to which the hon. Member refers. Information required to update the estimates to 1989-90 in paragraph 6.9 is not available.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the aggregate value of single premium life assurance policies; what is his estimate of the amount of tax collected per £1,000 of single premium over the life of a single premium life assurance policy in terms of constant prices; and what is his estimate of the gain to the revenue per £1,000 of premium from a tax regime meeting the criteria set out in paragraph 3.3 of the consultative document on the taxation of life assurance issued by the Inland Revenue in June.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** No estimate is available for the total value of single premium policies. None can be made for the lifetime tax yield per £1,000 of premiums paid on such policies whether under the current tax regime or under any alternative regime. This would vary widely depending on the future performance of each policy, on future tax rates, on the overall tax position of the life offices and policy holders concerned, and on the length of time for which each policy holder chose to retain his policy.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated revenue yield in the current financial year from fully implementing each of the options listed in paragraph 7.9 of the recent consultation paper on the taxation of life assurance; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* the charge falling on the policy holders and shareholders in the case of investment-linked and other life assurance, distinguishing where appropriate between qualifying and non-qualifying policies, current charges, exit charges and capital gains.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The options to which the hon. Member refers set out in broad outline possible alternative approaches to the reform of life assurance. The extra yield, if any, to be expected from implementation of these options would depend on the precise measures assumed to be adopted. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the Budget the Governments' proposals for implementation along the lines of "Option C" in the consultative document: estimates of the initial effect of these proposals on tax yield, and indications of their possible long-run effects, were published in the "Financial Statement and Budget Report" (HC 235).

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated revenue yield in the current financial year from taxing pension schemes on the basis of the first and last of the principles set out in paragraph 7.3 of the recent consultation paper of the taxation of life assurance.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The first principle in paragraph 7.3 of the consultative document "The Taxation of Life Assurance" is that income earned for policy holders should be taxed as it arises and that capital gains should be taxed, at the latest, as they are reflected in benefits paid out. To apply this principle to funded occupational pension schemes would require that tax relief on the investment income of the funds should be withdrawn. It would be for decision whether pensioners would be allowed a tax credit to set against the tax due on the pensions paid to them to reflect the tax which had been borne by the fund on its investment income. The net revenue cost or yield would depend upon the precise proposal, on the nature of any transitional provisions and on the behavioural responses of investors and institutions. Any estimate of revenue would almost certainly involve disproportionate cost.

The last principle is that tax effectively borne by policy holders and that actually reaching the Exchequer should as far as possible be in line. For occupational pension schemes, this already applies.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated share and estimated value of the pension and annuity business referred to in paragraph 6.23 of the recent consultation paper on the taxation of life assurance; and what is the amount of the disparity referred to in paragraph 6.25.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** On the basis of a sample of companies for 1986, pension and general annuity business liabilities at the end of that year amounted to about half of total life assurance liabilities, amounting to some £110 billion, of offices authorised to do life assurance business in the United Kingdom.

The disparity referred to in paragraph 6.25 of the consultative document "The Taxation of Life Assurance" will be eliminated once relevant measures in the current Finance Bill come into full force from 1 January 1990.

## Savings

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the various forms of institutional saving the estimated gain to the revenue in the current financial year from disallowing commission etc. as an expense.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Information on which to base a reliable estimate is not available centrally.

## Engagements

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list his engagements when he expects to make a major speech on the economy.

**Mr. Major:** My right hon. Friend will be speaking on a number of occasions over the next few months, including the IMF/IBRD meetings in Washington (26-28 September), the Conservative party conference (10-13 October) and at the Mansion house (19 October).

### Charitable Donations

**Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what basis Customs and Excise assess liability for value added tax on the whole of a donation by a commercial company towards an advertisement by a charitable organisation, rather than on the value of that part of the advertisement which might be deemed to be promoting the company.

**Mr. Lilley:** There is no VAT liability on unconditional gifts of money, but where payments are conditional on a charitable organisation supplying clearly identifiable benefits in return, for example, advertising or publicity, such supplies are liable to VAT, and have to be accounted for at the standard rate by any charitable organisation whose taxable turnover exceeds the registration limits.

### TSB Scotland

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the text of the letter of assurance about the future of TSB Scotland which he received from the then chairman of the TSB Group at the time of privatisation.

**Mr. Lilley:** The letter written when the Trustee Savings Bank Act 1985 was under consideration was published in *Hansard* on 4 July 1985 at cols. 261-63.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will institute an inquiry into the TSB before its proposed restructuring takes place, with a view to ensuring that pledges of autonomy for its Scottish operations, which were given at the time of flotation, are fulfilled.

**Mr. Lilley:** The future structure of the TSB is a matter for the TSB. I note that the TSB has recently confirmed that the assurances made at the time of its flotation will be honoured.

### Interest Rates (Mortgages)

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many letters he has received from members of the public on the level of interest rates or their impact on the cost of mortgages.

**Mr. Lilley:** My right hon. Friend has received a number of letters on this subject.

### "Official Report" (Sales)

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average daily sale of daily parts of the *Official Report* in 1988 and in each of the preceding nine years.

**Mr. Lilley:** The estimated average number of copies sold per issue for each year since 1980 is given in the table. I regret that figures for 1979 are no longer available.

| | *House of Commons Daily* | *House of Lords Daily* |
|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 6,169 | 3,855 |
| 1981 | 5,812 | 3,688 |
| 1982 | 5,391 | 3,295 |
| 1983 | 5,221 | 3,234 |
| 1984 | 5,005 | 3,290 |
| 1985 | 4,925 | 3,038 |
| 1986 | 4,713 | 3,030 |
| 1987 | 4,638 | 2,930 |
| 1988 | 4,535 | 2,669 |

### Inflation

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current level of inflation.

**Mr. Lilley:** The all items RPI inflation rate in the year to June 1989 was 8·3 per cent. the same as in May. A better indication of underlying inflation is given by the increase in the RPI excluding mortgage interest payments; it rose 5·9 per cent. in the year to June 1989, down slightly from the 6 per cent. figure in May.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Major:** The Government's economic policies are designed to maintain a vigorous economy in which business and enterprise can flourish. Over the last 12 months we have continued our commitment to this goal. Among the specific measures helpful to small businesses introduced in the last Budget were:

for the small companies' lower corporation tax rate of 25 per cent. profit limit raised by 50 per cent. to £150,000 and the limit for receiving transitional relief raised to £750,000;
simplification of pensions rules and substantial increases in personal pension contribution limits;
improved tax reliefs designed to encourage employee participation in PRP and employee share schemes (including ESOPS);
abolition of close company apportionment rules;
introduction of the receipts basis of schedule E (a simpler system for the assessment of earnings).
extended relief for pre-trading expenditure;
VAT registration threshold raised broadly in line with inflation;
CGT gifts relief retained for business assets.

We are continually looking at ways of reducing the burdens on small businesses. In addition to the continuous review of forms, explanatory notices and leaflets with the aim of providing guidance which can be easily understood, the following changes have been achieved in the last 12 months:

The completion of the computerisation of PAYE and extension throughout the country of computerisation of the tax affairs of the self-employed.
From 1 July 1989 the scope of the Community carnet was extended.
Development work has taken place for the introduction on 1 August 1989 of two fast lane systems which will speed up the clearance of certain EC imports.
Development work is proceeding on a new computerised system for the handling of import export freight which will speed up the clearance of goods.
We have also carried out thorough examinations of:
The VAT cash accounting scheme;
Default surcharge;
VAT bad debt relief;
Export data capture;
VAT second hand schemes; and
PAYE communications between employers and the Inland Revenue

The results of these reviews are under consideration

## Debt Repayment

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the exchanges between his officials and Sir Kit McMahon and the team of Midland bankers who visited Brazil in February to consider debt repayment problems.

**Mr. Peter Lilley** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* It has been internationally agreed that it is not for the Government to intervene in negotiations between commercial banks and debtor countries, and the United Kingdom fully supports this policy. Accordingly there have been no discussions on Brazil's debts to commercial banks between my officials and Sir Kit McMahon or other members of the Midland bank team which visited Brazil.

## EC (Tax Relief)

**Mr. Lester:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish figures of the information he has for wage and salary earners in each of the member states of the European Community showing *(a)* which allow income tax relief against social security contributions, *(b)* which allow income tax relief against specified travel to work costs, *(c)* which have a non-specific earned income tax relief and *(d)* which allow income tax relief for work-related child care costs.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* According to our latest available information, these reliefs are allowed in the EC member states as follows:

*(a)* In all member states, except the United Kindom and Ireland, social security contributions are generally an allowable deduction in the computation of taxable income from employment.

*(b)* In Luxembourg and Netherlands specified travel to work costs are allowed as a deduction in the computation of taxable income from employment. Certain other countries, eg. Belgium, Denmark, France and Federal Republic of Germany grant a flat-rate expense deduction for employment income, which is intended to cover, inter alia, the cost of travel to work..

*(c)* A general deduction in the computation of taxable income from employment, at varying percentages or flat-rates, is allowed in Belgium, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Spain. A flat-rate credit against tax due is allowed in Italy.

*(d)* Certain reliefs in the form of deductions in the computation of taxable income from employment, with varying provisions regarding, for example, the marital status of the taxpayer and the age of the relevant children, and usually up to a specified maximum deduction, are allowed in Belgium, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Luxembourg and Netherlands.

## Family Deeds of Covenant

**Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will reproduce in the *Official Report* the text of the Inland Revenue press release sent out following the 1988 Budget regarding the date by which notification of family deeds of covenant executed before 15 March 1988 had to be intimated to the Inland Revenue; and to which newspapers and periodicals this press release was sent;

(2) what information he has regarding the newspapers and periodicals in which there was publication of a reference to the Inland Revenue press release issued after the 1988 Budget and relating to the 30 June deadline by which intimation had to be made to the Inland Revenue of family deeds of covenant executed before 15 March 1988.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The text of the Inland Revenue press release issued on 15 March 1988 was as follows:

"The Chancellor proposes in his Budget to abolish tax relief for payments made by individuals under non-charitable Deeds of Covenant made on or after today. Recipients will be exempt from tax on the payments. This will greatly simplify the existing system.

The change will apply to covenants made to students by their parents, as well as to other covenants. Parental contributions to student grants will, however, be reduced for new students. Full details will be published by the Department of Education and Science tomorrow.

*Details*

1. Non-charitable covenants made by individuals *on or after 15 March 1988* will have no effect for tax purposes. This means that:

payers should not deduct tax from covenanted payments and will not get tax relief on them, and

recipients will not pay tax on them or be able to claim repayment.

2. The *present rules* will continue to apply to

all covenants in favour of charities;

other covenants made by individuals *before 15 March 1988* provided they are received by the tax office by 30 June 1988.

*Deduction of tax*

3. The effect of the reduction in the basic rate of income tax on charitable covenants, and on other covenants made before today, is set out in a separate Press Release.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

*Present tax position*

1. A deed of covenant is a way of legally transferring income from one person to another. It can be effective for tax purposes under present law if it is capable of running for more than 6 years (or more than 3 years if it is in favour of a charity).

2. On making each payment under the covenant the payer deducts basic rate tax and so gets basic rate relief. If the recipient is not liable to tax he can claim the tax deducted from the payment back from the Inland Revenue.

*Effect of the Budget proposals*

3. The payer will not be entitled to deduct tax from payments made under a new covenant (unless it is to a charity). If he covenants to pay £100, that is the amount he will pay and the recipient will receive. The Inland Revenue will not be involved. A separate Treasury Press Release explains the background to the proposals. Details will be available from tax offices shortly.

*Students*

4. Student covenants made on or after 15 March 1988 will be treated in the same way as other new covenants. But since the payments will no longer be taxable, students will have the whole of their personal tax allowances to set against other income, such as vacation earnings. Furthermore, for new students there will be a new and more generous scale for assessing parental contributions to their maintenance grants.

*A word of warning*

5. A Deed of Covenant is a legal document and it is *not* permissible to put a date on it earlier than the date it is executed. This will result in refusal of any tax refund. It can also result in prosecution by the Inland Revenue for attempted fraud.

*Other transfers of income*

6. Covenants which transfer income from one person to another are "annual payments". The proposals will also apply to other "annual payments" which transfer income in a similar way from an individual to someone else; but they will *not* apply to interest payments or to payments made for commercial reasons in connection with the payer's business.

Copies of the press release were sent to all national newspapers, over 200 other periodicals and local newspapers, and over 3,000 individuals and organisations which receive copies of Inland Revenue press releases on subscription. A leaflet was also available from local tax offices shortly after 15 March 1988.

There were many articles in the press about various aspects of the 1988 Budget measures, including the changes in the tax treatment of non-charitable covenants. Comprehensive information about press reports is not available, but the particular point about the 30 June 1988 deadline which the hon. Member has in mind was specifically mentioned in a number of publications, including the *Financial Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Which?*, *Taxation* and the *New Law Journal*. The point was also covered in the BBC radio programme "Money Box".

### Freelance Journalists

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received about Inland Revenue procedures over taxing the earnings of freelance journalists.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* None in recent months.

### Endangered Species

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide a breakdown of the articles derived from endangered species by *(a)* type, *(b)* animal and *(c)* country of origin seized by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in the year to 31 March.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The detailed information sought will not be available for some time. As soon as it is, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West of 26 May, *Official Report,* column *810,* if he will now give the finalised record of articles derived from endangered species seized in 1988.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The detailed information sought is not yet available. As soon as the necessary collation has been completed, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library.

### Freelance and Self-employed People

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will seek to introduce legislation to provide consistent treatment for tax purposes for all freelance and self-employed persons.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* No. I am not aware of any inconsistency in the legislative treatment, for tax purposes, of people in business on their own account.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1988-89.

**Mr. Brooke** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* The amount spent by my Department on official hospitality was £56,451 in 1988-89.

### Dangerous Substances

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his policy on compensation of industry for restrictions imposed on the use of dangerous substances.

**Mr. Chope** I have been asked to reply.

I assume the hon. Member is referring to my Department's consultation paper of 17 May, inviting comments on draft regulations introducing controls over hazardous substances. There is no intention to provide a general system of compensation where restrictions are imposed on the location and use of such substances. This follows the principle that compensation is not normally payable for a refusal of planning consent, or for making a consent subject to conditions. The new regulations will, however, provide for deemed consents to be automatically available for established uses.

## DEFENCE

### Aircraft Interceptions

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many Soviet Backfire aircraft have penetrated the United Kingdom air defence region since 1979;

(2) how many unidentified aircraft entered the United Kingdom air defence region in 1988; how many of these were *(a)* Soviet military aircraft, *(b)* non-Soviet military aircaft and *(c)* civil aircraft.

(3) in what year the Royal Air Force first intercepted a Soviet Backfire aircraft; and what was the approximate location of the interception;

(4) what was the average number of Soviet military aircraft intercepted per week by Royal Air Force aircraft in the United Kingdom defence regions in 1988; what are the trends in the level of activity since 1979; and what are the reasons for these trends;

(5) what was the average number of scrambles of Royal Air Force interceptor aircraft to locate and identify unidentified aircraft approaching the United Kingdom air defence region in 1988; and what proportion of these scrambles resulted in interception of an intruding aircaft.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer the hon. Member to the answers given by my predecessor to him on 3 May 1988 at column *384,* and to the hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) on 14 December 1987 at column *412.* The average number of Soviet aircraft intercepted in the United Kingdom air defence region each week in 1988 was 2-3. Details of such interceptions, including numbers of scrambles and types of aircraft intercepted are classified. I am not prepared to speculate about the reasons for fluctuations in Soviet aircraft activity.

### Training (Kenya)

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many training man-days were carried out by the Army in Kenya in each year since 1979.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The information is not held in the form requested. However, since 1979, Army training in Kenya has comprised the following:

(a) Infantry Battalion Group training exercises—involving approximately 600 men for six weeks, tri-annually since 1979;

(b) Royal Engineer construction training—involving approximately 120 men for two and a half months, annually since 1979;
(c) Royal Engineer survey training—involving approximately 35 men for four to six weeks, annually since 1979 with the exception of 1982 and 1984;
(d) Royal Signals training—two exercises, involving approximately 120 men and lasting for two and a half months, one in 1983 and one in 1984;
(e) Infantry Company training—five exercises involving approximately 120 men, for six weeks, in 1979, 1981, 1983 1985 and 1987;
(f) Adventurous Training—since 1986 there have been 27 expeditions of various types and for various lengths of time involving 418 people; information for the years prior to 1986 is not available.

### No. 3 Squadron, RAF Regiment

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the date of formation, operational base, equipment, staffing and role of No. 3 Squadron, Royal Air Force regiment.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** No. 3 Squadron Royal Air Force regiment, which is equipped with a variety of vehicles and infantry equipment, was formed in 1987. It is stationed at RAF Aldergrove, with a peacetime role of ground defence and general security duties. It is not our practice to publish detailed information about personnel numbers in operational units.

### HMS Trenchant

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes have occurred in the projected in-service date of HMS Trenchant since 1987; and what are the reasons for the changes.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** HMS Trenchant was delivered by the contractor in February this year. The delivery date forecast in 1987 was September 1988. The delivery date changed because of industrial action at VSEL during 1988.

### HMS Upholder

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes have occurred in the projected in-service date of HMS Upholder since 1987; and what are the reasons for such changes.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** HMS Upholder is planned to be delivered by the contractor around the end of 1989. The delivery date forecast in 1987 was August 1988. This change was due, first, to industrial action at VSEL during 1988 and, secondly because of a number of technical problems with new-to-service equipment on this the first of a new class of diesel-electric submarines.

### Sharp Spear

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the nature and purpose of the forthcoming North Atlantic Treaty Organisation exercise Sharp Spear; when and where it will take place; and how many ships, submarines, aircraft and personnel will take part.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Sharp Spear 89 is a major NATO maritime exercise which will take place from 7 to 21 September 1989 in the Baltic, Baltic approaches, the North sea, and waters surrounding the British Isles, including the Channel. It will demonstrate and improve the ability of NATO maritime forces to conduct shallow seas operations and protect reinforcement and merchant shipping in the waters off north-west Europe. Over 270 ships and submarines and 320 aircraft, and their associated personnel from 10 NATO countries will take part in the exercise.

### Low Flying

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has on the number of military jet flights at less than 1,500 ft over the Federal Republic of Germany in 1988.

**Mr. Neubert:** Ministry of Defence records of flights over the Federal Republic of Germany are maintained only for Royal Air Force aircraft. In 1988 RAF Germany carried out some 16,000 fixed-wing low-level sorties over the Federal Republic of Germany.

### No. 1 Squadron, RAF Regiment

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the reason for the redesignation of No. 1 Squadron, Royal Air Force Regiment as a light armour squadron.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** No. 1 Squadron Royal Air Force Regiment was redesignated as a light armoured squadron in 1982 when it was re-equipped with combat vehicles reconnaissance (tracked).

### Contracted-out Services

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what records are kept by his Department of employment levels in companies providing services to his Department on contract in areas where these services were previously provided by Ministry of Defence civilian personnel.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** It is not our policy to maintain detailed records of employment levels in companies who provide equipment or services to the MOD. It is a matter for the companies concerned.

### Euclid Programme

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Euclid programme for European collaboration on defence technology research; and what role and financial contribution will be made by the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Defence Ministers, at their meeting in Portugal in June, agreed to launch a joint programme of research and technology in defence which will be called EUCLID (European co-operative long-term intitiative in defence). The programme which it is envisaged will start in 1990, enjoys full United Kingdom support and will be based on the IPEG's work to establish a European technology plan for a number of technology areas important to defence. More detailed proposals—including funding plans—will be submitted to IEPG Ministers at their next meeting in February 1990. Present plans envisage IEPG nations spending about 120 million ECUs (£80 million) per year on this initiative with a United Kingdom contribution in the order of £15 million. European industry will, in due course, be invited to put forward proposals to meet the research priorities identified in the programme.

## Animal Experiments

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West of 11 July, *Official Report*, column *495*, if he will give details of the animals used in experiments by his Department or undertaken on a contract basis for each year since 1985 by *(a)* animal, *(b)* numbers and *(c)* type of experiment or test.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The number of Ministry of Defence animal experiments recorded by the Home Office under the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876 and the subsequent Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 between 1985 and 1987 (the last full year for which figures are available) is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1985 | 6,900 |
| 1986 | 6,600 |
| 1987 | 9,200 |

It is not our practice to provide further breakdown of these figures. Such information could enable an informed observer to gain a useful insight into the scope and direction of MOD's work, to the detriment of national security.

Contractors have the same reporting responsibilities as MOD under the act and their procedures are reported to the Home Office, not to MOD.

## Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr Sainsbury:** To assist in obtaining better value for money, the Ministry of Defence has implemented a number of measures to broaden its competition base, In particular, in November 1986 my noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement launched the small firms initiative which particularly sought to encourage small firms to bid for MOD business. The success of the initiatives can be measured by the degree of involvement of new companies in our competitions.

Over the last three years the MOD has made total payments each year to small firms of about £1,000 million. The number of small firms receiving payment on direct contract has increased from some 4,000 in 1986-87 to over 7,000 in 1988-89. In 1987-88 some 1,500 firms sought advice from the newly formed small firms advice division, and in 1988-89 the figure was more that 2,500. In recognition of the division's success, in November 1988 my noble Friend relaunched it as the new suppliers service, with the aim of making the benefits of this service available to potential new suppliers of all sizes (including foreign companies).

The small firms initiative is still a key element in encouraging competition and the new suppliers service retains a cell dedicated to dealing with small firms. In 1988-89 about 3,000 companies of all sizes approached the division for advice, either direct—by telephone or letter —or at the 60-odd sessions involving seminars or "meet the buyers" held throughout the United Kingdom last year. The seminars allow MOD's procurement policies and procedures to be explained to a large audience, and the "meet the buyer" sessions enable a wide range of individual queries to be dealt with at one forum; such events have been held, increasingly, in association with regional development agencies, the CBI and other interested bodies.

The new suppliers service is responsible for producing the booklet "selling to the MOD" which offers important guidance on MOD's policies and procedures, useful background information and contact points. The fourth, much expanded, edition was published last autumn, containing much new information, not only on selling directly to the MOD but to our prime contractors. A fifth edition is planned for later this year.

The service is also responsible for promoting the small firms research initiative (as part of the small firms initiative) aimed at encouraging small firms to bid for research work. In 1987-88, 32 firms won business totalling £1·1 million. In 1988-89, 38 firms won business worth £1·3 million. The trend is encouraging and the level of interest by small firms remains high.

Registration of new companies on the defence contractors list remains high. In 1988, 300 new small firms were registered, the same as in 1987.

The tangible results of the SFI show that a high level of interest continues, and that the demand for briefings and advice remain high as well. We shall continue to encourage small firms and monitor their response, and the contributions which this makes towards better value for money.

## Warships

**Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much time warships spent on average at sea in 1988, 1978, 1968, and 1959 or for the nearest comparable 10 year intervals back from the latest available date.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Comprehensive information is not available in the form requested from 1968 or earlier. However, the average time spent at sea by warships in 1988 and 1978, expressed as a percentage of operational time, was 41 per cent. and 42 per cent. respectively. The Navy is well aware of the possible consequences on morale of long periods spent at sea, and aims to set the optimum sea/shore ratio in its fleet programme.

## RAF Upper Heyford

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Leyton, (Mr. Cohen), 18 April, *Official Report*, column *112*, what information he now has on the nature and purpose of the proposed additions to the flight simulator facility, the engine shop and the avionics maintenance shop at RAF Upper Heyford.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I have nothing to add to the answer I gave the hon. Member on 13 July at columns *589-90*.

## Ordnance Explosions (Deaths)

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many deaths have occurred to service personnel as a result of controlled explosions of ordnance in the last 10 years for which information is available.

**Mr. Neubert:** Apart from the three deaths in the tragic accident at Kineton on 17 July this year, which are to be the subject of a board of inquiry, over the past 10 years there have been no fatalities as a result of the controlled demolition of ordnance.

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to be able to publish the results of the inquiry into the deaths of three Army personnel at Kineton on 18 July.

**Mr. Neubert:** A board of inquiry into the incident at Kineton on 17 July will be established, following the submission, as evidence, of the RMP report on the incident, and will be completed as quickly as possible. It is not our practice to publish board of inquiry reports but I will write to the hon. Member once the board's findings are known. Additional precautionary safety guidelines have been issued pending the outcome of the inquiry.

## Type 23 Frigates

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to make an announcement about the selection of the command and control system for the type 23 frigate.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Shortly.

## Service Personnel

**Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many men and women hold non-commissioned officer rank in each of the forces; and what percentage of the total in the forces this represents by rank and sex;

(2) how many persons there are in Her Majesty's forces, by Navy, Army and Air Force and by men and women;

(3) how many persons there are in commissioned ranks by Navy, Army and Air Force; and what percentage of the total in each service is represented by *(a)* men and *(b)* women.

**Mr. Neubert:** The information requested is given in the following table:

*United Kingdom regular forces—rank breakdown by service and sex at 31 March 1989*

| | *Royal Navy* | | *Royal Marines* | *Army* | | *Royal Air Force* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Male* | *Female* | | *Male* | *Female* | *Male* | *Female* |
| Total strength | 53,500 | 3,450 | 7,689 | 149,062 | 6,505 | 85,144 | 6,299 |
| Officers—total | 9,080 | 386 | 690 | 16,270 | 1,040 | 14,352 | 1,022 |
| Breakdown by rank—numbers | | | | | | | |
| Field Marshall | 1 | — | — | — | — | 1 | — |
| General | 4 | — | — | 8 | — | 6 | — |
| Lieutenant General | 13 | — | 1 | 10 | — | 9 | — |
| Major General | 40 | — | 3 | 65 | — | 52 | — |
| Brigadier | 28 | 1 | 2 | 239 | 3 | 107 | 2 |
| Colonel | 362 | 5 | 35 | 625 | 16 | 423 | 3 |
| Lieutenant Colonel | 1,198 | 14 | 103 | 1,838 | 28 | 1,361 | 15 |
| Major | 2,400 | 68 | 182 | 5,201 | 135 | 3,713 | 97 |
| Captain | 3,149 | 190 | 288 | 4,804 | 484 | 5,813 | 441 |
| Lietenant/2nd Lt. | 600 | 69 | — | 2,890 | 350 | 2,681 | 435 |
| Officer designate | 1,285 | 39 | 76 | 590 | 24 | 186 | 29 |
| Breakdown by rank—percentage | | | | | | | |
| Field Marshal | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| General | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Lieutenant General | 0·1 | — | 0·1 | 0·1 | — | 0·1 | — |
| Major General | 0·4 | — | 0·4 | 0·4 | — | 0·4 | — |
| Brigadier | 0·3 | 0·3 | 0·3 | 1·5 | 0·3 | 0·7 | 0·2 |
| Colonel | 4·0 | 1·3 | 5·1 | 3·8 | 1·5 | 2·9 | 0·3 |
| Lieutenant Colonel | 13·2 | 3·6 | 14·9 | 11·3 | 2·7 | 9·5 | 1·5 |
| Major | 26·4 | 17·6 | 26·4 | 32·0 | 13·0 | 25·9 | 9·5 |
| Captain | 34·7 | 49·2 | 41·7 | 29·5 | 46·5 | 40·5 | 43·2 |
| Lieutenant/2nd Lt. | 6·6 | 17·9 | — | 17·8 | 33·7 | 18·7 | 42·6 |
| Officer designate | 14·2 | 10·1 | 11·0 | 3·6 | 2·3 | 1·3 | 2·8 |

| | *Royal Navy* | | *Royal Marines* | *Army* | | *Royal Air Force* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Male* | *Female* | | *Male* | *Female* | *Male* | *Female* |
| Servicemen/women—total | 44,420 | 3,064 | 6,999 | 132,792 | 5,465 | 70,792 | 5,277 |
| Breakdown by rank—numbers | | | | | | | |
| Warrant Officer Class 1 | 881 | 14 | 26 | 2,191 | 31 | 2,158 | 21 |
| Warrant Officer Class 2 | — | — | 201 | 5,864 | 76 | — | — |
| Staff Sergeant | 8,257 | 146 | 342 | 7,671 | 160 | 6,104 | 34 |
| Sergeant | 7,579 | 392 | 719 | 14,422 | 530 | 11,463 | 332 |
| Corporal | 9,753 | 834 | 1,245 | 22,503 | 984 | 20,956 | 1,200 |
| Lance Corporal | — | — | — | 22,337 | 1,283 | — | — |
| Private (Classes 1 to 3) | 12,454 | 1,118 | 3,612 | 42,780 | 1,673 | 26,792 | 3,409 |
| Private Class 4/Junior | 5,496 | 560 | 854 | 15,024 | 728 | 3,319 | 281 |
| Breakdown by rank—percentages | | | | | | | |
| Warrant Officer Class 1 | 2·0 | 0·5 | 0·4 | 1·6 | 0·6 | 3·0 | 0·4 |
| Warrant Officer Class 2 | — | — | 2·9 | 4·4 | 1·4 | — | — |
| Staff Sergeant | 18·6 | 4·8 | 4·9 | 5·8 | 2·9 | 8·6 | 0·6 |
| Sergeant | 17·1 | 12·8 | 10·3 | 10·9 | 9·7 | 16·2 | 6·3 |
| Corporal | 22·0 | 27·2 | 17·8 | 16·9 | 18·0 | 29·6 | 22·7 |
| Lance Corporal | — | — | — | 16·8 | 23·5 | — | — |
| Private (Classes 1 to 3) | 28·0 | 36·5 | 51·6 | 32·2 | 30·6 | 37·8 | 64·6 |
| Private Class 4/Junior | 12·4 | 18·3 | 12·2 | 11·3 | 13·3 | 4·7 | 5·3 |

*Notes:*

1. All ranks shown are Army ranks. Personnel of the other Services are shown against their equivalent Army rank.
2. A dash (—) represents zero or, in the sections of the table showing percentages, a value of less than 0·05.
3. For the RN and RM only those officers holding Commodore and Brigadier appointments respectively are shown against the equivalent Army rank of Brigadier.

## Recruits (Pay)

**Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the level of pay for a new recruit in each of the forces by men and by women.

**Mr. Neubert:** For male recruits in the Army and RAF the annual rate of pay on joining is:

Junior (aged under 17½)—£3,321·50 to £4,500·45, depending on age

Basic Trainees (aged over 17½)—£5,953·15 to £6,226·90, depending on the length of their initial commitment.

Officer Cadets—£6,781·70.

Rates for the Royal Navy are similar except that all basic trainees start on £5,935·15. The Royal Navy also employs apprentice artificers at a starting salary of £4,387·30 per annum.

For femal recruits in all three services the annual rate of pay on joining is:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Under 17½ | 4,460·30 |
| Basic trainees | 5,898·40 |
| Officer Cadets | 6,719 |

## Overseas Postings

**Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of Army non-commissioned personnel who live abroad on accompanied postings and own homes are accompanied on such postings.

**Mr. Neubert:** The proportion of service men united with their families whilst serving overseas on accompanied postings is 95·6 per cent. It is not possible to identify what percentage of these are home owners, without incurring disproportionate costs.

## Nuclear-powered Warships Safety Committee

**Mr. Alan Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, further to his reply of 6 July to the right hon. Member for Swansea, West, *Official Report*, column *263*, the seven Ministry of Defence officials who are not full-time members of the nuclear-powered warships safety committee have voting rights; who is on the committee specifically to represent environmental or community viewpoints; and if there are any representatives from the Departments of the Environment, the Welsh Office, the Scottish Office or the Northern Ireland Office.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** No vote is taken at meetings of the nuclear-powered warships safety committee (NPWSC). Only unanimous advice is put forward. It is a committee of technical experts whose terms of reference are confined to public safety. The Department of the Environment is represented on the committee by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution (HMIP), and Scottish Office by Her Majesty's industrial pollution inspectorate. Although HMIP is part of the Department of the Environment, it also advises the Welsh Office, and where appropriate represents that Department on the NPWSC. The membership of the NPWSC includes experts from several other bodies which have environmental and public safety responsibilities: the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Department of Health and the nuclear installations inspectorate; and the National Radiological Protection Board. The Northern Ireland Office is not represented as there are no berths or facilities for nuclear-powered submarines in Northern Ireland.

## Equipment Exhibitions

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many visitors are expected to attend this year's Royal Navy equipment exhibition.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Based on previous exhibitions, a total of some 25,000 people are expected to attend RNEE between 24 and 29 September.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now make it his practice to publish the names of countries invited to British forces equipment exhibitions.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** No. It has been the consistent policy of this and previous Administrations not to release details of invitation lists to British forces equipment exhibitions. Invitations are issued on a confidential basis and it would be a breach of trust to release names.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the total cost of this year's Royal Navy equipment exhibition.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The cost of the Royal Navy equipment exhibition is estimated to be £2·4 million. As is usual practice, the costs incurred will be fully recovered from the participating companies.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when and where the next Royal Navy equipment exhibition will be held; and on which dates it will be open to *(a)* overseas customers, *(b)* the press and *(c)* the British public.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The next Royal Navy equipment exhibition (RNEE) will be held at Whale island, Portsmouth between 24 and 29 September 1989. Sunday 24 September will be the press day and the exhibition will be open to VIPs and overseas customers on 25 to 27 September. The remaining two days are trade days although overseas customers will still be welcome. The exhibition is not open to members of the public.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who will perform the opening ceremony at this year's Royal Navy equipment exhibition.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence is planning to perform this ceremony.

### Environmental Pollution

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much intermediate-level nuclear waste produced by submarine refits was dumped at sea prior to 1983.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* Sea dumping of intermediate-level nuclear waste prior to 1983 was carried out under a licence issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. No differentiation was made between ILW produced by the Ministry of Defence as a result of submarine refits and that arising from other sources.

### IUKADGE Command and Control System

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many changes were made to specifications for the IUKADGE command and control system between 1980 and 1988.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* There have been no changes to the IUKADGE command and control system operational requirement since the development contract was awarded to UKSL in 1980. However, as is usual practice, provision is made in the contract for changes to be made, by agreement between the parties, to the detailed specifications, or for necessary additions to be made which were not foreseen at the time of the contract. Such changes are promulgated by means of specification change notices, of which 28 have to date been agreed at prime contract level and 267 at lower levels. the majority of these were requested by the prime contractor.

### Electromagnetic Interference

**Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether electromagnetic interference has been a contributory factor in any accidents involving ground-based, seaborne or airborne weapons systems.

**Mr Archie Hamilton** *[holding anwer 20 July 1989]:* Electromagnetic interference has not been a contributory cause of any accident involving ground-based, seaborne, or airborne weapons systems in the United Kingdom.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Mobility Supplement

54. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what advice is given to the Legal Aid Board's assessment officers in respect of applications for legal aid by war pensioners who are in receipt of mobility supplement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The Department's asessment officers are instructed to disregard mobility supplement received by a war pensioner.

### National Insurance

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report*, *(a)* a list of the securities held by the national insurance fund, including the additions over the past 12 months, *(b)* his forecast of the surplus accruing to the fund in the current financial year for the purposes of the Autumn Statement, *(c)* the corresponding figures for the increase in revenue and *(d)* the purpose for which funds are being accumulated.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** *(a)* The national insurance fund securities, held by the national debt commissioners as at 30 June 1989 are as follows:

*National Insurance Fund*

*Securities held by the National Debt Commissioners at 30 June 1989*

| *British Government Securities* | *Nominal Value* £ |
|---|---|
| Ways and Means | 37,945,000·00 |
| Treasury Bills | 1,050,000,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Exchequer Stock 1989 | 124,185,081·66 |
| 11 per cent. Exchequer Stock 1989 | 261,200,000·00 |
| 10¼ per cent. Exchequer Convertible Stock 1989 | 36,046,819·20 |
| 11 per cent. Exchequer Stock 1990 | 103,315,703·11 |
| 12½ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1990 | 208,500,000·00 |
| 8¼ per cent. Treasury Stock 1987-90 | 15,000,000·00 |
| 8 per cent. Treasury Convertible Stock 1990 | 10,002,000·00 |
| 8 per cent. Treasury Convertible Stock 1990 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Convertible Stock 1990 | 154,836,210·19 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Convertible Stock 1990 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |

| *British Government Securities* | *Nominal Value* £ |
|---|---|
| 11¾ per cent. Treasury Stock 1991 | 223,252,742·22 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Convertible Stock 1991 | 3,000,000·00 |
| 11 per cent. Exchequer Stock 1991 | 173,910,000·00 |
| 11 per cent. Exchequer Stock 1991 NILO | 60,000,000·00 |
| 8 per cent. Treasury Stock 1991 | 138,500,000·00 |
| 8 per cent. Treasury Stock 1991 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |
| 12¾ per cent. Treasury Stock 1992 | 18,675,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Stock 1992 | 132,200,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Stock 1992 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |
| 8 per cent. Treasury Stock 1992 | 205,200,000·00 |
| 8 per cent. Treasury Stock 1992 NILO | 100,000,000·00 |
| 10½ per cent. Treasury Convertible Stock 1992 | 80,300,000·00 |
| 12¼ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1992 | 166,785,789·21 |
| 12¼ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1992 NILO | 75,000,000·00 |
| 13½ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1992 | 36,200,000·00 |
| 8¼ per cent. Treasury Stock 1993 | 136,500,000·00 |
| 8¼ per cent. Treasury Stock 1993 NILO | 115,000,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Stock 1993 | 205,200,000·00 |
| 12½ per cent. Treasury Stock 1993 | 97,200,000·00 |
| 13¾ per cent. Treasury Stock 1993 | 83,200,000·00 |
| 8½ per cent Treasury Stock 1994 | 242,750,000·00 |
| 8½ per cent. Treasury Stock 1994 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |
| 13½ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1994 | 55,150,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Stock 1994 | 129,600,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Stock 1994 NILO | 25,000,000·00 |
| 12½ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1994 | 182,500,000·00 |
| 9 per cent. Treasury Stock 1994 | 46,500,000·00 |
| 12 per cent. Treasury Stock 1995 | 176,550,000·00 |
| 12 per cent. Treasury Stock 1995 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |
| 10¼ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1995 | 154,500,000·00 |
| 10¼ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1995 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |
| 14 per cent. Treasury Stock 1996 | 20,000,000·00 |
| 15¼ per cent. Treasury Stock 1996 | 11,000,000·00 |
| 13¼ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1996 | 46,500,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Conversion Stock 1996 | 242,520,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Conversion Stock 1996 NILO | 75,000,000·00 |
| 13¼ per cent. Treasury Stock 1997 | 50,265,000·00 |
| 10½ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1997 | 268,650,000·00 |
| 8¾ per cent. Treasury Stock 1997 | 141,800,000·00 |
| 8¾ per cent. Treasury Stock 1997 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |
| 9¾ per cent: Exchequer Stock 1998 | 306,050,000·00 |
| 12 per cent. Exchequer Stock 1998 | 183,800,000·00 |
| 9½ per cent. Treasury Stock 1999 | 61,805,491·36 |
| 9½ per cent. Treasury Stock 1999 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |
| 12¼ per cent. Exchequer Stock 1999 | 85,000,000·00 |
| 10½ per cent. Treasury Stock 1999 | 20,000,000·00 |
| 10¼ per cent. Conversion Stock 1999 | 139,550,000·00 |
| 10¼ per cent. Conversion Stock 1999 NILO | 30,000,000·00 |
| 8½ per cent. Treasury Stock 2000 | 163,800,000·00 |
| 8½ per cent. Treasury Stock 2000 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |
| 9 per cent. Conversion Stock 2000 | 297,917,597·76 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Stock 2001 | 112,300,000·00 |
| 9½ per cent. Conversion Stock 2001 | 2,562,270·00 |
| 9¾ per cent. Conversion Stock 2001 | 34,000,000·00 |
| 9¾ per cent. Conversion Stock 2001 NILO | 100,000,000·00 |
| 12 per cent. Exchequer Stock 1999-2002 | 20,500,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Conversion Stock 2002 | 45,200,000·00 |
| 9½ per cent. Conversion Stock 2002 | 1,704,750·99 |
| 9¾ per cent. Treasury Stock 2002 | 138,600,000·00 |
| 9 per cent. Exchequer Stock 2002 | 221,200,000·00 |
| 9 per cent. Exchequer Stock 2002 NILO | 50,000,000·00 |
| 9¾ per cent. Conversion Stock 2003 | 6,860,738·55 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Stock 2003 | 52,550,000·00 |
| 11½ per cent. Treasury Stock 2001-04 | 9,000,000·00 |
| 10 per cent. Treasury Stock 2004 | 2,450,000·00 |
| 9½ per cent. Conversion Stock 2004 | 176,500,000·00 |
| 9½ per cent. Conversion Stock 2005 | 217,000,000·00 |
| 10½ per cent. Exchequer Stock 2005 | 15,000,000·00 |
| 8 per cent. Treasury Stock 2002-06 | 264,118,200·00 |
| 9¾ per cent. Conversion Stock 2006 | 19,500,000·00 |
| 11¾ per cent. Treasury Stock 2003-07 | 35,000,000·00 |
| 8½ per cent. Treasury Stock 2007 | 190,831,042·37 |
| 9 per cent. Treasury Stock 2008 | 160,000,000·00 |
| 8 per cent. Treasury Stock 2009 | 75,000,000·00 |
| 9 per cent. Conversion Stock 2011 | 5,000,000·00 |
|  | 9,662,239,436·62 |
| *Local Authority Bonds* |  |
| 11½ per cent. 23 August 1989 | 539,000·00 |
| 9⅝ per cent. 15 May 1991 | 340,000·00 |
| 9$\frac{1}{16}$ per cent. 2 December 1992 | 250,000·00 |
|  | 1,129,000·00 |
| *Local Authority Securities* |  |
| 6¾ per cent. GLC Stock 1990-92 | 3,000,000·00 |
| *Local Authority Mortgage Loans* | 210,035·08 |
| *Loans to Local Authorities* |  |
| Temporary Loans | 141,590,000·00 |
| Under one year | 153,425,000·00 |
| Over one year | 77,450,000·00 |
| Secondary mortgages | 26,300,000·00 |
|  | 398,765,000·00 |
| Total nominal value of securities held | 10,065,343,471·70 |
| Cash uninvested | 3,442·70 |
| TOTAL | 10,065,346,914·40 |

(b) and (c):

The forecast of the surplus and increase in revenue to the national insurance fund for the purposes of the Autumn Statement are provided by the Government Actuary's Department. The Government Actuary provided in his report on the drafts of the 1988 Benefits Uprating and Contributions Rerating Orders (Cm. 537) the following figures in respect of the tax year 1989-90:

|  | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| Surplus of income over expenditure | 519 |
| Increase in total income to the national insurance fund over 1988-89 | 197 |

Equivalent estimates for the 1989 autumn statement will be published by the Government Actuary's Department when the uprating and rerating orders for 1990-91 are laid before Parliament towards the end of the year.

(d) The national insurance fund pays for all contributory benefits; the fund is administered so that contributions collected and paid into the fund are paid out as benefits. The fund has no borrowing powers, so that it must have a balance to insure against unexpected contingencies. The minimum target balance recommended by the Government Actuary is not intended to be a fixed target, but a prudent limit below which the balance should not be allowed to fall continually.

## Disability Benefits Review

**Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will announce the proposed timetable for the disability benefits review; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if, following the publication of the final Office of Population Censuses and Surveys report he will make a statement on *(a)* the timescale for a review of the conclusions, *(b)* the terms of reference of such a review body and *(c)* the likely membership of the review team.

**Mr. Nicholas Scott:** The sixth and final OPCS report on disability in Great Britain was published on 17 July. This marks the point at which both the Government and organisations of and for disabled people can begin to look at the survey findings in the round. Once we have done so, I hope to be able to announce a timetable for further action.

### Departmental Press Releases

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will ensure that when his replies to letters sent to him are issued as his Department's press releases, copies of such letters are included in the press releases.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** When issuing press releases, we will continue to include any information that we judge to be appropriate in the circumstances.

### Benefits (Children)

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Bournemouth, West (Mr. Butterfill) of 3 July, *Official Report,* column *41,* if he will give a breakdown of his figure of 3 million children getting an extra 50p a week, showing how the figure is split between recipients of income support and of family credit, how it is distributed between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and giving the percentage of children in each region who are affected.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** On the basis of the assumptions underlying the Government's expenditure plans (Cmnd. 615), it is estimated that in the year 1989-90, 0·8 million children in families in receipt of family credit and 2·2 million children in families in receipt of income support in Great Britain will receive an extra 50p per week in their child allowances above the normal uprating increase. I regret that it is not possible to provide statistically reliable estimates of how these children are distributed among families in England, Scotland and Wales.

### Lone Parents

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his latest estimate of the number of lone parents; how many are in paid work; how many are on income support; how many are on other out-of-work benefits; and how many are receiving family credit.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The most recent estimate of lone parent numbers is for 1986 and the income support and family credit schemes did not commence until April 1988. Information for 1986 is as follow:

| | |
|---|---|
| Estimated numbers of lone parents | [1]1,010,000 |
| Estimated numbers in paid work | [2]440,000 |
| In receipt of supplementary benefit | [3]602,000 |
| In receipt of Family Income Supplement | [5]85,000 |

*Notes:*

No information is held on number of lone parents receiving unemployment benefit.

There were 722,000 lone parents in receipt of income support at [4]May 1988 and 108,000 in receipt of family credit at March 1989.

[1] OPCS estimate see Population Trends 55 Spring 1989.

[2] FES 1986, includes those in receipt of Supplementary Benefit with part-time earnings.

[3] February 1986 ASE figure excludes prisoners' wives and the temporarily separated.

[4] May 1988 ASE—figure excludes prisoners' wives and the temporarily separated.

[5] February.

### Means-tested Benefits

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his latest estimate of the public expenditure savings as a result of the low take up of means-tested benefits.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I refer my right hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 7 February 1989 at columns *628-29*. Estimates of the take-up of the main income-related benefits for 1985 will be published before the summer recess.

### Mortgage Interest

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish figures giving the disposable incomes, after taking into account means-tested benefits of single-wage married couples with two children under five years and mortgages of *(a)* £20,000, *(b)* £30,000, *(c)* £40,000 and *(d)* £50,000, firstly when out of work and receiving income support and secondly when in work earning £100, £150, £200, £250 and £300 a week.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** No precise figures are available. There are a variety of different mortgages, and mortgage interest fluctuations mean that mortgage interest payments can vary during the course of any given year. Social security provision for income support claimants with mortgages varies with the period benefit has been in payment.

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the maximum amount of mortgage interest payable with income support; and whether he will consider aligning the family credit regulations to take account of mortgage interest.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** There is no maximum amount of mortgage interest which can be met in income support, but the amount can be restricted in certain circumstances. We have no plans to allow for mortgage interest in the assessment of family credit.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Moore:** The Government's general policy towards small businesses is to create a climate in which they can flourish and to provide measures that support and help stimulate their development. Over the past 12 months my Department has continued to identify ways to help small businesses. Specific measures which have been introduced included:

(i) In February 1989 we issued a new communications package for employers which provided guidance on the collection of national insurance contributions and the payment of statutory sick pay. We enlisted the help of external consultants and in line with their recommendations, the structure and design of the guidance was completely revised. The aim was to make our instructions easier for employers to understand, in particular for the small employer who may have to carry out payroll functions personally.

At the end of February 1989, immediately after the dispatch of the new guidance material, a small survey was undertaken to sample initial reactions to the new material. The survey showed that 83 per cent. thought that the updating was a good idea and 69 per cent. agreed that they would be more likely to use the new guides than the old ones. A larger survey is currently under way to examine reactions to the material in use and to seek further improvements. The results are expected by September 1989.

(ii) We have produced a video, specifically aimed at small employers, which outlines the basics of the calculation and payment of statutory sick pay, and which has been available since March 1989. Copies can be obtained from CFL Vision, PO Box 35, Wetherby, Yorkshire, LS23 7EX, price £14·50.

(iii) In October 1988 we embarked on a series of experimental seminars for employers which provided instruction on the administration of statutory sick pay and statutory maternity pay. The pilot seminars were based in Scotland and found to be of value to both small and large employers. We intend to extend the service nationally and are currently selecting the staff to do this.

(iv) We have worked with the Department of Employment in producing a starter pack for the newly self-employed and those who may be contemplating self-employment. The pack, "Working for Yourself: What You Need to Know" became available in July 1989.

(v) We have undertaken a comprehensive review of all the inquiries local and central DSS offices make of business. Implementation of the report's recommendations will result in a lessening of the burden departmental inquiries place on business.

We are continuing to take positive steps to give small firms opportunities to do business with the Department. Local purchasing staff are encouraged to make contact with small firms and they are doing a substantial proportion of their business with them.

As yet we have not designed performance indicators specifically for monitoring achievements in this area, but my Department has a system to monitor proposals which impact on business to ensure the needs of small businesses are fully taken into account. We attach particular importance to action taken to help small firms and will continue to explore further ways of doing so.

### Community Charge

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list by each charging authority in England the income level at which *(a)* a single person aged under 25 years, *(b)* a single person aged over 25 years, *(c)* a single pensioner, *(d)* a pensioner couple and *(e)* a couple with two children all with no savings would lose entitlement to community charge rebate assuming the Department of the Environment's illustrative community charge figures for 1989-90.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The information requested has been placed in the Library.

### Benefits (Dundee)

**Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much was spent on community care grants and social fund loans by the Dundee, East and Dundee, West offices of his Department in 1988-89; what proportion of their budgets for these benefits this represents; and how much they have been allocated for these benefits for 1989-90.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Such information is available from the details held in the Library.

### Pensioners

**Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many pensioners in receipt of less than full basic national insurance retirement pension, because of insufficent contributions *(a)* also receive income support, *(b)* are living with partners whose income added to their own, takes them as a couple up to or beyond the basic income support level.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Information collected centrally on retirement pensioners in receipt of income support does not indicate the rate of basic state pension in payment to those individuals.

**Mrs. Beckett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security why leaflet NP1 advises only pensioners not receiving income support or housing benefit to read on and decide whether to claim income support; and whether he will take steps to amend the leaflets so as to avoid giving the impression that pensioners receiving only housing benefit cannot gain by claiming income support.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The leaflet does not refer to

> "only pensioners not receiving income support or housing benefit"

but to people who do

> "not at present get either benefit".

I do not consider that this gives the impression suggested, particularly as the next column of the leaflet sets out clearly the conditions of eligibility to income support.

### Elderly People (Evictions)

**Mr. Madden** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make arrangements to collect information about elderly people who are evicted from residential homes for the elderly in the private/voluntary sector; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** We have no plans to do so.

### Women Pensioners and War Widows

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has any information concerning the current average income of *(a)* women pensioners and *(b)* war widows.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* The average weekly gross income of all single[1] women pensioners in 1986 was £73.30 (at 1986 prices). Comparable information is not available for war widows.

*Source:* Family Expenditure Survey 1986.

[1] Information on the gross income of all women pensioners is not given because the available data on this group includes the income of the husbands of married women.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has any information concerning the percentages of all women pensioners which fall into different total income brackets; and if he will give comparable figures for war widows.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* The proportion of single[1] women pensioners in gross equivalent[2] income quintiles is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Quintile 1 (lowest) | 26·8 |
| 2 | 49·5 |
| 3 | 13·7 |
| 4 | 5·4 |
| 5 (highest) | 4·6 |

Comparable information is not available for war widows.

*Source:* Family Expenditure Survey 1986.

[1] Information on the income distribution of all women pensioners is not given because the available data on this group includes the income of the husbands of married women.

[2] Equivalisation is a method of adjusting incomes to allow direct comparisons to be made between different family types, for example single and married people, those with and without children, householders and non-householders.

## ENERGY

### EC Energy Policy

16. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on progress towards the development of a European Community energy policy.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The Commission has recently drafted instruments on price transparency, transfrontier trade in gas and electricity, and on notification of certain energy investments.

### Fast Breeder Reactors

19. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment he has made of the future of fast breeder reactors; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** My right hon. Friend announced the results of the Government's review of fast reactor policy to the House on 21 July last year at column 1288.

### Renewable Energy

24. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he intends to review the non-fossil fuel quota in the light of the study of renewable electrical energy potential in the north-west of England carried out by NORWEB and the energy technology support unit, Harwell.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The Government recently announced their intention to reserve a privileged place for renewables within the non-fossil fuel obligation. This will be done by setting special extra tranches of capacity which can be filled only by renewable forms of energy. The proposed levels of the tranches will be kept under review to ensure that when the obligations are laid they take fully into account the potential availability of renewable capacity. There is no need for further review at present.

27. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish the recently completed study of the renewable energy resource potential in the north-west of England carried out by NORWEB and the energy technology support, unit, Harwell.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The report and the accompanying overview report were published on 6 July. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

44. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the next regions to be studied by the energy technology support unit at Harwell for renewable electrical energy potential.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The potential for the use of renewable energy was assessed for the country as a whole and published in "Energy Paper 55". Since then two further studies considering electricity generation have been published; the "Cornwall Energy Project" by Cornwall county council and "Prospects for Renewable Energy in the Norweb Area" by the North Western electricity board and the energy technology support unit. No other specific proposals are in hand at present, but it is hoped that other electricity boards will follow Norweb's lead.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has evaluated which renewable energy projects currently being developed or studied by the energy technology support unit at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell, might prove suitable for export to *(a)* the Indian sub-continent and African states and *(b)* European Economic Community member states.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The Department's programme on renewable energy is focused primarily on the development of commercially viable and environmentally acceptable renewable technologies for the United Kingdom. Although at an early stage of development, many of the Department's projects could lead to products suitable for export to both industrialised and less well-developed countries. The United Kingdom is already involved in collaboration or information exchanges in a number of areas.

Many of the technologies being examined as part of the Department's R and D programme should offer considerable export potential for United Kingdom industry.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the energy technology support unit, Harwell's, medium-term and long-term projects for renewable electrical energy generation in the North West of England.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) earlier today.

### Combined Heat and Power

26. **Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what consideration is being given to enabling electricity generated through combined heat and power schemes in the home to be fed into the national grid.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Our privatisation proposals are specifically designed to encourage competition in generation and to ensure that all economic sources of electricity supply have access to the market. Any surplus electricity generated by CHP schemes is however more likely to be used locally than to be fed into the national grid.

## Coal and Oil Combustion (Tax)

28. **Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals exist for international negotiations on the taxation of coal and oil combustion in advanced western countries.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I am aware of no formal proposals for such international negotiations, although several ideas have been floated for a carbon tax or levy as a way to discourage $CO_2$ emissions. The proper forum for consideration of such ideas is the intergovernmental panel on climate change, which is examining strategies for responding to the greenhouse effect.

## Insulation

29. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the proposal by the Select Committee on Energy of a target of 250,000 low-income households to be insulated in a year.

**Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy to set a target of a minimum of 250,000 low-income households to be insulated in the current financial year.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) earlier today.

38. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his latest estimate of the number of low-income households which will be insulated under neighbourhood energy action programmes in the current financial year; and what are the resulting energy savings.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment announced on 10 February a package of special measures to help boost the project network. The most recent quarterly monitoring returns relate to the period before those measures took effect, so we are not yet able to produce reliable estimates of the number of households which will be treated in the current financial year.

51. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will hold urgent discussions on ways of stepping up the number of low-income households to be insulated over the next three years.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The Secretary of State for Employment announced on 10 February a special package of measures designed to boost the network of community insulation projects which provide practical help to low-income households. Officials from my Department and the Training Agency are now discussing ways of maintaining and building upon the improvement which stemmed from those measures.

52. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the progress being made to date in insulation schemes for private dwellings in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** Amendments to the Building Regulations were laid before the House on 11 July. These will require improvements in insulation standards for new housing (and other new buildings) which should achieve a saving of about 20 per cent. in heating requirements compared with standards under existing regulations. The amendments will come into operation on 1 April 1990.

Community insulation projects, which provide a low-cost insulation (mainly draughtproofing) service for low-income households, have so far insulated over 600,000 homes, about half of which are in the private sector. Over 3·5 million grants have been paid under the homes insulation scheme for loft, tank and pipe insulation. Over 90 per cent. of homes with accessible lofts now have some degree of loft insulation.

## Coal Liquefaction

30. **Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects the coal-to-oil liquefaction pilot plant at Point of Ayr to be commissioned; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The commissioning phase of British Coal's liquefaction project has already commenced, and I would expect this phase to be completed next year. My Department has offered to contribute up to 9 per cent. of the project cost up to a maximum contribution of £3 million, and is contractually committed to support the commissioning phase.

## Coal Orders

31. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce the level, duration and tonnage of coal to be ordered from British Coal by *(a)* National Power and *(b)* PowerGen from January 1990 onwards.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The negotiation of new coal purchase arrangements is primarily a commercial matter for the industries. The announcement of the details of such arrangements, once concluded, will also primarily be a matter for them.

## Coal Mining (Nottinghamshire)

32. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most up-to-date estimate of the impact of electricity privatisation on employment in mining in the Nottinghamshire coalfield.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Negotiations between the generators and British Coal are continuing. Following the conclusion of these negotiations, it will be for British Coal to estimate what effects there may be on its operations.

## Fossil Fuels (Levy)

33. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recent representations he has received seeking a levy on the combustion of any fossil fuel.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** None.

## Nuclear Power (Privatisation)

34. **Mr. James Lamond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most up-to-date estimate of the cost of transferring nuclear power stations to the private sector.

**Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce the discount on present net replacement cost value of £9·3 billion of the nuclear power stations of England and Wales, required to achieve a transfer to the private sector.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Vale of Glamorgan (Mr. Smith) earlier today.

### Gas Tariffs

35. **Mr. Rost:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to meet the Director General of Gas Supply to discuss tariffs proposed by British Gas.

**Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any plans to meet the Director General of Gas Supply to discuss the gas price tariff; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** I regularly meet the Director General of Gas Supply and discuss a range of matters of mutual interest.

### Electricity Generation

36. **Mr. Wood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the industry forecast for future electricity generating capacity before the year 2000.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The final year of the load forecast which the electricity supply industry (England and Wales) adopted in October 1988 is 1997-98. The forecast of unrestricted demand for that year is 56·5 GW.

### Coal Imports

37. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next expects to meet the chairman of British Coal regarding coal imports; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of British Coal regularly to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

### Electricity Privatisation

39. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has fully evaluated the value for money to be obtained from the £26·5 million allocated for advisers fees on electricity privatisation and the expenditure on departmental staff of comparable skills.

42. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps he is taking to ensure that value for money is being obtained from the £26·5 million to be spent on advisers' fees to promote electricity privatisation.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The Department carefully evaluates the costs and benefits associated with each item of expenditure and seeks to negotiate the best possible price with advisers before entering into a contractual relationship.

45. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received from environmental or conservation organisations on the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I have received a number of representations.

### Fluidised Bed Combustion

40. **Mr. Allen MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a further statement on the Grimethorpe fluidised bed combustion proposal.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** My Department is currently working with British Coal to put together a substantial financial package involving both private and public sector funding, to carry forward the proposed experiments at Grimethorpe as part of the programme to develop the topping cycle concept. Once the outcome of these discussions is known, I will make a further statement.

### Energy Efficiency

41. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what priority he proposes to give to the encouragement of energy efficiency and conservation.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The Government attach high priority to the promotion of energy efficiency through the work of the Energy Efficiency Office. Our proposals for the electricity supply industry will give further impetus to the promotion of energy efficiency, in particular through the duties they place on the Director General of Electricity Supply.

### Greenhouse Effect

43. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the total number of nuclear reactors operating worldwide and the total amount of electricity demand met by them; and if he will estimate the total quantity of greenhouse gases that would be produced as a result of replacing them with coal-fired power stations.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I understand from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that at the end of 1988 there were 429 nuclear reactors operating worldwide. Comprehensive figures for electricity generation are not yet available for 1988, but, in 1987, nuclear power generated 1,625 billion kw hours of electricity, equivalent to the output from 211 pressurised water reactors (PWRs) of the Sizewell B type.

It is difficult to be precise when estimating the increase in greenhouse gas production if nuclear power is replaced by coal worldwide but, on current figures, carbon dioxide ($CO_2$) output would increase by about 1·3 billion tonnes per year, or 35 per cent. of the present global contribution due to coal-fired electricity generation.

### Thermal Efficiency

46. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what improvements in thermal efficiency have been achieved in the past 10 years.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The efficiency of the nation's energy use has improved greatly over the past 10 years. In 1978 the United Kingdom consumed 1·23 tonnes of coal equivalent per £1,000 of GDP (at 1985 factor cost). In 1988 this had fallen to 1 tonne of coal equivalent per £1,000 of GDP in the same price terms, a reduction of 18·7 per cent. over the period.

### Nuclear Power Stations (Decommissioning)

47. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received about the decommissioning of nuclear power stations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I have received a number of representations relating to various aspects of the decommissioning of nuclear power stations in recent months.

### British Coal

48. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the issues he expects to raise when he next meets the chairman of British Coal.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of British Coal regularly to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

### Power Stations

49. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the power stations now being built in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Sizewell B PWR power station is at present under construction.

### Landfill Gases

50. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretaryof State for Energy what recent assessment his Department has made of the possibilities for the generation of electricity from landfill gases; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** There is great uncertainty about projections for renewable sources of energy. Based on data given in "Energy Paper 55—"Renewable Energy in the UK: The Way Forward", it has been estimated that by the year 2025 up to 4·5 per cent. of current energy requirements might come from a wide range of biomass sources if the diverse technologies involved can be successfully developed and applied.

It is not yet possible to assess with any certainty the contribution which electricity generation from landfill gases will make towards this proportion. However, there are indications that approximately 200 MW of landfill gas-fired generating capacity would be operating by the turn of the century.

### Oil Production

53. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the volume of United Kingdom oil production in 1988 and his estimate of production in 1989, 1990 and 1991.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The figures requested are set out in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's report to Parliament, "Development of the Oil and Gas Resources of the United Kingdom" (the Brown Book), published in April 1989.

### Coal-fired Generation

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretaryof State for Energy if he will bring forward proposals to require that a proportion of electricity be generated by coal-fired power stations.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** No.

### Energy Conservation

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the steps he is taking to promote energy conservation.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend for Devon, North (Mr. Speller) and the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 15 May, *Official Report*, column *105*.

### $CO_2$ Emissions

**Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his Department's estimate of the contribution that nuclear power will make to the required halving in United Kingdom $CO_2$ emissions by the year 2025.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** There is no requirement on the United Kingdom to reduce the future emissions of carbon dioxide or any other energy-related greenhouse gas. The course of any necessary future action should become clearer when the intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) reports in autumn 1990. Until then it would not be wise for the United Kingdom to act unilaterally in such a global matter.

In the meantime, current policies in the energy field are pointing in the right direction to curtail the growth of these gases. The encouragement of cost effective energy efficiency measures, the development of renewable energy resources, the support of diversified supply options such as nuclear (which emits almost no $CO_2$) in the Electricity Bill, are a firm basis for any future action. The United Kingdom's call for the strengthening of the Montreal protocol on CFCs will spur action on the most powerful of greenhouse gases.

**Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proportion of the United Kingdom's carbon dioxide emissions is caused by coal and oil-fired power stations.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Emissions from coal and oil-fired power stations account for about one third of the total United Kingdom emissions from non-biological sources.

### Least-cost Options

**Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy to increase support for least-cost options to meet energy demand.

**Mr. Parkinson:** The Government believe that, provided market barriers are removed, market forces are the best way to meet energy demand at least cost. Our proposals for privatisation of the electricity supply industry, and the work of the Energy Efficiency Office, are designed to tackle and remove market barriers.

### Efficiency and Conservation

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had recently with the director designate of the Office of Electricity Regulation on the priority to be given to energy efficiency and conservation.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State discussed energy efficiency issues with Professor Littlechild specifically on 6 June and generally on subsequent occasions. They agreed that the Office of Electricity Regulation and the Energy Efficiency Office would establish mechanisms for close co-operation on matters of common interest, both at national and regional level. I welcome these arrangements, which will reinforce the important work which both organisations will be doing to promote energy efficiency.

### Sulphur Emissions

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what will be spent in the next financial year in overcoming the problem of sulphur emissions from electricity power stations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** This is an operational matter for the CEGB. I have asked the chairman of the board to write to my hon. Friend.

### Nuclear Generation

**Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proportion of electricity is generated by nuclear power in *(a)* France, *(b)* Belgium, *(c)* Sweden, *(d)* Switzerland, *(e)* Finland, *(f)* West Germany, *(g)* Spain and *(h)* the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The latest available published information (1987) is as follows:

*(a)* France 70·1 per cent.; *(b)* Belgium 62·2 per cent.; *(c)* Sweden 45·9 per cent.; *(d)* Switzerland 38·4 per cent.; *(e)* Finland 36·7 per cent.; *(f)* West Germany 31·2 per cent.; *(g)* Spain 30·9 per cent.; *(h)* the United Kingdom 18·2 per cent.

*Source:* "Energy Statistics 1986-87" (OECD/IEA).

**Mr. Graham Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any proposals to require that a minimum percentage of electricity distributed by the electricity boards will come from electricity produced by nuclear generation.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Clause 34 of the Electricity Bill permits the Secretary of State to make orders to require public electricity suppliers to have available to them a certain minimum amount of non-fossil generating capacity. This is intended to encourage all economically viable and environmentally acceptable non-fossil sources. There is no intention to restrict such orders solely to nuclear generation.

### Uranium

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will request the Euratom safeguards authorities to re-designate all N-coded uranium imported to the United Kingdom since 1978 with a P code.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** In compliance with the terms of the Euratom treaty, it is not for the Government to seek to change the coding placed on imported nuclear materials by the Euratom safeguards authorities.

### White Papers

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, for each of the last three White Papers issued by his Department, for which legislation has been started, he will state the time elapsed between their publication and the First Readings of any Bills connected with them; and if he will do the same for the last three White Papers issued by his Department prior to May 1979.

**Mr. Parkinson:** Only one such White Paper has been issued by my Department since 1979. This was the White Paper "Privatising Electricity" (Cm. 322, 25 February 1988). The Electricity Bill had its First Reading on 30 November 1988. It is not for me to answer for the record of the last Government in this matter, but the information requested should be available in the Library of the House and the *Official Report*.

### Nuclear Power

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the magawatt equivalent of the 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. range of electricity to be provided by nuclear power, as specified in the *Official Report*, 5 April, column *275;* and if each area electricity board will have to accept this range.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The non-fossil fuel obligation will be set for each public electricity supply company in England and Wales later this year, taking into account its size and pattern of demand.

### Mines (Capital Investment)

**Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the capital investments in the following mines for the year 1989-90 *(a)* Murton, *(b)* Easington, *(c)* Dawdon, *(d)* Vane Tempest, *(e)* Wearmouth, *(f)* Westo and *(g)* Ellington.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** These are matters for British Coal. I have asked the chairman to write direct to the hon. Member.

### Coal-fired Power Stations

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list by year for the last 10 years, the tonnage level of purchases from *(a)* British Coal and *(b)* other sources of coal suppliers for use at power stations to be allocated to (i) National Power and (ii) Power Gen.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Deliveries of coal to individual power stations are a matter for the CEGB. I will ask the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

### Energy Sources

**Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment his Department has made on the question of environmentally comparable energy sources; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The chief scientist group at the energy technology support unit have carried out for my Department a number of appraisals of energy sources and their environmental impact is one of the range of factors assessed.

A wide-ranging appraisal of most energy sources and technologies relevant to the United Kingdom was reported in "Energy Paper 54" and specific assessments of alternative energy resources such as "Hot Dry Rocks" ETSU-R-34, "Bioethanol as a Transport Fuel" ETSU-R-44 and "Synthetic Fuel Options for Road Transport Applications" ETSU-R-33 have been published.

### Mining Subsidence

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish in the *Official Report*, for each year for which figures are available, the cost of compensation and repairs for coal mining subsidence damage.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Actual cash expenditure by British Coal during each of the last three financial years is as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1986-87 | 54·5 |
| 1987-88 | 48·9 |
| 1988-89 | 43·1 |

### Desulphurisation

**Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects the first power station in the east midlands will be equipped with flue gas desulphurisation equipment; and when such equipment will be available for use in power stations in the Trent valley.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** This is an operational matter for the CEGB. I have asked the chairman to write direct to my hon. Friend.

### Low-wattage Light Bulbs

**Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether his Department has made any estimate of the level to which the unit price of electricity to the private consumer would have to increase to make it economic for all consumers to switch to low-wattage light bulbs.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** Low-energy light bulbs already offer worthwhile savings to domestic consumers at current electricity prices. Their extra initial cost is more than compensated for by much longer lifetimes and lower electricity consumption.

### Landfill Gases

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many landfill sites have been identified by his Department where biodegradable wastes could produce significant volumes of biogas for commercial exploitation; how many sites are currently extracting biogas commercially; and what is the volume in coal tonnes equivalent he estimates can be exploited from British landfill sites.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** A recent estimate, made on behalf of my Department, has identified 438 sites where landfill gas from biodegradable wastes could be exploited commercially. Of this total, some 24 sites are already extracting and exploiting landfill gas and producing an energy equivalent of 0·16 million tonnes coal equivalent (mtce) annually. While there is great uncertainty about projections for renewable sources of energy, it is possible that this amount could more than double by 1992, and reach around 1·5 mtce by the turn of the century.

### Gas Prices

**Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will take remedial action to alleviate the rise in interruptible gas prices following the removal of the ability of users to negotiate individual contracts, consequent upon the implementation of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's recommendation to publish gas price schedules.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The Director General of Gas Supply is responsible for ensuring that British Gas plc operates within the terms of its authorisation, as modified to give effect to the MMC's recommendations. Mr. McKinnon is at present in discussion with British Gas on a number of points concerning the structure and operation of the gas price schedule. However, the level of interruptible gas prices is a matter for British Gas.

### Petrol Prices

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what has been the percentage change in the average pump price of four star or premium petrol, net of retailers' margin, duty and taxes, between 1959 and 1988, measured against the retail prices index and in constant money terms.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The percentage changes in the price of four star petrol (that is, premium), net of duty and taxes, over the period between 1959 and 1988, are as follows:

| | *Per cent.* |
|---|---|
| Petrol price (money of the day) | 407 |
| RPI | 769 |
| Petrol price deflated by RPI | −42 |

The Department of Energy does not have data on retailers' margins.

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what has been the percentage change in the average price of four star and premium petrol, net of duty and taxes *(a)* between 1960 and 1988, *(b)* between 1970 and 1988 and *(c)* between 1980 and 1988, measured against the retail price index and in constant money terms.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The percentage changes in the price of four star petrol (that is, premium), net of duty and taxes, over the relevant periods, are as follows:

| | *Petrol price (in money of the day) Per cent.* | *RPI Per cent.* | *Petrol price deflated by RPI Per cent.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1960 to 1988 | 414 | 756 | −40 |
| 1970 to 1988 | 453 | 478 | −4 |
| 1980 to 1988 | −19 | 60 | −49 |

### Flow Charts

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy(1) if he will indicate when the last flow chart showing United Kingdom energy flows was produced; and if he intends to issue a new chart with the latest figures; (2) if he will provide 1988 figures for the information which was provided by the 1983 energy flow chart.

**Mr. Parkinson:** The last chart showing United Kingdom energy flows was produced in 1987, and was based on data for 1986. The flow chart is produced every three years; the next chart is scheduled for publication in mid-1990. and will be based on data for 1989. The chart is prepared from data published in the annual "Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics." The 1989 edition of the digest, containing data for 1988, is scheduled to be published by HMSO on 27 July, and a copy will be available in the House of Commons Library.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Cecil Parkinson:** My Department's activities in support of small businesses remain essentially as stated in my reply to my hon. Friend on 14 July 1987 at columns *414-15*. In the development and implementation of my Department's policies full account is taken on their impact on small businesses. In particular over the last 12 months, Government funding for British Coal Enterprise has risen to £60 million and new job opportunities, many of which are in small businesses, now total 41,041 in 2,600 individual projects; I am seeking to encourage the development of small licensed coal mine operations and I am considering proposing an early increase in the statutory limits on the size of licensed mines; the Energy Efficiency Office has published booklets giving advice on energy efficiency in hotels, offices, factories and warehouses and high street banks and agencies; The Offshore Supplies Office has held a seminar on the export opportunities for smaller companies which examined ways to help them carry out economical market research and encouraged them to share the costs of doing so in carefully targeted areas.

### Nuclear Materials (Safeguards)

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn) *Official Report*, 20 June, column 91, where the statement of interpretation on regulation 3227/76 is published.

**Mr. Michael Spicer** *[holding answer 5 July 1989]*: The statement on quantity and quality of nuclear substances was made by Commissioner Mosar during the debate on transport of dangerous goods and substances in the European Parliament on 5 July 1988 and is contained in "Official Journal (Special Series) Annex No. 2-367" pages 89-90, which is available for inspection in the Library of the House.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Tuesday 25 July 1989*

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Misleading Advertisements

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many complaints he has received concerning misleading advertisements; and if he has any plans to amend the Control of Misleading Advertisement Regulations 1988.

**Mr. Forth:** My Department does not keep records of such complaints. Anyone complaining to the Department about an advertisement whether in respect of misleadingness or otherwise is referred to the appropriate advertising control authority: usually the Advertising Standards Authority or local trading standards department. Complaints about misleading advertisements which cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the authorities may be referred to the Director General of Fair Trading under the Control of Misleading Advertisements Regulations 1988. I will ask the director general to write to the hon. Member about the number of complaints he has received.

I have no plans to amend the regulations.

### Vehicle Mileage

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has had discussions concerning clocking and the possibility of requiring notification of a car's mileage to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre when relicensing, acquiring, or disposing of a car.

**Mr. Forth:** I have seen the recommendations to which the hon. Member refers, which were made by the working group led by the Director General of Fair Trading. As my hon. Friend the Minister for Roads and Traffic told the House on 16 March, the Government do not believe that the expensive system proposed for collecting and storing data in order to deter clocking would be sufficiently reliable to warrant the cost and bureaucracy involved. There are already mileage verification services available from private sector companies, and we believe that motor manufacturers could do much to solve the problem by developing tamper-resistant odometers.

### Second-hand Cars

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many complaints he has received concerning the failure of garages to carry out pre-sales inspections of second-hand cars; and what discussions he has had concerning the improvement of consumer protection in this area.

**Mr. Forth:** I am not aware of any complaints from consumers received by my Department specifically about the failure of garages to carry out pre-sales inspections of second-hand cars. I receive representations from time to time about various aspects of consumer protection in relation to used cars, but I have had no discussions specifically about pre-sales inspections.

### Creches

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has received any recent representations about pilot or permanent workplace creches and similar incentives further to encourage the return to employment of women in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Forth:** The Department of Trade and Industry uses the joint management and union arrangements which exist within the Whitley machinery to discuss workplace child care. The Department has received no recent representations outside this forum.

The DTI is keen both to retain female staff and to encourage women to return to its employ. With other Departments, the DTI has contributed funds to a play scheme in London for employees' children aged five to 12 years. We have also initiated a programme of action to promote part-time working, and have increased flexible working hours. We are shortly to announce details of a career break scheme.

### NESL

**Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will place in the Library a copy of the letter written to him by the European Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan on 12 July regarding NESL.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** It is not usual practice to publish correspondence of this kind between the European Commission and the Government of a member country. In the particular circumstances of this case, however, a copy of Sir Leon Brittan's letter of 12 July has, with his agreement, been placed in the Library appended to a note by the Department on exchanges between the Government and the Commission concerning NESL.

### Summer Time

**Miss Hoey:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what assessment has been made of the impact on quality of service for letter deliveries by the Post Office if there is an extra hour of winter morning darkness due to the implementation of single/double summer time;

(2) what information he has as to what extra costs the Post Office forecasts it will incur if there is an extra hour of winter morning darkness due to the implementation of single/double summer time.

**Mr. Forth:** Quality of service is a matter for the Post Office Board. I understand the change would increase lighting and heating costs and require some changes in staffing arrangements at post offices.

### Astra Satellite

**Dr. Woodcock:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster at what power levels the Astra satellite is authorised by international regulatory agreements to broadcast signals to the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Atkins:** The power level for which the ASTRA (Transmitting space station GDL-6) satellite has been co-ordinated with the United Kingdom under the procedures of the ITU/IFRB (International Frequency Registration Board of the International Telecommunication Union) is 53 dBW eirp (Effective isotropic radiated power).

### Eutelsat

**Dr. Woodcock:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what payments from public funds have been made in each of the last five years to British Telecom International in respect of its involvement in the Eutelsat organisation and for what purpose.

**Mr. Atkins:** No such payments have been made to British Telecom International (BTI). The following payments have, however, been made to EUTELSAT by the British National Space Centre in respect of United Kingdom membership of EUTELSAT:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1984 | 513,523 |
| 1985 | 1,389,568 |
| 1986 | 1,843,321 |
| 1987 | 903,063 |
| 1988 | 3,342,463 |

These payments are a contribution towards the subscription payable to EUTELSAT by BTI, as United Kingdom signatory, in recognition of the costs associated with demonstrating the commercial applications of the ECS series of experimental telecommunications satellites. The payments will cease by the end of 1994.

### Information Technology

**Mr. Michael Marshall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he is now in a position to give his Department's considered response to recommendations Nos. 24-26 of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry's report on information technology concerning the zero rating of value added tax on donations of information technology equipment made to educational institutions for research purposes.

**Mr. Forth:** The issues governing the zero rating of value added tax and taxation matters generally are complex and range beyond my Department. I can, however, state that I have taken note of the Select Committee's recommendation and can confirm that my Department remains committed to maintaining and improving the climate for investment for research and technology within the existing legislative framework. It is within this context that my officials have been liaising with the Treasury, but the policy regarding all fiscal matters is determined by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Mortgage Arrears

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Attorney-General (1) how many actions for repossession as a result of mortgage arrears were begun in the Coventry county court in each year since 1979;

(2) how many county court actions for mortgage repossession occurred in the Coventry county court; how many of these actions resulted in an order for possession of the property; how many of these orders for possession were suspended; and how many warrants for eviction were issued, in each year since 1979.

**The Attorney-General:** The number of mortgage actions for possession entered and orders made for possession in Coventry county court in each year since 1983 (the first year for which figures are available) are as follows. No information is collected on how many of these orders were suspended nor how many resulted in evictions.

| *Year* | *Number of mortgage possession actions entered* | *Number of mortgage possession orders made* |
|---|---|---|
| 1983 | 550 | 476 |
| 1984 | 545 | 446 |
| 1985 | 471 | 404 |
| 1986 | 505 | 497 |
| 1987 | 560 | 385 |
| 1988 | 454 | 536 |

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Adult Illiteracy

**Sir Anthony Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish his current estimate of the number of adult persons in the United Kingdom unable to read or write.

**Mr. Jackson:** Few adults are totally unable to write, but a substantial number have some problems with reading, writing and spelling. Research sponsored by the adult literacy and basic skills unit (ALBSU) and the Training Agency suggests that of the cohort of 23-year-olds who were interviewed in 1981 as part of the national child development study survey, 13 per cent. said that they had some problems with reading, writing or numeracy, and 3 per cent. said that their problems caused difficulty in everyday life. If this were typical of all adults in England and Wales, an estimated 5·5 million people could have some difficulties with literacy and numeracy, of whom about 300,000 might experience serious difficulties with reading and writing.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** This information is not readily available in the form requested. Between 1 December 1988 and 30 June 1989 the Department received 9,985 letters designated for ministerial reply, and 9,385 replies were issued. During January 1989, 1,352 letters for ministerial reply were received, and 1,041 replies issued. Approximately two thirds of this correspondence was from hon. Members.

### Personal and Social Education

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many hours the subjects of personal and social education will occupy in the national curriculum; and what will be the format for teaching these studies;

(2) how many hours the subject of alcohol education is to occupy in the national curriculum.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** Under section 4(3) of the Education Reform Act, national curriculum orders may not prescribe the time to be allocated to teaching any subject or topic. How the different programmes of study are taught will be a matter for each school to determine.

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what recommendations he intends to make on alcohol education in the draft orders to be laid before Parliament on that subject;

(2) when the draft orders on the study and attainment targets for alcohol education to be contained in the national curriculum will be laid before Parliament.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The order for science education within the national curriculum was laid before Parliament in March 1989. This includes attainment targets and programmes of study concerning the effects of alcohol on the way in which the human body functions.

### "Fun Eating at School Today"

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on the response in the Doncaster area to the Fun Eating at School Today campaign.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The FEAST campaign is run by individual local education authorities. Information on its results in particular areas is not collected by the Department.

### Creches

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to encourage education authorities and school governing bodies to establish work place or shared facility creches and similar incentives further to encourage the return of mothers to teaching.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** Under the education support grant programme for 1990-91, support is available for up to £2 million to boost the local recruitment of former teachers and mature entrants. Provision of creche and other child care facilities will be relevant expenditure for this activity.

### Higher Education (Funding)

**Sir Peter Emery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will ensure in the future that universities and polytechnics receive the same level of funding.

**Mr. Jackson:** Decisions on the public funding of the universities and the polytechnics will continue to reflect differences in their circumstances, of which universities' research role is part.

### Ethnically Based Statistics

**Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about ethnically based statistics on school pupils.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The Department is today issuing a circular to local education authorities and others, instituting from September 1990 a national scheme for the collection of ethnically based statistics on school pupils. I shall be placing copies of the circular in the Library.

The scheme's objective is to assist schools, parents, LEAs, the Department and others in ensuring that education meets the needs of all pupils, thereby helping to secure equality of opportunity. The great majority of those who commented on an earlier consultative circular welcomed the principle of collection of ethnically based data. The national scheme has been designed in the light of experience of pilot schemes in four LEAs.

LEA maintained and grant-maintained schools will be expected to collect ethnically based information on pupils entering either the primary or secondary phase of schooling in September 1990, and thereafter. Parents will be asked to provide, on a voluntary basis, information on their children's ethnic origin, religion and the language spoken in their home. The circular emphasises the need for care and sensitivity in the collection and handling of this information. Information supplied to the DES will be aggregated and will not permit the identification of individual pupils.

**Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about ethnically based statistics on students in further and higher education.

**Mr. Jackson:** The Department and the Welsh Office issued a consultation document raising the issues and options involved in the collection of ethnically based statistics for students in further and higher education last March. Comments were received from 100 bodies. There was general support for the proposal that the national data collection on ethnicity for each and every student/enrolment should be obtained via the incorporation of a question in the further education statistical record. Accordingly, we have agreed that a question to elicit this information using the agreed OPCS classification of ethnic groups will be included in the November 1990 FESR return.

With regard to the collection of data on applications for higher education, both the University Central Council on Admissions and the Polytechnic Central Admissions Systems have agreed to include an ethnicity question in their admission material for full-time first degree courses relating to the academic year 1990-91 and subsequently. UCCA data will then be transferred to the university statistical record in respect of those students enrolled at university.

The collection of these data will provide a valuable measure to inform forward planning and provision and alert decision-makers to issues and areas requiring further investigation.

### Motor Neurone Disease

**Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the projects on motor neurone disease funded by his Department.

**Mr. Jackson** *[holding answer 14 July]*: The Medical Research Council, which receives a grant in aid from this Department, is currently supporting the following projects on motor neurone disease:

| *Investigator* | *Department* | *Project title* |
|---|---|---|
| Dr. C. R. Slater | Neurology, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne | Structure and function of motor innervation in mice with an inherited disease of the motor neurones |
| Dr. P. J. Harrison | Physiology, University College and Middlesex School of Medicine, London | The segmental and functional connectivity of group 1B muscle afferents |
| Dr. F. S. Walsh | Neurochemistry, Institute of Neurology, London | Molecular recognition events in nerve-muscle co-cultures |
| Prof. M. F. Scanlon | College of Medicine, University of Wales, Cardiff | Investigation of the serum factor(s) in motor neurone disease which increase TRH production by rat brain stem cells |
| Dr. K. R. Mills | Clinical Neurology, University of Oxford | Mechanisms of muscle weakness in central nervous system disease: a study using magnetic brain stimulation |
| Prof. T. A. Sears | Sobell Department of Neurophysiology, Institute of Neurology, London | Tropic regulation of protein synthesis in motorneurones |
| Dr. R. Navarrette | Anatomy and Developmental Biology, University College, London | The role of nerve-muscle interaction in motorneurone functional development |
| Prof. G. Vrobova | Anatomy and Embryology, University College, London | Restoration of muscle function by regenerated embryonic motorneurones |

The Medical Research Council also supports a range of basic research which may be of relevance to motor neurone disease. In addition, university departments and medical schools support research from block grants from the Universities Funding Council, some of which may also be of relevance.

## WALES

### Anthrax

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list all the measures that he has taken since April, together with dates of implementation, to protect people from infection from anthrax; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Restrictions made under the Anthrax Order 1938 prohibiting the movement of animals and carcases to and from the premises, and of other potentially infected materials from the premises, were imposed by the local authority.

The community health physician, Wrexham, was notified on 19 April 1989. Where pigs had been licensed to be moved they had been inspected by a veterinary officer prior to leaving the farm; by a veterinary officer at the point of slaughter; and again by a qualified meat inspector after slaughter. Animals dying from anthrax were cremated and their surroundings cleansed and disinfected. Clwyd county council made appropriate arrangements to disinfect and dispose of the slurry.

### Opera (Llandudno)

**Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when officers of his Department last met representatives of local authorities in Gwynedd concerning the establishment of an opera venue at Llandudno; and what is the latest position with regard to this project.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Welsh Office officials met representatives of Aberconwy borough council and Gwynedd county council on 21 June. An application for the scheme to be considered as a project of regional or national importance has since been received from Aberconwy borough council and is being considered.

### Local Authority Finance

**Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list the figures by which an individual would be protected by the safety net against the full effects of the poll tax in each local authority area in Wales, showing against each the equivalent figure based on his written answer on 12 June, *Official Report*, columns *304-6;*

(2) whether, further to his written answer on 12 June, *Official Report*, columns *304-6*, he will list the community charge he estimates will apply to each local authority area in Wales *(a)* without safety net and *(b)* with safety net.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** No. The review of standard spending assessments has yet to be completed and the precise details of the safety net have yet to be settled. I agree with the Welsh local authority associations that it would be misleading to produce illustrative figures until consultation on these matters has been concluded.

### Cardiff Bay

**Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) whether his Department has submitted to the European Commission any plan, project or programme in respect of aid from the European regional development fund for any project within the Cardiff bay development corporation area;

(2) whether his Department has conducted any negotiations with the European Commission or others on any plan, project or programme in respect of aid from the European regional development fund for any project within the Cardiff bay development corporation area.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Projects in the Cardiff bay area have been submitted individually for ERDF assistance in the past. Developments in the Cardiff bay area are included in a proposal for an integrated development operation for industrial south Wales submitted to the European Commission in May last year. A linked reconversion plan for industrial south Wales, submitted to the European

Commission earlier this year also referred to developments in Cardiff bay. Discussions are currently under way between officials of my Department and of the European Commission.

### Welsh Development Agency

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the properties and facilities and their cash values of the Welsh Development Agency and facilities that have been sold in each of the years since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker** *[holding answer 5 July 1989]:* Details of industrial property sales in 1987-88 and 1988-89 are shown in the tables. Similar information for other years since 1979 is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

| *Location* | *Unit Reference* | *Consideration £ thousand* |
|---|---|---|
| *Year 1987-88* | | |
| Amlwch | Amlwch No. 1 | 187 |
| Maesteg | Revlon factory | 360 |
| Pyle | Northgate factory | 145 |
| Blackmill | G Q Parachutes factory | 105 |
| Maesteg | British Vita factory | 140 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | Ex-Hoover factory | 3,000 |
| Bridgend | Unit B15 Bridgend IE | 60 |
| Barry | Unit 1Ty Verlon | 300 |
| Tenby | A/F 16 and 17 Salterns IE | 40 |
| Burry Port | Units 4, 5, 6, and 7 Pembrey IE | 115 |
| Aberdare | A/F 1 Robertstown | 206 |
| Hirwaun | A/F 10 Hirwaun | 350 |
| Newport | Maesglas IE (26 factory units) | 2,225 |
| Swansea | Ex-Northgate premises | 111 |
| Kenfig | A/F 4 Kenfig IE | 295 |
| Pontardawe | A/F 1 Pontardawe IE | 75 |
| Cwmgors | A/F 1 Cwmgors IE | 55 |
| Ynyshir | A/F 7 and 8 Ynyshir IE | 73 |
| Porth | Remploy factory | 98 |
| Llwynypia | Glampak factory | 85 |
| Llwynypia | Unit A B 11 Llwynypia | 45 |
| Treforest | Commercial Unit, Treforest IE | 13 |
| Wrexham | Unit A, Redwither Road, Wrexham IE | 205 |
| Wrexham | Ex-Dunlop factory | 725 |
| *Year 1988-89* | | |
| Cwmbran | Units B1 and B3 Ty Coch IE | 228 |
| Cwmbran | Units 1, 2 and 3 Caldicot Way, Avondale IE | 465 |
| Blaenavon | Andrew Russell factory | 98 |
| Penyfan | A/F 5 Penyfan IE | 278 |
| Tafarnaubach | Unit 4, Tafarnaubach IE | 555 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | Unit 1, Goat Mill road, Dowlais | 238 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | Unit 2, Goat Mill road, Dowlais | 200 |
| Treorchy | Polikoff Universal factory | 100 |
| Cwmtillery | Unit 1, Cwmtillery IE | 260 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | Ex-Triang factory | 41 |
| Maesteg | A/F 3 Forge IE | 235 |
| Treforest | Units A16 and A17 Treforest IE | 527 |
| Hirwaun | Unit L2 Hirwaun IE | 11 |
| Cwmfelinfach | A/F 1 Nine Mile Point IE | 364 |
| Hirwaun | Unit L21, Hirwaun IE | 65 |
| Hirwaun | Unit B55, Hirwaun IE | 20 |
| Kenfig | A/F 3 Kenfig IE | 465 |
| Kenfig | A/F 4 Kenfig IE | 295 |
| Dafen | A/F 10 Dafen industrial park | 275 |
| Dafen | Unit 1, Dafen industrial park | 350 |
| Llanelli | A/F 1 North Dock | 69 |
| Morriston | A/F 3 St. Davids IE | 225 |
| Bridgend | James Walker factory | 22 |
| Ammanford | Unit 2, Park street | 125 |
| Llandeilo | Units B, C and D Beechwood IE | 95 |
| Milford Haven | Unit 5, Gt. Honeyborough IE | 65 |
| Pembroke Dock | Units 2 and 3 Ferry lane | 375 |
| Milford Haven | A/F 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 Great Honeyborough IE | 210 |

## TRANSPORT

### DRIVE Project

**Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many British organisations are involved in the European Community DRIVE project.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** British organisations are playing a major part in the DRIVE initiative and are involved in more than two thirds of the contracts let so far.

Up to now, some 60 DRIVE contracts have been awarded: 27 British organisations are involved in 42 of them and are taking the lead in 19. Bearing in mind the EC has had 189 DRIVE proposals, this is an impressive hit rate and illustrates the depth of technology available in Britain.

The Government's transport and road research laboratory has been awarded 12 contracts and is lead contractor in one. The local value of these contracts is £12·7 million, of which the TRRL share is £870,000. Work on most of these projects has started and will take two or three years.

With a budget of 50 million ecu (£32 million), DRIVE aims to create an integrated pan-European road transport environment, mainly using electronic systems to convey information to drivers and for controlling traffic.

### Motor Cyclists

**Mr. David Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the latest statistics he has available on the death rate of motor cyclists in relation to the overall population in (i) the United Kingdom, (ii) the United States of America, (iii) France, (iv) the Federal Republic of Germany and (v) Japan; and what were the comparable figures 10 years ago.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The information is as follows:

*Motor cyclist deaths per million head of population*

| | *1977* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 21·6 | 13·0 |
| USA | 19·3 | 18·6 |
| France | 53·0 | 29·1 |
| FRG | 35·0 | 17·8 |
| Japan | 16·7 | 25·5 |

The figures are published in the transport statistics report entitled "International comparisons of transport statistics; Part 2". They do not give an indication of the size of the motor cycle population in each country. The trend in the United Kingdom towards reduced casualties among motor cyclists is a heartening one.

### Driver Testing and Training

**Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the driver testing and training business plan for 1989-90.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Copies of the driver testing and training division's 1989-90 business plan have been placed in the Library.

### Road Safety

**Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will report on progress in implementing the recommendations of the interdepartmental review on road safety; and if he will indicate his future priorities for work on reducing road casualties.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Good progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the road safety review. I have placed a full progress report in the Library of the House. This includes a summary of the areas of work on which we shall be concentrating for the next 18 months. Casualty figures suggest that we are making reasonable progress towards the target of reducing casualties by one third by the year 2000. It is also clear that there is no room for complacency and that we shall have to step up our efforts even more in the future.

### Drink-driving

**Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many drivers involved in accidents were found to have been drinking over the limit in 1988; how this number has changed over the past 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Drivers involved in accidents who are not seriously injured may be breath-tested following the accident. In 1988, it is estimated that 75,000 drivers were so tested, of whom nearly 14 per cent., or just over 10,000, failed. In addition, coroners' reports on drivers who die in road accidents show that about 20 per cent. in 1988, or about 400, had a blood alcohol content above the legal limit.

The following tables show *(a)* the numbers tested following injury accidents each year since 1979 and the numbers failing; and *(b)* the percentages of drivers killed in accidents who had a high blood alcohol content.

*Table A*
*Drivers and riders in accidents*
*Numbers breath tested, and failing*

| | *Numbers tested* | *Numbers failing* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 41,000 | 14,100 |
| 1980 | 41,600 | 13,400 |
| 1981 | 41,000 | 12,300 |
| 1982 | 43,300 | 13,500 |
| 1983 | 42,300 | 12,400 |
| 1984 | 43,500 | 12,600 |
| 1985 | 44,700 | 12,600 |
| 1986 | 61,200 | 11,900 |
| 1987 | 65,000 | 11,000 |
| [1] 1988 | 75,000 | 10,200 |

*Table B*
*Percentage of drivers or riders killed in road accidents, whose blood alcohol level is above the legal limit*

| | *Killed* | *Per cent. over limit* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 2,700 | 32 |
| 1980 | 2,500 | 31 |
| 1981 | 2,500 | 30 |
| 1982 | 2,500 | 33 |
| 1983 | 2,200 | 28 |
| 1984 | 2,200 | 26 |
| 1985 | 2,100 | 26 |
| 1986 | 2,200 | 24 |
| 1987 | 2,100 | 23 |
| [1] 1988 | 2,100 | 21 |

[1] Provisional.

As the figures show, both the numbers of drivers failing the breath test, and the proportion killed who have a high blood alcohol content have been falling. This indicates a real fall in the amount of drinking and driving that occurs, although the levels are still too high.

We must continue our efforts to change public attitudes so as to accelerate this fall in drink-drive levels, and so reduce the number of accidents on our roads.

### Passenger Aircraft

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* the numbers of passenger aircraft, in service with United Kingdom operators, which exceed 75 per cent. of their economic design life objectives according to model type and as defined by *(a)* total number of flights, *(b)* total number of flying hours and *(c)* age; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will list in the *Official Report* the numbers of passenger aircraft in service with United Kingdom operators, by airplane model type, showing how many of each model type have exceeded their economic design life objectives in terms of *(a)* total number of flights or *(b)* total number of flying hours or *(c)* age; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** These data are not held by the Department though some may be available to the Civil Aviation Authority, which has the statutory responsibility for the safety regulation of civil aviation.

I shall ask the chairman of the authority to respond direct to the hon. Member.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many licences for passenger aircraft were issued to United Kingdom operators by his Department under arrangements known as wet leasing; if he will list, according to each model type, the numbers of such aircraft which have *(a)* exceeded their economical design life objectives in terms of either (i) total number of flights, (ii) total number of flying hours and (iii) age, or *(b)* reached 75 per cent. or more of their economic design life objectives in terms of either (i) total number of flights, (ii) total number of flying hours and (iii) age; if he is satisfied with the safety standards of aircraft which are wet leased; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** In 1988, the Department approved 19 wet leases of foreign registered passenger aircraft by United Kingdom airlines. A breakdown of the types of aircraft is as follows:-

| *Type* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| BAC 1-11 (500) | 1 |
| B727-100 | 1 |
| B727-200 | 4 |
| B737-200 | 5 |
| B737-300 | 4 |
| Convair CV-580 | 3 |

| Type | Number |
|---|---|
| DC10 | 1 |
| Total | 19 |

The other statistics requested in relation to these aircraft are not kept.

## Dartford Crossing

**Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects construction of the third Dartford crossing to be completed.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Good progress continues to be made on the new bridge. It is expected to be open early in 1991.

## Vessels

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in the *Official Report* the names, number of fatalities and port of registration of United Kingdom-registered cargo vessels and passenger ferries lost in each of the past five years; if each loss was the subject of an inquiry; how many masters of such vessels were [illegible] responsible; what was the range of sanctions imposed upon them; and to which regulations do these penalties refer.

**Mr. Portillo:** The names and port of registry of cargo vessels and passenger ferries registered in the United Kingdom lost in the five years 1984-88 are listed, with the number of fatalities. Inquiries were carried out by the Department of Transport in all cases. The remaining information requested is not readily available and could be compiled only at disproportionate expense.

*Cargo Vessels and Passenger Ferries Lost 1984-88*

| *Ship* | *Port of Registry* | *Deaths* |
|---|---|---|
| *1984* | | |
| Camilla Weston | London | — |
| Fylrix | Hull | — |
| *1985* | | |
| Johanna V | London | — |
| Bridgeness (Tanker) | London | — |
| Xanthence | Colchester | — |
| David F | Liverpool | — |
| Gwyn | Cardiff | — |
| *1986* | | |
| Southern Quest | Grangemouth | — |
| Eilean Rosin Dubh | Stornoway | — |
| *1987* | | |
| Herald of Free Enterprise | Dover | 189 |
| Besthorpe | Hull | 1 |
| Maral R | London | — |
| *1988* | | |
| Grit | London | — |
| BC Mercurius | London | — |
| Deepdale H | Liverpool | — |

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow on 11 July, *Official Report*, columns *458-59* he will indicate in how many of the subsequent inquiries into such losses the master was held responsible for the loss of his vessel; what were the penalties imposed upon those deemed to be offenders; and under which regulations those sanctions were imposed.

**Mr. Portillo:** I regret that information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be compiled at disproportionate expense.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow on 11 July, *Official Report*, columns *458-59*, he will indicate how many of these losses of fishing-vessels were subjects of inquiry; how many were lost as a direct result of collisions with submarines; and, of those which foundered following such collisions, how many were fishing at the time with *(a)* demersal gear and *(b)* pelagic gear.

**Mr. Portillo:** The Department of Transport made inquiries into the large majority of the losses, including all where fatalities occurred. None of the vessels was lost so far as is known as a direct result of collision with a submarine.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow on 11 July, *Official Report*, columns *458-59*, he will indicate the number of inquiries where no judgment or assessment was made concerning the reason or reasons for the loss of a fishing vessel; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** In all cases where an inquiry is carried out, an attempt is made to assess the possible causes of the accident. A full list of all cases with information as to the extent to which cause remains uncertain could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

## Manchester Airport (Far East Flights)

**Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many additional international flights to and from the far east at Manchester airport have been approved this year; which airlines and destinations are involved; and if he will list all similar applications still to be considered.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** So far this year, arrangements have been made allowing new scheduled services from Manchester to be operated to Malaysia and to Hong Kong, and for additional services to Singapore. United Kingdom airlines can seek licences for these routes from the CAA (at present, only British Airways has one, from Manchester to Hong Kong). Airlines at present designated by the authorities at the other ends of the routes are MAS, Cathay Pacific, Air Hong Kong and SIA. It is for each of these airlines to decide whether or not to take advantage of the opportunities. Apart from a licence application by Virgin Atlantic for services between Manchester and Singapore under consideration by the CAA, there are no outstanding requests for services between Manchester and the far east.

## Airtours and Orion

**Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he intends taking about the time-keeping and maintenance performance recently of the Airtours company and Orion airlines.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** It is the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that is responsible for ensuring that all United States carriers, including Orion Air, operate their aircraft in accordance with safety and airworthiness standards set by the FAA pursuant to their obligations under the Chicago convention. Our Civil Aviation Authority has already drawn the FAA's attention to the recurring maintenance difficulties experienced on Orion Air's services to and from Manchester.

### Fuel Efficiency

**Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether there are any plans to introduce legislation to require vehicle manufacturers to achieve fuel efficiency targets for cars and light vans.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* Following the June Environment Council, the European Commission is committed to looking for ways of reducing the emissions from vehicles of carbon dioxide, the principal "greenhouse" gas. These emissions are directly related to fuel efficiency. It is unclear how the Commission intends to fulfil this commitment. We expect it will consult member states at an early stage to explore what might be technically, economically and legally feasible.

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent in respect of each A2-M2 road maintenance programme or improvement programme in each of the last 10 years; and if he will list the amounts by programme.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* The information readily available is:

*A2/M2 road maintenance programme (£ million)*

| *Scheme* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *A2* | | | | | |
| Swanscombe-Pepper Hill | 0·2 | 2·9 | — | — | — |
| Barham-Westcourt Road | 1·3 | — | — | — | — |
| Tollgate-Marling Cross | — | 0·1 | 1·4 | — | — |
| Lydden-Whitfield | — | — | 2·0 | — | — |
| Tollgate-Thanglane | — | — | 2·1 | 0·6 | — |
| Coldred-Whitfield | — | — | 0·4 | 1·3 | — |
| Thanglane-M2 | — | — | — | 2·6 | — |
| GLC Boundary-M25 | — | — | — | 0·05 | — |
| Brewers Gate | — | — | — | — | 0·2 |
| West Court-Lydden | — | — | — | — | 1·2 |
| Whitfield Eastwards | — | — | — | — | 0·2 |
| County Boundary-M25 | — | — | — | — | 0·4 |
| Singlewell-Hog Lane | — | — | — | — | 0·05 |
| *M2* | | | | | |
| Junctions 3 and 4-5 | 4·8 | — | — | — | — |
| Junctions 5-7 Joints Ph1 | — | 0·5 | — | — | — |
| Junctions 5-7 Joints Ph2 | — | — | 0·5 | — | — |
| Junctions 5-6 Concrete repairs | — | — | 4·1 | 0·4 | — |
| Junction 4 | — | — | 0·2 | 2·7 | — |
| Junctions 5-7 overlay | — | — | — | 5·5 | |
| Junction 5 | — | — | — | — | 3·9 |
| Junctions 5-7 | — | — | — | — | 3·2 |
| Junctions 6-7 | — | — | 1·1 | — | — |

*A2 Improvement schemes (£ million)*

| *Schemes* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barham Crossroads | — | 1·9 | 0·6 | 0·04 |
| Swanscombe-B262 | 1·3 | — | — | — |
| Tollgate-Marling Cross | — | 0·78 | — | — |
| Cobham-3 Crutches | — | — | 0·94 | — |
| London Boundary-M25 | 0·07 | — | — | 2·35 |
| Singlewell-Hogg Lane | — | — | — | 0·01 |
| A2/M2 Brenley Corner Roundabout | — | 0·02 | — | — |

### Radioactive Material

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many journeys were made in 1988 of *(a)* uranium and *(b)* other nuclear or radioactive material, which were transported through the Doncaster metropolitan borough council area by (i) rail and (ii) road to Sellafield or other destinations; and what reviews are being carried out on the frequency of these cargo shipments.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Department does not collect data of the kind requested.

The movement of all radioactive materials must be made in compliance with national and international regulations which require safety for both normal and accident conditions to be built in to the container used for transport.

Safety does not depend on the choice of route used, which is a matter for the carrier.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** This question could be answered only at disproportionate cost.

### Civil Service Dispersal

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress is being made in his Department's review, in line with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for the further relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the south-east; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Eighty per cent. of DTp staff are located outside London and the Department is reviewing the possibilities for further relocation.

A decision to relocate the headquarters of the driver testing and training division to Nottingham in mid-1990 was announced earlier this year; a review of TRRL at Crowthorne concluded against relocation; a review of marine HQ posts is nearing completion; and a review of parts of the highways command has recently started.

### A1

**Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the decision was made to undertake the new road works south of Wetherby on the A1.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The carriageway repair work on the A1 at Bramham to the south of Wetherby was planned in February. The works are 0·5 miles long and are expected to be completed by 8 August.

We are conscious of the need to plan and phase road works and try to keep those on the A1 to a minimum.

To aid traffic flow, the lane restrictions which were in force on the A1 at Dishforth have been suspended until early September.

**Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of the A1 north of Doncaster to Dishforth are presently under repair.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** One half of one mile.

**Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport to the nearest 1,000, how many cones are presently deployed on the A1 between Doncaster and Dishforth.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** There are approximately 6,000 cones currently in use on the A1(M) Doncaster bypass. Between Doncaster and Dishforth, there are approximately 750 cones deployed for day-time lane closures. A further 750 cones are used for work which is being carried out at night to minimise traffic delays.

**Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the distances between highways works signs on the A1 between the M18 junction and the A19 both north and south.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The works on the A1(M) Doncaster bypass and those at Bramham to the south of Wetherby are 25 miles apart. The works at Bramham are 22 miles from those at Dishforth.

**Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether any departmental Ministers have travelled on the A1/M1 in Yorkshire during the past six months.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Yes. I drove up and down twice last month.

### Motorway HGV Checks

**Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the number of counties in which major check[illegible] been carried out on the motorways in the last 12 months, to discover how many heavy goods vehicles were unfit for use; and whether he will hold talks with the Association of Chief Police Officers on the effectiveness and frequency of exercises such as that carried out by Staffordshire county constabulary.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** In the 12 months to the end of June 1989, major vehicle checks were carried out in 23 counties; 470 goods vehicles were prohibited from further movement for offences including overloading, mechanical defects and breach of the drivers hours rules.

The Department regularly holds liaison meetings with the Home Office and representatives of the Association of Chief Police Officers at which enforcement procedures and other matters are discussed. The vehicle checks carried out by Staffordshire police are effective both in enforcing the law and increasing inter-agency co-operation. The Department's enforcement staff will continue to assist the police in Staffordshire and elsewhere in holding checks on motorways.

### Driving Test

**Sir Anthony Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will include a test of literacy in the driving test procedure before a person is licensed to drive a motor vehicle.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** There are no plans to do so. There is no known correlation between literacy and road safety.

It is not difficult to envisage someone functionally illiterate driving better than a doctor of philosophy (and vice versa).

### Mersey Rail

**Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will provide additional resources to improve services on the Mersey Rail northern line; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** No additional resources are required. I understand that once recent traincrew recruits have been trained the problem of cancellations should be much reduced.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### Overseas Aid (Annual Review)

**Mr. Terry Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much it cost to publish the "Annual Review of British Overseas Aid" in 1987.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Five thousand copies of "British Overseas Aid 1986" were produced in 1987 at a unit cost of £7·87.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

**Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, pursuant to the replies to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn), 19 June, *Official Report*, columns 32-33, he will seek from the Governments of the People's Republic of China, Argentina, Republic of South Africa and India the terms on which each is prepared to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** No. The non-proliferation treaty is open for signature to all states, and we take every suitable opportunity to encourage non-parties to join.

### Civil Service (Relocation)

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made in his Department's review, in line with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for the further relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the south-east; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** As a result of the FCO review, about 250 diplomatic wing jobs have been identified for possible relocation to the FCO estate at Hanslope Park near Milton Keynes, subject to planning permission and financial provision for the necessary development of that estate.

The aid wing has carried out two major relocation exercises in recent years and when the current move to Chatham is complete nearly 60 per cent. of ODA staff will be located outside London. Opportunities for further relocation are kept continuously under review.

### Armament Sales (Israel)

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total value of armament sales to Israel from Britain between 1980 and 1989; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** It has been the practice of successive Administrations not to give details of arms sales to particular countries.

### Human Rights (Israel)

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last made representations to the Israeli Government concerning human rights in Israel; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We have not taken up the question of human rights in Israel proper but have made repeated representations to the Israelis about human rights in the occupied territories.

### Creches

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has received any recent representations about pilot or permanent workplace creches and similar incentives further to encourage the return to employment of women in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** A survey to assess likely demand for a diplomatic and aid wing child care facility was recently carried out prior to a feasibility study completed in May this year. The results of this feasibility study are now being considered.

Both the diplomatic and aid wings also contributed to the setting up fund for a 1989 Westminster holiday play scheme, and children of school age of employees in both wings registered to take part. Separate play schemes are being planned at outer London aid wing locations.

A number of measures have been introduced in both the diplomatic and aid wings in recent years, designed to further the FCO equal opportunities policy—for instance, the introduction of flexible working hours, and the extension of special unpaid leave arrangements (for up to a total of five years) to enable an officer to meet domestic responsibilities.

### Hong Kong

**Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had, and what action is being taken, in secondary education in Hong Kong to lay the foundations for informed participation of youth in a democratic elective system in Hong Kong.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We are consulting the Government of Hong Kong. I will give the hon. Member a full reply as soon as possible.

### Immigration

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) when Mr. Irfan Abdul Alikazi, whose date of birth is 13 October 1969, first applied to the post in Bombay to enter the United Kingdom; on what dates he has been interviewed at the post; and when a decision is to be taken on his application;

(2) when Mr. Mohd Yasin, who was born in 1962 and whose reference is SN 81140, first applied to the post in Islamabad to enter the United Kingdom; and when a decision is going to be taken on his application.

**Mr. Waldegrave** [*pursuant to the reply*, 14 July 1989, c. *673*]: In accordance with the guidelines on the handling of representations by Members of Parliament in immigration cases, issued to Members on 14 December 1988, the questions have been referred to the correspondence unit of the migration and visa department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The hon. Member will receive a reply from the unit in due course.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Prevention of Terrorism Act

Q6. **Mr. Nelson:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she has received any recent representations requesting the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

**The Prime Minister:** No. The Prevention of Terrorism Act is one expression of our resolve to defeat the evil of terrorism, and there is no question of a repeal.

### Italy

Q15. **Sir Hugh Rossi:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the United Kingdom's relations with Italy.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

### Fire Service

Q29. **Mr. Marland:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the fire service.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a number of representations about fire service matters. We all owe a considerable debt to individual firefighters for their courageous service to the community. As with other public services, the Government have a responsibility to ensure that the fire service is run in the most efficient way possible and that it gives the best value for money to the public.

### Pakistan (Prime Minister)

Q36. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement following her recent meeting with the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

**The Prime Minister:** I had a very friendly and useful discussion with Prime Minister Bhutto on 7 July about a number of subjects, including Britain's relations with Pakistan, which are excellent, the situation in Afghanistan and other regional issues. I also welcomed the prospect of Pakistan's return to the Commonwealth.

### Securities and Investments Board

Q60. **Sir Anthony Grant:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the performance of the Securities and Investments Board.

**The Prime Minister:** While I receive from time to time representations about various aspects of the financial services regulatory system, only one received in recent months would fall into the category referred to by my hon. Friend.

### Maritime Affairs

Q63. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to rationalise the administration of maritime affairs into one Ministry.

**The Prime Minister:** No. There is a maritime aspect to the work of several Government Departments which could not sensibly be separated from their other responsibilities.

### Environmental Pollution

Q65. **Mr. Richard Page:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding environmental pollution.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a number of representations. The Government are committed to the protection of the environment. Government and industry are already investing £2 billion to reduce air pollution, £1·3 billion in the water industry, and £100 million a year on schemes to improve the quality of coastal bathing waters. This investment will improve the quality of the environment for generations to come. We also intend to bring forward legislation to strengthen the powers available to control pollution at source.

### Methodist Conference

Q71. **Mr. Archer:** To ask the Prime Minister what reply she has sent to the letter of 1 July from the President of the Methodist Conference.

**The Prime Minister:** It is not my usual practice to publish exchanges of this kind.

### EEC

Q82. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the EEC.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I receive regular representations on EC matters.

### National Health Service

Q90. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations she has had on the proposed reforms for the National Health Service.

Q111. **Mr. Malins:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the National Health Service.

**The Prime Minister:** I understand that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health has received some 8,500 representations on the White Paper; many correspondents give strong support for its objectives and endorse its proposals.

### Structural Fund Policy

Q94. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding structural fund policy in the European Economic Community.

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friends have received representations from local authorities and others about the management of the funds under the revised arrangements.

### Transport Policy

Q104. **Mr. Leigh:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding transport policy.

**The Prime Minister:** I regularly receive representations on a wide range of issues concerning transport policy. The programme of investment in railways is now running at the highest level since the transfer from steam to diesel 30 years ago. There is already a major programme of road building which the Government are committed to increasing still further.

### Crime

Q107. **Mr. John Browne:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the level of crime.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a number of such representations. The recent fall in the overall level of crime which is disclosed in the statistics for recorded offences in the year ending 31 March 1989 is encouraging.

### Maesglas, Newport

Q108. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to visit the Maesglas area of Newport, Gwent.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### British Rail

Q131. **Mr. Goodlad:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding British Rail.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, especially recently when a number of people have written to me about the great inconvenience caused to the travelling public by the rail strikes. Passengers and freight business will suffer unless the railways give a reliable service.

### Commonwealth

Q150. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations relating to the Commonwealth.

**The Prime Minister:** I regularly receive representations relating to the Commonwealth from hon. Members as well as from members of the public. I am greatly looking forward to attending this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, an event which is always of great importance to this Government.

### NATO

Q194. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding NATO.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a number of representations relating to NATO, most of them strongly supportive of the continuing, vitally important role of NATO in sustaining peace and security.

### Agriculture Policy

Q195. **Mr. Alexander:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding agricultural policy.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government frequently received representations about agricultural policy.

At the Royal Show earlier this month I was pleased to pay tribute to the enormous contribution the agriculture industry and the thousands of individual farmers make to our national life.

Our policy is to provide a framework within which this industry can thrive. We shall continue to negotiate for a more market-orientated common agricultural policy, building on the major reforms agreed at the February 1988 European Council. Our agricultural industry is well placed to benefit from the opportunities for fair competition that the EC's single internal market will bring.

### Steel Industry

Q209. **Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on progress made in rationalising the steel industry since 1979.

**The Prime Minister:** During the period since 1979 the Government promoted the Phoenix joint ventures involving private sector steel companies and the (then nationalised) British Steel Corporation and also a private sector steel scheme. These initiatives have now ceased but they reduced product overlap between the private and public sectors and contributed towards rationalisation within the industry as a whole. British Steel itself was then returned to the private sector in December 1988 and recently announced record profits of £593 million compared with substantial losses while nationalised. Productivity in the United Kingdom steel industry rose by 151 per cent. between 1979 and 1988.

### Mr. Graham Gaskin

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to her reply to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill, of 17 July, *Official Report*, column *22*, whether she will now take steps to set up an independent procedure to consider whether Mr. Graham Gaskin's files should be released to him; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** As my hon. and learned Friend the Minister for Health said in his written answer to the hon. Member on 18 July, a careful look is being taken in the light of the court's judgment in this case at the present general arrangements for social services clients to have access to their files to see whether any changes to those arrangements are needed.

The court awarded Mr. Gaskin £5,000 compensation and that sum, along with the court's award for legal fees and expenses, is being paid to him.

### Engagements

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 25 July.

**Mr. Stern:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 25 July.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 25 July.

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 25 July.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I had a number of meetings including one with General Yazov, the Soviet Defence Minister, on his first visit to the United Kingdom. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today and will be attending a special garden party to celebrate 150 years of public education. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Greenhouse Gases

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, further to his answer of 27 June, *Official Report*, column *441*, he will give the greenhouse gas equivalents for carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I have been asked to reply.

Molecule for molecule, the greenhouse warming effect of methane is approximately 27 times that of carbon dioxide and 165 times that of nitrous oxide. Taking account of concentrations in the atmosphere, their current contribution to the greenhouse effect is estimated to be 55 per cent. (carbon dioxide), 14 per cent. (methane) and 8 per cent. (nitrous oxide). The remaining fraction is primarily due to chlorofluorocarbons.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Prison Transfers

**Mr. Hume:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those prisoners who were refused transfers to prisons in Northern Ireland in each of the past seven years indicating the grounds for the refusals.

**Mr. Hurd:** The records available indicate that the numbers of requests from inmates in England and Wales for permanent transfer to Northern Ireland which were refused were as follows:

1982—1; 1983—1; 1984—5; 1985—28; 1986—11; 1987—3; 1988—4.

Information on the grounds for refusal in individual cases is not available, but all decisions were taken in accordance with the publicly stated policy on transfers which was in force at the relevant time. It would not be right to give the names of the inmates involved, many of whom will by now have been released.

**Mr. Hume:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement indicating the various grounds on which prisoners were transferred to Northern Ireland in each of the past seven years.

**Mr. Hurd:** Prisoners may be transferred from England and Wales to Northern Ireland if they are required to face trial there, if their presence there is necessary in the interests of justice, or if they apply for temporary or permanent transfer. Applications for permanent transfer have been granted where the inmate meets the criteria for transfer, as agreed between the Home Office and the Northern Ireland Office, in force at the relevant time, or where there are exceptional compassionate circumstances. The criteria for transfer now in force were announced in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) on 23 June at column *263*.

**Mr. Hume:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide a list of the names of all prisoners transferred to prisons in Northern Ireland in each of the past seven years, indicating the offences for which they were convicted, the prisons from which they were transferred, their sentences and the time served prior to transfer.

**Mr. Hurd:** It would not be right to give the names of the inmates concerned, many of whom will now have been released. Information on the periods served by the inmates before transfer is not readily available. The remaining information, which relates only to inmates transferred from England and Wales to Northern Ireland to serve the remainder of their sentences, is as follows:

*1982*

No transfers.

*1983*

1. Robbery; HMP Liverpool; five years.
2. Robbery; HMP Liverpool; five years.
3. Robbery; HMP Lancaster; 14½ years.

*1984*

1. Theft, grievous bodily harm; HMP Durham three years.

*1985*

1. Robbery; HMP Hull; six years.
2. Sending explosive substances, causing explosions; HMP Blunderston; life.
3. Manslaughter; HMP Wakefield; life.
4. Importing controlled drugs; HMP Wandsworth; three years.

*1986*

1. Robbery; HMP Wandsworth; six years.
2. Theft, robbery; HMP Long Lartin; eight years.

*1987*

1. Robbery; HMP Long Lartin; 10 years.
2. Importing controlled drugs; HMP Albany; 14 years.
3. Murder; HMP Wormwood Scrubs; life.

*1988*

1. Assault with intent to rob, unlawful handling, possessing imitation firearm, deception; HMP Frankland; five years.
2. Wounding; HMP Channings Wood; four years.
3. Robbery; HMP Haverigg; seven years.
4. Attempted robbery; HMP Frankland; four and a half years.
5. Robbery; HMP Durham; three years.

## Fire Services

**Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many fire appliances were in operation *(a)* throughout the United Kingdom and *(b)* in Wales as at 1 January 1980 and for each succeeding year;

(2) how many full-time firemen were employed *(a)* throughout the United Kingdom and *(b)* in Wales as at 1 January 1980 and for each succeeding year;

(3) how many fully manned fire stations were in operation as at 1 January 1980 and for each succeeding year *(a)* throughout the United Kingdom and *(b)* in Wales.

**Mr. John Patten:** I will write to the hon. Member regarding the available information in respect of England and Wales.

Questions relating to the fire service in other parts of the United Kingdom are the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

## Immigration

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the question from the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East, 26 June, column *323*, why he decided not to exercise his discretion in favour of the application for settlement of Mr. Abbas Karbassian.

**Mr. Renton:** As explained in the reply of 5 November 1987, at column *833*, to the question from the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser), a case in which continuous residence exceeds 10 years will be considered on its merits for the grant of indefinite leave to remain. Mr. Karbassian came to the United Kingdom on 30 April 1979 and was subsequently granted permission to remain until August 1987—in the first instance as a student and later on the basis of his marriage to a British citizen. An application for settlement (on the grounds of marriage) was refused on 1 August 1988 because the couple had separated. Mr. Karbassian lodged an appeal against this decision on 10 August 1988.

Mr. Karbassian is permitted, under section 14(1) of the Immigration Act 1971, to remain here pending the outcome of his appeal against the decision of 1 August 1988. However, time spent in the United Kingdom while an appeal is outstanding is not considered acceptable residence for the purpose of the discretionary grant of indefinite leave to remain under the long residence concession unless that appeal is subsequently successful.

## Forensic Pathology

**Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish the report of the working party on forensic pathology; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** The report of the working party on forensic pathology is published today; a copy is in the Library. Copies have been sent to the Association of Chief Police Officers, the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Pathologists, the local authority associations and others concerned with an invitation to let my Department have their views on it by the end of October. My intention is to consider the report and any representations received as soon as practicable thereafter.

### Risley Remand Centre

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received the report of the inquiry into the disturbance at Risley remand centre from 30 April to 3 May; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** I have now received the report of the inquiry conducted by Mr. Dunbar, the director of the south west region of the prison department. A summary of the report, including the list of recommendations resulting from the inquiry, has been placed in the Library. I informed the House on 4 May at columns 374-5 of the nature and effects of the disturbances on male wings at Risley.

The disturbance was one of the most serious and complex suffered by the prison service in recent years. Throughout there were violent attacks by prisoners upon the fabric of the centre and on the staff endeavouring to contain them. I pay tribute to the Governor and staff for their bravery and determination in resisting the extreme violence they faced and for bringing the disturbance to a conclusion as quickly as they did without serious injury to staff or prisoners. In doing so they prevented the rioters from totally destroying the establishment, which was their clear intention.

Mr. Dunbar's inquiry led him to conclude that Risley should be closed at the earliest possible moment. I accept that recommendation so far as male remand prisoners are concerned. They amounted to 468 inmates out of a total of 541 males at the time of the disturbance, and the disturbance was confined to them. After careful thought, and despite the practical difficulties of making a change, I do not believe it would be sensible to hold male remand prisoners at Risley for longer than we must. I have accordingly decided to work towards the end of Risley's remand function for males by the summer of next year, when refurbished accommodation will be available. Risley will then take only sentenced prisoners on the male side. In addition, the women's wing, which has not been the subject of criticism—indeed, it was commented upon favourably by Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons —and which has a valuable contribution to make in the female prison estate, will remain.

Work had already begun before the disturbance on the phased demolition and replacement of the prison. This will take some years and in the interim, B and C wings are being completely refurbished and strengthened to make them secure against this sort of attack. The male population of Risley will be limited to about 320 until new living blocks become available.

All the other recommendations have wider application in the prison service and I welcome them. Some—for example, the strengthening of cell doors—are statements of policy on which work is already in hand. Mr. Dunbar's recommendations on contingency planning will be taken fully into account in a major review which has been under way for some time and which is nearing completion. Other recommendations on physical resources, on protective clothing and equipment and on intervention plans are also accepted and will be taken on board. I also accept in principle the recommendations that Mr. Dunbar makes on personnel and regime matters.

The findings of the report concerning medical matters are most disturbing. The director designate of prison medical services and her staff have been to Risley and immediate steps have been taken to clean thoroughly the areas concerned and to remove the health hazards to which Mr. Dunbar has drawn attention. I accept all the particular recommendations in his report and have asked the director of prison medical services to explore further how these serious shortcomings came about and to take steps to ensure that they do not happen again, either at Risley or elsewhere in the prison system.

Mr. Dunbar makes a number of recommendations concerning the treatment of, and facilities for, remand prisoners. I accept most of them as desirable but they will have to compete for resources with other equally desirable aims in the prison service. I am not convinced that it is necessary for separate rules to be drawn up for remand prisoners, since distinctions between the unconvicted and the convicted can be satisfactorily reflected within a unified set of rules but I am willing to look at this again. I do not rule out reduction of censorship and the provision of telephones for remand prisoners but the security implications in respect of certain prisoners require, and will receive, careful consideration. Research on categorising all remand prisoners is already under way.

Of the remaining recommendations, those which are matters for the police will be drawn to their attention and I accept the others.

I have indicated the action being taken on all the recommendations which are of more general application. In addition, an action plan has been drawn up specifically for the purpose of rectifying the failings at Risley identified in Mr. Dunbar's report and making the necessary preparations for Risley's change of function. This will be the direct responsibility of the deputy director general of the prison service, who will be assisted by a small working group and will report regularly to me on progress.

The disturbance at Risley arose out of a long history of difficulties caused principally by the inadequacy of the buildings and the nature of the prisoners housed in them. It interrupted the considerable progress towards improving the regime for prisoners which the governor and staff had made following the report of Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons. I am sure that with all the changes I have outlined and, in particular, with confidence established in the renovated buildings, the governor and his staff will be able to resume their positive work to remedy the grave deficiencies identified in the report.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Hurd:** The available figures relate to and from Ministers and to and from the secretary to the immigration and nationality board, the great majority of which represented correspondence with hon. Members, and are as follows:

| | *January 1989* | *22 November 1988 —1 July 1989* |
|---|---|---|
| Received from hon. Members | 2,436 | 17,690 |
| Sent to hon. Members | 2,295 | 15,584 |

## Civil Service Dispersal

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress is being made in his Department's review, in line with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for the further relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the south-east; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mr. Hurd:** A report by consultants on the feasibility of relocation of the immigration and nationality department has been received and is under consideration. A review of the organisation and location of the prison service above establishment level is nearing completion. The scope for relocation of parts of the police department science and technology group and of the Home Office accounts branch is also under review.

## Welford Road Prison, Leicester

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were transferred to other prisons in the United Kingdom from Welford Road prison, Leicester, before 1 April, and the latest available date; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** The information requested is given in the table:

*Number of prisoners transferred from Her Majesty's prison requested of Leicester to other prisons: weekly 1 April—21 July 1989*

| *Week beginning* | *Number of prisoners* |
|---|---|
| April 3 | 27 |
| 10 | 12 |
| 17 | 4 |
| 21 | 19 |
| May 1 | 25 |
| 8 | 21 |
| 15 | 20 |
| 22 | 11 |
| 29 | 11 |
| June 5 | 16 |
| 12 | 22 |
| 19 | 19 |
| 26 | 23 |
| July 3 | 9 |
| 10 | 22 |
| 17 | 9 |
| Total | 268 |

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the prison population of Welford Road prison, Leicester, for each day from 1 April; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** The information requested is as follows:

*Population of Her Majesty's prison Leicester at unlocking*

| *April* | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| 1 | 412 |
| 2 | 412 |
| 3 | 412 |
| 4 | 417 |
| 5 | 384 |
| 6 | 396 |
| 7 | 407 |
| 8 | 395 |
| 9 | 395 |
| 10 | 395 |
| 11 | 401 |
| 12 | 389 |
| 13 | 388 |
| 14 | 389 |
| 15 | 389 |
| 16 | 389 |
| 17 | 389 |
| 18 | 397 |
| 19 | 400 |
| 20 | 400 |
| 21 | 405 |
| 22 | 406 |
| 23 | 406 |
| 24 | 406 |
| 25 | 411 |
| 26 | 401 |
| 27 | 407 |
| 28 | 408 |
| 29 | 413 |
| 30 | 413 |

| *May* | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| 1 | 413 |
| 2 | 413 |
| 3 | 397 |
| 4 | 397 |
| 5 | 390 |
| 6 | 394 |
| 7 | 394 |
| 8 | 394 |
| 9 | 403 |
| 10 | 377 |
| 11 | 382 |
| 12 | 379 |
| 13 | 379 |
| 14 | 379 |
| 15 | 379 |
| 16 | 372 |
| 17 | 366 |
| 18 | 382 |
| 19 | 388 |
| 20 | 391 |
| 21 | 391 |
| 22 | 391 |
| 23 | 394 |
| 24 | 378 |
| 25 | 381 |
| 26 | 381 |
| 27 | 392 |
| 28 | 392 |
| 29 | 392 |
| 30 | 392 |
| 31 | 383 |

| *June* | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| 1 | 377 |
| 2 | 374 |
| 3 | 379 |
| 4 | 379 |
| 5 | 379 |
| 6 | 386 |
| 7 | 375 |
| 8 | 386 |
| 9 | 389 |

| June | Numbers |
|---|---|
| 10 | 393 |
| 11 | 393 |
| 12 | 393 |
| 13 | 395 |
| 14 | 368 |
| 15 | 375 |
| 16 | 369 |
| 17 | 377 |
| 18 | 377 |
| 19 | 377 |
| 20 | 372 |
| 21 | 347 |
| 22 | 357 |
| 23 | 365 |
| 24 | 362 |
| 25 | 362 |
| 26 | 362 |
| 27 | 360 |
| 28 | 350 |
| 29 | 365 |
| 30 | 358 |

| July | Numbers |
|---|---|
| 1 | 358 |
| 2 | 358 |
| 3 | 358 |
| 4 | 357 |
| 5 | 343 |
| 6 | 355 |
| 7 | 356 |
| 8 | 356 |
| 9 | 356 |
| 10 | 356 |
| 11 | 362 |
| 12 | 341 |
| 13 | 343 |
| 14 | 346 |
| 15 | 346 |
| 16 | 346 |
| 17 | 346 |
| 18 | 350 |
| 19 | 340 |
| 20 | 356 |
| 21 | 338 |

## Emergency Calls

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to the proportion of screened-out emergency calls when the caller is informed that no further action is to be taken immediately or at a future time;

(2) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to what proportion of emergency calls in the Leyton constituency are screened out.

**Mr. Hurd:** The police respond to all emergency calls. A decision on whether to screen out any crime is taken only after a thorough initial investigation.

## Probation Service

**Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is now able to report the Government's response to the Audit Commission's recommendations on value for money in the probation service.

**Mr. John Patten:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) on 17 April at column *24*.

**Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to promote co-operation between the probation service and other agencies in the criminal justice system, as recommended by the Audit Commission in its recent report on the probation service.

**Mr. John Patten:** We have taken and are taking a number of steps to promote co-operation between the probation service and other agencies in the criminal justice system. The paper "Tackling Offending: An Action Plan" was sent to chief probation officers, justices' clerks, circuit administrators, chief crown prosecutors, chief officers of police, the Association of Chief Police Officers and a variety of other agencies and organisations working in the criminal justice field. That paper emphasised that although the probation service has a key role in achieving the aims of part II of the Green Paper, "Punishment, Custody and the Community", it cannot work alone and that other agencies must be involved; the Home Office has provided funds for a number of seminars on non-custodial penalties, organised by the NACRO, which have included amongst the participants magistrates, justices' clerks, members of probation services and members of police forces; a number of Home Office circulars have encouraged co-operation between the criminal justice services including the probation service; and Ministers and officials also take the opportunity in speeches and meetings to encourage such co-operation.

## Prisons (Security Status)

**Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his proposals to change the top security status for certain gaols by 1992 and as the consultation processes which will be involved.

**Mr. Hurd:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) on 12 April 1989 at columns *544-5*. This draws attention to the statement issued by the deputy director general of the prison service (a copy of which is in the Library) which includes details of the plans for the future shape and size of the prison dispersal system.

A copy of the statement has been sent for information to governors and to chairmen of boards of visitors of prisons normally holding inmates in the highest security category—category A—and copies have also been supplied to the trade unions.

Consultation with the staff interests concerned at national and local level will take place as appropriate as we work towards effecting the changes planned to take place in the 1990s at the establishments involved.

**Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of the eventual total job losses at Her Majesty's prison, Gartree, due to the change from category A by 1992.

**Mr. Hurd:** It is too early to be certain how many staff will be needed when the prison changes its function but the total staff in post figure could fall by more than 100. No redundancies are anticipated as a result of the change at Gartree. The aim is to absorb surplus staff by redeployment and natural wastage.

**Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what prior consultation he had with local hon. Members with a constituency interest before announcing his decision relating to changes of category at Her Majesty's prison, Gartree.

**Mr. Hurd:** None. The effect of the change planned for Gartree prison is that from the early 1990s the 50 or so category A prisoners will be replaced by inmates of a lower security category.

## Data Protection

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will list the legislation that applies penalties for unauthorised use, collection or disclosure of personal information from Government computers.

**Mr. Renton:** So far as I am aware, the only legislation that applies such penalties specifically in relation to computers is the Data Protection Act 1984. Other legislation such as the Official Secrets Acts deals with particular categories of information whether or not held on computers.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will list the recommendations made by *(a)* the Younger committee into privacy and *(b)* the Law Commission's report into breach of confidence which Her Majesty's Government have supported; and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** Many of the recommendations of the Younger committee were directed to organisations outside Government. Proposals addressed to Government were implemented by the Consumer Credit Act 1974 and the Data Protection Act 1984. In addition the Broadcasting Complaints Commission was established under the Broadcasting Act 1981; and the law on breach of confidence was referred to the Law Commission.

The Law Commission's report on breach of confidence, which is the responsibility of my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor, amounts essentially to a recommendation for a restatement of the common law and the Government do not propose to give its implementation high priority at present.

## Drug Addicts (Suicides)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug addicts have committed suicide in prisons and remand centres in each of the last five years; in which prisons and remand centres the suicides occurred; to what the addicts were addicted; what treatment they were receiving; how many were in single cells; and how many were *(a)* male and *(b)* female.

**Mr. Hurd** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* Information is readily available only from 1 January 1987; four inmates on whom verdicts of suicide have been returned since that date are known to have been addicted to drugs. The details requested are as follows:

(1) 1987; HMRC Risley; heroin; treated with antidepressant drugs; single cell; female
(2) 1987; HMP Canterbury; valium; treated with reduced doses of the drug of addiction and largactil; shared cell; male
(3) 1988; HMRC Risley; heroin; treated with heminevrin as a sedative; single cell; male
(4) 1988; HMP Lincoln; diconal tablets; treated with antidepressants; single cell; male

## Rehabilitation

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what specialist facilities exist; and what is the total amount invested by his Department for the rehabilitation of perpetrators of sexual abuse of children for each of the years for which figures are available.

**Mr. John Patten** *[holding answer 11 July 1989]:* Perpetrators of sexual abuse against children, who receive a prison sentence, are normally identified early in the prison reception process as requiring psychiatric assessment. Where the diagnosis suggests that the offender's behaviour was the result of an underlying mental illness, specific treatment is provided for that illness. If the behaviour was secondary to an aspect of personality disorder, the inmate might be offered psychotherapy, group therapy, behaviour therapy or a combination of these. But the effectiveness of such treatment depends critically on the motivation of the offenders and on their willingness to participate. Those judged to be mentally disordered receive treatment in special and other types of hospitals. Those under the supervision of the probation service will have available to them a variety of probation and multi-agency facilities. Some probation services have developed or are developing specialist skills in the supervision of sex offenders. The objective of probation service work with offenders, including sex offenders, is to reduce their offending behaviour by making them face up to the consequences of that behaviour, and by helping them to tackle the problems underlying it. No separate figures are kept of resources devoted by prison service establishments or by area probation services to work with those found guilty of sexual offences against children.

## Right to Silence

**Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has reached any conclusions on the abolition of the right of silence for accused persons interviewed in police stations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to make an announcement on the Government's review of the right to silence; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd** *[holding answers 15 June 1989 and 7 July 1989 respectively]:* I have received the report and am considering its recommendations. I have arranged for it to be published today. A copy will be placed in the Library.

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

## Written Questions

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Lord President of the Council how the level at which it is decided that a parliamentary written question could be answered only at disproportionate cost is evaluated.

**Mr. Ryder:** I have been asked to reply. The disproportionate cost level is based on an interdepartmental survey of the cost of answering parliamentary questions and is set at a level to identify and draw to ministerial attention the most expensive 1 to 2 per cent. That cost level is kept under review by the Treasury and currently stands at £250.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Sikhs (Headgear)

**Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will take steps to introduce legislation to exempt religious Sikhs employed in all sections of industry from having to wear protective headgear other than their traditional long hair and turban.

**Mr. Nicholls:** It was announced in another place on 14 July, during the Second Reading debate on the Employment Bill, that the Government intend to introduce a new clause to the Bill to exempt turban-wearing Sikhs from any statutory requirement to wear head protection in construction work. There are no plans to extend such an exemption to other industries at present.

### Claimant Advisers

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many claimant advisers are in post; and how many interviews with claimants they have carried out in the year to the latest available date.

**Mr. Lee:** There were 1,160 claimant advisers in post at 28 March 1989, the latest date for which figures are available.

The total number of interviews carried out in the 12 months to 26 May 1989 was 937,496.

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what have been the outcomes of interviews by claimant advisers showing *(a)* how many claimants have been referred to the Department of Social Security; *(b)* how many have been referred to adjudication because of doubts about their availability for work and *(c)* how many have been encouraged to apply for jobstart or family credit.

**Mr. Lee:** Outcomes of claimant adviser interviews held between April 1987 and May 1989 are as follows:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| (a) Referrals to DSS | 152,390 |
| (b) Referrals to Adjudication[1] | 54,919 |
| (c) Figure not available | |

[1] This is the total figure for referrals to adjudication—separate figures for referrals on availability doubts are not collected.

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the cost of the claimant adviser service in 1989-90.

**Mr. Lee:** The claimant adviser service is an integral part of the employment service, and it is not possible to give a total, discrete cost for the service.

The salary cost of the claimant adviser service for 1989-90 is estimated to be some £18·5 million.

### Training

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the data from the latest labour force survey showing the training received by employees in the last four weeks broken down by sex and age.

**Mr. Lee:** Preliminary results from the 1988 labour force survey, as requested, are shown in the following table:

*Employees of working age[1] receiving job-related training[2]*
*Great Britain, Spring 1988*

*Thousands*

| *Age* | *All persons* | *Men* | *Women* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16-19 | 396 | 224 | 172 |
| 20-24 | 546 | 310 | 237 |
| 25-34 | 773 | 448 | 325 |
| 35-49 | 847 | 448 | 399 |
| 50-59/64 | 214 | 118 | 97 |
| Total | 2,776 | 1,547 | 1,229 |

*Source:* Preliminary 1988 LFS estimates

[1] Men aged 16-64, women aged 16-59

[2] Those who in the four weeks prior to interview had taken part in any education or training connected with their job or a job that they might be able to do in the future.

### Availability For Work

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide details of the sample survey of delays in adjudication officers making decisions on availability for work, showing the number and proportion of cases involved, by regions, for each quarter since October 1987.

**Mr. Lee:** The following tables show the number of submissions on availability for work included in the sample survey in each of the regions covering the period January 1988 to March 1989, and the observed percentages on those cases in which a decision had been reached in less than four weeks.

*Table 1*
*Numbers of availability for work submissions included in the survey*

| *Region* | *Period ending March 1988* | *Period ending June 1988* | *Period ending September 1988* | *Period ending December 1988* | *Period ending March 1989* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern | 111 | 93 | 100 | 82 | 60 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 375 | 386 | 278 | 243 | 201 |
| East Midlands | 258 | 244 | 249 | 185 | 163 |
| Eastern | 174 | 227 | 154 | 171 | 157 |
| Southern | 182 | 154 | 149 | 149 | 132 |
| Western | 301 | 222 | 203 | 196 | 198 |
| South West | 351 | 154 | 198 | 140 | 137 |
| Wales | 102 | 73 | 43 | 36 | 137 |
| West Midlands | 119 | 128 | 109 | 152 | 102 |
| North West | 215 | 216 | 226 | 157 | 139 |
| Scotland | 422 | 361 | 403 | 327 | 284 |

*Table 2*

*Percentage of availability for work cases cleared in under 4 weeks*

| *Region* | *Period ending March 1988 percentage* | *Period ending June 1988 percentage* | *Period ending September 1988 percentage* | *Period ending December 1988 percentage* | *Period ending March 1989 percentage* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern | 97 | 100 | 96 | 100 | 98 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 97 | 97 | 94 | 86 | 91 |
| East Midlands | 91 | 96 | 91 | 91 | 88 |
| Eastern | 86 | 81 | 84 | 68 | 69 |
| Southern | 81 | 71 | 73 | 82 | 84 |
| Western | 87 | 78 | 72 | 85 | 70 |
| South West | 87 | 85 | 80 | 80 | 71 |
| Wales | 84 | 97 | 91 | 89 | 91 |
| West Midlands | 85 | 79 | 77 | 89 | 95 |
| North West | 93 | 86 | 92 | 89 | 88 |
| Scotland | 92 | 91 | 85 | 83 | 86 |

Records are no longer retained for periods prior to January 1988. However, I refer the hon. Member to the replies that I gave her on 25 March 1988 at column *259* and 12 April 1988 at column *38*.

## Job Clubs

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the latest number of *(a)* referrals to job clubs, *(b)* the number of starts with job clubs, *(c)* the number of job club leavers and *(d)* the number of job club leavers getting jobs, or becoming unemployed for Great Britain and each training agency region for each month since September 1988.

**Mr. Lee:** From September 1988 to May 1989, 100,440 people started with a job club. During the same period, there were 98,159 leavers, of whom 52,917 left to start work, with a further 15,794 going on to some other positive outcome such as training, education or self-employment. Regional and monthly breakdowns are given in the table.

Because of the very large number of potential referral points, the employment service does not keep statistics of referrals. All job club members are unemployed and separate records are not kept of the number remaining out of work on ceasing to attend.

| | *Northern* | *Yorkshire and Humberside* | *East Midlands and Eastern* | *London and South East* | *South West* | *Wales* | *West Midlands* | *North West* | *Scotland* | *Great Britain* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *September 1988* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Starts | 824 | 984 | 1,007 | 2,309 | 489 | 696 | 1,095 | 1,894 | 1,743 | 11,041 |
| Total leavers | 799 | 1,069 | 1,087 | 2,640 | 560 | 797 | 1,452 | 2,209 | 1,790 | 12,403 |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jobs | 418 | 592 | 679 | 1,246 | 310 | 453 | 721 | 1,204 | 1,007 | 6,630 |
| Other positive outcomes | 163 | 224 | 192 | 445 | 107 | 159 | 262 | 423 | 321 | 2,296 |
| Reasons not recorded | 218 | 253 | 216 | 949 | 143 | 185 | 469 | 582 | 462 | 3,477 |
| *October 1988* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Starts | 669 | 1,036 | 958 | 2,241 | 514 | 792 | 998 | 2,108 | 1,535 | 10,851 |
| Total leavers | 695 | 987 | 899 | 2,258 | 435 | 713 | 1,034 | 2,025 | 1,548 | 10,594 |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jobs | 393 | 583 | 532 | 1,032 | 247 | 387 | 509 | 1,150 | 891 | 5,724 |
| Other positive outcomes | 124 | 163 | 197 | 362 | 95 | 154 | 175 | 353 | 218 | 1,841 |
| Reasons not recorded | 178 | 241 | 170 | 864 | 93 | 172 | 350 | 522 | 439 | 3,029 |
| *November 1988* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Starts | 794 | 1,056 | 998 | 2,570 | 631 | 845 | 1,084 | 2,123 | 1,587 | 11,688 |
| Total leavers | 718 | 904 | 883 | 2,264 | 488 | 700 | 1,050 | 1970 | 1,417 | 10,394 |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jobs | 398 | 544 | 531 | 1,053 | 259 | 382 | 570 | 1,111 | 831 | 5,679 |
| Other positive outcomes | 113 | 178 | 166 | 368 | 96 | 139 | 173 | 307 | 197 | 1,737 |
| Reasons not recorded | 207 | 182 | 186 | 843 | 133 | 179 | 307 | 552 | 389 | 2,978 |
| *December 1988* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Starts | 476 | 689 | 620 | 1,683 | 335 | 454 | 782 | 1,148 | 1,022 | 7,209 |
| Total leavers | 489 | 770 | 707 | 1,895 | 409 | 532 | 749 | 1,418 | 1,254 | 8,223 |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jobs | 255 | 444 | 456 | 850 | 217 | 282 | 365 | 779 | 719 | 4,367 |
| Other positive outcomes | 81 | 106 | 110 | 296 | 76 | 99 | 144 | 223 | 209 | 1,344 |
| Reasons not recorded | 153 | 220 | 141 | 749 | 116 | 151 | 240 | 416 | 326 | 2,512 |
| *January 1989* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Starts | 902 | 1,213 | 1,007 | 2,550 | 703 | 851 | 1,497 | 2,300 | 1,407 | 12,430 |
| Total leavers | 646 | 849 | 835 | 2,067 | 457 | 683 | 1,002 | 1,650 | 1,182 | 9,371 |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jobs | 325 | 462 | 474 | 937 | 240 | 361 | 498 | 882 | 651 | 4,830 |
| Other positive outcomes | 123 | 147 | 172 | 332 | 100 | 142 | 153 | 277 | 185 | 1,631 |
| Reasons not recorded | 198 | 240 | 189 | 798 | 117 | 180 | 351 | 491 | 346 | 2,910 |

| | *Northern* | *Yorkshire and Humberside* | *East Midlands and Eastern* | *London and South East* | *South West* | *Wales* | *West Midlands* | *North West* | *Scotland* | *Great Britain* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *February 1989* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Starts | 939 | 1,204 | 1,121 | 2,875 | 705 | 835 | 1,450 | 2,446 | 2,072 | 13,647 |
| Total leavers | 754 | 999 | 893 | 2,350 | 530 | 725 | 1,171 | 2,025 | 1,460 | 10,907 |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jobs | 442 | 566 | 548 | 1,156 | 296 | 382 | 637 | 1,127 | 831 | 5,985 |
| Other positive outcomes | 110 | 166 | 175 | 400 | 104 | 142 | 198 | 332 | 234 | 1,861 |
| Reasons not recorded | 202 | 267 | 170 | 794 | 130 | 201 | 336 | 566 | 395 | 3,061 |
| *March 1989* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Starts | 873 | 1,096 | 1,034 | 2,703 | 660 | 680 | 1,104 | 2,297 | 1,957 | 12,404 |
| Total leavers | 927 | 1,161 | 1,126 | 3,057 | 711 | 807 | 1,558 | 2,535 | 1,920 | 13,802 |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jobs | 520 | 687 | 683 | 1,374 | 395 | 464 | 719 | 1,349 | 1,125 | 7,316 |
| Other positive outcomes | 160 | 149 | 198 | 444 | 99 | 121 | 201 | 356 | 296 | 2,024 |
| Reasons not recorded | 247 | 325 | 245 | 1,239 | 217 | 222 | 638 | 830 | 499 | 4,462 |
| *April 1989* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Starts | 811 | 1,160 | 944 | 2,417 | 586 | 663 | 982 | 2,184 | 1,857 | 11,604 |
| Total leavers | 894 | 1,112 | 863 | 2,575 | 582 | 725 | 911 | 2,109 | 1,701 | 11,472 |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jobs | 477 | 667 | 568 | 1,120 | 329 | 425 | 508 | 1,158 | 1,044 | 6,296 |
| Other positive outcomes | 137 | 141 | 136 | 352 | 81 | 86 | 128 | 307 | 205 | 1,573 |
| Reasons not recorded | 280 | 304 | 159 | 1,103 | 172 | 214 | 275 | 644 | 452 | 3,603 |
| *May 1989* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Starts | 743 | 919 | 798 | 2,075 | 527 | 510 | 811 | 1,731 | 1,452 | 9,566 |
| Total leavers | 876 | 1,006 | 919 | 2,276 | 580 | 597 | 961 | 1,968 | 1,810 | 10,993 |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jobs | 460 | 621 | 568 | 1,119 | 323 | 381 | 495 | 1,080 | 1,043 | 6,090 |
| Other positive outcomes | 116 | 128 | 108 | 333 | 66 | 97 | 164 | 250 | 225 | 1,487 |
| Reasons not recorded | 300 | 257 | 243 | 824 | 191 | 119 | 302 | 638 | 542 | 3,416 |

## Creches

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any further plans to encourage employers to establish workplace or shared facility creches or similar incentives further to assist the return to employment of women to counter skill shortages; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend takes, and will continue to take, every opportunity to encourage employers to help employees combine work and family responsibilities. Workplace nurseries are, however, only one possible way of helping parents with childcare. They can be successful, but it may not always be the most practicable solution. Other possibilities include help with childcare costs in the local home area and rearrangement of working hours and holidays to fit in with school hours and terms. We welcome measures taken by employers including assistance with childcare and the introduction of flexible working hours and family leave. The best way of introducing such measures is through voluntary agreement between employers and employees. Schemes can then be tailored to individual priorities and needs, and available resources.

My Department also plays a full part in the ministerial group on women's issues, which is currently considering the whole question of childcare. The group recently announced a five-point plan on child care which includes encouragement for the use of school premises after school and in holiday periods; support for the voluntary sector through pump-priming of projects and encouragement of partnerships between the voluntary sector and employers. The initiative will also encourage employers to use the tax reliefs available to them when they help their employees with child care.

## Collieries (Safety)

**Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of accidents at British Coal collieries at which there were either loss of life or serious injuries in each of the last five years and add the ratio of such incidents per 100,000 shifts worked in each year.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The information is not available in the format asked for; the number of fatal injuries and major injuries in British Coal collieries over the last five years are as follows:

| | *Fatal injuries* | *Major injuries* | *Rate per 100,000 manshifts* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *Fatal injuries* | *Major injuries* |
| 1984-85[1] | 22 | 378 | — | — |
| 1985-86 | 28 | 715 | 0·08 | 2·15 |
| 1986-87[2] | 15 | 952 | 0·05 | 3·45 |
| 1987-88[2] | 9 | 729 | 0·04 | 3·24 |
| 1988-89[2] (provisional) | 18 | 685 | 0·08 | 3·35 |

[1] This period covers the 15 months January 1984 to March 1985.

[2] The introduction of RIDDOR regulations on 1 April 1986 widened the coverage of the "major" injury category.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of concerns about the incidence of underground fires in British Coal collieries; and if he will pursue the matter with Her Majesty's inspector.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend is concerned about any incident which affects health and safety, but the number of underground fires in British Coal mines fell from 72 in 1987-88 to 52 in 1988-89. Reducing the number of underground fires is a primary objective of the Health and Safety Executive which through the work of the mines and quarries inspectorate, is actively monitoring safety measures taken by British Coal. These include the application of more sophisticated inspections and detection techniques, the raising of standards in the specification, design, installation and maintenance of machinery and equipment and the continuing development of fire-resistant materials.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) on how many occasions fire or smoke detection devices in British Coal collieries have been put out of use without notice being given to those employed in the colliery or Her Majesty's inspector;

(2) what information he has on whether underground fire or smoke alarms or similar monitoring equipment have been put out of operation or use by British Coal insofar as smoke or fire detection is concerned.

**Mr. Nicholls:** There is no statutory requirement for the Health and Safety Executive to be given notice of fire or smoke detection devices that have been put out of use and therefore the information requested is not available.

**Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on whether the use of free moving underground vehicles has led British Coal to put out of use fire or smoke detection and warning devices.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Health and Safety Executive is not aware of any fire detection systems being put out of use by the operation of free-steered vehicles underground.

## Employment Schemes

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how the 50-plus jobstart scheme is to be monitored; what targets he has for numbers participating in the scheme; what is the likely cost of the 50-plus jobstart scheme to his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** The 50-plus jobstart scheme is a variation of the existing jobstart scheme. It aims to help people over 50 to take up part-time work as a means of re-establishing themselves in the labour market.

Under 50-plus jobstart people over the age of 50 who have been unemployed for more than 12 months may be eligible for an allowance of £20 per week if they take up certain part-time jobs paying not more than £2·57 per hour. The scheme is being piloted in four areas—Lothian and the Borders, Dudley and Sandwell, Leeds and London South. The pilots started on 26 June 1989 and will run for one year. No targets have been set for the number of participants.

The number of people applying and being accepted for the allowance will be monitored. The pilots are being funded from within the overall cost of the main jobstart programme.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if the participation of income support claimants in the action credit and 50-plus jobstart schemes is intended to be purely voluntary; whether refusal to participate will affect claimants eligibility for benefits; and what measures his Department is taking to get over-50's to participate in the 50-plus jobstart scheme.

**Mr. Lee:** Participation of all claimants in the action credit scheme and in 50-plus jobstart is voluntary. Refusal to participate will not of itself affect entitlement to benefit. The 50-plus jobstart scheme is being publicised by means of leaflets and posters in unemployment benefit offices and jobcentres in the four pilot areas.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the minimum pay, training and employment conditions which action credit agencies are required to meet in providing part-time jobs for income support claimants; when the statement of the terms and conditions of employment of action credit participants will be available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Action credit is an employment scheme, with participants paid the rate for the job. It will allow participants to build on their ET training through practical work with an employer.

Action credit agencies are required to ensure that conditions of employment meet the relevant legislative standards. Each participant will have a personal document outlining their terms and conditions. I welcome the testing of this new initiative and hope that unemployed people in the pilot areas will make full use of it.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment why action credit agencies are required to pay employers' national insurance contributions for their employees participating in action credit; whether his Department expects employers to pay national insurance contributions for participants in similar schemes where employees are earning below the lower earnings limit; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Action credit agencies will pay class 1 national insurance contributions only on the lump sum that participants receive when they leave the scheme. Class 1 national insurance contributions are not payable where an employee earns less than the lower earnings level.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment why an earnings ceiling of £43 a week has been set for action credit participants; what, for participants working 23 hours a week, would be the hourly payment; how the earnings ceiling relates to the full extent normal rule; and what are his Department's target figures for participation in action credit.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The earnings ceiling of £43 per week has been set to ensure participants are not required to pay national insurance contributions on a weekly basis. Hourly earnings will be paid at the local rate for the job. There is no connection between the earnings ceiling on action credit and the full extent normal rule.

The scheme can help up to 300 participants in each pilot area, greatly enhancing the existing options for employment training leavers. The purpose of the pilot will be to test the attractiveness of the scheme; thus my right hon. Friend will not be setting numerical targets for these areas.

### Pioneer Concrete UK Limited

**Mr. Terry Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how often Pioneer Concrete UK Limited has been prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive under health and safety legislation during the last 10 years.

**Mr. Nicholls** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* Health and Safety Executive records show that it has prosecuted Pioneer Concrete UK Limited three times since 1979.

### Disabled People (Training)

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of the supplementary grant available to training agents and managers has been apportioned to the higher cost of training disabled people.

**Mr. Lee** *[holding answer 6 July 1989]:* The information as requested is not available. The Training Agency, however, does provide special help for people with disabilities. This includes the loan of special equipment which may be needed to help trainees with their training programme, adaptations to premises and equipment, personal reader service for blind trainees and communicator service for deaf trainees.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Mobility Housing

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many units of mobility housing have been provided by *(a)* the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and *(b)* housing associations in Northern Ireland in each year since 1979;

(2) how many units of wheelchair housing have been provided by *(a)* the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and *(b)* housing associations in Northern Ireland in each year since 1979.

**Mr. Needham:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) on 7 June, *Official Report*, vol. 154, column. *162-63*.

### Housing Associations

**Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he intends to provide additional sums of money to the housing association development programme (Northern Ireland) 1989-90 to cover the approved schemes for the mentally ill and handicapped.

**Mr. Needham:** No. Such schemes are being provided for within the existing budget.

**Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate how much money will be available under the housing association development programme (Northern Ireland) 1989-90 to fund new projects.

**Mr. Needham:** It is estimated that £7·6 million is available in the 1989-90 year to fund: *(a)* new starts, that is, schemes which will receive tender approval to commence work on site; *(b)* other schemes up to an advanced stage of planning but not to commence on site this year.

**Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give further assistance to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the voluntary housing associations to assist those persons who are homeless.

**Mr. Needham:** The Executive has the statutory responsibility of providing assistance to the homeless. The Executive has not asked for increased in-year funding for the homeless, whose needs for future years will, of course, be carefully considered during the public expenditure survey.

**Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list in the *Official Report* the names and addresses of those housing associations which have applied for funding in 1989-90.

**Mr. Needham:** The list is as follows:

*Association and Address*
Abbeyfield Northern Ireland Development Society Limited
Room 306, Bryson House,
28 Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7FE

Ballynafeigh Housing Association Limited
70 Kimberley Street,
Belfast BT7 3DY

Baptist Union of Ireland Housing Association Limited
117 Lisburn Road,
Belfast BT9 7AF

Belfast Community Housing Association Limited
131 Ravenhill Road,
Belfast BT6 8DR

Belfast Improved Houses Limited
Russell Court, Claremont Street,
Belfast BT9 6JX

Ben Madigan Housing Association Limited
Russell Court, Claremont Street,
Belfast BT9 6JX

Botanic Housing Association Limited
99 Agincourt Avenue,
Belfast BT7 1QD

Broadway Housing Association Limited
131 Ravenhill Road,
Belfast BT6 8DR

The James Butcher Housing Association (NI) Limited
Murray House, Murray Street,
Belfast BT1 6DN

Church of Ireland Housing Association (NI) Limited
74 Dublin Road,
Belfast BT2 7HP

Clonard Housing Association Limited
54 Clonard Gardens,
Belfast BT13 2RH

Connswater Housing Association Limited
50 Mersey Street,
Belfast BT4 1EX

Covenanter Residential Association Limited
Cameron House, 98 Lisburn Road
Belfast BT9 6AG
Craigavon and District Housing Association Limited
20 Carleton Street,
Portadown BT62 3EN

Craigowen Housing Association Limited
35 New Road,
Donaghadee BT21 0DR

Derry Housing Association Limited
18 Magazine Street,
Londonderry BT48 6HH

Donacloney Housing Association Limited
c/o Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations,
Carlisle Memorial Centre,
88 Clifton Street,
Belfast BT13 1AB

Down and Connor Housing Association Limited
Saint Lukes Presbytery,
Twinbrook Road,
Dunmurry, Co. Antrim

Dungannon and District Housing Association Limited
48A Irish Street,
Dungannon BT70 1DB

Flax Housing Association Limited
Brookfield Mill, 333 Crumlin Road,
Belfast BT14 7EA

Fold Housing Association
3-4 Redburn Square,
Holywood BT18 9HZ

Gosford Housing Association (Armagh) Limited
16 Stockingmanshill Road,
Armagh BT60 1HZ

Grove Housing Association Limited
139 York Road,
Belfast BT15 3GZ

Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Limited
12 Sullivan Close,
Holywood BT18 9HL

Hearth
181A Stranmillis Road,
Belfast BT9 5DU

Latharna Housing Association Limited
First Floor, 93-97 Main Street,
Larne BT40 1HJ

Lisnagarvey Housing Association Limited
8 Bensons Road,
Lisburn BT28 3UU

Malone Housing Association Limited
The Bursar's Office
The Queens University of Belfast
University Road Belfast BT7 1NN

Masonic Housing Association
(NI) Limited
74 Dublin Road
Belfast BT2 7HP

McGarel Housing Association Limited
First Floor, 93-97 Main Street, Larne BT40 1HJ

Newington Housing Association (1975) Limited
300 Limestone Road, Belfast BT15 3AR

Nih Housing Association Limited
'Hazelbank', 361 Shore Road, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim
BT37 9SA

Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association Limited
Murray House, Murray Street, Belfast BT1 6DN

North Belfast Mission Housing Society Limited
35A Rathcoole Drive, Newtownabbey BT37 9AQ

Open Door Housing Association (NI) Limited
10-14 Commercial Court, Belfast BT1 2NB

Presbyterian Housing Association (NI) Ltd
Room 119, Church House, Fisherwick Place, Belfast
BT1 6DW

The Royal British Legion Housing Association (NI) Ltd
War Memorial Building, Waring Street, Belfast BT1 2EU

St. Matthew's Housing Association Limited
58 Harper Street, Belfast BT5 4EN

Students Housing Association Co-operative Limited
3-5 Botanic Avenue, Belfast BT7 1JG

Tennent Street District Housing Association Limited
229 Tennent Street, Belfast BT13 3GG

Triangle Women's Housing Association Limited
7 Girona Avenue, Portrush

Ulidia Housing Association Limited
57A Botanic Avenue, Belfast BT7 1JF

Ulster Homemaker Limited
C/o Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations,
Carlisle Memorial Centre, 88 Clifton Street, Belfast
BT13 1AB

Willowfield Parish Church Housing Association Limited
131 Ravenhill Road, Belfast BT6 8DR

Woodvale and Shankill Housing Association Limited
58 Rosebank Street, Belfast BT13 3HB

**Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list in the *Official Report* those schemes which have been assured of finance from the Housing Association Development Programme (Northern Ireland) 1989-90 together with the sums of money allocated.

**Mr. Needham:** The inclusion of individual schemes in the housing association development programme does not in itself guarantee that the scheme will proceed. This will depend upon compliance with agreed procedures, costs and standards and on the availability of resources. On that basis, no schemes are assured of finance. Nevertheless those schemes which have been included in the programme for possible tender approval during 1989-90, together with the capital "allocations", are as follows:

| *Scheme address* | *Capital allocation 1989-90 £* |
|---|---|
| 2-12 Dundela crescent, Belfast | 69,000 |
| 3-17 Ethel Street, Belfast | 181,000 |
| Glencraig Community, Holywood | 10,000 |
| Newry road, Kilkeel Mourne Grange 3 | 200,000 |
| Main street, Lisnaskea | 374,000 |
| Abbey Gardens, Knock, Belfast | 137,000 |
| 1-33 Barrack Hill, Armagh | 273,000 |
| Millmount House, Banbridge | 218,000 |
| Mountain Road, Kilkeel | 222,000 |
| 1 Cavehill Road, Belfast | 102,000 |
| Randalstown Road, Antrim | 86,000 |
| Croft Phase 2, Bloomfield Road, Bangor | 119,000 |
| Elizabeth Avenue, Carrickfergus | 61,000 |
| Kinsale Park, Caw, Londonderry | 382,000 |
| 14 Inverary Avenue, Belfast | 238,000 |
| Carrick House Annexe, Belfast | 179,000 |
| 1-25 Ambleside Street, 111-113 Silvio Street, Belfast | 127,000 |
| Tennent Street Phase 5, Belfast | 277,000 |

| | *Capital allocation 1989-90* £ |
|---|---|
| Ambleside Street, Tennent Street, Sydney Street West, Belfast | 114,000 |
| Warden Street, Ballymena | 174,000 |
| CDA 94, Donegall Street, Belfast | 10,000 |
| 14, 18 Hills Avenue, Belfast | 36,000 |
| Tennent/Orkney Phase 6, Belfast | 74,000 |
| 1 Park Avenue, Belfast | 79,000 |
| 7 Windsor Avenue, Lurgan | 12,000 |
| Woodview Avenue, Portadown | 64,000 |
| Gate Lodge Foyle Hospital, Londonderry | 35,000 |
| 18, 43 Curran Road, Larne | 76,000 |
| 2-10 Fountainville Avenue, Belfast | 161,000 |
| 139 Glen Road, Belfast | 316,000 |
| 4, 6, 8 Bryansford Road, Newcastle | 152,000 |
| 49 Somerton Road, Belfast | 22,000 |
| 3, 5 Brookhill Avenue, Belfast | 90,000 |
| 157-159 Falls Road, Belfast | 32,000 |
| 42-45, 161-166 Rathkyle, Antrim | 250,000 |
| Lyne Lodge Canal Quay, Newry | 94,000 |
| Bray Street/Rathlin Street, Belfast | 259,000 |
| Cambrai Street, Belfast | 185,000 |
| *Repairs* | |
| Dundela, Belfast, Flue Lining | 26,000 |
| Edenderry, Belfast, Flue Lining | 36,000 |
| Ravenhill, Belfast, Flue Lining | 38,000 |
| Dundela, Belfast, Re-Roofing | 72,000 |
| Windsor Park, Belfast | 317,000 |
| Crosby Flats, Bangor | 344,000 |
| Ogilvie Street, Ravenhill Avenue, Belfast | 8,000 |

In addition, a total of £4·5 million has been "allocated" in respect of a further 115 schemes which associations may take to an advanced stage of design so that they may be considered for inclusion in the next or subsequent financial year.

**Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will list in the *Official Report* those schemes which have been submitted for inclusion in the housing association development programme (Northern Ireland) 1989-90 intending to provide accommodation specifically for people who are homeless.

**Mr. Needham:** The following proposals to provide accommodation specifically for the homeless were identified by housing associations as projects which they would like to have had included for tender approval in the 1989-90 development programme:

*Scheme Address*
65 Bridge Street, Newry
1-5 Curran Road/2 Circular Road, Larne
239 Newtownards Road, Belfast
14 Inverary Avenue, Belfast
32 Edward Street, Portadown
83-95 Foyle Street, Londonderry
Carrick House Annexe, Belfast
14-16 Lodge Road, Coleraine

## Disability

**The Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children in schools in Northern Ireland are defined as deaf; and what steps are being taken to identify those who may suffer from blindness as well or from another handicap in addition to deafness.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** According to latest information (January 1988) there were 82 deaf pupils of compulsory school age attending grant-aided primary, secondary and special schools. Of these, 45 suffered from one or more additional physical handicaps. No details are available about children attending grammar schools.

Under the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 it is a matter for education and library boards to identify and make provision for children with special educational needs.

**The Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many deaf people are resident in mental hospitals in Northern Ireland; how many of these have an additional handicap; what plans have been made for their future in the community; and if he will express these figures as a percentage of the number of residents in mental hospitals.

**Mr. Needham:** This information is not collected centrally. Plans for the future in the community of deaf people resident in mental hospitals are the responsibility of the health and social services boards. In drawing them up, boards take appropriate account of patients' individual needs and circumstances.

## Medical Screening

**The Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the number of medical screening units in the Province and future demand for screening.

**Mr. Needham:** Screening for hearing and visual defects, speech disorders and other developmental problems is an integral part of the child health surveillance programme. The physical and developmental status of children is assessed on an ongoing basis from infancy to age 14. Where abnormalities are detected children are referred to appropriate specialist services. Adults with suspected handicapping conditions are also referred to specialist services by their family doctor. Existing services have the capacity to deal with present and expected future requirements.

**The Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what post-school provision exists for deaf and multi-handicapped young people in Northern Ireland; and what advice he is giving to area boards on this matter.

**Mr. Needham:** In Northern Ireland, the individual needs of hearing-impaired and multi-handicapped clients are met by the general range of statutory and voluntary services including the provision of home helps, aids and adaptations and day centre and workshop activities.

Specialist social workers for the deaf provide advice and guidance to hearing-impaired people and their families and act as interpreters where necessary. Three resource centres for the hearing impaired are provided in the Eastern health and social services board area at Beechbank house, Helen Keller house and the Parkmount rehabilitation unit.

The regional strategy for the period 1987-92 advises boards that the Department of Health and Social Services expects them to effect improvements in services specifically for the deaf and blind, either through the creation of specialist posts, or through in-service training designed to ensure that existing staff, including social workers, are made more aware and capable of meeting the needs of sensorily handicapped people.

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision has been made in the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys survey of disability in Northern Ireland for the identification of deaf-blind people and deaf people who may suffer from an additional handicap to their deafness.

**Mr. Needham:** The study of disability now under way in Northern Ireland is modelled closely on that carried out in Great Britain by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, and the same methods of establishing the nature and extent of disability are being followed. Information is sought on each and every disability that an individual has which interferes with his or her ability to perform daily activities. Thus, people with varying levels of visual loss and/or hearing loss and those who suffer an additional disability to their hearing loss will be included in the survey. Investigations cover those living in private households and also those who live in residential establishments of varying kinds.

The study is being carried out by the policy planning and research unit of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will meet representatives of organisations representing the deaf to discuss the implications for them of the Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1989.

**Mr. Needham:** No request for a meeting to discuss the implications of the Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1989 has been received from any organisation representing deaf people.

## Residential Homes

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many residents in *(a)* Northern Ireland residential and *(b)* Northern Ireland nursing homes are required to contribute all or part of their personal expenses allowance to fund shortfalls in fees charged to them.

**Mr. Needham:** I regret that the information is not available.

## Elderly People

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of how many elderly people and their relatives cannot afford to pay for care in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Needham:** None, but income support is available to people in need of care whose resources are below levels prescribed by Parliament.

## Roads

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals he has to complete dualling of the Belfast-Larne road; and whether this road has been indentified as a Euro-route.

**Mr. Needham:** The existing single carriageway sections of the Belfast-Larne road are adjudged capable of carrying projected traffic flows for the foreseeable future. Proposals for completion of dualling are therefore considered to be long term. The Department of Environment for Northern Ireland has indentified the route as a Euro-route.

## Housing

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many sub-contractors named by successful main contractors in tender documents submitted to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive were not subsequently used after the main contract was awarded, in each of the last three years.

**Mr. Needham:** I am advised by the chairman of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive that the information requested is not available as contractors are not required to name proposed sub-contractors when submitting tenders for Housing Executive contracts, although some do so.

## Road Safety (Carrickfergus)

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he proposes to reduce traffic congestion and improve road safety at Windermere road and Windermere avenue, Carrickfergus, Country Antrim.

**Mr. Needham:** As there is little evidence of traffic congestion or a particular road safety problem at Windermere road and Windermere avenue, no action is proposed at the present time.

## Coal Gas Works, Carrickfergus

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration has been given to the retention of the only complete coal gas works in Ireland at Carrickfergus, or to the retention of this site as a historical tourist attraction and for educational purposes.

**Mr. Needham:** I understand that this site, which is owned by Belfast city council, is to be sold later this year, after it has been detoxified to the normal standard. The Carrickfergus Gasworks Preservation Society, which wishes to develop the site as a gasworks museum, will have the opportunity to make an offer for it.

## Scotland (Transport Links)

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had regarding road, rail and ferry links between Northern Ireland and Scotland.

**Mr. Needham:** Discussions are continuing at ministerial and official levels on proposals for improved facilities at Larne harbour, the upgrading of the rail connection between Belfast and Larne and the possible introduction of a ferry service between Red Bay harbour and Scotland.

## Sewage Disposal (Islandmagee)

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the marine survey postponed in 1988 into sewage disposal from Ashvale park, Islandmagee, County Antrim, to the sea will be carried out.

**Mr. Needham:** A study, including any necessary marine survey, has been initiated and is expected to be completed by November 1989.

## Benefit Statistics

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons in Northern Ireland are currently receiving *(a)* unemployment benefit and *(b)* income support.

**Mr. Needham:** The latest available information is as follows:

| | *Number of recipients* |
|---|---|
| Unemployment Benefit | 21,584 |
| Income Support | [1]183,235 |

[1] This includes an estimated 4,000 people who get unemployment benefit and income support.

## Civil Service Statistics

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show for each grade in the Northern Ireland Civil Service the number and percentages of *(a)* Roman Catholics, *(b)* Protestants and *(c)* others, showing the number and percentages of males and females in each category; and if he will indicate the percentage of each of those groupings of working age in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Cope:** The information requested by the hon. Gentleman is contained within the Second Report of the Equal Opportunities Unit of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The Second Report was published in December 1987 and shows the make-up of the Northern Ireland Civil Service by sex, religion and disability as at 1 January 1987.

Copies of the Second Report were placed in the Library on 17 December 1987.

The following table shows estimated aggregated figures (1985-87) of the religious affiliation of persons of working age in Northern Ireland, derived from the continuous household survey.

| | *Males per cent.* | *Females per cent.* | *All per cent.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Catholic | 37·9 | 39·6 | 38·9 |
| Protestant | 57·8 | 57·8 | 57·8 |
| Other or not stated | 4·3 | 2·6 | 3·3 |

## Bogside Flats (Demolition)

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the demolition of the Bogside flats in Londonderry was carried out by the main contractors or by sub-contractors.

**Mr. Needham:** I am advised by the chairman of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive that the demolition of the Bogside (Rossville street) flats was carried out by the main contractor.

## MOT Tests

**Mr. Peter Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the length of delay for vehicles awaiting MOT tests in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Needham:** The average waiting time for private car test appointments was approximately six and a half weeks at 14 July 1989.

## Teachers

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish details of the numbers of *(a)* Roman Catholic and *(b)* other teachers who have graduated in each of the last three years for which records are available, together with information on the level of qualification awarded in each category from Northern Ireland universities and teacher training colleges.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** Available information is as follows:

| | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Stranmillis College* | | | |
| BEd (Hons) | 53 | 68 | 83 |
| BEd | 89 | 77 | 51 |
| PGCE | 51 | 65 | 67 |
| *St. Mary's College* | | | |
| BEd (Hons) | 61 | 60 | 94 |
| BEd | 85 | 75 | 65 |
| PGCE | 46 | 58 | 61 |
| *Queen's University* | | | |
| PGCE | 109 | 124 | 115 |
| *University of Ulster* | | | |
| PGCE | 22 | 23 | 25 |
| BA | 10 | 11 | 6 |
| BA (Hons) | 28 | 25 | 27 |
| BA/BSc single subject concurrent | 2 | 2 | — |
| BA/BSc (Hons) single subject concurrent | 45 | 33 | 53 |
| BA/BSc (Hons) combined subject | 16 | 6 | 11 |
| BSc | 20 | 10 | 2 |

Since St. Mary's is a voluntary Roman Catholic college it is likely that most graduates are Roman Catholic. The other institutions are in the public sector and non-denominational.

## Planning Officers

**Mr. Clifford Forsythe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if, in taking account of the peculiar structure of local government in Northern Ireland, he will require planning officers to follow the practice of councillors in declaring their interests in cases where their duties may constitue a conflict of interest on the part of themselves or their families.

**Mr. Needham** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* In accordance with their conditions of service all civil servants are required not to put themselves in a position where their duty and private interests conflict and they must not make use of their official position to further those interests. All planning officials, therefore, are expected to take no part in cases where their duties may constitute a conflict of interest on the part of themselves or their families.

## Rent Arrears

**Mr. Clifford Forsythe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under what powers the Northern Ireland Housing Executive demands deductions for arrears which are being disputed by a tenant.

**Mr. Needham** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* In cases where tenants do not repay rent arrears voluntarily the Northern Ireland Housing Executive recover arrears by three main methods: by direct payment from benefits under the Social Security Claims and Payments Regulations (NI) 1988; from other money due to the tenant from Government sources under the Payment for

Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (NI) 1971; and under the Magistrates Courts (NI) Order 1981. When using the Magistrates Courts (NI) Order the Executive must prove the debt in court. If a tenant disputes the withholding of money under the Social Security Claims and Payment Regulations or the Payment for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (NI) he can use the Executive's internal complaints procedure and if he is still not satisfied he can refer his case to the commissioner for complaints.

## Multiple Births

**Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the number of sets of *(a)* twins, *(b)* triplets, *(c)* quadruplets, *(d)* quintuplets, and *(e)* sextuplets, born in Northern Ireland in each year since 1980; and what was the total number of maternities in each of these years.

**Mr. Needham** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* The information is set out in the table:

| *Type* | *1980* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *a.* Twins | 298 | 305 | 306 | 263 | 304 | 272 | 281 | 322 | 287 |
| *b.* Triplets | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 1 |
| *c.* Quadruplets | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 |
| *d.* Quintuplets | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| *e.* Sextuplets | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Maternities | 28,542 | 27,229 | 26,905 | 27,188 | 27,547 | 27,529 | 27,989 | 27,694 | [1]27,614 |

[1] Provisional.

## NHS (Regrading)

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about progress in implementing the recent regrading exercise for National Health Service staff.

**Mr. Needham** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the regrading of medical laboratory scientific officers. The assignment of existing posts to new grades under the medical laboratory scientific officer regrading exercise is a matter for the health and social services boards. In each board this involves a review of each post against the needs of the board. The exercise is at a fairly advanced stage in all the boards and local staff interests are being consulted. However, due to the work involved it has not been possible to assign the new grades before 1 April this year as had been planned.

## Scientific Staff

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to the relationship between difficulties experienced in the recruitment and retention of medical physicists, clinical biochemists, microbiologists and psychologists in Northern Ireland and similar difficulties in Great Britain; and whether he has received any recent representations or information on this.

**Mr. Needham** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* I have received some representations about pay and conditions of service for these groups of staff. In Northern Ireland there is, as for other staff groups in the health and personal social services, a policy of parity with similar grades of staff employed in the National Health Service. In Great Britain, I understand that the management side of the appropriate Whitley Council has set up a working party to investigate reported problems of recruitment and retention. I shall, of course, be keeping in close touch with developments.

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he intends to take to ensure that the commitment given in "Working for Patients" to maintain a health care service based on high technology includes measures to recruit and retain scientific staff to operate the service.

**Mr. Needham** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* The current commitment within the Health Service to recruit and retain, within available resources, sufficient numbers of staff of the right calibre for the job will continue.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Atlantic Salmon Conservation Trust (Scotland)

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Inland Revenue has completed its review of the charitable status of the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Trust (Scotland).

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I regret that I cannot comment on the tax affairs of any particular body.

### Arts and Charities (Sponsorship)

**Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what tax incentives are available to encourage commercial sponsorships of the arts and charities.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Sponsorship payments which are not of a capital nature are deductible for tax purposes in calculating trading profits if they are made wholly and exclusively for the purposes of the payer's trade. In practice, this means that the sole purpose of the payment must be to provide the payer with a benefit—often in the form of advertising—commensurate with his expenditure.

There are also special tax reliefs for business donations to charities.

### Life Assurance

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has on the rules for the taxation of investment-linked and other life assurance in *(a)* Germany and *(b)* Luxembourg for life offices and policy holders, respectively.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** In both countries life offices pay tax broadly by reference to their trading profits. In Germany policy holders may also pay tax on policy benefits received, depending on the terms of the policy and its duration. So far as I am aware, investment-linked life assurance comparable to that in the United Kingdom is not usual in either country: I am aware of no special tax provision for it.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what practical limitations have been or are likely to be imposed by membership of the EEC on the Government's freedom to increase the tax take from the life assurance business, including pension and annuity business.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The practical development of a single internal EC market for life assurance is still at an early stage but in consultation with the industry the Government will be keeping the position under review. The decision this year to reform the existing tax regime for life assurance instead of adopting a more radical option will undoubtedly provide stability for the run-up to 1992. But allowing for freedom of services in the EC was only one of several objectives of the reform. As my right hon. Friend said in his Budget speech, above all the effect of the changes will be to provide a more efficient and equitable tax regime for this most important industry.

## Personal Taxation

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the gross and taxable income of the self-employed in the current financial year as *(a)* declared for tax and *(b)* not so declared; and if he will provide comparable figures for 1978-79.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The latest information is for 1986-87. The estimates cover married couples and single people whose main source of income is from self-employment.

*£ billion*

| | *Gross Income* | *Taxable Income* |
|---|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 9·1 | 4·5 |
| 1986-87 | 26·4 | 15·4 |

By their very nature, estimates of amounts of income not declared for tax are not available.

## Special Debt Relief

**Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how it is proposed to account for the special debt relief to the poorest and most heavily indebted countries agreed at the Toronto summit this year.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The arrangements announced by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development on 25 November 1988 (WA col. 13) following the Toronto agreement have been modified for technical reasons. ECGD will receive the lower amount of interest from the debtor as before. But it is now intended that, instead of ODA reimbursing ECGD for the forgone receipts, ECGD's obligations to the Consolidated Fund will be reduced by the same amount. The published accounts will be noted to make this clear. These changes will be taken into account during the 1989 public expenditure survey. It is expected that the cost of providing special debt relief in this way will count as part of Britain's net official development assistance to developing countries, as reported to the development assistance committee of the OECD.

## Offices (London)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage increase over the nearest equivalent figure for 1976 and 1966 is represented by the total rateable value of offices, including banks in office areas, in London, as shown in section 1 of table 11.1 of Inland Revenue Statistics 1987.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** About 26·5 per cent. for 1 April 1986 compared with 1 April 1976. A comparison with 1966 would not be appropriate because rateable values for that year were based on the 1963 revaluation.

## Personal Taxation

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has information from the family expenditure survey, the survey of personal incomes and from the building societies which enable him to estimate the distribution of mortgage interest relief by marital status as well as by range of total income.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Information on the distribution of mortgage interest relief by marital status and by range of total income is available from projections of the data from the 1986-87 "Survey of Personal Incomes" and the 1986 "Family Expenditure Survey". However, all estimates are provisional and those for marital status are rather tentative because of lack of firm data.

Latest estimates for 1989-90 based on the assumption that interest rates remain at current levels for the rest of 1989-90 are given in the table. The estimates include mortgages formerly under the option mortgage scheme which are now subsumed within MIRAS.

*Tax units receiving mortgage interest relief by marital status and range of total income 1989-90*

| *Range of total income* | *Number of tax units with mortgage interest relief Thousands* | *Average value of relief per mortgagor £* | *Cost of relief £ million* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Singles* | | | |
| Up to £5,000 | 300 | 430 | 130 |
| £5,001 to £10,000 | 810 | 630 | 510 |
| £10,001 to £15,000 | 660 | 670 | 440 |
| £15,001 to £20,000 | 400 | 810 | 330 |
| £20,001 to £25,000 | 190 | 850 | 160 |
| £25,001 to £30,000 | 80 | 1,110 | 80 |
| over £30,000 | 100 | 1,430 | 140 |
| Total | 2,540 | 700 | 1,790 |
| *Married couples* | | | |
| Up to £5,000 | 340 | 540 | 180 |
| £5,001 to £10,000 | 890 | 570 | 510 |
| £10,001 to £15,000 | 1,600 | 650 | 1,040 |
| £15,001 to £20,000 | 1,480 | 690 | 1,020 |
| £20,001 to £25,000 | 1,010 | 700 | 710 |
| £25,001 to £30,000 | 530 | 820 | 440 |
| over £30,000 | 910 | 1,170 | 1,060 |
| Total | 6,760 | 730 | 4,960 |
| *Total income* | | | |
| Up to £5,000 | 640 | 490 | 310 |
| £5,001 to £10,000 | 1,700 | 600 | 1,020 |
| £10,001 to £15,000 | 2,260 | 660 | 1,480 |
| £15,001 to £20,000 | 1,880 | 720 | 1,350 |
| £20,001 to £25,000 | 1,200 | 720 | 870 |
| £25,001 to £30,000 | 610 | 860 | 520 |
| over £30,000 | 1,010 | 1,200 | 1,200 |

| *Range of total income* | *Number of tax units with mortgage interest relief Thousands* | *Average value of relief per mortgagor £* | *Cost of relief £ million* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 9,300 | 730 | 6,750 |

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has made estimates of the revenue cost of the introduction of separate taxation; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing by range of total income for two-earner married couples the number of wives earning (i) more and (ii) less than the single allowance.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** It is estimated that the revenue cost of the introduction of independent taxation will be approximately £500 million in the first year, 1990-91, and approximately £1·2 billion in 1991-92.

The number of wives earning more than the single allowance in 1990-91 by range of total income for example is given in the table. The figures are estimates based on a projection of the 1986-87 "Survey of Personal Incomes" and are therefore provisional. I regret that it is not possible to provide reliable estimates of total income for couples where the wife earns for the number of wives earning less than the single allowance.

*Number of wives earning more than single allowance, 1989-90, by range of total income of the married couple*

| *Range of total income of married couple (lower limit) (£)* | *Thousands* |
|---|---|
| 1 | 110 |
| 5,000 | 310 |
| 10,000 | 580 |
| 15,000 | 990 |
| 20,000 | 1,420 |
| 30,000 | 450 |
| 40,000 | 150 |
| 50,000 | 150 |
| Total | 4,160 |

## Charitable Donations

**Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total value of income covenanted to charities by *(a)* individuals and *(b)* companies in every year from 1984-85 to 1988-89, inclusive.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Gross amounts covenanted to charities are shown in the table. I regret that a reliable breakdown of these figures between individual and company covenants is not available.

*Gross amounts covenanted to charities*

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 400 |
| 1985-86 | 450 |
| 1986-87 | 500 |
| 1987-88[1] | 650 |
| 1988-89[2] | 800 |

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[1] Estimated.

[2] Provisional.

**Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the value of income convenanted to professional arts organisations with charitable status by *(a)* individuals and *(b)* companies in every year from 1984-85 to 1988 inclusive.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I regret that the information requested is not available.

**Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the value of payroll giving—"give as you earn"—to *(a)* all charities and *(b)* professional arts organisations with charitable status in 1987-88 and 1988-89.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** It is estimated that about £1 million was donated to charities in 1987-88 through the payroll giving scheme and over £3 million in 1988-89. No information is available on how much of these amounts were received by professional arts organisations.

## Higher Rate Tax

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of persons subject to higher-rate tax in the current year on the basis of separate taxation for husbands and wives.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** On the basis of the latest information available, it is estimated that just under 1·3 million individuals will be liable to income tax at the higher rate when independent taxation starts in 1990-91. This estimate is based on a projection of the 1986-87 "Survey of Personal Incomes" and is therefore provisional.

## Income Tax

**Mr. Lester:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the cost of administering income tax.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* The total cost of administering income tax for the financial year 1987-88, the last year for which this figure is available, was £931·5 million.

## Married Women (Tax)

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many married women pay income tax on their earnings; and what proportion they make up of all married women in paid work.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* It is estimated that in 1989-90 some 3·7 million married women will pay income tax on their earnings. It is believed that this represents approximately half of all married women with some income from employment.

## Mortgage Interest Tax Relief

**Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will estimate the revenue cost of mortgage interest tax relief projected for the year 1989-90;

(2) what was the revenue cost of mortgage interest tax relief for 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The estimated costs of mortgage interest tax relief in the United Kingdom are shown in the table. The cost of mortgage interest in 1989-90 is based on the assumption that interest rates remain at current levels for the rest of 1989-90.

*Cost of mortgage tax relief*

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1986-87 | 4,670 |
| 1987-88 | 4,800 |
| 1988-89[1] | 5,500 |
| 1989-90[1] | 6,750 |

[1] provisional.

## ENERGY

### British Nuclear Fuels (Safety)

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had with British Nuclear Fuels with respect to plans to make production workers more responsible for safety monitoring; whether he intends to discuss this with the nuclear installations inspectorate; what implications the plan has for the 1986 safety audit carried out by the nuclear installations inspectorate; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Neither my right hon. Friend nor I have had discussions with British Nuclear Fuels plc on this matter. Any such proposal and its implications for the 1986 safety audit would be a matter for discussion between British Nuclear Fuels and the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate.

### Halliburton Group

**Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether, before letting any further contracts to the Halliburton group or any of its subsidiaries, he will make it his policy to instruct his officials to demand prior assurances from the company *(a)* that full compensation will be paid to any British subject in their employ who is injured while working for them abroad, *(b)* that no British subject will be dismissed immediately while still in hospital receiving treatment and *(c)* that Halliburton Manufacturing and Services Ltd., 17 Hanover square, London W 1, will reply to letters written by hon. Members on behalf of constituents dismissed while in its employ.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** No. It would not be appropriate for the Secretary of State to attempt to regulate the management procedures and practices of companies with which the Department contracts.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The Department of Social Security received 1,333 letters from right hon. and hon. Members and organisations during the month of January and despatched 1,345 replies. This Session 10,314 have been received and 9,474 replies were issued to 1 July.

### Civil Service Dispersal

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what progress is being made in his Department's review, in line with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for the further relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the south-east; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** We are making excellent progress in relocating "backroom" work from 21 local social security offices in London to the three social security centres in Glasgow, Belfast and Makerfield.

The first social security centre at Glasgow is due to start work on 14 August.

As a separate exercise, a team of officials is close to completing a thorough and systematic review of the location of our headquarters work. We expect to receive a report of the team's findings shortly.

### Local Offices (South Yorkshire)

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any plans to review the areas covered by the boundaries of his Department's offices in Doncaster and Wath-on-Dearne in the county of South Yorkshire, with particular regard to the more rural areas of Doncaster metropolitan borough council.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The local office network in this area is being reviewed later in the year. No specific proposals have yet been made regarding the boundaries of Doncaster and Wath-on-Dearne local offices.

### Invalidity Benefit

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security to what extent charitable work undertaken prior to the period covered by a claim for entitlement to invalidity benefit is used as an indication of a person's ability to work during the period covered by the claim.

**Mr. Scott:** Work, whether charitable or other, carried out prior to a claim for invalidity benefit does not affect entitlement to that benefit. Where a person performs some work during the period of the claim, it is for the independent adjudicating authorities to determine whether such work is consistent with the incapacity for work test, which is one of the qualifying conditions for entitlement.

### Creches

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has received any recent representations about pilot or permanent workplace creches and similar incentives further to encourage the return to employment of women in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** We have received no recent representations but officials are in regular touch with staff and their representatives about child care provisions generally. Holiday play schemes have been established in several different parts of the country often in collaboration with other Government Departments and other local employers. Information about local child care facilities is also available to staff. A study is currently under way into the feasibility of providing workplace nurseries.

These schemes form only part of the provisions to encourage the employment of women. Flexible working patterns including part-time working and job sharing, maternity leave and pay, career break opportunities and other special leave arrangements are all designed to encourage women to return to or remain in work in the Department.

## Sickness Benefit

**Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will list the action taken by his Department to assist Mr. A., reference OVB/STB/EC, Longbenton, 25 January 1989, to obtain sickness benefit in respect of his car accident in Italy on 7 December 1983; what response his Department obtained from the Italian authorities; and what efforts they made to insist upon a reply, before the intervention of the Italian ambassador and the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Responsibility for Mr. A's claim was transferred to the Italian authorities on 8 August 1988, and from that date the matter was outside the control of the Department.

However, on request from Mr. A, overseas branch wrote to the Italian authorities on 25 January 1989, asking them to write to Mr. A and let him know the position on his claim. In response to a letter from my hon. Friend asking the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to arrange for the intervention of the British consul with the Italian authorities, which later was passed to the Department for reply as a social security matter was involved, overseas branch has written to the liaison officer in Italy to see whether the inquiries instigated by the Italian ambassador at my hon. Friend's request, have produced any results. If overseas branch has not received a reply to this letter within one month, we have said that the request to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the consulate in Italy to pursue the matter will be reconsidered.

## Jobstart

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what estimate he has made of savings accruing to his Department from reductions in the payment of benefit to participants in the 50-plus jobstart scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The initiative is being piloted for a year in four areas. It started on 26 June. An estimate of potential income support savings will be possible once the results of the pilot are available.

## Family Credit

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many applications there have been for family credit in each month since April 1988, and how many awards have been made in each month since April 1988.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The information is as follows:

| | *Claims* | *Awards* |
|---|---|---|
| *1988* | | |
| April | 96,505 | 40,213 |
| May | 41,721 | |
| June | 52,293 | 36,145 |
| July | 46,100 | 37,912 |
| August | 46,376 | 40,249 |
| September | 47,759 | 24,158 |
| October | 56,373 | 44,944 |
| November | 57,850 | 46,234 |
| December | 44,834 | 35,797 |
| *1989* | | |
| January | 63,638 | 42,712 |
| February | 60,318 | 45,180 |
| March | 68,637 | 47,184 |
| April | 96,752 | 43,300 |
| May | 123,038 | 39,187 |
| June | 107,276 | 73,778 |

*Notes:*

1. The figures are for the four or five weeks ending on the last Friday of the month.

2. The figures for claims received include those made to renew existing awards and those made more than four weeks before the expiry of an existing award (and therefore invalid).

## Family Support

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the level of support for the family net of the consequences of unemployment growth, in total, and by each category of benefit for each year since the first full year after the introduction of child benefit and express the levels of support by each category of benefit in standard prices with the levels of expenditure in the first full year after the introduction of child benefit as the base.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 10 March 1989]*: The information requested is set out as follows:

*Family support 1978-79 to 1988-89 (£ million)*

| | *1978-79 cash/real* | *1979-80 real* | *1980-81 real* | *1981-82 real* | *1982-83 real* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FIS/Family credit | 24 | 23 | 30 | 43 | 58 |
| Maternity grant | 16 | 14 | 12 | 11 | 10 |
| Maternity allowance | 105 | 107 | 108 | 104 | 94 |
| Statutory maternity pay | — | — | — | — | — |
| Supplmentary benefit/income support[1] and housing benefit | 629 | 490 | 483 | 575 | 767 |
| Social fund | — | — | — | — | — |
| Child benefit | 1,776 | 2,389 | 2,129 | 2,222 | 2,252 |
| One parent benefit | 22 | 37 | 44 | 50 | 56 |
| Child tax allowances | 460 | — | — | — | — |
| Additional personal tax allowance (lone parent) | 60 | 60 | 61 | 76 | 86 |
| Total | 3,092 | 3,121 | 2,867 | 3,080 | 3,323 |

| | *1984-85 real* | *1985-86 real* | *1986-87 real* | *1987-88 real* | *1988-89 real* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FIS/Family credit | 71 | 69 | 83 | 88 | 193 |
| Maternity grant | 10 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Maternity allowance | 90 | 87 | 86 | 25 | 12 |
| Statutory maternity pay | — | — | — | 86 | 110 |
| Supplementary benefit/income support and housing benefit | 1,019 | 1,141 | 1,257 | 1,404 | 1,360 |
| Social fund | — | — | — | — | 22 |
| Child benefit | 2,396 | 2,374 | 2,320 | 2,250 | 2,064 |
| One parent benefit | 67 | 71 | 76 | 80 | 79 |
| Child tax allowances | — | — | — | — | — |
| Additional personal tax allowance (lone parent) | 78 | 80 | 87 | 83 | 75 |
| Total | 3,732 | 3,831 | 3,917 | 4,016 | 3,915 |

[1] Supplementary Allowance, Income Support and Housing Benefit paid to one-parent families and to people looking after elderly persons. Housing Benefit includes rate rebates.

## National Insurance Fund

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to publish his next review of the long-term financial position of the national insurance fund under section 137 of the Social Security Act 1975.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 6 July 1989]:* The Government Actuary is responsible for reviewing the operation of the 1975 Social Security Act for each five-year period, and section 137 of the Social Security Act 1975 provides that the Government Actuary shall review the national insurance fund. The Government Actuary advises that he plans to complete his quinquennial report by the end of the year, when my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will lay the report before Parliament.

## Child Benefit

**Mr. Bob Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much of the overall spending on child benefit goes to families on income-related benefits, broken down by benefit.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* The information requested is set out as follows:

*Estimated child benefit expenditure on families in receipt of income-related benefits 1989-90*

| *Benefit* | *Child Benefit £ million* |
|---|---|
| Income Support | 850 |
| Family Credit[1] | 300 |
| Housing Benefit only[2][3] | 100 |

[1] Based on the assumptions underlying the Government's Expenditure Plans (Cmnd 615).

[2] Child Benefit expenditure on families receiving Housing Benefit is estimated on the assumption that the rate rebate scheme is operating throughout Great Britain.

[3] In receipt of Housing Benefit but no other income-related benefit. Income Support and Family Credit recipients may also be receiving Housing Benefit.

# SCOTLAND

## Scottish Homes

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what further provision he intends to make in order to reduce the length of delays presently experienced by purchasers from Scottish Homes; what is the number of legally qualified staff presently engaged in work relating to the sale of domestic residential property; what is the number of legally qualified staff formerly employed by *(a)* the Housing Corporation and *(b)* the Scottish Special Housing Association in order to deal with such work; and what arrangements are being made by Scottish Homes in order to reduce the backlog of cases.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Scottish Homes has recently contracted with some 30 private legal firms to assist its own in-house conveyancing staff to increase the throughput of applications in order to clear the large number of cases on hand at present. This arrangement should enable up to 1,000 applications to be processed monthly, and should ensure that in future sales should be completed within six months of application.

The number of legally qualified staff employed by Scottish Homes on house sale work is nine, with a further four posts awaiting recruitment. This compares with 14 such staff employed by SSHA to do such work. The Housing Corporation had no landlord function and thus had no such staff.

## Teachers

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of qualified teachers not employed in the teaching profession in 1979; and what is the current number.

**Mr. Lang:** The information requested is not available.

## Community Charge

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment his Department has made of the costs of regional authorities of *(a)* ensuring that the registrar of births, marriages and deaths advised the community charge registration officer of the death of an individual registered to pay the poll tax, *(b)* removing the deceased person's name from the community charge register *(c)* calculating the amount due by the deceased person and *(d)* preparing, mailing and pursuing the payment of that amount by the deceased person's next of kin or executor.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Under the provisions of the Community Charge (Notification of Deaths) (Scotland) Regulations (SI 1988 No. 2211) as amended by the Community Charges (Notification of Deaths)

(Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1989 (SI 1989 No. 735) the district registrar, in respect of a death registered in his district is required within seven days of registration of such death to notify a number of prescribed particulars relating to the deceased to the community charges registration officer of each region or islands area within which the registration district falls. No fee is charged to regional authorities for the provision of this information. Other costs associated with removing a deceased person's entry from the community charges register and with collecting any outstanding amount of unpaid community charge are a matter for the regional or islands council concerned.

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what record his Department is keeping of the number of complaints received at either the Scottish Office or at individual regional authorities about the levying of community charge on deceased persons.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Very few representations on this issue have been received in the Scottish Office. Information about representations made to regional councils is not held centrally.

## Piper Alpha

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will outline the role performed by his officials in the monitoring of the area above and on the sea-bed surrounding the wreckage of Piper Alpha; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** In the period following the incident on 6 July 1988 to February 1989 the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, in co-operation with the operators Occidental Petroleum (Caledonia) Ltd., carried out surveys of debris and other samples from the Piper Alpha site for possible polychlorinated byphenyl (PCB) and radioactive contamination. Details of the work carried out and of the results of these surveys were given in scientific reports published on 6 June (copies of which have been placed in the Library).

Further monitoring and surveys are being carried out by the operators in compliance with conditions attached to the approval for the abandonment programme granted by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy under the Petroleum Act 1987. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland and Her Majesty's industrial pollution inspectorate were consulted on the monitoring requirements and will advise as appropriate on the results as and when available.

Monitoring of the area may also be carried out in due course as part of the general monitoring of sea waters around Scotland on behalf of this Department.

## Renaval Fund

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow on 25 April, *Official Report*, column *489*, he is in a position to indicate the response of the European Commission to the applications under the Renaval fund; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** An application for Strathclyde region to be declared eligible under Renaval went forward to the European Commission on 26 May 1989. We still await a response.

## Nature Conservancy Council

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the names of the members of the Nature Conservancy Council's advisory committee for Scotland and give in each case their occupations, their employer, their nominator and the date their term of office is due to expire.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The information requested is as follows:

*NCC Advisory Committee for Scotland*

| *Name* | *Occupation* | *Employer* | *Appointment ends* |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. R. Trotter (Chairman) | Estate Manager | Not known | 31 March 1990 |
| J. M. S. Arnott | Vice-Chairman Countryside Commission for Scotland, manager (Edinburgh) for BBC Scotland (part-time) | Not known | 31 March 1990 |
| J. C. Compton | Farmer and landowner | Not known | 31 March 1990 |
| Professor P. S. Corbet | Biologist (formerly University of Dundee) | Not known | 31 March 1990 |
| A. D. M. Farquharson | Chartered surveyor, Farmer, forester | Not known | 31 March 1990 |
| J. L. Goodfellow | Past Vice-President National Farmers' Union of Scotland. Retired farmer | Not known | 31 March 1990 |
| J. R. Johnstone | Industrialist Landowner | Not known | 31 August 1989 |
| Dr. R. C. Kirkwood | Reader in Biology | University of Strathclyde | 31 March 1992 |
| Professor J. B. L. Matthews | Director, Dunstaffnage Marine Laboratory | NERC | 31 March 1992 |
| Mrs. E. Macdonald | Crofter | Not known | 31 March 1992 |
| Councillor D. J. McPherson | Vice-Convenor Highland Regional Council | Not known | 31 March 1992 |
| Professor I. Parsons | Professor of Mineralogy | University of Edinburgh | 31 March 1991 |
| Professor W. Ritchie | Professor of Physical Geography | University of Aberdeen | 31 March 1990 |
| J. H. Scott | Farmer and landowner | Not known | 31 March 1990 |
| Dr. E. A. Smith | Director, Development Trust | University of Aberdeen | 31 March 1992 |
| Professor T. C. Smout | Historian | University of St. Andrews | 31 March 1991 |
| Miss V. M. Thom | Author and consultant on interpretative planning | Not known | 31 March 1990 |

Members of NCC's advisory committee for Scotland are not nominated for appointment. Instead they are appointed by the Nature Conservancy Council with the approval of the Secretary of State for Scotland.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro), 11 July, *Official Report*, column *436*, what measures he proposes to introduce to ensure that scientific advice continues to be made available to the proposed Scottish Nature Conservancy Council.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The Government intend that this council's work will be founded on an objective science base. Careful consideration is being given to various possible mechanisms for achieving this. Details of the proposals will be announced in due course.

### Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act

**Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many fines have been recovered each month by means of civil diligence under section 56 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1987 during the years 1988 and 1989.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Section 56 of the 1987 Act applies not to fines but to fixed penalties payable in consequence of a conditional offer by the procurator fiscal. Information about the enforcement of these by means of civil diligence is not yet available as returns from district courts are incomplete.

### Devolution (Europe)

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from the business community about devolution or independence in Europe.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I have not received any such representations recently. I am, however, aware of the findings of a research study on this subject published this month by the *Scottish Business Insider* magazine. The study demonstrated that there is serious concern among top companies in Scotland at the detrimental effect on the Scottish economy which would be the consequence of constitutional change in Scotland.

### Set-aside

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate how many full-time and part-time jobs have been lost as a consequence of the set-aside scheme for agricultural land in Scotland; and if he will estimate how many of those job losses are attributable to whole farm set-side.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** As indicated in the reply given to the hon. Member on 15 December 1988 at col. *622* the possible consequences of the set-aside scheme for farm employment will be included in an evaluation of the scheme in its early years of operation. No results are yet available. I do not expect whole farm set-aside to be a significant factor since in the majority of cases where the whole of the area of eligible land has been set aside, the set-aside area represents less than half the total area of the farm.

### Clydeside Western Buses

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is in a position to make a statement on financial support for the employees of Clydeside Western Buses, in preparing a bid for the purchase of that company.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** We have consistently made it clear that financial assistance will be made available to one management-employee buy-out team per company. The Scottish Transport Group has recommended that, in the case of Western Clydeside, financial assistance to prepare a bid for the purchase of the company should be offered to the management-employee buy-out team led by Mr. Alan Wilson, managing director of Western Clydeside. The Scottish Transport Group considered that a successful bid was most likely to emerge from the outline proposals put forward by this team; and that these proposals offered the prospect of the most satisfactory shareholding arrangements for employees. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has now approved the Scottish Transport Group's recommendation and the Scottish Transport Group will today be writing to Mr. Wilson confirming this offer.

The decision to offer assistance to the management-employee buy-out team will not confer any preferential status on this team as bidders. All bids will be considered on their merits with bids involving employee participation receiving preference. This preference will not in any way depend on whether or not financial assistance has been given.

### Environment Protection

**Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what policies his Department has implemented in the last five years to develop environmental protection measures.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** In 1984-85 the Department brought into effect the main provisions of part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 relating to the control of water pollution; these were further strengthened by means of the Water Act 1989. These provisions are the framework for implementing EC legislation on the protection of the water environment (some 30 directives) and other international agreements, such as those arising from the ministerial conferences on the North sea.

Scottish water authorities, with the encouragement of the Department, have made considerable progress in improving the quality of public water supplies, particularly with regard to lead in drinking water: provisions in the Water Act 1989 will strengthen the existing Scottish legislation on the quality of public and private supplies.

The Government have increased funding to water and sewerage authorities to improve the water environment. In the last five years, some £500 million has been invested in water and sewerage services. The allocation for 1989-90 has been increased by 14 per cent. over planned provision.

The Department has supported research in Scotland as part of the Government's major research programme to determine the effects of acidification and in association with the Department of the Environment, has undertaken a major review of the control of air pollution in Great Britain, with a view to legislation.

The hazardous waste inspectorate, set up in 1983, has given advice and guidance to local authorities on safe and efficient systems of waste management; it has published three comprehensive reports and issues guidance on such matters as landfill gas.

### Scottish Information Office

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will introduce safeguards to protect the integrity and non-party political status of the Scottish Information Office.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The staff of the Scottish Information Office, as civil servants, are well aware of established conventions followed by Ministers in relation to party political activity. I see no need to issue new guidance to that which has stood successive Governments in good stead, and to which I fully subscribe.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Rifkind:** In January this year some 834 letters were received by my ministerial colleagues and myself from hon. and right hon. Members, and the total for the Session to 1 July is certainly in excess of 8,000. To provide like information on correspondence issuing during the same periods would incur disproportionate costs.

### Consultants

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has come to a decision in relation to his proposal to engage consultants to advise on how the awareness of the Scottish people in relation to the activities of his Department can be improved.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I have now made arrangements with Hall Advertising Limited, Edinburgh who will work in association with specialist staff from Siegel and Gale and Kingsway Rowland for the preparation of a full report which will define a corporate identity strategy for the Scottish Office and describe the corporate visual guidelines for its implementation. Work will begin right away and I expect that it will take four months for the report to be concluded. When I have received and considered the report I will be informing the House of the decisions I have taken.

### Planning Applications

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the future of neighbour notification of planning applications following the deletion of domestic subjects from the valuation roll.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The Government are committed to maintaining the neighbour notification arrangements in Scotland, but the present procedure provided for in the Town and Country Planning (General Development) (Scotland) Order 1981 requires to be changed. Developers are currently required to serve a notice on the named owners, occupiers and lessees of neighbouring land as listed in the valuation roll, informing them that a planning application for a proposed development has been submitted, that a copy of the application and plans may be inspected at the address of the planning authority and that they have 14 days to make representations to the authority. These procedures will remain for all but domestic property.

With the introduction of the community charge entries for domestic property on the valuation roll will no longer be updated. It is therefore necessary to adopt a different approach to identifying those neighbours on whom notification of a planning application must be served. We propose to replace the existing arrangements with a requirement to notify two categories of neighbours. These would be firstly those listed in the parts of the community charges register which a member of the public may inspect in respect of the address of the neighbouring property and, secondly, the owner of the neighbouring property. Notification of the owner will be by means of a notice addressed to "the owner" at the address of the neighbouring property. Those receiving the notification would have the same opportunity as at present to make representations to the planning authority about the application. The Scottish Development Department is currently undertaking a complete revision and updating of the General Development Order and the neighbour notification procedure will be altered as part of that revision during next year. In the meantime the valuation roll remains available for consultation.

The introduction of these changes to the notification procedures will ensure that owners and occupiers of property continue to receive notification of planning applications affecting neighbouring property and that the task of undertaking neighbour notification does not place an undue burden on developers.

### Community Charge

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will reconsider the position of those with severe mental impairment from progressive disease in relationship to payment of the poll tax; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** My right hon. and learned Friend has made it clear that if a practical way can be found of tackling the problem of determining the point at which a person with a progressive brain disorder should be exempt from the community charge, he will look closely at it.

### Fraud and Corruption (Councillors)

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to how many local authority councillors have been prosecuted and convicted for fraud or corruption in each of the past 10 years; and if he will list the authorities on which they served.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** This information is not collected centrally.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Lang** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* Small firms continue to play an important and dynamic role in the regeneration of the Scottish economy. Small firms also continue to benefit from the comprehensive schemes of support that the Government have introduced. In the main, these are delivered through the Scottish Development Agency, the Highlands and Islands Development Board and from the Industry Department for Scotland, where policy responsibility lies. In addition to providing services specific to Scotland, the SDA, HIDB and the Industry Department for Scotland are responsible for the delivery and monitoring in Scotland of United

Kingdom services on behalf of other Departments, including the Department of Employment and the Department of Trade and Industry. During 1988, there was a net increase of over 3,400 in the number of registered companies in Scotland. Between January 1980 and January 1989 there was a net increase of some 20,000 or over a half in the number of companies registered in Scotland. VAT returns indicate that between 1980 and 1987 the number of new businesses operating in Scotland showed a net increase of 13,400.

The following describes the services available to small firms in Scotland during the periods 1987-88 and 1988-89 and some of their achievements.

*Regional Assistance*

IDS made offers to small firms in Scotland of regional selective assistance of £4 million in 1987-88 and £12 million in 1988-89. Under the revised regional development grant scheme, approvals to small firms amounted to £48 million in 1987-88 and £70 million in 1988-89. Information on the grant offered to small firms under the original RDG scheme is not available. Under both the investment and innovation elements of the regional enterprise grants scheme, some £2 million was offered to companies in Scotland in 1988-89.

*Better Business Services and Better Technical Services Schemes*

During the periods in question, the BBS scheme was administered by IDS, SDA and the HIDB. The scheme allows small companies to have access to subsidised professional business advice and in 1987-88 some 9,597 offers of assistance were made with an associated value of £2·9 million. In 1988-89 some 6,804 offers of assistance were made with an associated value of £3·1 million. The BTS scheme was available in Strathclyde and part of Tayside region and allowed small companies to have access to subsidised professional advice of a technical nature. In 1987-88, 1,720 offers were made with an associated value of £1 million. Support under the BTS scheme ceased on 31 March 1988.

*Scottish Development Agency*

SDA support for small business includes the provision of financial assistance, premises and a wide range of advisory services, including the small firms service in Scotland and the administration of DTI's consultancy initiatives, under the enterprise initiative. Under the consultancy initiatives, some 1,235 consultancy projects were undertaking during 1988-89. It is estimated that Scotland accounted for 10 per cent. of total GB expenditure on this scheme, compared with a 6·9 per cent. share of eligible firms. During 1987-88 the SDA had contact with 19,125 small companies. Some £2·7 million was invested in 692 small firms creating or safeguarding some 800 jobs. In addition, some 875 small companies received assistance with the costs of attending promotional events. Sixty small companies were provided with technical advice, while 30 received assistance with market research studies. In the year 1988-89, the agency had contact with 19,250 small firms. Some £1·8 million was invested in 92 small firms creating or safeguarding 1,600 jobs. In addition, 925 small companies received assistance with the costs of attending promotional events. Eighty small firms were provided with technical advice while 40 companies received assistance with market research studies.

*Highlands and Islands Development Board*

As well as delivering the small firms service in its area, the HIDB undertakes a wide range of activities in support of business, most of which are small, to help them overcome the difficulties of operating in this peripheral and rural part of the United Kingdom. The measures taken include financial support to business, provision of factories and assistance with business advice and training. In 1987-88, the board approved 1,063 offers of financial assistance with an associated value of £14·4 million. This generated private sector investment of some £42·3 million and created or safeguarded 2,700 jobs. For the period 1988-89, the board approved 1,220 offers of financial assistance with an associated value of £25·3 million. This generated private sector support of £44·4 million and created or safeguarded 3,300 jobs. In the period 1987-88, the HIDB completed 6,090 sq m of factory floor space. In this period some 2,920 jobs were housed in HIDB factories. In the period 1988-89, the HIDB completed 12,553 sq m of factory floor space. In this period, some 3,130 jobs were housed in HIDB factories.

*Local Enterprise Trusts*

Local enterprise trusts have proved to be an important catalyst in fostering the enterprise culture in Scotland. The Government have continued to demonstrate their recognition of the valuable role played by the trusts, and the SDA provided financial support of £1·04 million to the 40 enterprise trusts in 1987-88, the latest year for which figures are available—an increase of over 46 per cent. over the previous year. This has triggered a further £3·28 million from the other public and private sector partners. During 1987-88 trusts in Scotland had contact with 25,000 clients from which 3,800 small businesses were formed. Companies assisted by enterprise trusts created some 9,000 new jobs. The SDA bases its financial assistance on its appraisal of each trust's annual management plan which contains details of the previous year's projects and objectives for the oncoming year.

*Deregulation*

The Scottish Office has responded fully to the deregulation initiative. This participation has resulted in an improved awareness within SO Departments of the needs of business and has led to a more systematic approach to assessing the financial and other burdens imposed on business by regulation. Scotland was the first area in the United Kingdom to set up a pilot Government business shop which provides small businesses with a single access point for advice on dealing with Government regulations. It is hoped that, with the co-operation of other participating regulatory Departments, the Government business shop will be permanently established in Glasgow once the pilot period has ended.

*Public Purchasing*

Earlier this year, the SDA, assisted by IDS, held two seminars on MOD procurement. These events attracted over 400 Scottish companies and as a result over 70 companies participated in face-to-face discussions with

MOD procurement staff. SDA will be embarking on a further series of seminars dealing with public purchasing issues in the near future.

### Employment Training

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all private sector companies appointed as training agents or training managers in Scotland for employment training schemes.

**Mr. Lang** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* The information requested is set out in the list.

*Training Agents*
Central Training
Employment Training Scotland Limited
Greater Edinburgh Training Association (GETA)
Highland Training and Development Limited
Lanarkshire Training Agency
QCG Enterprises Limited
Support Training
The Training Agency Limited

*Training Managers*
Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce
Aberdeen Enterprise Trust
ABTA National Training Board
ADM Limited
Addapt Limited
Agricultural Training Board
A & M Projects
AMARC (Training Education and Safety) Limited
Angus Training Group Limited
Anne Rodger
Balloch Trust Enterprises Limited
Business and Employment Skills Training Limited
Central Chamber of Commerce
Comet Group PLC
Community Industry
Dumbarton District Training Association
Dundee Enterprise Trust
Dundee and Tayside Chamber of Commerce and Industry
East Kilbride and District Group Training
Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures
Edinburgh and District Engineering Training Association (EDETA)
Employment and Training Sponsors (Scotland) Limited
Fate
Galloway Training Organisation
Garnock Workspace Limited
Glasgow College Enterprise Limited
Glasgow Training Group (Motor Trade) Limited
Grand Metropolitan Community Services Trust
GRTA Limited
Hairdressing Training Associates
Henry Boot Training Limited
Highland Perthshire Development Company Limited
Highland Training Limited
Hotel and Catering Training Board
JHP Training Limited
John Laurence (Glasgow) Limited
Industrial Training Service Limited
Intec Inverclyde
Lanarkshire Enterprise Training Consortium
Lagta Limited Employment Training Unit
Lloyds British Training Services Limited
May-Tag Limited
MDS (Management Services) Limited
Metcon Training
Microcom Training Limited
Mid-Grampian Employment Training
Midscot Training Services Limited
MI Technologies Limited
Moray Firth Group Training Association
MTC Limited
Ness Training Consultants
Newstart
Offshore Petroleum Industry Training Board (OPITB)
Omega Training Limited
Oriel Training Services
Phoenix Employment Training
Plastics Processing Industrial Training Board
Radix Training (Scotland) Limited
RDL Professional Services Limited
Reid Consultants Limited
Road Transport Industry Training Board
RRW Associates Limited
Sight and Sound Education Limited
Simpson and Dalgarno Partnership
Skillchoice Training (Central) Limited
Stakis Hotels and Inns Limited
Stirling Heatsave
Strathclyde Training Agency
Suliven Limited
Sumlock Calculating Services Limited
Support Training
Tayside Training Services Limited
Tayside Road Transport Group Training Association Limited
Tektra Managing Agency Limited
Training and Development Edinburgh Limited
Training Services (Ayrshire) Limited
Westwood Training Services
Whiteleys College
Wimpey Group Services Limited

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for the years 1966, 1970, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1983, 1987 and the latest available full year *(a)* the total number of jobs by industrial category in Scotland *(b)* a breakdown of full-time and part-time employment in each year and *(c)* for each category including full-time and part-time jobs, the percentage increase or decrease between the last available full year and 1966.

**Mr. Lang** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* The information is not available in the precise form requested. Table 1 shows employment in 1966 and 1970 separately for men and women analysed by the 1968 standard industrial classification. There is no information available which separately identifies the number of women working part-time on this basis.

Table 2 shows the number of male, female and part-time female employees in employment at June 1971 and for each of the years requested up to June 1988, the latest year available, analysed by industrial division of the 1980 standard industrial classification.

Table 3 shows the percentage increase or decrease in employment between June 1971, the earliest date for which estimates are available on the basis of the 1980 standard industrial classification and June 1988, the latest date for which employment estimates are available, consistent with the series shown.

Estimates of the number of part-time male employees are not available for the years for which information has been requested.

*Table 1*

*Employees in employment at June: Scotland*

*'000s*

| *Industry (standard industrial classification, 1968)* | *1966* | *1970* |
|---|---|---|
| *Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing* | | |
| Male | 62 | 50 |
| Female | 10 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 73 | 59 |
| *Mining and Quarrying* | | |
| Male | 54 | 38 |
| Female | 2 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 56 | 39 |
| *Manufacturing Industries* | | |
| Male | 499 | 488 |
| Female | 226 | 221 |
| TOTAL | 726 | 708 |
| *Construction* | | |
| Male | 177 | 164 |
| Female | 10 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 187 | 173 |
| *Gas, Electricity and Water* | | |
| Male | 31 | 26 |
| Female | 4 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 35 | 31 |
| *Service Industries* | | |
| Male | 519 | 502 |
| Female | 525 | 547 |
| TOTAL | 1,044 | 1,049 |
| *All Industries and Services* | | |
| Male | 1,342 | 1,267 |
| Female | 777 | 791 |
| TOTAL | 2,120 | 2,058 |

*Table 2*

*Employees in employment, at June: Scotland*

*Thousands*

| *Industry (1980 standard industrial classification)* | *1971* | *1974* | *1975* | *1976* | *1977* | *1978* | *1979* | [1]*1983* | [1]*1987* | [1]*1988* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing[1] (Division 0) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 47 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 41 | 41 | 41 | 31 | 25 | 24 |
| Female | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Part-time female | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 55 | 50 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 48 | 48 | 37 | 30 | 28 |
| Energy and Water Supply (Division 1) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 64 | 57 | 56 | 58 | 58 | 61 | 64 | 60 | 38 | 35 |
| Female | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| Part-time female | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 71 | 64 | 63 | 65 | 66 | 69 | 72 | 68 | 46 | 43 |
| Metal Manufacturing and Chemicals (Division 2) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 78 | 75 | 75 | 70 | 72 | 70 | 68 | 46 | 37 | 36 |
| Female | 13 | 13 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 14 | 9 | 9 | 10 |
| Part-time female | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 92 | 88 | 88 | 83 | 86 | 85 | 82 | 55 | 46 | 46 |
| Metal Goods, Engineering and Vehicles (Division 3) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 230 | 232 | 225 | 214 | 212 | 212 | 206 | 159 | 143 | 142 |
| Female | 57 | 64 | 58 | 53 | 54 | 51 | 52 | 36 | 35 | 36 |
| Part-time female | 5 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Total | 287 | 296 | 283 | 267 | 266 | 263 | 258 | 195 | 178 | 178 |
| Other Manufacturing (Division 4) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 157 | 156 | 144 | 141 | 142 | 139 | 140 | 104 | 90 | 87 |
| Female | 141 | 143 | 130 | 124 | 128 | 124 | 125 | 88 | 84 | 85 |
| Part-time female | 18 | 23 | 20 | 19 | 21 | 20 | 20 | 15 | 13 | 11 |
| Total | 298 | 299 | 274 | 265 | 270 | 263 | 265 | 193 | 173 | 172 |
| Construction (Division 5) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 140 | 149 | 152 | 149 | 142 | 139 | 143 | 122 | 128 | 134 |
| Female | 8 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 11 |
| Part-time female | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 148 | 159 | 162 | 160 | 153 | 150 | 155 | 134 | 139 | 145 |
| Distribution, Hotels and Catering; Repairs (Division 6) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 143 | 146 | 146 | 147 | 151 | 154 | 160 | 157 | 158 | 163 |
| Female | 206 | 221 | 221 | 222 | 224 | 222 | 232 | 214 | 225 | 235 |
| Part-time female | 80 | 99 | 106 | 110 | 111 | 112 | 120 | 115 | 129 | 134 |
| Total | 349 | 368 | 367 | 369 | 374 | 376 | 392 | 371 | 384 | 399 |
| Transport and Communication (Division 7) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 119 | 113 | 116 | 112 | 110 | 112 | 111 | 98 | 88 | 86 |
| Female | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 21 | 21 | 22 |
| Part-time female | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 144 | 139 | 141 | 137 | 134 | 136 | 135 | 119 | 109 | 108 |

| *Industry (1980 standard industrial classification)* | *1971* | *1974* | *1975* | *1976* | *1977* | *1978* | *1979* | [1]*1983* | [1]*1987* | [1]*1988* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Banking, Insurance and Finance (Division 8) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 54 | 58 | 60 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 62 | 69 | 80 | 83 |
| Female | 48 | 53 | 55 | 56 | 58 | 56 | 61 | 71 | 85 | 90 |
| Part-time female | 8 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 18 | 20 | 20 |
| Total | 102 | 111 | 114 | 115 | 118 | 117 | 123 | 140 | 165 | 173 |
| Other Services (Division 9) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 184 | 197 | 205 | 217 | 209 | 212 | 211 | 214 | 223 | 229 |
| Female | 274 | 313 | 331 | 343 | 346 | 349 | 362 | 373 | 400 | 407 |
| Part-time female | 99 | 126 | 136 | 142 | 144 | 146 | 157 | 170 | 197 | 198 |
| Total | 458 | 510 | 536 | 560 | 556 | 561 | 573 | 587 | 623 | 636 |
| All Industries[1] (Divisions 0-9) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 1,216 | 1,227 | 1,219 | 1,210 | 1,198 | 1,200 | 1,205 | 1,060 | 1,010 | 1,020 |
| Female | 787 | 857 | 858 | 861 | 873 | 867 | 897 | 839 | 882 | 908 |
| Part-time female | 224 | 281 | 294 | 306 | 312 | 314 | 332 | 337 | 378 | 383 |
| Total | 2,003 | 2,084 | 2,076 | 2,071 | 2,071 | 2,067 | 2,102 | 1,899 | 1,892 | 1,928 |

[1] Due to a change of classification in September 1981 the figures for Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing include non-principal tenant farmers prior to 1981 and exclude these from September 1981. In 1981 there were an estimated 6,000 non-principal tenant farmers in Scotland.

*Table 3*

*Employees in Employment, at June: Scotland percentage change between 1971 and 1988*

| | *Male* | *Female* | *Part-time Female* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] |
| 1 Energy and Water Supply | −45 | +20 | −28 | −39 |
| 2 Metal Manufacturing and Chemicals | −53 | −28 | −18 | −50 |
| 3 Metal Goods, Engineering and Vehicles | −38 | −36 | +33 | −38 |
| 4 Other Manufacturing | −45 | −39 | −37 | −42 |
| 5 Construction | −4 | +30 | +84 | −2 |
| 6 Distribution, Hotels and Catering; Repairs | +14 | +14 | +66 | +14 |
| 7 Transport and Communication | −27 | −14 | −1 | −25 |
| 8 Banking, Insurance and Finance | +53 | +88 | +148 | +69 |
| 9 Other Services | +24 | +49 | +99 | +39 |
| 0-9 All Industries[2] | −16 | +15 | +71 | −3 |

[1] Due to the change in classification from September 1981 which resulted in non-principal tenant farmers being treated as self-employed, it is not possible to calculate the percentage change in employment over this period for Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.

[2] The percentage change for All Industries between 1971 and 1988 has been estimated after deducting an estimated 6,000 male non-principal tenant farmers in 1971.

## HEALTH

### NHS Reform

14. **Mr. Rathbone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what special allowance he has made in his plans for National Health Service reforms to ensure proper general practitioner services for small town hospitals.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** On 4 May I agreed with the GMSC negotiators that where GPs were providing a necessary service in the public sector, such as being a clinical assistant in a small hospital, they would be required by their terms of service to be available to their practice's patients on a minimum of four, rather than five days a week. This will ensure sufficient flexibility to allow GPs to continue their contracts with local hospitals.

25. **Mr. David Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the proposals in the White Paper, "Working for Patients", will affect general practitioners' freedom to refer patients for treatment.

82. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how general practitioners' ability to refer patients for treatment will be affected by the proposed reform of the National Health Service.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** When district health authorities place contracts, they will be expected to give effect to the referral patterns which local GPs want. They will need to consult closely with their GPs, therefore, in order to agree a range of contracts which make best use of their resources to secure the best services for their residents. As a result, local GPs will be much more closely involved in planning health care for their patients than at present. GPs will also have their freedom to refer increased, because for the first time they will be able to refer patients for NHS treatment in private hospitals. DHAs will be much better placed to take advantage of GPs' knowledge of their patients' needs.

GP practice budget holders will of course have their freedom to refer increased because they will be able to negotiate their own preferred pattern of referral with hospitals and units using the taxpayers money at their disposal.

31. **Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made on the implementation of the proposals in the White Paper, "Working for Patients".

**Mr. Mellor:** We are pleased to be able to say that good progress is being made on the implementation of our proposals for the Health Service. Consultation is taking place with a great many interested parties, including those representing medical opinion, and we are working with NHS managers to ensure smooth implementation. Progress includes:

receipt of 178 expressions of interest in self-governance from hospitals and other NHS services;

publication of an initial guide on self-governing hospitals which has provided much more information about how self governing hospitals will operate;

the establishment of the new NHS management executive and the NHS policy board;

a major initiative to improve the quality of service is now under way;

publication of a further working paper on the capital charging system;

the first 56 hospitals are now in the process of installing new information systems;

shortlisting for 90 FPC general manager posts is virtually complete and a number of appointments have already been made.

medical audit systems are being developed at a cost of £2 million this year; and

bids for the 100 extra consultant posts promised in the White Paper are due at the end of July.

40. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how education and training will be affected by the proposals in the White Paper, "Working for Patients".

54. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the implications of the White Paper, "Working for Patients", for education and training.

**Mr. Mellor:** Since the White Paper "Working for Patients" was published, a number of working papers have been issued and these contain some further detail about training and education. The working paper, "Self-Governing Hospitals—An Initial Guide", advises that a consultation paper on training and education will be issued shortly, which will deal fully with these important issues.

65. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received directly from members of the public about the reforms of the National Health Service.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have received more than 5,000 representations directly from members of the public in respect of our proposals for the Health Service.

## Nurses

15. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the number of nurses in the National Health Service at present; and what it was in 1979.

**Mr. Mellor:** Provisional figures show that at 30 September 1988 there were 404,000 whole-time equivalent nursing and midwifery staff (including agency staff) in the National Health Service in England. The comparable figure for September 1979 is 358,000 whole-time equivalents.

27. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress of appeals by nurses with regard to regradings.

70. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress of appeals by nurses with regard to regradings.

83. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress of appeals by nurses with regard to regradings.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer the hon. Members to my reply to the hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross) earlier today.

## General Practitioners (Contract)

16. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received about the new contract for general practitioners.

17. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a further statement on the proposed contract for general practitioners.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I met Mr. Michael Wilson and his negotiating team from the General Medical Services Committee yesterday.

The Government are proceeding with the preparation of the necessary amendments to regulations and to the GPs' statement of fees and allowances. Subject to Parliament's approval, the reforms to the GPs' contract will be introduced on 1 April 1990.

33. **Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will next be meeting the chairman of the British Medical Association to discuss progress on negotiations over the general practitioners' contract.

57. **Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will next be meeting the chairman of the British Medical Association to discuss progress on negotiations over the general practitioners' contract.

85. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will next be meeting the chairman of the British Medical Association to discuss progress on negotiations over the general practitioners' contract.

88. **Mr. Caborn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will next be meeting the chairman of the British Medical Association to discuss progress on negotiations over the general practitioners' contract.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I have no plans at present to meet the chairman of the British Medical Association on this subject, but I met the chairman of the General Medical Services Committee and his negotiating team on 24 July.

34. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the new general practitioners' contract will affect health promotion clinics and regular check-ups.

**Mr. Mellor:** The new contract will for the first time introduce a fee for GPs providing health promotion clinics. It will also require GPs to offer health check-ups to patients newly registering with them, and patients who have not seen their GP for three years.

41. **Mr. Janman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the new general practitioners' contract will affect the performance of minor surgery by general practitioners.

89. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health to what extent general practitioners will be able to carry out minor surgery under the terms of the new general practitioners' contract.

**Mr. Mellor:** The new contract will for the first time introduce a fee for suitably qualified GPs who provide minor surgery services to patients. This will encourage the provision of minor surgery by GPs and relieve the pressure on out-patient departments.

45. **Mr. Conway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the implications in the new general practitioners' contract for the assessment of the health care of young children.

**Mr. Mellor:** The new contract will for the first time introduce a fee for GPs who provide child health surveillance services to children on their lists, according to programmes agreed by the district health authority. There will also be new incentives to encourage GPs to help achieve high levels of coverage for childhood immunisations. District health authorities will continue to be responsible for monitoring health care services for young children, and GPs will be required to keep them fully informed of the services they provide. DHAs will work in close co-operation with family practitioner committees.

47. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the implications of the new general practitioners' contract for immunisation and screening policies.

**Mr. Mellor:** By introducing new payments linked to the achievement of specified levels of coverage for childhood immunisation and cervical cytology, the new contract will offer GPs a powerful incentive to help raise coverage among their patients.

48. **Mr. Curry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how health care in deprived areas will be affected by the new general practitioners' contract.

60. **Mr. Maples:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what will be the implications of the new general practitioners' contract for services in deprived areas.

**Mr. Mellor:** The new contract will help improve services in deprived areas. Changes to their remuneration system will encourage GPs to practise in areas of deprivation by recognising the special circumstances involved. In future family practitioner committees will be able to target funds for premises improvements and practice team expansion to improve services in these areas. The greater emphasis in the new contract on preventive care will mean that patients in deprived areas will benefit as GPs seek to improve the levels of protection against childhood diseases and cancer of the cervix.

67. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the implications of the new general practitioners' contract for health care for elderly patients.

79. **Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the new general practitioners' contract will affect health care for elderly patients.

**Mr. Mellor:** The new contract will lead to improved services to elderly people. As a result of changes to their terms of service and remuneration system GPs will have a powerful incentive to strive to provide them with the best possible care. There will be a significantly increased capitation free for patients over the age of 75, and in return for this GPs will be expected to offer annually a thorough health assessment, including a home visit if the patient wishes.

68. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the new general practitioners' contract will affect preventive health care.

71. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give details of how the new general practitioners' contract will affect preventive health care.

**Mr. Mellor:** The new contract forms an important part of our policy of encouraging health promotion and the prevention of ill-health. General practitioners' terms of service will make clear their role in these areas, and there will be new payments encouraging the provision of health promotion clinics, check-ups for newly registered patients and the achievement of high levels of coverage for cervical cancer screening and childhood immunisations.

90. **Mr. Nicholas Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the implications of the new general practitioners' contract for night visits by doctors.

**Mr. Mellor:** The hours during which a night visit fee may be claimed will be extended and a higher fee introduced for GPs who make their own visits or who arrange visits in a small rota of no more than 10 doctors. This will reward those doctors who ensure continuity of care to their patients during out-of-hours periods.

## Hospices

18. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was provided by the Government in 1988-89 in grant to Help the Hospices.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Department made a grant of £400,000 on 9 March 1989 to Help the Hospices for distribution to local projects in short-term financial difficulty.

92. **Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the cost and nature of the support given by his Department to the hospice movement.

**Mr. Mellor:** During 1988-89 the Government made an additional £1·3 million available to health authorities to distribute as a contribution to the costs incurred by voluntary hospices due to the nurses' pay award. It also made a grant of £400,000 to Help the Hospices for distribution to local projects in short-term financial difficulty. In addition, the Government provided separate funding for the AIDS hospices at the Mildmay hospital and London Lighthouse, £256,000 and £208,000 respectively. The bulk of NHS support for hospices comes from local health authorities, which are best placed to judge how the contribution of voluntary bodies can be integrated with the other services for which they are responsible.

## Smoking

20. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received about smoking.

**Mr. Freeman:** I receive a number of representations on this important subject, from a range of interested bodies.

**Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the results of the 1988 Office of Population Censuses and Surveys survey of teenage smoking; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The results of this survey were published yesterday in an Office of Population Censuses and Surveys report entitled "Smoking among secondary school children in England in 1988" [ISBN 0 11 691267 7]. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The results of the survey show that the decline in teenage smoking revealed by the 1986 survey has been confirmed, and there is evidence of a further decline in 1988. The prevalence of regular smoking among teenagers aged 11-15 is estimated at 7 per cent. for boys and 9 per cent. for girls. This is well below the level of 13 per cent. for both boys and girls seen in 1984. The results of this survey will be of great value in helping to determine the precise strategy to be used in the new teenage smoking campaign announced by the Prime Minister in January. This should encourage health workers, teachers and parents to continue their worthwhile efforts to persuade young people not to take up this dangerous habit.

## Eye Tests

21. **Mr. Robert Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on monitoring of the take-up of eye tests.

24. **Mr. Allen Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on monitoring of the take up of eye tests.

30. **Mr. Callaghan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on monitoring of the take-up of eye tests.

35. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the monitoring of the take-up of eye tests.

**Mr. Mellor:** We intend to carry out a survey into the number of private sight tests later this year when the market has had time to become more stable.

## NHS (Scientists)

22. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what urgent measures he is taking in order to solve the problems of recruitment and retention of scientists in the National Health Service.

**Mr. Mellor:** We understand that the management side of the Scientific and Professional Staffs Council has set up a working party to investigate the recruitment and retention of scientists in the NHS and is currently considering its findings.

## Hospital Doctors

23. **Mr. David Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on initiatives to reduce junior hospital doctors' hours.

39. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on initiatives to reduce the hours worked by junior hospital doctors.

51. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps have been taken to reduce the hours worked by junior hospital doctors.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Government are committed to reducing further the onerous hours of some junior hospital doctors. There are two current initiatives. That launched in June 1988 aims to minimise the number of doctors with average weekly hours of duty in excess of 84. Interim reports from health authorities in January showed progress had been made but more needed to be done. The second initiative was launched earlier this month and involves studies to see whether the Government's long-term aim of 72 hours duty a week can be achieved within existing constraints. Final reports on both initiatives are due in October.

74. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the number of hospital doctors in the National Health Service now; and what it was in 1979.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information is in the table:

*Figures, for England only, as at 30 September*

| | *1979* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|
| Hospital medical staff | 41,736 | 46,394 |

## No-fault Compensation

26. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his Department's policy on the introduction of a no-fault compensation system for high-risk medical practitioners.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Department has no plans to introduce any kind of no-fault compensation scheme for medical practitioners. We consider that the basis for seeking compensation for injuries alleged to have been suffered as a result of medical negligence should continue to be through litigation in the courts.

## British Medical Association

28. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met the British Medical Association; and what subjects were discussed.

38. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will make a statement on his latest discussions with the British Medical Association regarding the White Paper, "Working for Patients."

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I last met the British Medical Association on 15 June when we talked about the Government's proposals for the Health Service. Although the BMA expressed opposition to some of the proposals, they continued to support a number of our planned reforms including medical audit, the principle of money following the patient, the extension of resource management and the greater involvement of doctors in management. Both sides expressed their unconditional support to the underlying principles of the Health Service.

64. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he is now able to give an assessment of the current relations between his Department and the doctors within the British Medical Association membership.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Although I very much regret the hostile and unconstructive stance that the BMA as an association has taken towards our plans for the Health Service, I know that there is strong support for the principles on which our reforms for the Health Service are based and for many of our individual proposals among doctors in the hospital service and in general practice.

## Hospitals (Self-governing Status)

29. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how public opinion is to be tested in Bradford over proposals for local hospitals to become self-governing trusts; and if he will make a statement.

84. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he is issuing to health authority on arrangements for public consultation where groups have expressed an interest in pursuing the opting out of individual hospitals.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Members to the reply that my right hon. and learned Friend gave to the hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) earlier today.

## Hospital Patients (Discharge)

32. **Mr. Andrew Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that health authorities adopt the hospital discharge practices outlined in circular HC (89) 5, "Discharge of Patients from Hospital".

**Mr. Freeman:** Circular HC(89)5 states that, in the light of the guidance held in the circular, district and special health authorities should report on action taken to their regional health authority or, in the case of special health authorities, to the Department by 31 March 1990.

## Hospitals (West Midlands)

36. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has had any discussions with Sir James Ackers about his plans to redevelop the hospital system in the west midlands.

**Mr Mellor:** Yes, recent discussions have covered hospital services in Birmingham, for which the region has made proposals for reorganisation which are currently the subject of preliminary local consultation.

## Wheelchairs (Leicestershire)

37. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the provision of wheelchairs by the Leicestershire health authority.

**Mr. Mellor:** Provision of wheelchairs is a matter for the district health authority concerned and the hon. Member may care to contact the chairman of Leicestershire health authority for the information that he seeks.

## Midwives (Grading)

42. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the number of settlements in the midwives' regrading dispute; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not collect this information centrally.

## Doctors (Northern Region)

43. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met doctors in the northern region; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I was in Newcastle on 3 and 4 July for meetings to discuss the NHS White Paper "Working for Patients" and I met doctors on both occasions.

## Patients (Bury)

44. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients are being treated per year in the Bury district health authority; and how many were treated in 1979.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested is given in the table.

*Patients treated, NHS hospitals, Bury district health authority, 1979 and 1987-88*

| | *1979* | *1987-88* | *Percentage increase* |
|---|---|---|---|
| In-patient cases treated | 17,768 | 23,130 | 30·2 |
| Day cases | 1,621 | 2,421 | 49·4 |
| New out-patients | 22,474 | 24,589 | 9·4 |
| Total out-patient attendances | 99,889 | 109,596 | 9·7 |

*Source:* Returns: SH3 (1979 data), SH3a, KH09 and KH18.

## General Practitioners (Lists)

46. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the latest figure he has as to the average size of a general practitioner's list.

**Mr. Mellor:** The average list size in England for unrestricted principals at 1 October 1987 was 2,020, at 1 October 1978 it was 2,312. The provisional figure for 1 October 1988 is 1,999.

## Performance Indicators

52. **Mr. Neale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what conclusions he draws from work on analysing performance indicators.

**Mr. Mellor:** The booklet "Comparing Health Authorities" published by the Department in April 1988, copies of which are in the Library, gave examples of some of the conclusions drawn from work on analysing performance indicators. These include:

*Cost per case for acute in-patient care:* Even when standardised for specialty mix and the costs of teaching hospitals and London, this Indicator in 1986-87 showed that costs in some districts are more than 15 per cent. higher or lower than might be expected.

*Length of stay:* The Indicator for average length of stay in general surgery in 1986-87, standardised for age, sex and clinical condition, showed figures in some districts over 40 per cent. more than the national figure and in others more than 30 per cent. less. There are similar variations for other specialties.

*Throughput:* Throughput for general surgery in 1986-87 standardised for age, sex and diagnosis was in some districts over 40 per cent. higher than the national average and in others over 30 per cent. lower than the national average. There are similar variations in other specialties.

These show marked scope for improvements in performance by significant parts of the service.

56. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on establishing performance indicators.

81. **Mr. Day:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress in establishing performance indicators.

**Mr. Mellor:** Sets of performance indicators have now been published by the Department for 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87. Indicators have been increasingly important in review cycles establishing a key role in addressing variations in performance. Last year districts were asked to carry out an analysis of the four-year trend in their indicators and to report to their authority members. This underlined the role of indicators in the monitoring and management of services at the local level. Research completed in 1987 showed widespread acceptance and use of the indicators by all levels of Health Service management.

## General Practitioners (Pay)

55. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the level of general practitioners' remuneration now; and what it was in 1979.

**Mr. Mellor:** The intended average net remuneration for general practitioners in 1989-90 is £31,105. For 1979-80 it was £12,830. These figures exclude GPs' reimburseable practice expenses.

## Meat Tenderisers

58. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he plans any new studies on the effects on human health of eating meat treated with tenderisers.

**Mr. Freeman:** No new Government-funded studies on the effects on human health of eating meat treated with tenderisers are planned. I am not aware of any other studies in progress elsewhere.

## Abortion

61. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to revise the financial regulation on private abortion clinics and their referring agencies.

**Mr. Freemman:** No.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many conceptions in 1986, 1987 and 1988 *(a)* led to maternities, *(b)* were terminated under the terms of the Abortion Act 1967 among residents of England and Wales aged 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 years, 22 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years, 30 to 34 years, 35 to 39 years and 40 years and over; and what percentage *(a)* represents of *(b)*.

**Mr. Freeman:** Some conceptions occurring in 1988 would lead to maternities in 1989 and this information is not yet available. Data for 1986 and provisional data for 1987 are as follows. All pregnancies of women usually resident in England and Wales which led to a maternity or termination by abortion under the 1967 Act are included (and those which led to a spontaneous abortion are excluded).

| *Age of woman at conception* | *Number of conceptions* | | *Maternities per 100 abortions* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Leading to maternities* | *Terminated by abortion*[1] | |
| *1986* | | | |
| All ages | 671,259 | 147,658 | 455 |
| Under 11 | 2 | 0 | 70 |
| 11 | 1 | 0 | |
| 12 | 10 | 14 | |
| 13 | 107 | 158 | |
| 14 | 809 | 1,171 | 69 |
| 15 | 3,293 | 3,629 | 91 |
| 16 | 8,933 | 6,492 | 138 |
| 17 | 16,101 | 8,675 | 186 |
| 18 | 22,456 | 9,721 | 231 |
| 19 | 27,419 | 9,786 | 280 |
| 20 | 32,348 | 10,028 | 323 |
| 21 | 37,767 | 9,882 | 382 |
| 22-24 | 138,241 | 24,865 | 556 |
| 25-29 | 225,557 | 28,242 | 799 |
| 30-34 | 115,352 | 17,672 | 653 |
| 35-39 | 37,503 | 12,763 | 294 |
| 40 and over | 5,360 | 4,560 | 118 |
| *1987* | | | |
| All ages | 689,452 | 160,948 | 428 |
| Under 11 | 1 | 1 | 72 |
| 11 | 2 | 2 | |
| 12 | 16 | 13 | |
| 13 | 126 | 185 | |
| 14 | 736 | 1,163 | 63 |
| 15 | 3,304 | 3,586 | 92 |
| 16 | 9,415 | 7,097 | 133 |
| 17 | 15,915 | 8,894 | 179 |
| 18 | 23,114 | 10,534 | 219 |
| 19 | 27,911 | 11,137 | 251 |
| 20 | 32,808 | 10,904 | 301 |
| 21 | 38,046 | 10,778 | 353 |
| 22-24 | 140,590 | 28,750 | 489 |
| 25-29 | 233,178 | 31,468 | 741 |
| 30-34 | 120,131 | 18,910 | 635 |
| 35-39 | 38,186 | 12,601 | 303 |
| 40 and over | 5,973 | 4,925 | 121 |

[1] Legal terminations under 1967 Abortion Act.

*Note:* 1987 data are provisional.

## Prescriptions

62. **Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what form recent representations on the proposals regarding prescriptions in the National Health Service White Paper have taken.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have received a large number of representations in respect of the NHS White Paper plans for indicative drug budgets. These have come from a wide range of members of the community including GPs, community health councils, pharmaceutical companies, bodies representing patients suffering from chronic illness and members of the public. In response we have been able to provide unequivocal reassurances that indicative drug budgets will enable patients to receive all the drugs they require, that there will be no disincentive to GPs to accept patients requiring expensive courses of drug treatment and that there will be no change to the range or quality of appliances available to patients nor to the existing arrangements for certain categories of patients to receive free prescriptions.

## Waiting Lists

63. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients are currently on hospital waiting lists; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The latest available figures are for 30 September 1988 and are contained in the booklet "Hospital In-patient Waiting Lists—England", a copy of which is in the Library.

66. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the percentage reduction in the number of patients waiting longer than 12 months for an operation in the South Birmingham health authority area in the last year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Mellor:** Between September 1987 and September 1988 there was a 48 per cent. reduction in the number of patients waiting more than a year for treatment in the surgical specialties in the South Birmingham health authority.

### Mental Patients

69. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about his Department's plans for provision of help to mental hospital patients.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer the hon. Member to the statement that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health made to the House on community care on 12 July 1989, and to the written answer that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) on 13 July at columns *620-25*.

### NHS Staff (Information Skills)

73. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in training National Health Service staff in information skills.

80. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans there are for training National Health Service staff in information skills.

**Mr. Mellor:** On 28 June the NHS management executive and the NHS training authority launched a strategy for training Health Service staff in information management and technology. As part of this launch, we announced a programme of 20 centrally funded projects worth £4½ million to develop training courses and material in support of health authorities' implementation of the strategy.

The importance of training cannot be overemphasised. The NHS is becoming increasingly dependent upon accurate and timely information for the effective and efficient management of health services, both in the acute sector and in the community. This will inevitably mean larger numbers of more powerful computer-based information systems. The people who design and run the systems, those who put the data in and those who interpret and use the information they provide must all be trained if they are to do their jobs properly. The strategy will provide a very useful framework within which Health Authorities can make the arrangements that best suit their local needs.

### General Practitioners

**Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners were under contract to the National Health Service in 1979; how much this cost; and what were the comparable figures in 1988.

75. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the number of general practitioners now; and what it was in 1979.

**Mr. Mellor:** The figures are as follows:

| *Year on 31 October* | *1979* | *1987* | [1]*1988* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of unrestricted principals[2] | 21,357 | 24,992 | 25,322 |
| Cost of general medical services[3] (£ million) | 468 | 125 | 1,402 |

[1] Provisional.

[2] Doctors in contract with FPCs in England to provide unrestricted services.

[3] Cost of the general medical services in England, excluding the cost of drugs and appliances prescribed by GPs and the administrative costs, for years 1979-80, 1987-88 and (provisional) 1988-89.

### Centre for Applied Microbiological Research

76. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he plans to review the future of the centre for applied microbiological research.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) on 19 July at columns *202-3*.

### Cook-chill Meals

77. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proposals he has to monitor the effects of nutrient depletion on long-stay hospital patients whose diet comprises cook-chill meals.

**Mr. Freeman:** An expert group which recently reviewed the cook-chill guidelines concluded that, provided the guidelines are followed, food produced by the cook-chill method is as nutritious as food produced by conventional catering. Regional and district health authorities are responsible for monitoring hospital catering services.

### Child Care

78. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the implications of the Children Bill *[Lords]* for child care.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Bill has been generally welcomed. Many detailed points have been considered during the Bill's progress in Parliament.

### Consultants

86. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital doctors are currently qualified to become consultants.

**Mr. Mellor:** Appointment to consultant posts is made on the advice of advisory appointments committees. Appointments are normally made from the senior registrar grade. In 1987 there were 3,215 senior registrars in the hospital service in England, of whom 500 had been in the grade for four years or more.

### Ancillary Services

87. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met representatives of the Health Service trade unions to discuss the privatisation of ancillary services.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Government's policy is for NHS ancillary services to be subject to competitive tendering —not privatisation. Competitive tendering was among a number of topics discussed when my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State met the TUC health services committee on 1 March 1989.

### Trent RHA (Resources)

91. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he is satisfied that the resources available to the Trent regional health authority are sufficient to meet the needs of areas like that served by the Rotherham health authority.

**Mr. Freeman:** This year Trent regional health authority received a real terms increase in funding of 2·9 per cent. —higher than the national average increase of 2·7 per cent. The region subsequently received additional moneys to help meet the cost of the review body awards (£9·6 million) and NHS review implementation (£2·5 million). Allocation of funds to individual district health authorities is a matter for the regional health authority.

### Phoenix House Trust

**Mr. Michael Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what public funds have been given to the Phoenix House Trust in each of the years from 1986-88.

**Mr. Freeman:** The provision and funding of direct client services for drug misusers is the responsibility of the local statutory authorities and the Government have also provided them with special earmarked funds for drug services. However, under the central funding initiative set up by the Department in 1983 to pump-prime community-based services for drug misusers, Phoenix House received grants totalling over £1·1 million. Each grant was for a period of three years. In each of the years referred to by the hon. Member Phoenix House received the following amounts in support of its local residential rehabilitation facilities:—

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1985-86 | 135,055 |
| 1986-87 | 404,276 |
| 1987-88 | 309,234 |
| 1988-89 | 59,000 |

I understand that Phoenix House has also received support from Home Office funds.

### Artificial Limbs

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the cash limit for the disablement services centre for 1989-90; what number of artificial limbs this was estimated to cover; how many have been produced since the beginning of the financial year to the latest available date; what contingency plans exist for continued production in the event of demand for these limbs outstripping expected quotas; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The cash limit for the Disablement Services Authority for 1989-90 is £94·231 million. The authority is required to keep its total spending, of which expenditure on artificial limbs is a part, within this figure. Questions about the detail of its spending should be addressed to the authority.

### Single European Act

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his assessment of the implications of the Single European Act in 1992 on the health care provided in Britain.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Single European Act (SEA) commits the European Community to the aim of progressively establishing a single market by the end of 1992. The provision of health care is not directly affected by the SEA and remains a domestic matter. There are however a number of proposals concerned with the free movement of goods, services and people throughout the Community, which may have an indirect effect on health. The main areas affected by European Community legislation and legislative processes are pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, tobacco products and the mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

### Cyclotron Machines

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has requested an evaluation of the performance of the cyclotron machine at Clatterbridge hospital, the Wirral; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The treatment provided by this facility is being evaluated by the Medical Research Council, which will keep the Department informed of progress as appropriate.

### Toxocariasis

**Sir David Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his latest estimate of the number of people in England and Wales infected by dog-related toxocariasis; and how serious he estimates the threat of this disease to be to human beings.

**Mr. Freeman:** The provisional number of laboratory reports in 1988 from England, Wales and (all) Ireland to the Public Health Laboratory Service's communicable disease surveillance centre is 54. The seriousness of toxocariasis varies from mild pulmonary symptoms and fever to permanent loss of vision.

### Erith Hospital

**Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received concerning Erith hospital.

**Mr. Freeman:** Since the previous reply to my hon. Friend on 3 November 1988 at column *753*, one letter has been received from him, two from another hon. Member, and one from a member of the public.

### Community Services (Mentally Handicapped)

**Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines his Department has given to regional and district health authorities about risk-taking policies becoming part of the format for developing community services for people with a mental handicap.

**Mr. Freeman:** None. However, in respect of general provision for those with a mental handicap, "Needs and Responses" published in June 1989 draws attention to the need for all agencies participating in the provision of care for those with special needs to have jointly agreed guidelines on risk taking. A copy is in the Library.

## Radiotherapy (Delays)

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many National Health Service patients have been identified to have died because of delays in receiving radiotherapy doses due to *(a)* shortages of hospital physicists and *(b)* other causes.

**Mr. Freeman:** I am not aware of evidence of deaths attributable to these causes. If the hon. Member has a particular cause for concern, perhaps he will write to me.

## Hospital Physicists

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital physicists there are; what are their pay scales; and what duties they perform.

**Mr. Mellor:** At 30 September 1987 there were 790 (whole-time equivalents) physicists employed in the NHS in England; the role of the medical physicist is very varied and the specific duties will depend on an individual's contract with his/her employing authority; the salary scales are as follows:

*Pay scales as at 1 April 1988*

| *1988-89*<br>£ |
|---|
| *Probationer—lower qualification* |
| 7,378 |
| 7,949 |
| 8,255 |
| 8,548 |
| 8,866 |
| 9,158 |
| 9,452 |
| 9,770 |
| *Probationer—higher qualification* |
| 8,255 |
| 8,548 |
| 8,866 |
| 9,158 |
| 9,452 |
| 9,770 |
| 10,063 |
| 10,369 |
| *Basic* |
| 8,548 |
| 8,866 |
| 9,158 |
| 9,452 |
| 9,770 |
| 10,063 |
| 10,568 |
| 11,073 |
| *Senior* |
| 11,778 |
| 12,163 |
| 12,814 |
| 13,440 |
| 14,091 |
| 14,742 |
| 15,394 |
| *Principal* |
| 15,180 |
| 15,899 |
| 16,630 |
| 17,347 |
| 18,078 |
| 18,810 |
| 19,527 |
| 20,258 |
| 20,989 |
| *Top grade* |
| 21,136 |
| 21,893 |
| 23,090 |
| 24,193 |
| 25,297 |
| *Top grade—with greater responsibility* |
| 23,914 |
| 24,672 |
| 25,869 |
| 26,971 |
| 28,088 |

Negotiations on a pay increase from 1 April 1989 are still continuing and an interim offer of 5 per cent. has been made.

## Medicines Commission

**Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to receive the annual report of the Medicines Commission for 1988.

**Mr. Mellor:** I have received the report and copies have today been laid before both Houses of Parliament in accordance with the requirements of section 5(2) of the Medicines Act 1968.

Bound volumes will shortly be placed in the Libraries containing the 1988 reports of the Medicines Commission, the Committee on Safety of Medicines, the Veterinary Products Committee, the British Pharmacopoeia Commission, the Commitee on the Review of Medicines and the Committee on Dental and Surgical Materials. The bound volumes include a record of the personal and non-personal interests in the pharmaceutical industry of members of these advisory bodies, with the exception of the Veterinary Products Committee for whom only personal interests are recorded.

I am glad to pay tribute to the valuable work done in the public interest by the distinguished members of the Medicines Act advisory bodies.

## Care in the Community

**Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consideration has been given to the provision of housing alterations and adaptations for elderly and mentally disabled people being discharged into the community from long-stay hospitals; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** Elderly and mentally disabled people are eligible for assistance for house alterations under the provisions of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, and are also eligible for help under the home improvement grant schemes run by local authorities. We would expect health authorities and local authorities to liaise as necessary over any adaptation needed for an eligible patient who is to be discharged.

## Resource Management Initiative

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish his Department's evaluation of the resource management initiative in hospitals.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Department intends to evaluate the resource management initiative in October 1989.

### Health Service Commissioner

**Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to receive the annual report of the Health Service Commissioner for 1988-89.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Health Service Commissioner has, as in previous years, made a report on the performance of his functions in England, Scotland and Wales. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales presented the report to the House on Thursday 13 July. It was published on 13 July (House of Commons Paper No. 457) and copies are available from the Vote Office.

### Midwives

**Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health by what percentage the number of midwives working in the National Health Service has increased over the last 10 years; and by what percentage midwives' pay rates have increased since last year.

**Mr. Mellor:** There has been a 28 per cent. increase in the number of midwives working in the NHS in England in the 10 years up to September 1987. Midwives' pay rates have increased on average by over 28 per cent. since March last year.

### Foetal Material (Research)

**Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he is now in a position to publish the report of the committee set up last year to review the report of the advisory group on the use of foetal material and foetuses for research; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Together with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales I am arranging for the report of the committee to review the guidance on the use of foetal material and foetuses for research (Cm. 762) to be published today. A copy has been placed in the Library. We are most grateful to the Rev. Dr. John Polkinghorne, FRS and his committee for producing their report on this complex and sensitive matter in just over a year.

The Government accept the Committee's main recommendations which are that:

> The use in research of foetuses showing signs of life is no longer in general to be permitted (the Peel code permitted this in certain circumstances);
>
> The mother's consent to the use of foetal tissue for research of therapy is required;
>
> The mother's consent for such purposes should not be sought until she has given her consent to the termination of pregnancy. She should not be informed of the specific use which may be made of foetal tissue, lest this may influence her decision to have her pregnancy terminated;
>
> The Government should begin negotiations with the Medical Research Council and relevant professional bodies with a view to setting up an intermediary body which would receive tissue for research or therapy from centres willing to provide it. Those wishing to undertake research or therapy involving foetal tissue would obtain it from this intermediary. The committee's recommendation is founded on the principle of keeping the practice of abortion separate from the use to which any tissue might be put.

The principal change proposed by the committee is a substantial revision of the guidance on the use of foetuses for research in the Peel report published in 1972 in the light of subsequent developments including the use of foetal tissue in transplants involving patients suffering from Parkinson's disease. Letters are being sent to all health authorities in Great Britain commending the use of the revised code in the NHS and to all proprietors of private sector facilities approved under section 2 of the Abortion Act 1967.

The Government will actively pursue the other recommendations in the report and in particular will shortly begin discussions with the Medical Research Council and the relevant professional bodies with a view to setting up the intermediary body which the committee recommends should become the sole agency in this country from which those wishing to carry out research or treatment involving the use of foetal tissue should obtain it. The committee recommended that its report should be kept under regular review with the professional bodies concerned. I will arrange for this to be done on a five-yearly basis.

### Special Hospitals Service Authority

**Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs) on 3 July, *Official Report*, column *48*, he is now able to provide details of the membership of the new Special Hospitals Service Authority.

**Mr. Freeman:** With the agreement of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, we have decided that the authority's membership should reflect the Government's proposals for health authority membership in the White Paper, "Working for Patients". Accordingly, there will be five non-executive members, including the chairman, and four executive members—the chief executive, medical and nursing advisers and a finance director.

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Donald Dick, a consultant psychiatrist, a vice-president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and former director of the Health Advisory Service, and Mr. James Collier, a business consultant and former deputy secretary in my Department, have accepted my invitation to serve as members of the authority. The names of the two remaining non-executive members will be announced shortly, following further consultation with my right hon. Friend.

The executive members are to be appointed following open competition for the posts in question. The first of these appointments has now been made: Mr. Charles Kaye, currently district general manager, Basingstoke and North Hampshire health authority, will be joining the authority as its chief executive. Arrangements for the selection of the authority's other senior managers have been put in hand, and the outcome will be announced in due course.

I am also pleased to announce that, as a result of a selection process based on open competition, Dr. Diana Dickens has been appointed general manager, Rampton hospital and Mr. Alan Franey, general manager at Broadmoor hospital. The selection process for the appointment of general manager, Moss Side and Park Lane hospitals, is continuing and, until its completion, interim arrangements are being made for management of those hospitals.

### Infectious Disease Reporting

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the operation of the system of infectious disease reporting set up under the Local Government Act 1974.

**Mr. Freeman:** The statutory basis for the system of infectious disease reporting in England and Wales is now contained in the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 and the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988.

Medical practitioners are required to notify cases of certain infectious disease to local authority proper officers who are required to pass data on to other bodies including district health authorities and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. Serious outbreaks of disease and individual cases of particular diseases must also be reported to the chief medical officer. In practice surveillance of infectious disease in the population draws upon various sources of data apart from these notifications, for example school sickness records, general practitioner reports, laboratory reports, hospital data, death registration and local surveys.

We announced last July that we accepted the general principles advanced by the chief medical officer's report on "Public Health in England" and that we would be taking a number of steps to carry forward its recommendations. To this end the Department has set up a review of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. We will be issuing a consultation paper later this year.

## DEFENCE

### Radiation

**Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent advice he has received from the National Radiological Protection Board with respect to recommendations for further studies on mortality and cancer incidents among British participants in United Kingdom atmospheric nuclear weapons tests and experimental programmes.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** On 28 January 1988 the NRPB, in collaboration with the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, published its epidemiological report on mortality and cancer incidence amongst British participants in the United Kingdom atmospheric nuclear weapons test programme. The report included data up to the first of January 1984. Since that time NRPB has continued to accumulate data on mortality and cancer incidence amongst both participants and the control group. The NRPB has now advised that, in order to provide a reliable assessment of the further accumulated data for the period 1 January 1984 to 1 January 1989, it will be necessary to conduct a full-scale validation and analysis exercise. Following this advice, we have decided to set in hand a further study as proposed by the NRPB and ICRF, which are the independent experts on these matters.

On the advice of the NRPB and ICRF, the methodology will be the same as that adopted for the original study. They hope to be in a position to report on this further study by the end of 1991, though this timetable is subject to any unforeseen difficulties they may encounter in the validation and analysis of the data.

The NRPB's recommendation and the decision to proceed with this further study are not based on any new and worrying evidence, but rather on a wish to be able to give a definitive statement on whether the overall picture has changed as a result of the further five years follow-up. The MOD and other Government Departments and agencies will, to the extent that it is available, provide all the information sought by the NRPB and ICRF in support of this further study.

### EC (Defence Advisory Team)

**Sir Dudley Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what briefing and assistance he is giving the defence advisory team set up by Mr. Delors, the European Commissioner.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** We are not aware of the existence of such a team.

### Air-launched Missiles

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will outline options that are under consideration by the Government with regard to the procurement of an air-launched missile to replace the existing free-fall nuclear bombs.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I have nothing to add to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) on 17 July at column *71*.

### Warheads

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reduction in types of warhead and their numbers is envisaged by the statement made in paragraph 9 on page 12 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates, Cm. 675-1.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Any changes to the number of weapons mentioned in the Statement on the Defence Estimates will depend on modernisation decisions which have yet to be taken.

### HERO Unsafe Weapons

**Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many weapons systems classified HERO unsafe in the possession of the United States armed forces are stored, transported or deployed in the United Kingdom or its territorial waters.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I understand that there are no such systems present in the United Kingdom or its territorial waters.

### EMR Emitters

**Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what account is taken of the locations of large EMR emitters such as radio, telephone and television transmitters, when the storage, transportation or deployment of weapons is involved.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** My Department maintains a computer data base of all high intensity radio transmitting areas in the United Kingdom. This information is taken into account in all decisions involving the storage, transportation, or deployment of weapons.

## United States Forces (Payments)

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the estimated total amounts of official payments by the United States forces in the United Kingdom to British firms and agencies other than central Government plus private expenditure by United States personnel in the United Kingdom, for each financial year since 1979-80; and if he will make a statement on trends in these figures in this period.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The estimated expenditure by the United States forces on purchases made directly from the private sector, including personal expenditure, is as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 185 |
| 1980-81 | 213 |
| 1981-82 | 289 |
| 1982-83 | 317 |
| 1983-84 | 441 |
| 1984-85 | 422 |
| 1985-86 | 499 |
| 1986-87 | 557 |
| 1987-88 | 589 |
| 1988-89 | 564 |

## Defence Estimates

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will state the reasons for the increases in project cost and the extension of the period of peak expenditure for the type 23 frigates, set out in the major equipment projects tables in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989" and the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988";

(2) what are the reasons for the increase in project cost for the GWS26 Mod 1 vertical launch Sea Wolf missile system, set out in the major equipment projects tables in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989" and the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988".

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The Statement on the Defence Estimates tables show the cost and peak expenditure periods of projects on order or in clear prospect at the time the information was compiled. The Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989 therefore takes into account a larger number of type 23 frigates and VLSW missile systems than that in the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988.

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the reasons for the increase in expenditure between 1988-89 and 1989-90 in the category "Extramural research: Overseas", set out in table 3.3 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989" volume two.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The difference between the 1988-89 and 1989-90 Estimates in the overseas category of extramural research in table 3.3 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989, volume (Cm 675-II) arises principally from the payment through Defence Votes of the United Kingdom's contribution to the European trans-sonic wind tunnel (ETW) which has now entered the construction phase.

## Low Flying

**Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all alterations made to low flying avoidance areas and transit areas since August 1988, giving in each case the date of the alteration and the reason for the alteration.

**Mr. Neubert:** No. It is not our practice to publish detailed information on the United Kingdom low flying system. The system is, however, kept under continuous review and minor changes are made frequently, to improve the operation of the system and to take account of new developments.

**Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the percentage increase in 1988 in the airspace over land in the United Kingdom which is available for military low flying.

**Mr. Neubert:** I regret that the information requested by the hon. Member is not available.

## Frigate Project

**Mr. Speed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the up-to-date progress of the NATO frigate project; and how much money his Department has spent on this so far.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The contract for project definition was signed in January and is expected to take two years to complete.

The next milestone is a review of progress by all eight NATO nations during this autumn, when the United Kingdom will also consider the alignment between the programmes for the ship and its major weapons systems.

My Department's expenditure to June 1989 amounts to approximately £4·5 million.

## Creches

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has received any recent representations about pilot or permanent workplace creches and similar incentives further to encourage the return to employment of women in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** We are planning to establish in 1990 a nursery for the children of staff working in central London. We are also considering what might be done to provide child care in other locations throughout the United Kingdom.

Other policies designed to encourage the return to employment of women working in the MOD are:

More flexible working patterns at all levels (for example part-time work and job sharing).

combining working in the home and in the office.

the granting of up to 5 years maternity leave.

"Keeping in Touch" schemes, involving periods of casual work, for staff on temporary absence from the Department.

the use of unpaid leave to allow for care of children during school holidays.

## Aldermaston (Flooding)

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the recent flooding of the atomic weapons research establishment at

Aldermaston; whether underground bunkers and the underground railway were flooded; and to what extent research programmes were interrupted or adversely affected.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Heavy local rainfall on 6 July 1989 caused minor flooding in some buildings at the atomic weapons establishment, Aldermaston. Research programmes were not significantly interrupted or adversely affected.

### Flight Simulators

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many flight simulators are available to the Royal Air Force; when they entered service; and which aircraft they simulate.

**Mr. Neubert:** A total of 43 simulators are available to the RAF as follows:

| *Aircraft type* | *Numbers* | *Entered service* |
|---|---|---|
| Air Combat | 1 | 1986 |
| Buccaneer | 2 | pre-1975 |
| Chinook | 1 | Time hired on a commercial system |
| Harrier GR3 | 2 | pre-1975 |
| Harrier GR5 | 1 | Time hired from Spanish airforce |
| Hawk | 3 | 1977 |
| Hawk | 2 | 1978 |
| Hercules | 1 | 1983 |
| Hercules | 1 | 1984 |
| Hercules | 1 | 1985 |
| Jaguar | 3 | pre-1975 |
| Jet Provost | 4 | pre-1975 |
| Jetstream | 1 | 1977 |
| Nimrod | 3 | pre-1975 |
| Phantom | 3 | pre-1975 |
| Puma | 1 | Time hired on commercial simulator |
| Tornado F3 | 4 | 1988 |
| Tornado GR1 | 1 | 1982 |
| Tornado GR1 | 2 | 1983 |
| Tornado GR1 | 1 | 1984 |
| Tornado GR1 | 1 | 1985 |
| Tristar—500 | 1 | Time hired on commercial simulator |
| VC10 C1 | 1 | 1987 |
| VC10 K1 | 1 | 1987 |
| Victor | 1 | pre-1975 |

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is his policy towards the use of flight simulators by the aircrew of the Royal Air Force; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what studies his Department has carried out to determine the extent to which low flying training may be sustained by the use of flight simulators.

**Mr. Neubert:** Simulation is an important element in training military pilots, particularly in procedures, instrument flying and cockpit familiarisation. The extent to which low flying training might be substituted by the use of simulators is kept under review but simulators currently in service with the Royal Air Force do not reproduce the necessary environment with sufficient fidelity to provide an adequate substitute for low level tactical flying training.

### Armour Piercing Weapons

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what agreements his Department has entered into with the United States Government to develop jointly a hand-held armour piercing weapon; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** None. There has, however, been a discussion between officials on the possible benefits of an exchange of data.

### Laser Systems

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department intends to place orders for multiple integrated laser engagement systems for use by the Army; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** We are looking into the requirement and suitable procurement arrangements for this type of training equipment for the British Army. We expect that the decision on whether to proceed will be made before the end of the year.

### Lodging Allowances

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each rank of serving officer in the armed forces between the rank equivalent to an army captain and a major-general, inclusive, the lodging etc. allowances payable to those having to rent accommodation in London while serving in the Ministry of Defence.

**Mr. Neubert:** Personnel for whom no public accommodation is available, and who are therefore required to rent accommodation, are paid lodging allowance as follows:

| | *£ per day* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Rank* | *Rate A* | *Rate B* | *Rate C* |
| Captain or equivalent | 20·11 | 14·33 | 18·81 |
| Major and Lieutenant Colonel or equivalents | 22·54 | 16·76 | 21·24 |
| Colonel and above, or equivalents | 25·62 | 19·84 | 24·32 |

*Notes:*

1. A rates of lodging allowance are payable to personnel who would be eligible for free food and accommodation if they were occupying service single accommodation. As virtually all personnel are required to pay a food charge, rate A is mainly used as the basis for calculating rates B and C.

2. B rates are payable to personnel who, if they were occupying public single accommodation, would be required to pay food and accommodation charges.

3. C rates are payable to those married unaccompanied personnel who, if they were occupying public single accommodation, would be required to pay the married unaccompanied rate of food charge but would be eligible for free accommodation.

### Environmental Pollution

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the environmental effects of the production, use, storage and ultimate disposal of nuclear fuels for the United Kingdom's naval forces.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* The environmental effects of the production, use, storage and ultimate disposal of nuclear fuels for the United Kingdom's naval forces are negligible. Radioactive discharges to the environment that lie within United Kingdom jurisdiction, whether made by contractors associated with the programme or by the Royal Navy itself, comply with authorisations from, or agreements with, the Department of the Environment or the Scottish Development Department. These authorisations and agreements are set so that discharges within the limits they permit have no detrimental effect on any human beings. Radioactive discharges made by nuclear submarines on the high seas are governed by naval regulations that have the same effect.

### Joint Tactical Information Distribution

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what study he has made of the cost of providing joint tactical information distribution system terminals for *(a)* the Tornado air defence variant aircraft, *(b)* Invincible class aircraft carriers and *(c)* Type-42 destroyers.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[holding answer Monday 17 July 1989]:* Studies of the cost of integrating JTIDS into the Tornado ADV have been undertaken and work is now proceeding concurrently with the full development phase of the JTIDS project.

Project definition studies on the RN variant of JTIDS for the CVSA and type 42 classes are currently being undertaken in industry. Estimates of the costs of the system will be submitted upon completion of the PD phase.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Housing Action Trust (Southwark)

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his policy on the eviction of squatters in the event of the proposed housing action trust being created on the Gloucester grove or North Peckham estates in Southwark;

(2) whether there will be any limitations on the time the proposed housing action trust in Southwark could continue to exist.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* As I told the hon. Member in my replies to her on Thursday 20 July, one of the primary statutory objects of a housing action trust would be to secure the proper and effective management and use of the housing for which it was responsible. It would be for a trust to decide how to deal with problems of unlawful occupation of property by squatters.

### Craven Cottage Football Ground

**Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he received from Hammersmith and Fulham council the compulsory purchase order and supporting evidence relating to Craven Cottage football ground; and when he intends to hold the inquiry to consider the council's compulsory purchase order.

**Mr. Chope:** The compulsory purchase order was received from Hammersmith and Fulham council on 30 May. An inquiry is being arranged.

### Carbon Dioxide Emissions

**Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he accepts the claims made by the Association for the Conservation of Energy about United Kingdom emissions of carbon dioxide; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Estimates of United Kingdom emissions of carbon dioxide since 1977 were published in the "Digest of Environmental Protection Statistics", No. 11, in February this year. They do not support the figures quoted by the Association for the Conservation of Energy (ACE). United Kingdom emissions were only 1 per cent. higher in 1987 compared with 1986. This is still 10 per cent. lower than in 1979. An initial estimate of the emissions for 1973 shows that they were about 14 per cent. higher than at present, not 20 per cent. lower as claimed.

### Local Polls

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, what provisions permit local authorities to conduct local ballots, polls or referenda on issues of local concern; and under what conditions.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** There are specific provisions for parish polls in England and Wales on questions arising at parish meetings, where 10 electors (or one third of the electors for the parish, if that is less) so demand.

The provisions are in paragraphs 18, 21 and 22 of schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972 and the Parish Community Meetings (Polls) Rules 1987 (SI1987, No. 1).

For other local authorities, there are no specific provisions.

### Debate (Information)

**Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment on which date he drew to the attention of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry the information which had been given to the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment by the hon. Members for Bexhill and Battle (Mr. Wardle) and for Eastbourne during a debate in the House on 26 May, *Official Report,* columns 1291 and 1292; and what further action has been taken.

**Mr. Moynihan:** I wrote to my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs at the Department of Trade and Industry on 7 June drawing his attention to the information provided by the hon. Members during the debate on 26 May. It is for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who has responsibility for such matters, to decide what action to take on the basis of this information.

## Sewage Discharges

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report*, those sewage treatment works in the North West water authority which have failed to meet their discharge consents during the last 12-month period for which figures are available.

**Mr. Howard:** In 1988 90 per cent. of sewage treatment works in the North West water authority area complied with the terms of their discharge consents. Those which did not are as follows:

Adlington
Appleby
Ashley
Ayside
Barrow in Furness (Palace N)
Beston
Beetham
Betley
Bolton
Brigham
Chorley No.1
Crooklands
Delamere
Dunkinfield
Eaglesfield
Failsworth
Fazakerley
Gamblesby
Glenridding
Hesketh Bank
High Leigh
Hillhouse
Horton-in-Ribblesdale
Hyde
Irlam
Kendal
Langwathby
Nether Eover
Ormskirk
Pardshaw
Prescot
Ravenstonedale
Rowrah
Skelmersdale
Strines
Talkin
Thornton Hough
Utkinton (Quarry Bank)
Wardle
Weeton
Wigan
Windergill
Worsley

The North West water authority has in hand a major capital expenditure programme designed to bring substandard sewage treatment works into compliance with their discharge consents by March 1992, wherever practicable.

## Emergency Work

**Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidance he gives as to what constitutes emergency work under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980.

**Mr. Gummer:** There are no provisions relating to emergency work in the 1980 Act.

## Polluters

**Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment on what date members of the public were given the right to prosecute polluters.

**Mr. Howard:** Members of the public were given the right to prosecute polluters of rivers by sections 31 and 32 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, which were brought into force by the present Government on 31 January 1985. This right is contained in the Water Act 1989.

## Unoccupied Property Rating

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of all types of hereditament which will be exempt from unoccupied property rating after 1 April 1990; and when he anticipates making regulations to bring these exemptions into effect;

(2) what proposals he has to exempt occupiers of empty industrial premises from payment of the national non-domestic rate after April 1990.

**Mr. Gummer:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment intends to consult shortly on draft regulations, to be made in final form in the autumn, to replicate from 1 April 1990 the exemption from unoccupied property rating of those hereditaments which are currently exempt from such rates under paragraph 2(a) to (d) of schedule 1 to the General Rate Act 1967, the Rating (Exemption of Unoccupied Industrial and Storage Hereditaments) Regulations 1985 (SI No. 258) and the Rating (Exemption of Unoccupied Property) Regulations 1967 (SI No. 954).

## Housing

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report*, the market value of *(a)* all privately owned housing stock and *(b)* all publicly owned housing stock in England and Wales at the latest available date, indicating the amount it would be necessary to charge each householder to finance local government expenditure at current levels on the assumption that rate support grant levels remain static, should capital value taxation be introduced.

**Mr. Gummer:** My right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for the Environment placed in the Library on 19 July a table showing the capital value rate which could have applied in each local authority area in 1989-90 if introduced in conjunction with a local income tax. These are based on an assumed domestic rateable value in England of £1,200 billion.

## "Digest of Environmental Protection and Water Statistics"

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many copies of the "Digest of Environmental Protection and Water Statistics" have been *(a)* distributed and *(b)* sold in each year since 1979; and what efforts are made by his Department to ensure copies are placed in public, school and college libraries.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The latest estimates of the number of copies of the "Digest of Environmental Protection and Water Statistics" distributed and sold since 1978, when the digest was first published, are as follows:

| *Issue number* | *Year* | *Distributed* | *Sold* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1978 | 1,732 | 1,332 |
| 2 | 1979 | 1,196 | 746 |
| 3 | 1980 | 1,082 | 682 |

| Issue number | Year | Distributed | Sold |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 1981 | 818 | 568 |
| 5 | 1982 | 863 | 613 |
| 6 | 1983 | 879 | 629 |
| 7 | 1984 | 843 | 543 |
| 8 | 1985 | 1,011 | 596 |
| 9 | 1986 | 1,233 | 833 |
| 10 | 1987 | 1,096 | 716 |
| 11 | 1988 | 1,235 | [1]835 |

[1] Final sales likely to reach 1,000 and a reprint may be required.

There are over 250 regular purchasers of the digest, some of which are school and college libraries. The digest is listed in the Department of the Environment's annual list of publications, which is sent to all local authorities, and HMSO's sectional list No. 5, Department of the Environment. It is advertised in *Social Trends* and steps are being taken to publicise the volume in professional librarian journals.

## "Solving the Greenhouse Dilemma"

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received a copy of the report entitled "Solving the Greenhouse Dilemma", published by the Association for the Conservation of Energy on 2 July; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** We were interested to receive the report as a contribution to the current wide-ranging debate on the greenhouse effect.

We, together with other Government Departments, will be considering this report as well as other proposals, as part of the intergovernmental panel on climate change.

## "Inside the Poison Trade"

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek to obtain a copy of the video tape and transcript of the UNEP sponsored programme, entitled "Inside the Poison Trade" on hazardous and toxic waste disposal, for the departmental library.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** We have no plans to do so.

## Local Finance (Waltham Forest)

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will tabulate in relation to the London borough of Waltham Forest how much revenue would be raised from the individuals resident in the borough assuming *(a)* a system of capital value rates plus local income tax paid in proportions of 80-20, *(b)* the existing system of rates and *(c)* the community charge; and how much Government grant would be given in each case.

**Mr. Gummer:** The amount raised in any area with a system of capital value rates plus local income tax would depend on the tax rates set. It is possible to calculate tax rates which would apply in each area from a comparison of grant-related expenditure and actual spending. The implication of these tax rates for specimen individuals, with defined incomes and property values, can then be assessed. I have published figures on this basis which are consistent with the illustrative 1989-90 community charge and with current levels of domestic rates.

I cannot estimate how much would be raised from the residents in any one local authority area if a system of capital value rates combined with local income tax were in force. This is because data are not available for each local authority area for either the capital value of domestic properties or the taxable income of residents.

Based on the illustrative 1989-90 community charge levels placed in the Library on 19 July, the amount raised from the full community charge in Waltham Forest could have been up to £56 million. But part of this amount would have been met by the Exchequer through community charge benefit payments. The figure comparable with the present system of domestic rates is £51 million.

In 1989-90 illustrative community charges assume a standard spending grant of £78 million for Waltham Forest residents. In 1989-90 rate support grant payable to Waltham Forest amounted to £83 million. In addition, Waltham Forest residents presently benefit from grant paid to the Receiver for the Metropolitan police district and the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority.

With both the current system and the community charge the Government also provide additional amounts to the poorest in each area in the form of rebates to reduce their payments to the local authority. Specific grants are also paid to fund certain areas of local authority spending and other Government grants are paid from a variety of programmes.

## Gipsy Sites

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many meetings his Department has convened of representatives of local authorities from Yorkshire to discuss strategy for gipsy site provision on a regional or sub-regional basis in each of the last five years; if he will list the participating local authorities; and when the next such meeting is scheduled to take place;

(2) if he will make it his policy to ensure that officials of his Department visit the permanent gipsy sites within the city of Bradford metropolitan district council before he takes any decision on any application Bradford council may submit for designation of such sites.

**Mr. Trippier:** Officials have meetings with representatives of county and district councils in Yorkshire jointly and individually as required to discuss gipsy site provision. Meetings drawing together representatives from local authorities throughout the country are also held regularly to discuss gipsy issues.

Officers from the Department have visited the City of Bradford metropolitan district council's gipsy site at Mary street and plane to see the one in Esholt in the near future.

## Town and Country Planning

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he is proposing to introduce legislation to consolidate the statutes relating to town and country planning before he introduces legislation to abolish structure plans.

**Mr. Chope:** I understand that the Law Commission does not now expect to finish preparing the consolidation of the planning Acts in time for introduction during the current parliamentary Session. I cannot anticipate when legislation relating to development plans might be introduced, but we are bearing in mind the interaction of these legislative proposals with each other.

## Community Charge, Lambeth

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the likely level of poll tax in Lambeth from 1 April 1990 on the assumption that patterns of expenditure in the current year by Lambeth and the Inner London education authority do not change.

**Mr. Gummer:** The Government have no plans to introduce a poll tax.

To estimate a 1990-91 community charge on the assumptions suggested by the hon. Member would be misleading, because there will be changes in local government responsibilities which will alter expenditure patterns. Based on current responsibilities, the illustrative full community charge in Lambeth for 1989-90 is £543.

## Rating Reform

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is yet able to indicate the projected average poll tax for England based on 1989-90 local expenditure figures; and which local authorities would be above or below that figure.

**Mr. John Gummer:** The Government have no plans to introduce a poll tax.

Figures placed in the Library on 19 July show the illustrative community charge in each English local authority based on 1989-90 rate levels. The average is £274.

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the likely level of poll tax in *(a)* Burnley, *(b)* Pendle, *(c)* Rossendale, and *(d)* Hyndburn as from 1 April on the assumption that current patterns of expenditure are maintained within those boroughs and by Lancashire county council.

**Mr. Gummer:** The Government have no plans to introduce a poll tax.

I have made no estimate of the likely level of community charge in any area. Illustrative 1989-90 community charge levels were placed in the Library on 19 July.

## Planning

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to introduce legislation to strengthen the present provisions in the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 for planning enforcement in line with the recommendations contained in the Carnwath report.

**Mr. Howard:** I refer my hon. Friend to my reply on 24 May to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) *Official Report*, volume 153, column *942*.

## Property Services Agency

**Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his holding answer of 26 June, when he intends to provide a substantive answer to the hon. Member for East Kilbride about the refurbishment and redevelopment of empty property held by the Property Services Agency.

**Mr. Chope:** I have replied to the hon. Member today.

## Boundary Commission

**Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the Boundary Commission to complete its review of the London borough boundaries.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Local Government Boundary Commission must complete its reviews by 31 March 1992. Apart from that date, the rate of progress is a matter for the commission.

**Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the Boundary Commission to publish recommendations regarding the boundary of the London borough of Bexley.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** It is its statutory duty to complete the review by 31 March 1992. The rate of progress is a matter for the commission. I understand that the commission is considering separately the boundaries between the London borough of Bexley and the boroughs of Dartford, Bromley and Greenwich. They published draft proposals on the boundary with Dartford on 11 July 1988, and one small further draft proposal on 10 July 1989; they published draft proposals on the boundary with Bromley on 29 May 1989. They intend to hold a local meeting in connection with the boundary with Greenwich (at Thamesmead) in the autumn, which may result in draft proposals.

## London Boroughs (Staff)

**Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has concerning the increase or decrease in staff employed by each of the London boroughs since May 1986; if he will publish any such information in the *Official Report* in tabular form; and if he will make an estimate of the contribution the increased payroll in the London borough of Hillingdon makes to overspending per adult.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The total numbers of full and part-time staff employed by each London borough are collected quarterly and published in table H of the joint staffing watch (until recently the joint manpower watch) press notice available in the Library of the House. No estimate is available of the contribution of Hillingdon's increased payroll to overspend per adult.

## Regent's Park

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many deck chairs are available in Regent's park; how much they cost to hire and what were the equivalent figures in and for each year since 1979-80.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** There are approximately one hundred deckchairs in Regent's park. The cost per half-day session is 35p. Figures for the number of deckchairs in previous years are not available because the number of chairs provided is left to the discretion of the contractor. Hiring costs in previous years were as follows:

| *Year* | *pence* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 20 |
| 1982 | 25 |
| 1984 | 30 |
| 1986 | 35 |

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the financial and other status of Zoo Operations Ltd. in considering London Zoo's proposals for changes in Regent's park.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Zoological Society of London's current proposals for changes follow a full review of the society's finances and zoo operations carried out in 1987-88 by consultants employed jointly by the Government and the society. The Government's conclusions on that review were announced on 11 May last year. We shall await the Zoological Society of London's detailed proposals for the further 10 acres. Zoo Operations Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Zoological Society of London.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is Her Majesty's Government's policy concerning the renewal of leases of private demesnes in the centre of Regent's park and the addition of such land to the park for the benefit of the public; when this policy was determined; and what was the policy which it replaced.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Private properties leased in Regent's park are owned by the Crown Estate and, apart from Regent's college, are not generally open to the public. Two areas of Regent's park—the zoological gardens and the golf and tennis school which are both open to the public on payment of a fee—are occupied on lease from the Department of the Environment. This division of responsibility is based on the provisions of the Crown Lands Act 1936 and the Crown Estate Act 1961.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what restrictions he has suggested to London Zoo concerning the location of any land that it takes over under the Crown Estate Act 1961.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Crown Estate Act 1961 gives the Secretary of State power to grant up to 10 acres of neighbouring land. We await the Zoological Society of London's detailed proposals. Any new boundaries will have to be carefully landscaped by the society to minimise the impact on the park.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to ensure that London Zoo's rights in Regent's park under the Crown Estate Act 1961 are not assigned to any other body.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The current lease precludes the Zoological Society of London from underletting any part of its premises in Regent's park except for temporary use by a society or organisation with purposes similar to the society's. The new lease will include a similar restriction.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether any lessees of land in Regent's park besides London Zoo have made proposals to him to charge for access to any part within the outer canal.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The only other holder of a lease in Regent's park from my Department is the golf and tennis school which already charges for the use of its facilities. Companies also hold licences to operate and charge for recreational and refreshment facilities. Other organisations and individuals occupy property on lease from the Crown Estate.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether *(a)* the Crown Estate and *(b)* the occupants of St. John's lodge, Regent's Park lane, proposed taking in any part of the park other than that required to change the public access to the public gardens behind the lodge.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Crown Estate made an informal inquiry to my Department in relation to the reinstatement of the original gardens of St. John's lodge as set out by John Nash. The Crown Estate was told that a formal request would not be looked on favourably and this has been accepted.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the land at Gloucester slips car park is included in the 10 acres of land in Regent's park of which the London Zoo may claim use under the Crown Estate Act 1961.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** No.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment who is currently responsible for deck chairs in Regent's park.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The contract for the deck chair service is currently operated by J. H. Kesslers Limited.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether his agreement to the London Zoo taking over the Gloucester slips car park in Regent's park was by lease; and on what date any agreement was signed.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Zoological Society of London took over management of the Gloucester slips coach and car park under licence and not by lease on 1 April 1989. The terms of the licence will be finalised shortly.

## Local Government Finance

**Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the assumed contributions to local expenditure for each authority from *(a)* Government funds and *(b)* business rates in the tables contained in the document "1989-90 Illustrative Capital Value Rates and Local Income Tax" published on 19 July.

**Mr. Gummer:** The illustrative capital value rates and local income tax figures published on 19 July assume that Government funds and business rates are distributed to achieve full equalisation of tax rates. This means that in every area the same tax rates would apply if all local authorities were spending at the level needed to provide a standard level of services. The level of grant entitlement would vary if expenditure were at a different level in order to ensure that each £1 per head of additional spending in any area would lead to exactly the same change in tax rates. Areas with high average house values and high average taxable incomes would receive less grant with higher spending, while areas with low taxable resources would receive more grant with higher spending.

## Costs

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the cost of answering the question from the hon. Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) 19 July, *Official Report*, columns *215-6*.

**Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total cost of producing and distributing the document published by his Department on 19 July entitled "1989-90 Illustrative Capital Value Rates and Local Income Tax."

**Mr. Gummer:** I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Grocott) on 24 July 1989.

## Creches

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any recent representations about pilot or permanent workplace creches and similar incentives futher to encourage the return to employment of women in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** My Department is considering possible initiatives providing child care for its staff which they, and their union representatives, have supported.

## Local Authority Finance

**Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how, in the new local government finance system, he intends that the relevant population of each charging authority in England should be calculated for the purposes of determining revenue support grant and non-domestic rate entitlement and for dividing precepts among charging authorities.

**Mr. Gummer:** I told the Consultative Council for Local Government Finance on 12 July that following representations from the local authority associations we now intend that the relevant population should be calculated from data supplied from community charge registers. We intend to take powers in the Local Government and Housing Bill to facilitate this. These data will, we believe, provide the most appropriate record of the adult population in an area liable to pay the community charge. We shall make provision for those occasions when the necessary information is not provided by a local authority. We also intend to make provision to enable the Secretary of State to substitute an alternative figure where there is doubt that the figure derived from the register is a realistic estimate of an area's adult population. For this purpose we propose that an alternative be adopted where the register figure differs from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys' estimate of the area's adult population by more than a defined percentage.

**Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the results of consultation on the harmonisation of the decapitalisation rate used for rating assessment in Great Britain that he announced on 7 March.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I have considered carefully the responses received to our proposal to set the decapitalisation rate for property valued by reference to the cost of construction somewhere in the range of 6 per cent. to 7 per cent. Respondents recognised that a common decapitalisation rate throughout Great Britain will assist in the harmonisation of rating. However, they generally argued that a figure as high as 7 per cent. overstated the relationship between the decapitalisation rate and the 1988 cost of borrowing to finance construction. We have therefore decided to set the rate at 6 per cent. for most property, with a lower rate of 4 per cent. applying to educational property—schools, universities, polytechnics and to colleges of further and higher education provided by local authorities and non-profit making bodies; this rate will also apply to hospitals and certain other health establishments. The necessary regulations will be made later this year.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland is giving further consideration to the rates to be applied to sports grounds, amateur sports clubs and to church property valued on the contractors basis in Scotland.

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidance he provides *(a)* to parents about the eligibility of their children aged 18 or 19 years or over, who are required to remain in secondary education, to pay poll tax and *(b)* to young people, who leave secondary education after their 18th or 19th birthdays and are granted places as students at institutions of higher or further education, about their liability to pay a full personal poll tax between leaving school and entering university or college; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* No one has any liability to pay a poll tax as no such tax exists or is planned. Guidance on individuals' community charge liability is contained in the Department's free booklet "You and the Community Charge" and the associated series of free leaflets including that entitled, "Students".

## Nature Conservancy Council

**Mrs. Ann Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many full-time staff are employed by the Nature Conservancy Council in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Scotland; how many contract staff are employed in each country; and how many staff are employed by the Nature Conservancy Council pursuing (i) Great Britain or (ii) international functions.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* Details of the numbers of staff employed by the NCC and their location within the organisation at 1 July 1989 are as follows:

| *Location* | *Permanent staff* | *Contract staff* |
|---|---|---|
| England HQ and regions | 281 | 189 |
| Wales HQ and regions | 88 | 44 |
| Scotland HQ and regions | 160 | 87 |
| Great Britain HQ[1] | 258 | 132 |
| International branch | 5 | — |

[1] Except International branch.

## Directorate of Rural Affairs

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the number and gradings of his officers who are currently working in the directorate of rural affairs; and whether he proposes any increases following the changes announced to the Nature Conservancy Council and Countryside Commission.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* There are currently 99 staff working in the Department's directorate of rural affairs. The grades of these staff are as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Grade 3 | 1·0 |
| Grade 5 | 3·0 |
| Grade 6 | 2·0 |
| Grade 7 | 11·5 |
| SEO/SPTO | 9·0 |
| HEO | 16·0 |
| EO | 18·0 |
| AO | 26·0 |
| AA | 12·5 |
| | 99·0 |

These figures include one additional SEO who has already been allocated to assist in work concerned with reorganising the conservation agencies. Further adjustments will be made if necessary.

## Funeral Services

**Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, in the light of comments in paragraph 417 of the 1988-89 report by the Local Government Ombudsman, he has any plans to ban unfair trading practices in respect of funeral services by certain local councils.

**Mr. Gummer** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Behaviour such as that of Wear Valley district council, both in maladministration by discriminating between local traders and in refusing to implement the local ombudsman's recommendations for compensation, is unacceptable. However, on the information available, what appears to have occurred is an abuse of the council's power to provide information rather than any unfair trading practice.

## Landfill Gas Sites

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the top 20 landfill gas sites in England and Wales by acreage.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* Information concerning the acreage of landfill sites is not held centrally.

## Caravan Sites Act 1968

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the operation of the Caravan Sites Act 1968.

**Mr. Trippier** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* My right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for the Environment announced on 6 February 1987 that a review of the Act had been completed and that there was to be no amendment of the present law. We are concerned to assist and encourage authorities to fulfil their duties under the Act as quickly as possible.

## Residuary Bodies

**Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what procedures exist to facilitate public scrutiny of the accounts of residuary bodies.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* Section 79 of the Local Government Act 1985 requires residuary bodies to make their accounts available for public inspection.

## Departmental Properties

**Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those empty properties which are rented, leased or owned by the Property Services Agency and which are being considered for refurbishment or redevelopment to allow reoccupation by a Government Department and the probable date of reoccupation.

**Mr. Chope** *[holding answer 26 June 1989]:* The list is as follows:

*Schedule of empty properties rented, leased or owned by the PSA undergoing or being considered for refurbishment or redevelopment to allow re-occupation by a Government Department*

*Property*
Godwin House, George Street, Huntingdon
Chaucer House, Upper Marlborough Road, St. Albans
Caledonian House, 39/61 St. Albans Road, Watford
87 Burlington Road, New Malden, Surrey
St. Mary's Gate, Chesterfield
22 and 29 The Springs, Wakefield
Sheriff Court House, Castle Street, Aberdeen
Norfolk House, East Kilbride
Hut Number 3, Chaucer Barracks, Canterbury
Shire Hall, Shuttern, Taunton
Clarence Street, Swindon
Telford House, Park Gardens, Yeovil
Portcullis House, Lagland Street, Poole
Reading Courts, The Forbury, Reading

The agency aims to bring vacant space back into re-occupation as soon as possible.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Wednesday 26 July 1989*

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Civil Servants (Resignations)

3. **Mr. John Garrett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants of assistant secretary level and above have resigned from the Civil Service in each of the last 10 years.

**Mr. Ryder:** Numbers of civil servants of unified grade 5 (assistant secretary equivalent) and above who have resigned from the Civil Service in each of the last 10 years are shown in the table. The numbers of resignations each year represent less that 2½ per cent. of the total staff numbers.

*Unified grades 1 to 5*

| | *Numbers resigning* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 18 |
| 1980 | 27 |
| 1981 | 25 |
| 1982 | 38 |
| 1983 | 31 |
| 1984 | 37 |
| 1985 | 39 |
| 1986 | 31 |
| 1987 | 37 |
| [1]1988 | 49 |

[1] Provisional.

### Import Penetration

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each industry listed in the tables given in replies to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby, 14 November 1988, *Official Report*, columns *401-2* and *412*, concerning import penetration in certain industries, the increase in the volume of imports and exports to the four areas between 1979 and 1987 together with the gross and net fixed capital investments.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I have been asked to reply.

Constant price trade-by-industry data are not available on an area basis. Detailed information on fixed capital expenditure by individual sectors of industry may be conveniently found in the summary volumes of the annual census of production.

### Finished Manufactures

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing his best estimate of the value and increase in volume, based on 1985 = 100, and United Kingdom output of finished manufactures in 1973, 1978, 1981, 1985, 1987 and the current year to date and the value and volume of (i) imports of intermediate goods, (ii) United Kingdom output of finished manufactures less imports of intermediate goods and (iii) exports of finished manufactures.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I have been asked to reply.

A current price estimate for the value of United Kingdom output of finished manufactures is not readily available. An index at constant prices is provided in the table. Figures for imports of intermediate goods and exports of finished manufactures may be found in the latest annual supplement to the monthly review of external trade statistics and the latest balance of payments press notice, both of which are available in the Library.

*Estimated volume index of output of finished manufactures*
*(1985 = 100)*

| *Year* | |
|---|---|
| 1973 | 104·0 |
| 1978 | 103·9 |
| 1981 | 90·9 |
| 1985 | 100·0 |
| 1987 | 105·0 |
| [1]1989 | 115·4 |

[1] To date.

*Note:* Finished manufactures have been taken to comprise consumer and investment goods.

### Exports

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing (i) for ratio 3 of the export sales ratio in the years 1975, 1979 and 1987 for manufacturing less divisions 21, 23, 24, 41/42, 46 and 47, (ii) the increase in the value of United Kingdom sales and exports for this group of industries less the value of imports of intermediate goods divided between them in the same ratio and (iii) the estimated increase in volume of net output and net exports for this group after this adjustment.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I have been asked to reply.

Figures constructed from current price data are estimated to be as follows. Comparable data at constant prices could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

*Exports as a proportion of manufacturers' sales*
*Per cent.*

| | *Manufacturing less divisions 21, 23, 24, 41/42, 46, and 47* |
|---|---|
| 1975 | 33 |
| 1979 | 34 |
| 1987 | 43 |

*Value of United Kingdom sales and exports less the total value of imports of intermediate goods divided between them pro-rata*
*£ billion*

| *United Kingdom* | *Manufacturing less divisions 21, 23, 24, 41/42, 46 and 47* |
|---|---|
| *Home Sales* | |
| 1975 | 38 |
| 1979 | 74 |
| 1987 | 120 |
| *Exports* | |
| 1975 | 14 |
| 1979 | 26 |
| 1987 | 49 |

### Earnings Rule (Abolition)

**Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the implementation of the abolition of the earnings rule.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I have been asked to reply.

From 1 October 1989, existing pensioners who already have their pension reduced because of their earnings will be awarded the full pension to which they are entitled. Those who have deferred taking their pension will be offered the opportunity to claim it or to continue deferment. The Department's objective is that as many as possible of those who wish to do so will be able to draw their pension by Christmas. In any event, payments will be backdated to 1 October.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### Senior Management Development Programme

**Mr. John Garrett:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service, what has been the enrolment on the Civil Service senior management development programme for the last five years.

**Mr. Luce:** The senior management development programme was launched in September 1985. The approximate numbers of participants at 31 March of each year were:

| | *Participants* |
|---|---|
| 1986 | 2,600 |
| 1987 | 3,000 |
| 1988 | 4,300 |
| [1] 1989 | 4,500 |

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[1] Provisional figure.

### Next Steps Initiative

**Sir Hal Miller:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how the next steps initiative is progressing; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce:** The next steps initiative is taking firm root. There are now eight agencies set up and the project manager expects that by this time next year there will be 20 or more established. Over 30 areas of Government activity covering around one third of the Civil Service, have been announced as candidates for agency status. These are all listed. The candidates include the social security operations, which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security announced in May that he intended to set up as two or three agencies covering virtually the whole of his Department. There is more to come; work is progressing in a number of other important areas of government.

In support of this, a good deal of other work has been completed or is in hand, including work on accountability, appointment of chief executives, pay and personnel and recruitment flexibilities, financial regimes and delegation generally.

The aim of next steps is better value for money and better service to the public. Accordingly agencies set up are being given performance targets and objectives in these areas. The first Agency is not yet a year old, but the signs are that targets will be achieved, and meanwhile that the move to agency status has, as expected, released energies and enthusiasms of staff to tackle their tasks differently and better. I look to this to develop and progress. The success of next steps will be measured not simply by the number of agencies set up, but in the improvements in performance, for the benefit of taxpayers, customers and staff, that are expected to result. Arrangements are being set in hand to evaluate the project.

Next steps has attracted considerable public interest and indeed general support, both at home and abroad. This House too has taken a close interest, and in the last six months both the Public Accounts Committee and the Treasury and Civil Service Committee have carried out their own inquiries. The Government welcome this interest and will be replying to their reports in due course.

*Executive Agencies Established at July 1989*

Vehicle Inspectorate (DTp)
Companies House (DTI)
Her Majesty's Stationery Office
National Weights and Measures Laboratory (DTI)
Warren Spring Laboratory
Resettlement Units (DSS)
Civil Service College (OMCS)
QEII Conference Centre (PSA)

Eight in number

*Executive Agency Candidates Announced at July 1989*

These are activities publicly announced by the responsible Ministers as under consideration for Agency status. Their progress towards Agency status varies, with some at a more advanced and certain stage than others.

Building Research Establishment (DOE)
Central Statistical Office
Central Office of Information
Central Veterinary Laboratory (MAFF)
Civil Service Commission Recruitment Service (OMCS)
Civil Service Occupational Health Service (OMCS)
Crown Suppliers Fuel Branch (PSA)
Defence non-Nuclear Research Establishments (MOD)
Department of the Registers of Scotland (SO)
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Directorate (DTp)
Driver Testing and Training (DTp)
Employment Service (DE)
Forensic Science Service (HO)
Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate (SO)
Historic Royal Palaces (DOE)
Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce
Insolvency Service (DTI)
Laboratory of the Government Chemist (DTI)
Land Registry
Meteorological Office (MOD)
National Engineering Laboratory (DTI)
National Physical Laboratory (DTI)
Passport Department (HO)
Patent Office (DTI)
Planning Inspectorate (DOE)
Radiocommunications Division (DTI)
Royal Parks (DOE)
Social Security IT Services Agency (DSS)
Social Security Benefits Agency (DSS)
Training Agency (DE)
Vehicle Component Approval (DTp)
Veterinary Medicines Directorate (MAFF)

| | |
|---|---|
| Employment and Training Agency | Northern Ireland Civil Service |
| Social Security Operations | |
| Rating Division | |

Thirty-five in number

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### Nepal

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Nepalese authorities about providing medical or other equipment and assistance to overcome shortages due to the dispute between Nepal and India.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** No specific request for medical equipment has been received. The flow of supplies into Nepal appears to have improved and this has been reflected in our own aid projects where the improved supply of fuel has enabled a sustainable level of operations. We are, however, engaged in a continuing dialogue with the Nepalese authorities on our aid programme and will consider any well-founded request carefully.

## DEFENCE

### Anthrax

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Leyton of 19 July, if he will list the off-site activities of the chemical defence establishment at Porton Down involving detection, decontamination, treatment and protective systems involving anthrax other than on Gruinard island.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** All research work on anthrax undertaken by CDE scientists has been located at Porton Down and Gruinard island.

### Mine Warfare Exercise

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if consultations have taken place with local fishermen concerning the mine warfare exercise which is to take place in the firth of Clyde during August; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** There is no specific exercise taking place in the Firth of Clyde in August, but a dummy minefield is being laid during the month for evaluation purposes, as part of a continuing programme of mine countermeasures work. The co-ordinates of this were passed to the Clyde fishermen's association on 20 June 1989. A favourable response was received from the association on 10 July, and a Clyde warning message was issued on 20 July.

### Submarine Exercises

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the Royal Navy is considering the re-introduction of the practice of having a fleet tender in attendance when a submarine is submerged on exercise; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I am advised that it has not previously been standard practice for fleet tenders to be present at submarine exercises and there are no plans to introduce such a measure. Tenders will, however, continue to be a present for specific trials such as an initial dive after build or refit.

### HMS Dreadnought

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his future plans for HMS Dreadnought.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I refer the hon. Member to the House of Commons Defence Committee's seventh report, published on 21 June 1989.

### Nuclear Submarines (Rosyth)

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy that there be no further storage of nuclear submarines in the vicinity of Rosyth dockyard.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The Government have made no decision about the method by which decommissioned nuclear submarines will be disposed of, nor where any submarines should be stored, should temporary storage afloat be necessary.

### Training

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Clackmannan of 19 July *Official Report*, column *232*, what are the restrictions on the nature and extent of the training which apply in the two areas referred to in his reply; for what purpose he acquired long term rights over the two areas referred to; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Neubert:** The following restrictions apply to the nature and extent of training on the two areas in question:

*Forestry Commission Land in Galloway*

Under the terms of the licence, use of the area is permitted for adventure training, map reading, orienteering and small scale escape and evasion exercises. There are limitations on the number of men permitted to use the area at any one time and all buildings, lochs, SSSIs, low lying land and fields containing crops and hay are out of bounds. There are also limitations on the use of blank ammunition and pyrotechnics, vehicles and helicopters.

*British Aluminium Company Land at Kinlochleven*

The majority of the area is not available to MOD between 1 August and 21 October. With certain exceptions vehicles are not permitted other than on public roads. The use of live ammunition is prohibited and training must not interfere with or cause damage to any hydraulic or factory installation nor interfere with the landlord's use for all normal estate, sporting, agricultural or silvicultural purposes.

We have acquired long-term rights over these two areas to secure the continuation of our present training activities.

### Training Land

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) to what percentage area of Ministry of Defence property holdings the public has *(a)* full access, *(b)* limited access and *(c)* no access;

(2) to what percentage area of Ministry of Defence training land the public has *(a)* full access, *(b)* limited access and *(c)* no access.

**Mr. Neubert:** It is our policy to allow access to MOD-owned land where this is compatible with operational and safety considerations and with the interests of tenants and licensees. Records are not held in a form that would show the percentage of MOD land over which the public has access.

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage area of Ministry of Defence training land is allowed to be used for live-fire training exercises.

**Mr. Neubert:** Records are not held in the form required and the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Live Ammunition (Exercises)

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the annual number of exercises involving the use of live ammunition for each of the last 10 years.

**Mr. Neubert:** I will write to the hon. Member.

**Mr. O'Neill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the annual number of reported incidents of members of the public discovering live ammunition in areas that had recently been used for training purposes, for each of the last 10 years for which data is available.

**Mr. Neubert:** I will write to the hon. Member.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Police (West Midlands)

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the West Midlands as to whether any of the officers suspended or disciplined in the last five years in the west midlands police force were involved in investigating the murder of Carl Bridgewater.

**Mr. Hurd:** I understand from the chief constable of the West Midlands police that no officer from that force who was involved in the Carl Bridgewater murder inquiry has been suspended in the last five years. Two such officers have been disciplined in that period.

### Crime Screening

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will direct the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to publish in his annual report the statistics relating to the screening of reported crimes for further investigation; if he will publish the figures for 1988; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that detailed figures for 1988 are not available centrally, but that the commissioner is considering what information might be published in future annual reports.

### Prison Officers' Housing

**Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the cause of the hold-up by the Home Office in relation to the sale of 44 homes on the Gartree estate to prison officers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** Of the 81 prison quarters on the Gartree estate, 46 were released for sale under the prison service discount sales scheme on 30 June 1988. A total of 21 applications for purchase were received and offers of sale have been made to 18 applicants. Valuations for the other three properties have yet to be received from the district valuer.

Five of the offers made were accepted and sales are going ahead in the normal way. The main reason for delay on the other sales is the unwillingness of prospective purchasers to accept the terms of the discount scheme. This requires that the properties should be offered for sale on the basis of a valuation made at the date of application to purchase or at the date on which the properties were released for sale, whichever is the later. I have no authority to sanction sales based on a valuation at the date on which the discount scheme first came into effect—June 1987—which is what these prospective purchasers are seeking.

### Cornfield Circles

**Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constables of Hampshire and Wiltshire on their investigations into the cornfield circles in Hampshire and Wiltshire; what is the estimated cost of these investigations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** I understand from the chief constables of Hampshire and Wiltshire that there have been no investigations into the cornfield circles by their officers.

### Race Relations (Liverpool)

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will direct the Chief Inspector of Constabulary to inquire into those aspects of the findings of the first report of the Liverpool 8 inquiry into race relations in Liverpool which relate to the Merseyside police; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** No.

### Broadcasting (Deaf People)

**Sir Charles Morrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has to ensure that the Independent Television Commission will have adequate representation of deaf people.

**Mr. Renton:** The Independent Television Commission will be a regulatory body rather than a representative one. Members will be chosen to cover a wide range of experience and knowledge, but we do not believe it would be right to appoint a member specifically to serve the needs of the deaf.

**Sir Charles Morrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether he intends to lay down regulations that oblige the television broadcasters to ensure that whenever there is an emergency or urgent news flashes, the programme is broadcast so that deaf viewers can fully understand the message;

(2) whether the proposed requirements for Channels 3 and 5 with regard to subtitling for the deaf will be applied to the BBC channels, Channel 4, cable and satellite channels; what reasonable target for the amount of subtitles in future years will be set by the Independent Television Commission; whether the proposed 10 per cent. increase in Teletest subtitles will be a minimum requirement; whether the proposal will include a requirement to provide a diverse service across all programming; and whether he is considering any inclusion in the proposal for sign language services and open-in-vision subtitles.

**Mr. Hurd:** As I announced on 13 June, at column 715, we are proposing that Channel 3 and Channel 5 licensees should, in the first year of the new licences provide 10 per cent. more hours of subtitling than had been achieved on average by the ITV companies in the previous year. The licensees would, of course, be free to provide more hours than this if they so wished. The ITC would take this and other matters into account in judging a suitable target for future years. We envisage that the choice of which programmes should be subtitled should be left to the licence holder. The BBC and Channel 4 will continue to be bound by public service commitments and so can be expected to continue to provide subtitling.

It will be for the broadcasters to determine how information is presented, beyond the requirement to be impartial and accurate in news reporting. Live subtitling is complex, and in some instances would be difficult to provide.

With regard to the additional television channels, which are becoming available, we have always made it clear that we intend to impose on these channels a number of consumer protection requirements to safeguard the public on matters of taste and decency. Beyond that their success or failure will be determined by their ability to attract and retain viewers with their programme service.

Services for the deaf should generally be provided by teletext, although by virtue of their public service obligations the BBC and Channel 4 can be expected to provide specialist services for those viewers without access to a teletext television set.

### Birmingham Pub Bombings

**Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the West Midlands as to how many officers involved in the case against Keith Parchment were also involved in the case of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the West Midlands as to how many officers involved in the case against Paul Fitzsimmons were also involved in the case of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings;

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the West Midlands as to how many officers involved in the case against Hassan Khan were also involved in the case against the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings;

(4) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the West Midlands as to how many officers involved in the case against Ernest Callaghan, Anthony Waldron, Robert Burston and Alexander Davies were also involved in the case against the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings;

(5) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the West Midlands as to how many of the officers involved in the case against Paul Dandy were also involved in the case of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

(6) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the West Midlands as to how many officers involved in the case against Vincent Palmer were also involved in the case against the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings;

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I understand from the chief constable of the West Midlands Police that no officer involved in the cases of any of the individuals named was also involved in the case concerning those convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

### Detective-Sergeant Michael Hornby

**Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Police Complaints Authority as to the number of complaints made to them against Detective-Sergeant Michael Hornby; and what action was taken in each case.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** No. The Police Complaints Authority is not itself empowered to receive complaints against police officers. Any complaint that the authority may receive against an individual officer is passed to the chief constable of the force concerned, so that he may record it and have it investigated under the terms of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 where appropriate under the supervision of the authority.

**Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, pursuant to his answer of 11 July, *Official Report*, column *425*, he will call for a report from the chief constable of the West Midlands as to whether Detective-Sergeant Michael Hornby's personal file contains details of the offence for which he was disciplined in 1980.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 21 July, at column *403*, pursuant to the answer given to the hon. Member on 11 July.

**Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, pursuant to his answer of 11 July, *Official Report*, column *425*, he will call for a report from the chief constable of the West Midlands as to how many complaints have been received against Detective-Sergeant Michael Hornby for each of the last seven years.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I understand from the chief constable of the West Midlands Police that four complaints have been made against Detective-Sergeant Hornby in the last seven years, consisting of one in 1983, two in 1986 and one in 1987 which was subsequently withdrawn.

### Mr. Majid Agha

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what instructions are given to immigration officers about providing receipts for personal property which is retained by such officers;

(2) what was the reason for the delay in responding to the letter from the hon. Member for Stretford about Mr. Majid Agha (HO Ref A429590);

(3) what were the nature and length of the avoidable delays in arriving at a decision in the case of Mr. Majid Agha; and what steps have been taken to avoid repetition;

(4) when the conclusion was arrived at that Mr. Majid Agha resides lawfully in Britain;

(5) when the passports of Mr. Majid Agha were returned to him by immigration officers following their seizure;

(6) why the visit to the home of Mr. Majid Agha by immigration officers took place without notice; why the immigration officers were accompanied by police officers on the visit to Mr. Majid Agha; and why Mr. Majid Agha's passports were taken by immigration officers.

**Mr. Renton:** The case to which the hon. Member refers was the subject of a complaint about the conduct of the immigration officers involved in the particular inquiry. Following investigation I wrote to the hon. Member on 8 June. The answers to the additional specific questions are as follows:

The reason why an unannounced visit by immigration and police officers took place was because information was available about the possible commission of immigration and other criminal offences. In the course of the inquiry two passports were taken away, against receipt, and with the consent of the person who was the subject of that inquiry. Instructions to immigration officers are that documents or other items taken during this kind of inquiry should have been provided voluntarily and that a receipt should be provided for any items retained.

The visit took place on 31 January, the decision that the person in question was lawfully settled in the United Kingdom was made on 3 April and the passports returned on 20 April. There were two avoidable delays: one between 10 February and 21 March when the case received insufficient attention due to pressure of work, and one between 3 April and 17 April when the papers were temporarily mislaid in the immigration office at Manchester airport. Local procedures have been revised, aimed at avoiding a repetition of such delays.

The reason for the delay in responding to the letter from the hon. Member for Stretford was, as explained in my interim reply of 13 March to his letter of 1 February, that investigation of the complaint and other inquiries at Manchester airport took some time to conclude.

### Breath Tests

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when the Government intend to respond to the request of the Association of Chief Police Officers for additional breath-testing powers; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when the results of the Home Office consultation period on police breath-testing powers will be published; and in what form.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) on 8 May 1989 at column *284*.

### Yashpal Singh

**Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why no Home Office representative was available to attend the case of Yashpal Singh (TH/1204/88) at Thanet house on 21 July, in which the entry certification officer, New Delhi, is the respondent; when a Home Office representative will be available to attend a hearing; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** The Home Office presenting officer allocated to the case was unfortunately admitted to hospital on that day. The case was complex and it was not, at short notice, possible to reallocate it. The adjudicator agreed to an adjournment and future listing of the case is a matter for my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor.

### Designated Custody Officers

**Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has received from chief constables in England and Wales concerning the extent to which they have designated custody officers having a rank other than that of a sergeant and having dual responsibilities within their police station in accordance with the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Chief officers are not required by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 to provide my right hon. Friend with such information and he has not received any approaches from them on this point.

### Police Radio (Interference)

**Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations his Department has received from the Northumbria police concerning exceptional radio interference on both VHF and UHF radio channels resulting from the European Cellnet system; what information he has on the extent to which this is causing a breakdown of communications between the command and control systems and police officers on the street; and what action he is taking to remendy this problem.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

### Child Care Workers (Police Information)

**Mr. Michael Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will extend the arrangements for the disclosure of police information about those who apply to work with children, which are currently available to local authorities and to voluntary organisations.

**Mr. Hurd:** We have today announced that, with the agreement of the Association of Chief Police Officers and representatives of the voluntary sector, three pilot schemes are to be set up to allow voluntary organisations access to police information about those who apply to work with children. One of the schemes will cover, principally, national child care organisations, the other two will be based locally in Dudley and Lancashire.

The national scheme will be hosted by the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations and, although it will cover largely national child care organisations, it would not exclude other nationally based organisations.

The two local schemes, hosted by the Dudley Council for Voluntary Service and the Community Council for Lancashire will aim to provide a service for locally organised voluntary groups.

The three new schemes, which will be funded by the Government during the pilot phase, will extend to voluntary organisations the arrangements now available to local authorities and the health service which will allow them access to police information about those seeking to work in posts which would give them substantial and unsupervised access to children.

### Underground Railway Stations (Fire Precautions)

**Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he proposes to make regulations on fire precautions in underground railway stations.

**Mr. Hurd:** The necessary consultation with railway operators, fire authorities and others has now been completed and it is my intention to lay regulations within the next two weeks. The first of them will come into effect in mid-September. The regulations will be made under section 12 of the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and will be subject to the negative resolution procedure.

The regulations are part of the Government's response to Mr. Desmond Fennell's investigation into the King's Cross Underground fire and were announced to the House by my right hon. Friend, the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) last November. They will incorporate the great majority of Mr. Fennell's recommendations concerning fire precautions in underground railway stations and some additional requirements amongst them those concerning the construction of stations.

The regulations will include those requiring the installation of heat detectors and sprinklers in escalators and other areas of high fire risk, for the protection and maintenance of exits so that all of these, including ticket barriers, can be immediately opened in case of fire, and for the training and provision of staff so that in an emergency they will know what to do.

They apply to all underground stations, not only to those in London, and will be enforced by the local fire authority for the area. Fire authorities will have discretion to relax some of these requirements when this is justified by the circumstances.

### Citizenship

**Mr. Wells:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for registration as British citizens made under the transitional provisions of the British Nationality Act 1981 are still outstanding; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** In the financial year 1987-88 some 190,000 such applications for registration were received. I announced to the House on 19 May 1988 at column 1080 that a new nationality office in Liverpool would be opened to assist with the processing of the applications and the new office opened on 22 August 1988. Excellent progress has been made and the number of registration applications now outstanding is less than 60,000. We expect to have taken decisions on the last of the outstanding applications during January 1990—significantly ahead of the target date of 1 April.

The establishment of the Liverpool nationality office to process registration applications has allowed the rest of the nationality division in Lunar house to concentrate exclusively on other categories of application for citizenship. Furthermore, once the registration work is completed, the Liverpool nationality office will begin to process naturalisations, almost doubling the capacity available for that work. In this way, we hope to be able to improve the level of service given to applicants during 1990-91.

The difficulties caused by the rush of applications at the end of 1987 are not yet over, but we are on course to improve the level of service to our customers. The staff of the nationality division, both in Croydon and Liverpool, are to be congratulated on the efforts made to achieve that aim.

### Immigration

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigration inspectors have been involved in each of the last six months for which records are available in the authorisation of decisions of immigration officers to make deportation orders against people; and on what basis each decision for *(a)* overstaying, *(b)* breach of conditions or *(c)* otherwise was taken.

**Mr. Renton** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* Fourteen immigration inspectors are authorised to take decisions relating to those liable to deportation under section 3(5)(a) of the Immigration Act 1971. Other categories of deportation cases are dealt with exclusively by the deportation section. Decisions in all deportation cases are based on all the known relevant facts in accordance with the immigration rules.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Inner Cities

81. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will report upon the progress of the Government's inner-city initiative.

**Mr. Forth:** Under the comprehensive range of measures, costing £3·5 million this year, which makes up the Action for Cities initiative, good progress continues to be made in the regeneration of our inner cities. In the 57 inner city target areas, unemployment fell by almost 24 per cent. in the 12 months to May 1989. Recorded crime in the Metropolitan police force areas fell by 6 per cent. in 1988. Involvement of private companies continues to grow—over the last six months the number of companies working with the Government's inner city task forces has increased from 450 to 500.

### Astra Satellite

**Dr. Woodcock:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will take steps to ensure that the financial assistance given to, and the tax incentives provided for, the Astra project by the Luxembourg Government are in accordance with the treaty of Rome and that these aids will not distort fair competition in the United Kingdom satellite market.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** It is open to the Government to raise with the European Commission any cases in which EC rules on state aids are alleged to have been broken and where British companies have been put to competitive disadvantage. If my hon. Friend would like to give me any further information relating to the aid given to the Astra project by the Luxembourg Government, I would be happy to consider the matter further.

### Life Assurance and Pensions

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish in the *Official Report* figures for each year since 1979 showing the net increase in the amounts available for investment of life assurance and pension schemes to the nearest £1 million; and if he will provide a forecast for 1987 and for 1988.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Estimates of total net investment by the long-term funds of insurance companies and self administered pension funds (excluding net investment by pension funds in insurance-managed funds) are as follows for the year 1979 to 1988.

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 10,100 |
| 1980 | 11,744 |
| 1981 | 13,533 |
| 1982 | 15,201 |
| 1983 | 15,957 |
| 1984 | 17,668 |
| 1985 | 18,089 |
| 1986 | 20,295 |
| 1987 | 21,035 |
| 1988 | 20,142 |

*Note:* There are some breaks in the series due to definitional changes. The main ones are between 1983 and 1984 and between 1984 and 1985.

### Insurance Agents (Commissions)

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make proposals to amend the law to ensure that tied agents of insurance policies disclose their commissions.

**Mr. Redwood:** No. Tied agents are not providing independent advice on behalf of a client, but are acting as the agent of the company they represent. The Securities and Investments Board has produced further proposals for disclosure of the status of the intermediary and disclosure of expenses in sales of life assurance and unit trusts.

### Timeshare Developments

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what representations he has received concerning cancellation provisions in contracts for timeshare developments; and what conclusions he has drawn;

(2) if he will introduce legislation to require timeshare developers to include cooling off periods in contracts and provide for independent arbitration in the event of disputes over timeshare contracts;

(3) if he will take powers to ban the use of incentive awards and sales presentations by timeshare developers.

**Mr. Forth:** I receive a steady flow of complaints about timeshare problems mainly criticising the sales techniques used by some companies and the lack of a penalty-free cooling off period in many timeshare contracts. I announced on 2 June that I had asked the Director General of Fair Trading to carry out a review of the whole range of timeshare problems and to make appropriate recommendations in the early part of next year.

### China

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will withdraw financial assistance from those organisations which are presently receiving assistance to further trade with China.

**Mr. Redwood:** The maintenance of departmental financial support for missions to and exhibitions in China is being reviewed on a case by case basis.

### Internal Market Council

**Mr. Hayes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will report on the outcome of the Internal Market Council on 18 July; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Redwood:** The Council, at which my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office represented the United Kingdom, discussed several issues, including the proposed European company statute; the draft EC merger regulation; and draft directives relating to rights of residence, the legal protection of computer programmes, and the introduction of public purchasing rules into the energy, water, transport and telecommunications sectors.

### Life Offices

**Mr. Sayeed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangemens have been made to provide guidance to life offices on the regulatory position as it affects broker funds.

**Mr. Redwood:** We have recently considered whether any regulatory issues arise from the operation of "broker funds", defined as "Any arrangement under which a broker (or a nominee of the broker) has rights, not available to individual policyholders, to advise or decide on matters which determine the benefits under policies issued by the life insurance company through the broker.

We have consulted the Securities and Investments Board and other relevant self-regulating organisations. The Securities and Investments Board is today issuing a consultation paper on the marketing and competence issues involving broker funds.

We have concluded that the operation of broker funds may in the past have exhibited some potential for unfairness although we have no firm evidence that there was any unfairness.

Consequently the Department has today written to life offices and other relevant organisations providing guidance to life offices and their auditors on the regulatory position as it affects broker funds, and on certain other issues to which they should have regard in the appointment of brokers to manage funds and in the operation of those funds. I have arranged for a copy of the text of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House. The letter emphasises the importance of section 31A of the Insurance Companies Act 1982. This section requires insurance companies to ensure that adequate arrangements are in force for securing that transactions affecting assets of the company (other than transactions outside its control) do not operate unfairly between different funds of the company. In the Department's view any transaction between funds which is effected in the knowledge that it will, or is likely to, cause detriment to one of the funds must "operate unfairly". While section 31A is already in force we are considering introducing a new regulation later this year requiring companies to report on their arrangements to meet the duty imposed by the section. This regulation—which is the subject of separate consultation with the industry—would require a certificate to be signed by the directors, to be annexed to the annual report, which would state that for the past financial year the company has had in force arrangements to meet this duty. This certificate would be subject to audit. We have considered the implications of section 31A for the operation of intermediaries funds, and in particular for the granting of rights to brokers which are not conferred on policyholders generally and detailed guidance is provided in the letter to assist insurance companies to comply with the section. Further, we consider that insurance companies should satisfy themselves as to the competence of any broker or nominee managing any of its funds and to monitor their performance on a regular basis. At all times companies should maintain tight controls on broker fund operations.

### Toys (Safety)

**Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he intends to make the regulations to implement in the United Kingdom the European Community directive on toy safety.

**Mr. Forth:** I am pleased to inform my hon. Friend that I made the Toys (Safety) Regulations 1989 on 25 July and they are being laid before the House today.

### Car Production Plant, Swindon

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he made to Rover Group, British Aerospace or Honda in relation to the location of the proposed car production plant at Swindon.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The location of Honda's proposed car production plant was a matter for the company, but the Government made clear their welcome for Honda's decision to develop its existing engine facility at Swindon to full vehicle manufacture.

### FIMBRA

**Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will place in the Library a copy of the letter he received recently from the chairman of FIMBRA as referred to during the proceedings of the Standing Committee of the Companies Bill by the hon. Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith), column *619*.

**Mr. Redwood** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* It is not my right hon. and noble Friend's normal practice to place in the Library correspondence which he receives from third parties simply because it is referred to by an hon. Member in debate. However, since I understand that the chairman of FIMBRA provided copies of the letter in question to hon. Members serving on Standing Committee D at the time, I am, with the agreement of the chairman, placing a copy in the Library.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Birtenshaw Farm, Bolton

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Attorney-General if he has received any representations about the covenant on Birtenshaw farm, Bolton; and if he will make a statement.

**The Solicitor-General:** The Attorney-General has received an application for his consent to realtor proceedings in respect of a proposed development at Birtenshaw farm. This application is now being considered.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Football Matches

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Prime Minister how many football matches she has attended in an official capacity in the past 10 years.

**The Prime Minister:** I have attended four matches in my official capacity over the past 10 years. In addition, since his appointment, my hon. Friend the Minister for Sport has attended 25 domestic and international matches.

### Foreign Visits (Gifts)

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list the numbers and types of gifts she has received on her official visits abroad; and where these gifts are currently stored.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

### Radioactive Waste

**Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Prime Minister how many representations she has received from *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* Norway regarding Nirex proposals for radioactive waste disposal at Sellafield and Dounreay.

**The Prime Minister:** I have so far received two representations from United Kingdom residents and approximately 2,400 from Norway.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Teachers (Pay)

**Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he has taken to recognise above-average teacher performance in any plans he has for the future determination of teachers' pay.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** Local education authorities can already award incentive allowances to teachers who have demonstrated outstanding ability in the classroom. It is important that any new pay arrangements continue to allow for classroom excellence to be rewarded.

### Teachers (Resignations)

**Mr. Straw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Blackburn of 29 June, *Official Report*, column *536*, what information or estimates he now has as to the number of resignations submitted by teachers as at 31 May;

(2) what inquiries he has been able to make as to the number of *(a)* teachers and *(b)* head teacher resignations and the likely level of vacancies in September 1989; and with what result.

**Mr. Rumbold:** Comprehensive data are not available. My officials telephoned a number of local education authorities to ask about the level of teacher resignations. Separate information on head teachers was not collected. Information from those authorities suggests that the position is little changed from that in recent years. As local authorities and schools are still recruiting teachers to take up posts in September, it is too early to make estimates of likely vacancies.

## National Curriculum

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what will be the benefit to primary schools of the introduction of the national curriculum and pupil assessment.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The national curriculum will assist all primary schools to reach the standards currently found in the best. Its framework of targets with linked assessment will enable primary schools to judge their pupils' achievements against objective standards and to identify their needs accordingly. This will give pupils the best possible foundation for their future education.

## Student Grants

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science on what basis postgraduate grants will be calculated once the link with the undergraduate grant comes to an end; and what compensation postgraduate students, especially those in high rent areas, will receive for the removal of benefits.

**Mr. Jackson:** The levels of postgraduate studentships will in future be determined by the award-making bodies, consulting among themselves and with the Department as appropriate, in the light of all relevant factors, including the number and quality of applications for support and other claims on their resources. Students who face financial difficulties when they are no longer eligible for social security benefits will be able to seek supplementary assistance from their higher education institutions from the access fund for postgraduate students.

## School Closures

**Mr. Straw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give the latest information relating to school closures for the current year to date on a basis consistent with the table in his answer to the hon. Member for Blackburn, *Official Report*, of 29 June, column *536*.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The information is given in the table.

| *Calendar year* *(1)* | *Number of proposals decided* *(2)* | *Number of places to be taken out of use by proposals in column 2* *(3)* | *Number of proposals in column 2 approved* *(4)* | *Number of surplus places to be taken out of use as a result of approved proposals* *(5)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1989[1] | 84 | 34,992 | 73 | 24,981 |

[1] 1 January 1989 to 30 June 1989.

## Inspectors' Reports

**Mr. Straw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* the expected dates for the publication of any report of any committee of Her Majesty's inspectors and of other documents of significance, during the next six months, with brief details of each publication.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** There are no reports of Her Majesty's Inspectorate committees published. Her Majesty's Inspectorate publications are based on the findings and messages from inspections and as such are planned and produced by Her Majesty's inspectorate and it is the senior chief inspector who decides where and when what is to be put to the Secretary of State for his agreement to publish.

## GCSE

**Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, whether he has yet an indication of the effect of the GCSE examinations on staying on in full-time education and on the attainments of those taking the examination; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold** *[pursuant to the reply, 10 February 1989, c. 846-48]:* Provisional statistics collected by my Department indicate that in January 1989 there were some 382,000 pupils aged 16 and over in maintained and independent schools in England, an increase of 5 per cent. on the previous year. This represents a staying-on rate of 32·4 per cent. in all schools (29·5 per cent. in maintained schools alone) compared with 29·4 per cent. and 26·6 per cent. respectively in 1987-88. These are the highest-ever rates for staying on in school.

Of these pupils, some 314,000 are following A-level courses, an increase of 8 per cent. on the previous year. The proportion of the age group on first year A-level courses in schools has risen by 3 percentage points to just under 24 per cent.; again, the highest figure ever.

These are encouraging figures, particularly given the decline in the age cohort. They represent a 10 per cent. increase in the staying-on rate, the highest increase ever. In particular they strengthen the earlier evidence that the GCSE has raised the sights of many pupils and encouraged them to stay on for more advanced study.

Comparable figures for enrolments in further education are not yet available.

The following tables set out the relevant information.

*Table 1*

*Pupils aged 16 and over in maintained secondary and independent schools*

|  | *1987-88 actual* | *1988-89 estimated* | *Percentage change* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Pupils 16 to 18* | | | |
| Boys | 182,138 | 190,187 | +4 |
| Girls | 178,553 | 189,686 | +6 |
| Total | 360,691 | 379,873 | +5 |
| *Pupils by age* | | | |
| 16 | 212,427 | 218,251 | +3 |
| 17 | 132,313 | 145,150 | +10 |
| 18 | 15,951 | 16,472 | +3 |
| 16 to 18 | 360,691 | 379,873 | +5 |
| 19 plus | 2,378 | 2,497 | +5 |
| Total | 363,069 | 382,370 | +5 |
| *Pupils by course of study*[1] | | | |
| 'A' level | 291,474 | 313,872 | +8 |
| GCSE | 53,556 | 49,810 | −7 |
| 'AS' level[2] | 481 | 968 | — |
| All other | 17,558 | 17,720 | +1 |
| Total | 363,069 | 382,370 | +5 |

[1] Pupils may be taking more than one course but they are only counted once at the highest level course.

[2] One year group in 1987-88. Two year groups in 1988-89.

*Staying on rates at maintained secondary schools*[1]

| *January each year* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* | *1989 (provisional)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Pupils aged 16* | | | | | | |
| Boys | 25·4 | 25·2 | 25·5 | 25·0 | 25·4 | 27·8 |
| Girls | 29·4 | 28·3 | 28·3 | 27·5 | 27·9 | 31·2 |
| Total | 27·4 | 26·7 | 26·9 | 26·3 | 26·6 | 29·5 |
| *Pupils aged 17* | | | | | | |
| Boys | 16·6 | 16·0 | 15·9 | 15·9 | 15·7 | 16·7 |
| Girls | 18·0 | 17·2 | 16·7 | 16·8 | 16·4 | 17·9 |
| Total | 17·3 | 16·6 | 16·3 | 16·3 | 16·0 | 17·3 |

[1] Ages at previous 31 August. The number of pupils aged 16 and 17 expressed as a percentage of the 15 year olds one and two years earlier.

*Table 3*

*Participation of 16 year olds in full-time education 1983-84 to 1988-89—Place and type of study—Males and Females*

*Percentage of estimated population aged 16*

*England*

| *Academic year* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Place and type of study* | | | | | | |
| A-level study | | | | | | |
| Maintained secondary and independent schools[1] | 19·7 | 19·4 | 19·4 | 19·4 | 20·8 | 23·8 |
| Tertiary colleges | 0·5 | 0·7 | 0·7 | 0·8 | 1·1 | n/a |
| Total | 20·2 | 20·1 | 20·1 | 20·2 | 22·0 | n/a |
| Other establishments | 1·6 | 1·6 | 1·6 | 1·8 | 1·8 | n/a |
| All establishments | 21·8 | 21·6 | 21·7 | 21·9 | 23·7 | n/a |
| O-level study[2] | | | | | | |
| Maintained secondary and independent schools[1] | 7·8 | 8·0 | 7·9 | 7·4 | 6·6 | 6·5 |
| Tertiary colleges | 0·3 | 0·4 | 0·4 | 0·4 | 0·5 | n/a |
| Total | 8·0 | 8·3 | 8·3 | 7·8 | 7·1 | n/a |
| Other establishments | 2·0 | 1·8 | 1·8 | 1·9 | 1·8 | n/a |
| All establishments | 10·0 | 10·2 | 10·1 | 9·7 | 8·9 | n/a |
| Other non-advanced study | | | | | | |
| Maintained secondary and independent schools[1] | 2·0 | 1·7 | 1·9 | 1·8 | 2·0 | 2·1 |
| Special schools[3] | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·6 | n/a |
| Tertiary colleges | 0·8 | 1·2 | 1·3 | 1·3 | 1·6 | n/a |
| Total | 3·4 | 3·5 | 3·8 | 3·7 | 4·2 | n/a |
| Other establishment | 12·6 | 11·6 | 11·8 | 11·4 | 11·6 | n/a |
| All establishmentss | 16·1 | 15·1 | 15·6 | 15·1 | 15·8 | n/a |
| All types of non-advanced study | | | | | | |
| Maintained secondary and independent schools[1] | 29·5 | 29·1 | 29·2 | 28·6 | 29·4 | 32·4 |
| Special schools | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·6 | n/a |
| Tertiary colleges | 1·6 | 2·2 | 2·4 | 2·5 | 3·2 | n/a |
| Total | 31·7 | 31·9 | 32·2 | 31·7 | 33·2 | n/a |
| Other establishments | 16·2 | 15·0 | 15·2 | 15·1 | 15·2 | n/a |
| All establishments | 47·9 | 46·9 | 47·4 | 46·8 | 48·4 | n/a |
| Population aged 16 (thousands) | 759·6 | 742·7 | 733·7 | 713·9 | 722·6 | 673·2 |

*Notes:*

[1] Estimated as no age split is available.

[2] Including those on CSE, GCSE and CEE courses.

[3] No details by type of course are available for special schools.

n/a = Not available.

## CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

### Clergy (Car Purchase)

**Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, if he will publish the details of the scheme operated by the Church Commissioners, in conjunction with dioceses of the Church of England, to assist clergy with car purchase and operation.

**Mr. Alison:** The car loan scheme operated by the commissioners enables all serving clergy, deaconesses and licensed lay workers on the commissioners' payroll to apply, through their diocesan office, for an interest free loan towards the purchase of a car. The loan is normally repayable over four years and, for parochial clergy, has a current ceiling of £4,550.

The scheme was introduced on 1 July 1988 and has proved extremely popular; to date 2,798 loans have been granted, the total sum involved being £9·9 million.

Parochial church councils are expected to reimburse the clergyman in full for those expenses which relate to parochial duties. These include car expenses, which the commissioners recommend be met by a mileage rate which includes elements for running costs, insurance, tax and depreciation.

## ENERGY

### Nuclear Programmes (Expenditure)

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) of 10 July, *Official Report*, column *380*, if he will set out a detailed breakdown of the expenditure listed for 1988-89 nuclear, under the column headed "Other"; and what are the reasons for the increase from 1987-88 to 1988-89.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The information requested is set out in the table. It should be noted that the figures are based on estimated outturn. Final outturn figures for 1988-89 are not yet available and will be published in the appropriate accounts in the usual way.

The increase from 1987-88 is largely accounted for by decommissioning and radioactive waste management operations (Drawmops), the purpose of which is to enable the UKAEA to do the work needed to ensure that the Department's liabilities for radioactive waste management and decommissioning work are properly and safely met. The 1988-89 main estimates provision for Drawmops was some £10 million higher than in 1987-88. Drawmops is an operational programme where the work in any particular year is determined in the light of safety factors and the need to carry out work at least overall cost to the taxpayer. The Drawmops figure in the table also includes the provision of £51·4 million made in a spring supplementary Estimate for outstanding UKAEA liabilities to British Nuclear Fuels plc for decommissioning and radioactive waste operations.

As explained in the Department's 1988 main Estimates (HC 339-vi), some £18 million of overall expenditure with the UKAEA in 1988-89 represented a technical adjustment to the timing of payments made by the Department (offset by a corresponding reduction in the UKAEA's external financing limit to leave no net change in public expenditure). This adjustment accounts for some £5 million of the expenditure in the "Other" column.

The remainder of the increase on the 1987-88 total is accounted for by small increases in other programmes.

*Breakdown of Department of Energy 1988-89 expenditure under "Other" heading in table at column 380, Official Report 10 July 1989*

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| General Nuclear Safety Research | 6·6 |
| Radiological Protection Research | 0·5 |
| Safeguards | 1·2 |
| Radioactive Waste Management Research | 2·4 |
| NIREX | 1·2 |
| Nuclear Materials Management | 4·5 |
| Decommissioning and Radioactive Waste Management Operations | 84·7 |
| Winfrith | 6·3 |
| Public Information | 3·0 |
| Advisory Services and Other | 3·9 |
| Contribution to UKAEA's Underlying Research Programme | 17·1 |
| Miscellaneous | 0·5 |
| Total | 131·9 |

### Civil Service (Relocation)

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what progress is being made in his Department's review, in line with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for the further relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the South East; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mr. Wakeham:** As my predecessor told my hon. Friend on 15 February 1988 at column *513*, there are no current plans for such relocation.

The position will be reviewed at the end of 1990-91, when the Department has had some 18 months' experience of working in its new headquarters building.

### End Users (Expenditure)

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the total expenditure on energy in the United Kingdom by end users for each of the last three years; what proportion of that expenditure was tax; and what proportion that expenditure was of gross domestic product.

**Mr. Wakeham:** Figures for the United Kingdom for the years 1986 to 1988 are shown in the following table:

| *Year* | *Expenditure on energy by final users £ million* | *Tax as a proportion of expenditure on energy Per cent.* | *Energy expenditure as a proportion of GDP*[1] *Per cent.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1986 | 37,950 | 22·6 | 10·0 |
| 1987 | 38,530 | 23·4 | 9·3 |
| 1988 | 38,910 | 24·9 | 8·5 |

[1] Calculated using the average measure of GDP at current market prices.
*Source:* Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics and Central Statistical Office figures for GDP.

### Energy Efficiency Office

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the budget for the Energy Efficiency Office for each year since its inception.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The Energy Efficiency Office was established on 31 October 1983. Actual expenditure in each year has been as follows:

| *Year* | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 17·5 |
| 1985-86 | 22·5 |
| 1986-87 | 24·5 |
| 1987-88 | 18·6 |
| 1988-89 | 18·5 |

Budget allocation for 1989-90 is £15 million.

### Childhood Cancer

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what research has been, and is being, undertaken to investigate the possible detrimental effects to health of overhead electricity power lines, specifically the alleged link between electromagnetism and childhood cancer; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The Central Electricity Generating Board has been carrying out research into the health effects of power frequency electromagnetic fields produced by overhead lines since the late 1970s.

Independent work has also been carried out under contract at hospitals and universities in the United Kingdom and has included a detailed case/control study to investigate any possible links with childhood cancer. So far, the results have revealed no association between childhood cancers and overhead power lines. Research is continuing.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Chief Electoral Officer (Report)

**Mr. Conway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the report of the chief electoral officer for Northern Ireland for 1988-89 will be published.

**Mr. Tom King:** The chief electoral officer's report was laid before the House today and is published as a House of Commons paper (No. 497). Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

### Short Brothers plc

**Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the status, after the company is sold to Bombardier, of the Government's assurances to creditors of Short Brothers plc that Her Majesty's Government would, in the last resort, ensure that their claims were fully met.

**Mr. Tom King:** After the date of completion of the sale of Short Brothers plc to Bombardier, no new obligations incurred by the company will be covered by any such assurances which have been given on a number of occasions, most recently on 21 July 1988. Obligations incurred between the signature of the contract and the completion date will cease to benefit from the assurances on completion.

### Disabled People (OPCS Surveys)

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with organisations of and for disabled people on the findings of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys surveys.

**Mr. Needham** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* None.

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made on assessing the financial implications of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys surveys and of the Disabled Persons (N.I.) Act 1989.

**Mr. Needham** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* As the hon. Member is aware, the findings of the OPCS surveys relate only to Great Britain. The financial implications of the comparable Northern Ireland surveys will be considered when the relevant information is available.

As to the Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1989, the Department of Health and Social Services is currently consulting health and social services boards about the financial implications of its implementation.

### Disability Benefits Review

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals he has formally, to consult organisations of and for disabled people about the overall structure of the disability benefits review.

**Mr. Needham** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* Now that the sixth and final report of the OPCS survey of the disabled in Great Britain has been published, I understand that my hon. Friend the Minister for the Disabled will be announcing a timetable for further action once proper consideration of these surveys has been completed. The need for consultation with organisations of and for disabled people in Northern Ireland about any Government proposals arising from the exercise and from the parallel surveys now being conducted locally will be considered at the appropriate time.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The records show the following:

| | *(a)* | *(b)* |
|---|---|---|
| Received | 1,149 | 10,142 |
| Sent | 943 | 8,883 |

### European Institute for Advanced Security Studies

**Mr. Hill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the present state of deliberations in the Western European Union Council of Ministers on the establishment of a European institute for advanced security studies as proposed by the Western European Union parliamentary assembly.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The Permanent Council is continuing to study this question. A report will be made to the next meeting of the Council of Ministers.

### Conventional Arms Limitation

**Mr. Hill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what specific measures the Government considers are necessary to ensure the progress of negotiations on the limitation of conventional armaments, and to link all initiatives in regard to short-range nuclear weapons with their success, as recommended by the Western European Union Parliamentary Assembly.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Alliance proposals for progress in the conventional armed forces negotiation were tabled in Vienna on 9 March and 13 July. The Alliance position on the relationship of SNF to conventional arms control was set out in the comprehensive concept issued by the NATO heads of Government summit meeting on 29-30 May.

### UN (British Delegations)

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish the names of the British delegations to each meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations in the past two years.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** A list of accredited delegations to the United Nations General Assembly is published each year by the United Nations. I have arranged for copies of the list for 1987 (UNGA 42) and 1988 (UNGA 43) to be placed in the Library.

### Official Visits

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his Department's estimated expenditure in the current year on hosting official visitors from foreign countries.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Since January there have been 15 guest of Government visits initiated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1989. These were:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Presidential | 3 |
| Prime Ministers | 2 |
| Foreign Ministers/Minister of State | 10 |
| | 15 |

Total expenditure to date = £215,000.
Estimated total expenditure for 1989 = £350,000.

### South Africa

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last made representations to the South African Government for the release of *(a)* Walter Sisula, *(b)* Elias Motsoaledi, *(c)* Andrew Mlangeni, *(d)* Ahmed Kathrada, *(e)* Wilton Mkwayi and *(f)* Nelson Mandela; what reply he has received; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We have made frequent representations to the South African Government calling on them to release Mr. Mandela and all other political prisoners. Most recently, on 23 June, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister raised the subject with the new leader of the South African National party, Mr. F. W. de Klerk. We continue to look for a positive response from the South African Government.

### Grenada

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations between Her Majesty's Government and Grenada.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Our relations with Grenada are close and friendly.

### Chemical Weapons

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about the export of chemicals from India which may be used for the production of chemical weapons.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** India has a growing chemical industry and exports a number of chemicals. We understand that the Indian Government are reviewing the country's chemical export practices to ensure that chemicals exported from India cannot be diverted into the manufacture of chemical weapons.

### Colombia

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in Colombia.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** We have made a number of representations about human rights to the Colombian authorities over the last five years. The precise information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Human Rights

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in Bahrain.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We have made a number of representations to the Bahraini authorities about human rights over the past five years but the precise information required is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in French Polynesia.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** None.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has made complaining about the denial of human rights in the last five years in Andorra.

**Mr. Maude:** None.

### Kenya

**Mr. Straw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Kenya concerning that Government's practice that British nationals of Asian Kenyan origin require visas to enter Kenya while other British nationals do not.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Immigration procedures for entry into Kenya are a matter for the Kenyan Government. However, our High Commission has made regular representations to the Kenyans on this subject since Kenya introduced revised visa regulations in 1986.

### Hong Kong

**Mr. Hayes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will announce a scheme of assurances to encourage Hong Kong people to remain in the territory.

**Mr. Major:** The Government are continuing their urgent work on the scheme and an announcement will be made as soon as this work is completed.

### CSCE (Implementation)

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress there has been in the implementation by the Soviet and eastern European countries of the provisions of the Helsinki final act and other conference on security and co-operation in Europe documents during the last six months; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We have recently prepared a report on Soviet and East European implementation of their CSCE commitments for the period January to June 1989. Copies will be deposited in the Library of the House.

### Nepal

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about the impact on British travellers of the present dispute between India and Nepal.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** There is no reason for British travellers not to visit Nepal. We understand that fuel supplies are no longer rationed, public transport is almost back to normal and most hotels are now operating normally.

## TRANSPORT

### Channel Tunnel

82. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has received any environmental impact study consequent on British Rail's proposals for a subsurface junction in Warwick gardens in connection with the Channel tunnel rail link.

**Mr. Portillo:** Not yet. British Rail intends to produce in due course an environmental statement covering the whole of the proposed route for the Channel tunnel rail link.

### Docklands Light Railway

**Mr. Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to how many passengers per hour the Docklands light railway takes, and how many it will take when improved.

**Mr. Portillo:** The current capacity of the Docklands light railway on each of the Tower Gateway and Stratford branches is about 1,750 passengers per hour. The capacity of the railway between Tower Gateway and the Isle of Dogs will double early next year and increase further to some 6,500 passengers per hour at the beginning of 1991. On completion of the City extension and upgrading programme, the available capacity from Bank and Stratford respectively will be about 7,000 and 5,000 passengers per hour. The planned capacity of the Beckton extension from Bank is similar to that from Bank to the Isle of Dogs.

### Driving Tests

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the average waiting time for a driving test in *(a)* Doncaster, *(b)* Barnsley, *(c)* Rotherham, *(d)* Sheffield and *(e)* nationally; and what were the comparable figures (i) five years and (ii) 10 years ago.

**Mr. Atkins:** The table shows the waiting time for a test nationally and at each of the test centres, at present and at July 1985. No earlier figures are available.

| *Centre* | *Waiting times* *At present weeks* | *July 1985 weeks* |
|---|---|---|
| Doncaster | 11 | 18 |
| Rotherham | 12 | 18 |
| Barnsley | 5 | 17 |
| Sheffield | 8 | 26 |
| Nationally | 11 | 18 |

### Driving Examiners

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many driving examiners his Department employs in *(a)* Doncaster, *(b)* Barnsley, *(c)* Rotherham and *(d)* Sheffield; and what were the comparable figures (i) five years and (ii) 10 years ago.

**Mr. Atkins:** The table shows the examiners in post at each of the test centres (i) at present, (ii) in 1985 and (iii) in 1979.

| | *Examiners in post* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Centre* | *At present* | *1985* | *1979* |
| Doncaster | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Rotherham | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Barnsley | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| Sheffield | 15 | 11 | 10 |

### Drink-Driving

**Mr. Higgins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on the number of countries which have reduced the level of drunken driving at a faster rate than the United Kingdom over the past five years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins:** The percentage of drivers and riders killed in road accidents in the United Kingdom over the past five years whose blood alcohol level was above the legal limit fell from 28 per cent. in 1983 to 21 per cent. in 1988.

The number of drivers and riders involved in accidents over the same period who were breath-tested rose from 42,300 to 75,000, yet the number that failed the test fell from 12,400 to 10,200. We are not aware of any other country in which the level of drinking and driving has fallen at a faster rate than these indicators show.

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the mean blood alcohol concentration of drivers and riders with illegal blood alcohol levels killed in road traffic accidents in total and by age groups in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Scotland.

**Mr. Atkins:** The mean blood alcohol concentration of drivers and riders killed in road accidents can be calculated from coroners' reports. As we do not have complete reports for all such drivers or riders, the following figures are based on samples, and cannot reasonably be disaggregated beyond the levels given. The table shows the levels requested for England and Wales, Scotland, Great Britain, and an age breakdown for Great Britain.

*Mean blood alcohol concentrations of drivers and riders killed in road accidents with a BAC above the legal limit: 1987*

| | *mean blood/ alcohol level (mgs per 100 ml)* |
|---|---|
| England and Wales | 180 |
| Scotland | 205 |
| Great Britain | |
| Age 16-24 | 165 |
| Age 25-39 | 185 |
| Age over 40 | 200 |
| Total | 180 |

Because of the small numbers involved, care must be taken in comparing these levels. In particular, the information for Scotland is based on a very small sample, and so is liable to a large degree of error.

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are for repeating the 1988 breath test surveys of the frequency of drinking and driving; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply of 24 May to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) col. *558*. The surveys are now under way.

### Hedgerow Cutting

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has issued advice to British Rail about the timing of hedgerow cutting along railway lines to prevent the killing of hedgerow birds; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** No. These are management matters for British Rail, which has its own code of practice on railway linesides.

### Fishing Vessels

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many foreign-owned fishing vessels have been struck off the register of United Kingdom registered fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement:

(2) how many foreign-owned fishing vessels have been refused *(a)* a full certificate or *(b)* a temporary certificate in respect of the new register of United Kingdom registered fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement;

(3) how many foreign-owned fishing vessels or those which are partially owned by non-United Kingdom citizens have been warded *(a)* full certificates and *(b)* temporary certificates by the registrar general for shipping in respect of the new register of United Kingdom registered fishing vessels;

(4) how many outstanding applications there are for *(a)* full certificates and *(b)* temporary certificates in respect of the new register of United Kingdom registered fishing vessels at the most recent date; and if he will make a statement.

(5) if he will list the number of *(a)* full certificates and *(b)* temporary certificates granted by the registrar general for shipping in respect of the new register of United Kingdom registered fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. McLoughlin:** At 21 July 1989, 9,613 vessels had been registered. Thirteen of these were owned by individuals who are not United Kingdom citizens but who could prove long standing United Kingdom residence and involvement in the British fishing industry. No separate record is kept of vessels which are partly owned by non-United Kingdom nationals. Soome 3,500 temporary certificates were issued for three months, lapsing on 1 July 1989: most of these vessels have since been fully registered. About 150 formerly registered vessels have been refused registration because they failed to satisfy the requirements of the 1988 Act but fresh applications have been received in respect of the majority of them. In addition to these, the registrar general is currently processing 750 new applications for full registration.

### North Report

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he proposes to introduce legislation based on the North report; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 23 June to the hon. Member for Staffordshire, Moorlands (Mr. Knox) at column *269*.

### Whaley Bridge Bypass

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the report by Allol and Lomax, consulting engineers, into the performance of the consulting engineers employed on the Chapel-en-le-Frith/Whaley Bridge bypass; and if he will place a copy in the Library.

**Mr. Atkins:** I refer the hon. Member to the replies given by the then Minister for Roads and Traffic, my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley), on 2 and 9 March.

### Derailment (Harrow)

**Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the derailment of the InterCity 125 express train at Harrow and Wealdstone which occurred at 8.50 pm on Thursday 20 July; and what decision he has reached on a public inquiry.

**Mr. Portillo:** Six coaches of the 1400 Glasgow to London express passenger train carrying about 300 passengers became derailed as the train approached Harrow and Wealdstone station.

The train came to rest with the locomotive and leading four coaches standing on the rails in the station platform. The fifth coach was derailed and leaning over. The rear of the train had divided into two parts with a gap of 400m between the leading part and three derailed but upright coaches; and a gap of 35m between those three and the last two derailed but upright coaches. Twenty-six persons were injured, none seriously. Twenty were treated locally, and six taken to hospital. The emergency services were called by the senior conductor, using a passenger's cellphone, as the train came to rest.

The independent railway inspectorate and British Rail are investigating the cause of the accident. My right hon. Friend will not decide on the need for a public inquiry until he has more information about why the accident occurred.

### East London Rail Study

**Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress is being made on the east London rail study.

**Mr. Parkinson:** The Department's consultants, Halcrow Fox and Associates (HFA), have today issued a report on the east London rail study. Their preferred option for a second line to the Docklands is an extension to the Jubilee line from Green Park via Waterloo, London Bridge and Canary wharf to Stratford. The line might be routed via either Greenwich point or Brunswick foreshore.

No decisions have yet been taken on whether the proposed line should be built. HFA estimates that the total cost of the new line would be of the order of £900 million at late 1988 prices. We shall need to consider the findings of the report, and in particular how the line would be financed. As we have already made clear the line would only be built if sufficient contributions are forthcoming from property developers and other landowners who would benefit.

LRT has already begun consultations with local authorities and other interested parties about these proposals. I have agreed that, in order that a Bill could be deposited this autumn to seek the necessary parliamentary powers, further work should concentrate on the recommended alignment running from Green Park via Waterloo to London Bridge rather than the alternative which might start from Charing Cross and run via Ludgate Circus.

### Salisbury Bypass

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make an announcement about the preferred route of the proposed Salisbury by-pass.

**Mr. Atkins:** We aim to announce a preferred route before the end of the year.

## WALES

### Porpoises (Deaths)

83. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures his Department has taken to identify the cause of the deaths of porpoises washed up in Cardigan bay in the current year.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** None. Welsh Water, in liaison with other interested parties, has carried out considerable research, but has concluded that none of the existing discharges in Cardigan bay has contributed to the problem.

### Anthrax

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many deaths of pigs in 1988 at Singrett farm, Llay, have been ascribed to anthrax; how many deaths were ascribed to matters other than anthrax; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** No deaths in 1988 at Singrett Farm, Llay, were ascribed to anthrax. It has not been possible to ascertain how many deaths were due to other causes but the mortality rate was well within the range experienced in other well-run units.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he took consequent upon the outbreak of anthrax at Singrett farm, Llay in April to establish the cause of previous deaths in 1989 at that farm; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Prior to the outbreak of anthrax at Singrett farm, Llay on 19 April, 13 sows and gilts had died during 1989. Anthrax was not suspected in any except one which died on 9 April, for which tests proved negative.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when the production of vaccine in Britain was begun to combat the anthrax outbreak at Llay; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Production of an emergency supply of vaccine to deal with the outbreak of anthrax at Llay began on 10 July 1989 at the MAFF central veterinary laboratory, Weybridge.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will establish a public inquiry into the 1989 anthrax outbreak in Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** No.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what review he will undertake of *(a)* the anthrax regulations and *(b)* the Medicines Act consequent upon the current year's outbreak of anthrax in Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** The decision to slaughter and offer compensation was taken on animal welfare grounds not because of any deficiency in the Anthrax Order 1938.

### Health Service Proposals

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he proposed to publish in Wales the equivalent to the Department of Health's, "Self Governing Hospitals: a Guide"; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** My officials will be making available copies of the Department of Health's documents "Self-Governing Hospitals: An Initial Guide" and "Self-Governing Hospitals: Briefing for NHS Managers" for the information of relevant NHS interests in Wales.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he proposes to publish papers concerning National Health Service reforms as they apply to Wales.

**Mr. Grist:** Chapter XI of the White Paper, "Working for Patients" (Cm. 555), set out the broad framework for further improving the NHS in Wales. My right hon. Friend and I have been having extensive discussions with a wide range of interests since the publication of the White Paper and we intend shortly to make a statement on the next steps in Wales.

### Welsh Development Agency

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will place in the Library minutes of the meetings of the board of the Welsh Development Agency for 1989.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** No. It would not be appropriate for the Welsh Development Agency to make public a record of its board meetings.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on what occasions over the last 12 months, the finance director of the Welsh Development Agency met representatives of the National Freight Corporation; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** I am advised by the agency that the finance director has met representatives of the National Freight Corporation once (on 13 July 1988) when a range of matters of mutual interest was discussed.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to his oral reply to the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams) of 17 July, *Official Report*, column 6, if he will list the names and positions of the Welsh Office officials, who knew of the rejection of the management buy-out from WDA West Wales; when those officials first learned of the proposals; and how they came to know of them.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** In November or December 1988 an official of the Welsh Office, Mr. Own Rees, head of the economic and regional policy group, was telephoned at home by a chartered accountant and informed that the regional managers of the west Wales office of the Welsh Development Agency had formulated proposals for a regional management buy-out which were not being favourably considered by the agency's management in Cardiff. Mr. Rees told the accountant that he was not the official with responsibility for the affairs of the WDA and that if he or those he was advising wished to pursue the question he or they should write in an official way to the director of the Welsh Office industrial department. In January 1989 the accountant wrote to Mr. Rees at his home making the same points and received the same response. Mr. Rees informed the industry department director of both approaches and of his reply. Nothing further was heard from the accountant.

In May 1989 industry department officials made inquiries of the agency to enable me to answer the question put down by the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams). In that context, I was informed that the west Wales management had made proposals for contracting out certain services to the private sector but that these were regarded by the agency as premature. I knew nothing of management buy-out proposals until Mr. Wyn Pryce wrote to me and made his announcement to the press.

### Alcohol and Drug Abuse

**Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much his Department spends each year on counteracting *(a)* alcohol abuse, and *(b)* drugs abuse in Wales.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** The prime responsibility for providing advice and treatment facilities to deal with alcohol and drug abuse rests with individual health and local authorities. The Health Promotion Authority for Wales also has a major health educational role.

On drug misuse in the current financial year my Department has earmarked nearly £1·5 million for health authorities and voluntary sector projects.

On alcohol misuse, in addition to funds allocated to health authorities and the Health Promotion Authority for Wales, my Department has also funded the activities of Alcohol Concern Wales (ACW). In 1988-89, ACW received £48,000 and a bid for increased funding for 1989-90 is currently being finalised.

Funds are also provided to finance specific publicity campaigns to warn of the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse.

### Quangos (Appointments)

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the quangos to which he appoints the chairpersons in Wales.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** I appoint the chairpersons to the following bodies:

Advisory Group for Breast Cancer Screening
Agricultural Advisory Panel for Wales
Agricultural Dwelling House Advisory Committee Panel of Chairman
Agricultural Valuation Committee (Wales)
Agricultural Wages Committees:
    Clwyd
    Dyfed
    Glamorgans
    Gwent
    Gwynedd
    Powys
All Wales Advisory Panel on the Development of Services for People with Mental Handicaps
Ancient Monuments Board for Wales
Cardiff Bay Development Corporation
Committee on Opportunities for Volunteering
Committee for the Welsh Scheme for the Development of Health and Social Research

Curriculum Council for Wales
Development Board for Rural Wales
District Health Authorities:
    Clwyd
    East Dyfed
    Gwent
    Gwynedd
    Mid Glamorgan
    Pembrokeshire
    Powys
    South Glamorgan
    West Glamorgan

Family Practitioner Committees:
    Clwyd
    Dyfed
    Gwynedd
    Mid Glamorgan
    Powys
    South Glamorgan
    West Glamorgan

Health Promotion Authority
Historic Buildings Council for Wales
Housing for Wales
Land Authority for Wales
Library and Information Services Council (Wales)
Local Government Boundary Commission
Place Names Advisory Committee
Rent Assessment Panel
Standing Working Group of the Wales Advisory Body for Local Authority Higher Education
Teamcare Valleys Steering Group
Training, Enterprise and Education Advisory Group
Sports Council for Wales
Urban Investment Grant Advisory Panel
Wales Tourist Board
Welsh Committee on Drug Misuse
Welsh Development Agency
Welsh Health Common Services Authority
Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board
Welsh Language Board
Welsh National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting
Welsh Water Authority

## Lluesty Hospital, Clwyd

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a further statement concerning the future of Lluesty hospital, Clwyd.

**Mr. Grist:** I understand that when it met on 24 July, Clwyd health authority decided to propose the closure of Lluesty hospital, and to consult widely on the issue. The consultation period will end on 30 November 1989.

If in the light of this exercise the authority decides to proceed with the proposal the issue would, in the normal way, be referred to my right hon. Friend. Given his potential role in this matter it would be inappropriate for me to comment further at this stage.

## Drainage Works, Caergwrle

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make an additional cash allocation to the Welsh water authority to enable repairs and improvements to be made to the underground sewerage and drainage in the Derby road area of Caergwrle in Alyn and Deeside; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Grist:** No. Priorities within their expenditure programme are a matter for the authority to determine.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet Caergwrle community council to discuss the need for remedial action to be taken in the Derby road area of Caergwrle concerning underground drainage; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Grist:** No. This is a matter for the Welsh water authority which, I understand, has remedial action in hand.

## Clayform Shopping Development

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet residents of the Broughton and Bretton communities who object to the proposed Clayform shopping development project; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Grist:** No, but any written objections submitted by the Broughton and Bretton communities, or any other party, will be carefully considered by my right hon. Friend in reaching a decision on whether to call-in the Clayform Company's shopping development proposal.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy to ensure that a public inquiry is held on the application of the Clayform Company shopping development project proposal at Broughton and Bretton, Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Grist:** The application by the Clayform Company has now been referred to the Welsh Office by the Alyn and Deeside district council as a material departure from the approved Clwyd structure plan, under paragraph 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Plans) (Wales) Direction 1981. A decision on whether the application should be called in for my right hon. Friend's determination, normally after holding a public local inquiry, will be made as soon as possible.

## Mountain Lane CP School, Buckley

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet the parent-teacher association and school governors of Mountain Lane CP school, Buckley, Clwyd, to discuss with them the need for a mobile classroom in order to avoid overcrowding and the need to conduct classes in the school hall which is also a dining room; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** No. Responsibility for determining school provision rests with the Clwyd local education authority. I am currently considering a proposal by the LEA to cease to maintain Bistre nursery school and a nursery extension to Mountain Lane CP school forms part of that proposal.

## Cancer Treatment

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he proposes to make a statement on cancer treatment services for people in north Wales.

**Mr. Grist:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to the hon. Member for Delyn (Mr. Raffan) on 17 July 1989 at column *36*.

## Local Government Expenditure

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will state, for each district and county in Wales, for 1989-90 and 1990-91, the *(a)* spending need assessment, *(b)* adult population, *(c)* community charge at need, *(d)* domestic contribution for spending at need, *(e)* share of the national non-domestic rate pool, *(f)* share of revenue support grant, *(g)* the total of *(e)* and *(f)* and *(h)* expenditure.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** Illustrative figures for 1989-90 are given in the table. Figures for 1990-91 are not available.

| | *(a) Standard spending assessment*[1] | *(b) Adult population*[2] | *(c) Community charge at standard spending* | *(d) Domestic contribution for standard spending* | *(e) Share of national non-domestic rate pool (NNDR)* | *(f) Revenue support grant (RSG)*[3] | *(g) Total of RSG and NNDR* | *(h) Assumed expenditure (Total rate income plus block grant)*[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *£000* | *(000s)* | *£* | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* |
| Alyn and Deeside | 6,492 | 54·2 | 26·63 | 1,443 | 1,722 | 3,327 | 5,049 | 6,288 |
| Colwyn | 4,895 | 42·1 | 26·63 | 1,121 | 1,337 | 2,437 | 3,774 | 4,948 |
| Delyn | 6,109 | 49·0 | 26·63 | 1,305 | 1,556 | 3,248 | 4,804 | 6,360 |
| Glyndwr | 3,423 | 31·8 | 26·63 | 847 | 1,010 | 1,566 | 2,576 | 3,513 |
| Rhuddlan | 6,328 | 43·9 | 26·63 | 1,169 | 1,394 | 3,765 | 5,159 | 6,260 |
| Wrexham Maelor | 11,089 | 87·3 | 26·63 | 2,325 | 2,773 | 5,991 | 8,764 | 11,163 |
| Carmarthen | 4,984 | 42·7 | 26·63 | 1,137 | 1,356 | 2,491 | 3,847 | 4,670 |
| Ceredigion | 6,748 | 50·9 | 26·63 | 1,356 | 1,617 | 3,776 | 5,393 | 5,956 |
| Dinefwr | 3,454 | 29·9 | 26·63 | 796 | 950 | 1,708 | 2,658 | 2,617 |
| Llanelli | 8,021 | 57·6 | 28·57 | 1,646 | 1,830 | 4,546 | 6,376 | 8,239 |
| Preseli Pembrokeshire | 6,965 | 53·7 | 26·63 | 1,430 | 1,706 | 3,830 | 5,535 | 5,880 |
| South Pembrokeshire | 4,450 | 31·2 | 26·63 | 831 | 991 | 2,628 | 3,619 | 3,942 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 9,365 | 59·4 | 26·63 | 1,582 | 1,887 | 5,897 | 7,783 | 10,556 |
| Islwyn | 7,232 | 50·4 | 26·63 | 1,342 | 1,601 | 4,289 | 5,890 | 7,781 |
| Monmouth | 6,396 | 61·0 | 26·63 | 1,624 | 1,938 | 2,834 | 4,771 | 6,396 |
| Newport | 14,941 | 98·1 | 28·57 | 2,803 | 3,116 | 9,022 | 12,138 | 15,743 |
| Torfaen | 8,641 | 69·0 | 26·63 | 1,838 | 2,192 | 4,612 | 6,803 | 9,539 |
| Aberconwy | 5,334 | 42·4 | 26·63 | 1,129 | 1,347 | 2,858 | 4,205 | 5,443 |
| Arfon | 5,804 | 41·4 | 26·63 | 1,103 | 1,315 | 3,387 | 4,702 | 5,830 |
| Dwyfor | 3,501 | 21·1 | 26·63 | 562 | 670 | 2,269 | 2,939 | 3,546 |
| Meirionnydd | 3,537 | 24·7 | 26·63 | 658 | 785 | 2,095 | 2,879 | 4,180 |
| Ynys Môn | 7,124 | 52·6 | 26·63 | 1,401 | 1,671 | 4,053 | 5,724 | 7,423 |
| Cynon Valley | 8,405 | 49·6 | 28·57 | 1,417 | 1,575 | 5,412 | 6,987 | 7,638 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 7,783 | 44·5 | 28·57 | 1,272 | 1,413 | 5,098 | 6,511 | 7,818 |
| Ogwr | 12,716 | 103·4 | 26·63 | 2,754 | 3,284 | 6,679 | 9,963 | 13,529 |
| Rhondda | 11,289 | 59·0 | 28·57 | 1,686 | 1,874 | 7,729 | 9,603 | 11,328 |
| Rhymney Valley | 10,384 | 77·6 | 26·63 | 2,067 | 2,465 | 5,853 | 8,318 | 11,176 |
| Taff Ely | 9,127 | 70·2 | 26·63 | 1,869 | 2,230 | 5,028 | 7,257 | 8,773 |
| Brecknock | 3,995 | 31·6 | 26·63 | 842 | 1,004 | 2,149 | 3,153 | 3,879 |
| Montgomeryshire | 4,474 | 39·2 | 26·63 | 1,044 | 1,245 | 2,185 | 3,430 | 3,743 |
| Radnorshire | 2,032 | 17·3 | 26·63 | 461 | 549 | 1,022 | 1,572 | 1,827 |
| Cardiff | 34,929 | 214·3 | 26·63 | 5,707 | 6,807 | 22,415 | 29,222 | 28,921 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 10,663 | 89·6 | 26·63 | 2,386 | 2,846 | 5,431 | 8,277 | 9,259 |
| Port Talbot | 5,723 | 38·5 | 26·63 | 1,025 | 1,223 | 3,474 | 4,697 | 5,991 |
| Lliw Valley | 5,498 | 47·3 | 26·63 | 1,260 | 1,502 | 2,736 | 4,239 | 5,370 |
| Neath | 6,174 | 50·0 | 26·63 | 1,332 | 1,588 | 3,254 | 4,842 | 6,656 |
| Swansea | 22,775 | 144·0 | 26·63 | 3,835 | 4,574 | 14,366 | 18,940 | 24,328 |
| Clwyd | 206,028 | 308·3 | 135·97 | 41,918 | 49,389 | 114,721 | 164,109 | 214,596 |
| Dyfed | 186,966 | 266·0 | 135·58 | 36,065 | 42,612 | 108,289 | 150,902 | 190,422 |
| Gwent | 232,151 | 337·9 | 135·42 | 45,759 | 54,130 | 132,262 | 186,392 | 229,842 |
| Gwynedd | 131,096 | 182·2 | 135·97 | 24,773 | 29,188 | 77,136 | 106,323 | 130,092 |
| Mid Glamorgan | 290,088 | 404·3 | 135·29 | 54,698 | 64,767 | 170,622 | 235,390 | 294,617 |
| Powys | 71,323 | 88·1 | 135·97 | 11,979 | 14,113 | 45,231 | 59,344 | 70,111 |
| South Glamorgan | 207,951 | 303·9 | 135·97 | 41,320 | 48,684 | 117,948 | 166,631 | 207,939 |
| West Glamorgan | 191,497 | 279·8 | 135·97 | 38,043 | 44,823 | 108,631 | 153,454 | 200,871 |

[1] Standard spending (needs) assessments are under review for 1990-91.

[2] Population figures are based on the Registrar General's 1987 mid-year estimates.

[3] Excluding safety-net adjustments.

[4] Including community councils' precepts

## HEALTH

### Low Birth Weights

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by year from 1979 to date for the Trent regional health authority, and by hospital, the number of low birth weight deliveries recorded.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not collect information centrally in the form requested. However, statistics on low birth weight deliveries are published annually in OPCS monitor DH3 "Infant and Perinatal Mortality" broken down into regions and districts but not hospitals.

### Health Care Demand

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his estimate of the annual increase in demand for health care due to new drugs, new surgical techniques, improved diagnostic techniques, new monitoring and life support equipment and better after-care methods.

**Mr. Freeman:** There is no precise measure of the annual increase in demand for health care as a result of medical advance which can both raise and lower costs of treatment and care.

## Operations (Waiting Times)

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current waiting time for the following operations: *(a)* kidney transplants, *(b)* hip replacement joints,*(c)* knee replacement joints and *(d)* cataract removal.

**Mr. Freeman:** Information on waiting times for kidney transplants is given in my reply to the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) on 22 February at columns *674-75*. For the other operations requested the latest information held centrally is for 1985 and is given in the table.

*Estimated median interval in weeks between the time an in-patient was placed on the waiting list and admission to an NHS non-psychiatric hospital, England 1985*

| *Operation* | *Median Waiting Time (weeks)* |
|---|---|
| Total hip replacement and arthroplasty of hip | 21 |
| Arthroplasty of knee | 21 |
| Operation on eye lens (mainly cataract) | 16 |

## Dentists

**Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the contribution that the transfer of responsibility for payment of general dental practitioners to the Dental Practices Board will make to strengthening the role of family practitioner committees as set out in the White Paper "Working for Patients";

(2) whether he consulted the Society of Family Practitioner Committees or the Society of Administrators (Family Practitioner Services) on the transfer of responsibilities for payment of dental practitioners to the Dental Practices Board;

(3) whether responsibility for payment of general dental practitioners has now been transferred from family practitioner committees to the Dental Practices Board.

**Mr. Freeman:** Officials have written both to the Society of Family Practitioner Committees and to the Society of Administrators (Family Practitioner Services) about the propsal to transfer responsibility for paying dentists to the Dental Practice Board. The transfer has not yet taken place. Meetings to discuss the implications of the change will be held soon. It will not detract from the management role of family practitioner committees in relation to the delivery, quality and availability of general dental services in their areas.

## CT Scanners

**Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many computerised tomography scanners are currently installed in England and Wales; how many are owned *(a)* by the private sector and *(b)* by the National Health Service; of the latter, how many were purchased by (i) health authorities and (ii) provided by private gift or public subscription; and if he will make available any information at his disposal on the number of such machines installed in other western countries at his disposal including the United States, Japan, Sweden, France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

**Mr. Freeman:** Latest information indicates that there are 198 CT scanners currently installed in England and Wales, of which 29 are owned by the private sector and 169 by the National Health Service. Our best estimates suggest that 61 per cent. of these scanners were purchased by health authorities and 39 per cent. by private gift or public subscription.

Available information on the number of machines installed in other western countries is limited; estimates suggest a total of 3,600 in the United States of America, 3,000 in Japan, 450 in West Germany and 200 in France. We have currently no details of the number in Sweden.

## Kidney Dialysers

**Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many kidney dialysers are *(a)* currently installed in England and Wales; how many are owned *(a)* by the private sector and *(b)* by the National Health Service; of the latter, how many were (i) purchased by health authorities and (ii) provided by private gift or public subscription; and if he will make available any information at his disposal on the number of such machines installed in other western countries, including the United States, Japan, Sweden, France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

**Mr. Freeman:** I regret that the information is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## Magnetic Resonance Imaging Machines

**Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many magnetic resonance imaging machines are currently installed in England and Wales; how many are owned *(a)* by the private sector and *(b)* by the National Health Service; of the latter, how many were (i) purchased by health authorities and (ii) provided by private gift or public subscription; and if he will make available any information at his disposal on the number of such machines installed in other western countries, including the United States, Japan, Sweden, France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

**Mr. Freeman:** Available information indicates that there are 19 magnetic resonance imaging machines currently installed in England and Wales, of which four are owned by the private sector and 15 are operated partially or entirely within the National Health Service.

The source of funding for the purchase of these 15 was as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Purchased by health authorities | 1 |
| Purchased by Department of Health and other Government agencies | 3 |
| Purchased by public appeal and the National Health Service | 1 |
| Purchased by public appeal and Government agencies | 1 |
| Purchased by public appeal and donation | 9 |

Information on the number of machines installed in other western countries is only available up to September 1988 and is limited; estimates suggest a total of 1,300 in the United States of America, 275 in Japan, seven in Sweden and 85 in West Germany. We have currently no details of the number installed in France.

## Ultrasound Scanners

**Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many ultrasound scanners are currently installed in England and Wales; how many are owned *(a)* by the private sector and *(b)* by the National Health Service; of the latter, how many were (i) purchased by health authorities and (ii) provided by private gift or public subscription; and if he will make available any information at his disposal on the number of such machines installed in other western countries, including the United States, Japan, Sweden, France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

**Mr. Freeman:** I regret that the information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

## Cyclotron Machine

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health from which budget the money used to purchase a cyclotron machine for St. Thomas's hospital was taken.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Government grant of £6 million to the Cyclotron Trust will be funded from the Department's hospital and community health service budget. Details of the financial and operational arrangements for the proposed project have yet to be settled in consultation with those concerned.

### Withington Hospital, Manchester

**Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will approve the decision of the South Manchester health authority to close a 24-bedded ward for the mentally ill at Withington hospital, Manchester; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** The North Western regional health authority recently published an implementation framework, "Focusing on Care", which emphasises the development of district services and makes it clear that the closure of the four large mental illness hospitals in the North West region will be carried out only at a pace consistent with adequate provision for the mentally ill in the community. In addition to acute in-patient services in each district and a range of residential facilities designed to meet the needs of long term service users, the frame work envisages a range of day care facilities including more day hospital provision which all district health authorities will take forward within the annual capital spending programme for North Western region currently running at more than £90 million.

Acute psychiatric in-patient services for central Manchester are currently based well outside the authority's boundary and are due for renewal in August 1991. Options for new provision have been submitted to the regional health authority who expect to be able to announce in the autumn a three-year capital programme from 1990-91. These options have been developed taking account of medical opinion that the services would best be provided nearer to patients and if possible attached to the Manchester Royal Infirmary.

The South Manchester health authority announced on 13 July 1989 the temporary closure of ward P10 in Withington Hospital, Manchester from August 1989 when a refurbished ward P9 will become available for acute care in-patients in the psychiatric department of Withington hospital. As a result of discussions, I have been reassured that:

—no patients will be discharged from Withington hospital without the responsible consultant being entirely satisfied that adequate arrangements exist in the community to assist the patient and ensure continuing medical surveillance;

—no patient need be discharged from the Withington hospital as a result of the temporary closure of ward P10 which will not take place before the refurbished ward P9 becomes available;

—there will be 165 beds available in the South Manchester district for acute in-patient care for mentally ill patients. The average monthly occupancy over the past 12 months has been 153.

The South Manchester district health authority has been under acute financial pressure for a number of years and has had unfortunately to undertake a number of ward closures that have affected both Withington and Wythenshawe hospitals. There is an urgent need to re-appraise the duplicated provision of the whole range of district acute services in two major hospitals in the same district and situated within four miles of each other.

I plan to visit in the autumn the North West regional health authority in Manchester and Withington hospital and Manchester Royal Infirmary.

### NHS Management

**Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will state the terms of reference of the National Health Service Policy Board, and the role and responsibilities of the National Health Service Management Executive.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** At its first meeting on 7 July the NHS policy board, established as a result of the White Paper "Working for Patients", adopted the following terms of reference:

"Key principles

The NHS Policy Board advises the Secretary of State on policy formulation for the NHS and the strategic oversight of the NHS. It does not concern itself with management responsibilities and operational detail, which are delegated from the Secretary of State to the NHS Management Executive.

Functions

In the light of these principles, the Board's functions are to:

1. support Ministers by bring both NHS and wider management perspectives to bear on the formulation of policy objectives for the NHS;

2. advise Ministers on the determination of the strategy within which the Management Executive will operate;

3. advise Ministers on the desirability and feasibility of operational objectives proposed for the Management Executive;

4. monitor the Management Executive's stewardship and performance.

Relationships with the Department of Health

The Policy Board draws on the advice and support of all those Divisions in the Department of Health which have responsibility for the development of policies applied in and through the NHS. It is particularly concerned with the overall pattern and balance of policies for the NHS, and with assessing the effectiveness of their implementation, not with the detailed formulation of specific polices."

It also agreed the Written Statement of the role and responsibilities of the NHS management executive, a copy of which I have placed in the Library.

### Infant Deaths

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many babies died within one year of birth in 1987 and 1988;

(2) how many babies were stillborn in 1987 and 1988.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information is shown in the table:

*Number of infant deaths[1] and stillborn babies, England and Wales, 1987 and 1988*

| | *Infant deaths* | *Stillborn* |
|---|---|---|
| 1987 | 6,272 | 3,423 |
| 1988 | 6,270 | 3,382 |

[1] Deaths under one year of age.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the total number of babies who died in 1987 and 1988, and to date in 1989 aged one week, two weeks, three weeks, four weeks, five weeks, six weeks, two months, three months, four months, six months, 14 months and 15 months;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the total number of babies who died in 1979, 1980, 1987, 1988 and 1989 aged one week, two weeks, three weeks, four weeks, five weeks, six weeks, 14 months and 15 months by area health authority;

(3) what was the total number of abortions performed at *(a)* 18 weeks, *(b)* 20 weeks, *(c)* 22 weeks, *(d)* 24 weeks,

*(e)* 26 weeks and *(f)* 28 weeks since 1968; how many were to save the life of the pregnant woman; and what percentage the latter represents of the former.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## Abortions

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many women were admitted to hospital for failed attempted abortion in each year since 1959.

**Mr. Freeman:** The available information is shown in the table taken from the hospital in-patient inquiry, a 10 per cent. sample study of National Health Service hospitals in-patient records. The last data year for this study was 1985.

The data shown are the number of patients recorded in this study with the principal diagnosis of failed attempted abortion, International Classification of Diseases (9th revision) code 638. There is no comparable code for earlier revision of the ICD, prior to 1979.

*Number of patients (10 per cent. sample) with principal diagnosis of failed attempted abortion, England and Wales 1979-81 England 1982-85*

| *Year* | *Number in the sample* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 15 |
| 1980 | 8 |
| 1981 | 6 |
| 1982 | 11 |
| 1983 | 14 |
| 1984 | 8 |
| 1985 | 11 |

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received recently *(a)* supporting and *(b)* opposing the amendment of the Abortion Act 1967 to include the words "serious" and "substantially" in the criteria for an abortion; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** None.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his Department's policy on the availability of abortions to minors under the age of 16 years without parental knowledge or consent; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** Under the Abortion Act 1967 termination of pregnancy may be carried out if two registered medical practitioners are of the opinion, formed in good faith, that an abortion is justified in terms of the Act.

Parental consent to treatment of girls under 16 years of age, whether for abortion or any other condition, is not essential if, in the judgment of the doctors concerned, the treatment is in the girl's best medical interest and she has sufficient maturity and understanding to appreciate what is involved.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received *(a)* supporting and *(b)* opposing the introduction of legislation requiring that the parent or guardian of a minor under 16 years of age is informed before an abortion is performed; what percentage the latter represents of the former; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** One representation has been received on this subject and this supports a change in the law.

## Embryo Research

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library his Department's response to the Glover report on embryo research, commissioned by the European Commission; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Department has not responded as it was not involved in the commissioning or publication of the report. The Government do not in any case take a collective view on embryo research.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice and assistance was *(a)* sought by and *(b)* given to the Glover committee on embryo research; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** Dr. Glover and his committee did not seek any advice or assistance from the Department of Health.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has held with other members of the Council of Europe on the issue of human embryo experimentation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** Officials of the Department of Health have taken part in discussions of this issue by the Council of Europe's ad hoc committee of experts on bioethical issues (CAHBI).

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from the European Commission concerning his proposed Bill on embryo research; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** I have not received any representations from the European Commission about this.

## Mental Health Act Commission

**Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 are in hospitals covered by the Liverpool office of the Mental Health Act Commission.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* At 30 June 1989, the most recent date for which figures are available, there were 651 patients detained at the special hospitals at Moss Side and Park Lane. At 31 December 1986, the latest date for which a figure is available centrally for all detained patients in mental illness and mental handicap hospitals and the units covered by the Liverpool area of the Mental Health Act Commission there were 1,867 detained patients.

## NHS Indemnity Scheme

49. **Sir Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in introducing a National Health Service indemnity scheme.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* It remains the Government's intention to introduce new arrangements whereby health authorities would take financial responsibility for the negligent acts of their medical and dental staff in the course of their NHS employment. However this is subject to a satisfactory resolution of the outstanding issues, including the financial arrangements and the handling and financing of existing liabilities. If this can be achieved, it is proposed that the scheme should come into operation on 1 January 1990.

## SCOTLAND

### Trade Union Officials

**Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will introduce legislation to prevent district councils from paying the salary of a full-time trade union official; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** No. Paid facility time for accredited trade union representatives is a matter for individual employers, subject to the requirements of section 27 of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 and the provisions of the ACAS code of practice on time off for trade union duties and activities.

### Police National Computer

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many accesses were made to each category of the stolen and suspect vehicle index of the police national computer over the last year; and what has been the percentage growth in use of these categories over the year;

(2) how many accesses were made to each category of the wanted and missing persons index of the police national computer over the last year; and what has been the percentage growth in use of these categories over the year;

(3) how many accesses were made to each index of the police national computer over the last year; and whether he will include in these statistics an indication of the number of access requests that could search more than one index;

(4) whether he has information as to the number of accesses made to the police national computer by each constabulary over the last year; and whether he can give the proportion of access requests made to the vehicle indexes of the police national computer.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** This information is maintained on a Great Britain basis and I accordingly refer the hon. Member to the reply that he has received from my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office.

### YTS

**Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many trainees there are in Scotland participating in YTS.

**Mr. Lang:** On 30 June 1989 there were 49,602 young people participating in YTS in Scotland.

### Local Government

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will seek to amend section 24(7) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975 to permit the commissioner to conduct investigations in respect of alleged maladministration affecting all or most people in a local government area.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to do so.

### Well Woman Clinic, Glasgow

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on what grounds Greater Glasgow health board closed the well woman and family planning clinic at Berryknowes Road, Glasgow; and what local consultations they engaged in.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** This is a matter for Greater Glasgow health board but I will be replying to the hon. Gentleman's letter shortly.

### Owner-occupation

**Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the trend in owner-occupation since 1979.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** One of the Government's principal housing objectives is to maximise the opportunities for home ownership. In Scotland, the proportion of houses in owner-occupation has increased from 35 per cent. in 1979 to over 45 per cent. at present, and over the 10-year period to 1988 the number of owner-occupiers has increased from 699,000 to 944,000. This substantial progress has been achieved largely by the introduction of the right to buy scheme for public sector tenants in 1980. Since then discount levels have been increased, and we have introduced a number of further improvements to the scheme to make it easier for tenants to purchase their homes.

Many other measures are aimed at continuing the growth of home ownership in Scotland. A major initiative has been the establishment of Scottish Homes, which has a wide range of functions, including the promotion of owner-occupation, especially for first-time buyers. We have asked Scottish Homes to introduce a scheme for house purchase under which the tenants' financial commitments will be related to their current rentt. This rens to mortgages scheme will be available to tenants of Scottish Homes and the Scottish new towns later this year.

There are other schemes which enable tenants of housing associations and local authorities to be offered cash incentives to purchase other properties; and the Scottish Homes low cost home ownership programme assists those who cannot purchase outright to make a first step towards owning their own homes.

### Ambulance Service

**Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of patients living in the Highlands and Islands conveyed to hospital by the Scottish ambulance service in hospital cars between 22 September 1987 and 21 December 1987.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The answer is 4,015.

### Register House

**Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to reduce the entry charge to those seeking to undertake research at Register house.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Both the Scottish record office, at Her Majesty's General Register house, and the General register office (Scotland), at New Register house charge to recover the costs of various services they provide, but there is no entry fee as such to either.

### Mental Health Unit, Glasgow

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the regrading and restructuring of the mental health unit of the Greater Glasgow health board; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Statistical information on the effects of the regrading exercise on the nursing staff of the mental health unit is not held centrally. I understand that the health board is attempting to resolve a dispute with trade unions representing nurses in the unit so as to secure the lifting of an interim interdict which prevents the board from continuing with their proposals for restructuring the unit.

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received concerning nurse regrading in the mental health unit of the Greater Glasgow health board.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** I have received one anonymous letter purporting to come from a nurse employed in the mental health unit of Greater Glasgow health board.

### School Meals

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if there has been a change in the take-up of school meals, resulting from the Social Security Act 1986, in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) on Wednesday 19 July at columns *199-200*. Information about school meals in Strathclyde region is collected on an education division basis and is not available separately for Greenock and Port Glasgow. Information about the take-up of meals prior to 1989 can be found in the annual reports of the school meals census, copies of which are in the Library.

Questions about school meals in England and Wales should be addressed to my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the Secretary of State for Wales.

### Taxi Drivers

**Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many private hire taxi drivers in each Scottish local authority area have been *(a)* reported and *(b)* charged with illegal operating activities; how many of these have been prosecuted; and how many of these have been found guilty in each year since 1983.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** This information is not separately identifiable in criminal statistics, which are centrally compiled.

### Heather Burning

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will issue advice to farmers about the timing of heather burning in order to protect bird chicks; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The permitted dates for muirburn in Scotland are set out in the Hill Farming Act 1946. Advice on this legislation and on good management practice is contained in the "Guide to Good Muirburn Practice", jointly produced by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland and the Nature Conservancy Council and published for HMSO. A summary of this advice is contained in the leaflet "Muirburn—A Code of Practice" which is available free of charge from the Scottish agricultural colleges. In addition, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland issues a press release each year to remind farmers and crofters about the date for the end of the muirburn season and the need to take proper precautions to prevent damage to wildlife and adjoining properties.

### Suicide

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many suicides there were in prisons and young offender institutions in each of the past 10 years.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The information is as follows:

| *Year* | *Suicides* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 3 |
| 1980 | 1 |
| 1981 | 3 |
| 1982 | 3 |
| 1983 | 6 |
| 1984 | 5 |
| 1985 | 7 |
| 1986 | 7 |
| 1987 | 7 |
| 1988 | 7 |

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the number of incidents defined as suicide attempts in prisons and young offender institutions in each of the past 10 years.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Statistics are not kept recording the number of suicide attempts.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland who has responsibility for deciding whether an accident is to be classified as a self-inflicted wound or an attempted suicide in prisons and young offender establishments.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Governors of establishments make this decision, based on the advice of their medical officers.

### Warrant Sales

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many warrant sales were carried out in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow and *(b)* Strathclyde in each of the past 10 years.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The number of warrant sales reported to Greenock sheriff court (which has Port Glasgow within its jurisdiction) and the two sheriffdoms of north Strathclyde and of south Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway from 1979 to 1988 are set out in the table:

| | *Greenock sheriff court* | *Sheriffdom north Strathclyde* | *Sheriffdom of south Strathclyde Dumfries and Galloway* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 7 | 29 | 30 |
| 1980 | 4 | 15 | 25 |
| 1981 | 1 | 16 | 30 |
| 1982 | 2 | 34 | 73 |
| 1983 | 1 | 17 | 79 |
| 1984 | 4 | 41 | 83 |
| 1985 | 4 | 63 | 86 |
| 1986 | 2 | 83 | 68 |
| 1987 | — | 77 | 110 |
| 1988 | 3 | 123 | 116 |

## Fishing Industry

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any proposals concerning the introduction of a quota system for the west of Scotland prawn fishery; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** Landings of nephrops (prawns) by United Kingdom vessels from the west of Scotland in recent years have been, on average, between 70 and 80 per cent. of the United Kingdom's total allowable catch. Current indications are that this situation is unlikely to change markedly in 1989 and it is not therefore considered necessary to introduce a quota system for this stock at this time. Fisheries departments will, however, continue to monitor uptake of this stock closely and will take steps to control this fishery, if necessary.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proposals he has concerning the introduction of a de-commissioning scheme for fishing vessels; if such proposals contain a suggested regulation stating that any such vessel must have a pressure stock licence before being accepted for de-commissioning; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** Fisheries Ministers are currently considering various issues concerning the structure of the fishing industry. A number of options, including decommissioning, are being considered as possible means of dealing with the present structural difficulties within the industry.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the weight and value of landings in each of the past 10 years; and what proportion of the total United Kingdom landings were for these years.

**Mr. Lang:** The information requested is given in the table:

*Fish landings by United Kingdom vessels into Scotland*

| | *Standard landed weight*[1] *(thousand tonnes)* | *Value at first sale (£ million)* | *Percentage of Landings into the United Kingdom* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *weight percent* | *value percent* |
| 1979 | 355·0 | 122·2 | 42·3 | 48·1 |
| 1980 | 371·4 | 113·6 | 49·0 | 51·2 |
| 1981 | 444·0 | 127·5 | 59·3 | 55·7 |
| 82 | 498·2 | 148·7 | 64·4 | 57·1 |
| 1983 | 499·1 | 170·2 | 67·0 | 60·7 |
| 1984 | 543·3 | 193·9 | 74·1 | 65·1 |
| 1985 | 592·6 | 215·1 | 77·9 | 66·5 |
| 1986 | 551·3 | 234·5 | 76·7 | 64·7 |
| 1987 | 574·9 | 273·6 | 72·7 | 62·9 |
| 1988 | 554·9 | 253·1 | [2]74·8 | [2]62·9 |

[1] For demersal fish (excluding Norway pout and sandeels) this generally means gutted fish with head on; for other species (including shell fish) it usually means whole fish.

[2] Provisional.

## Prisoners (Telephone Services)

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the maximum value of phonecard permitted for purchase by prisoners; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** At Barlinnie and Perth prisons, where phonecards are in use, £1 cards are available for purchase by prisoners as necessary. Telephones for prisoners in other establishments accept coins.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the ratio of telephones to prisoners at *(a)* each prison, *(b)* Cornton Vale prison for women and *(c)* young offender institutions; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The information is set out in the table. A range of factors bear on the number of telephones available for prisoners at establishments, including the level of demand for their use.

| | *Ratio of telephones to number of prisoners/young offenders* |
|---|---|
| *Prisons* | |
| (a) Aberdeen | 1:70 |
| Barlinnie | 1:113 |
| Dungavel | 1:53 |
| Edinburgh | 1:57 |
| Friarton | 1:73 |
| Glenochil | 1:39 |
| Greenock | 1:87 |
| Inverness | 1:91 |
| Low Moss | 1:64 |
| Noranside | 1:38 |
| Penninghame | 1:30 |
| Perth | 1:47 |
| Peterhead | [1]— |
| Shotts | 1:55 |
| (b) Cornton Vale | 1:44 |
| *Young offenders institutions* | |
| (c) Castle Huntley | 1:61 |
| Dumfries | 1:129 |
| Glenochil | 1:127 |
| Polmont | [2]1:391 |

[1] Telephones for prisoners have not been installed at Peterhead.

[2] Consideration is being given to the installation of additional telephones at Polmont.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which prisons with authority to install telephones for prisoners are still without telephones; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Telephones for prisoners have not been installed at Peterhead prison.

## Drainage Scheme, Inverness

**Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is satisfied that the independent environmental assessment into the proposed Inverness main drainage scheme, agreed to by Highland regional council, will be of sufficient scope to satisfy his criteria in making a subsequent decision on the planning application; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** It is for Highland regional council to determine the most appropriate method of complying with my right hon. and learned Friend's direction to provide an environmental statement. The statement will require to follow the criteria as laid down in the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1988 and in particular the advice given in schedule 3 of these regulations. When he receives the statement my right hon. and learned Friend will consider whether he requires further information before reaching a decision on the council's notice of intention to develop.

### Fabrication Facilities, Lewis

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the cumulative total of public investment in the development of the fabrication facilities at Arnish in Lewis.

**Mr. Lang:** for reasons of commercial confidentiality figures in the form requested are not available. However, figures published in *British Business* show that £1·37 million was offered to Lewis Offshore in 1975 by way of regional selective assistance. In addition, grants from the Highlands and Islands development board totalled £271,000.

### Child Care

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if statistics are held centrally of places and shortages, by region or travel-to-work area, of child care facilities for working mothers.

**Mr. Lang** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Statistics of child care facilities provided by regional and islands councils are set out in periodic statistical bulletins entitled "Home Care Services, Day Care Establishments and Day Service" published by the social work services group, copies of which are available in the House of Commons Library.

### Dundee High School

**Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much surplus European Community butter and meat was allocated to Dundee high school in the last year, and during each year since 1979.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* No surplus European Community food has been allocated to Dundee high school under the surplus food scheme, whereby butter and beef are made available for distribution free to people in receipt of income support or family credit, or of no fixed abode or living in welfare hostels.

However, Dundee high school is registered under the surplus butter to non-profitmaking organisations scheme and since February 1989 has been entitled to receive a maximum of 1,316 kg of reduced price butter per month.

### Drugs (Ambulance Staff)

**Mrs Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* those prescription-only drugs which ambulance staff in Scotland were allowed to administer to patients in their care prior to 30 June, and those which have subsequently been withdrawn.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The statutory list of prescription-only medicines which can be administered by ambulance staff to patients in life-threatening circumstances is as follows:

Adrenaline injection BP
Atropine sulphate injection
Chlorpheniramine injection
Cobalt edetate injection
Dextrose injection strong BPC
Diphenhydramine injection
Hydrocortisone injection
Mepyramine injection
Promethazine hydrocholoride injection
Snake venom antiserum
Sodium nitrite injection
Sodium thiosulphate injection
Sterile pralidoxime

The above medicines can be supplied to ambulance staff only on the instructions of the appropriate medical authority. The medicine for treatment of asthmatics, in use prior to 30 June, has now been re-established in ambulances.

The list of prescription-only medicines which may be carried by ambulance staff who have had extended training in accordance with National Health training authority guidelines is now the subject of discussions between health boards and the ambulance service.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Cereals Levy

**Mr. Ralph Howell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will express the figures relating to cereals co-responsibility levy payments in his answer of 18 July, *Official Report*, columns 97-98, in pounds sterling.

**Mr. Curry:** The figures can be expressed in £ sterling as follows:

*1986-87*

| | *Amount of levy collected in £ million* | *Levy collected divided by tonnes of national production* |
|---|---|---|
| Belgium | 13·39 | 5·82 |
| Denmark | 6·97 | 0·87 |
| Germany | 50·34 | 1·97 |
| Greece | 2·81 | 0·53 |
| France | 58·20 | 1·16 |
| Ireland | 3·43 | 1·91 |
| Italy | 25·37 | 1·43 |
| Luxembourg | 0·23 | 4·60 |
| Netherlands | 11·71 | 9·01 |
| Spain | 17·75 | 1·10 |
| United Kingdom | 39·40 | 1·61 |

*1987-88*

| | *Amount of levy collected in £ million* |
|---|---|
| Belgium | 12·48 |
| Denmark | 10·12 |
| Germany | 56·31 |
| Greece | 7·14 |
| France | 175·05 |
| Ireland | 4·49 |
| Italy | 29·49 |
| Luxembourg | 0·26 |
| Netherlands | 15·96 |
| Spain | 27·62 |
| United Kingdom | 56·20 |

These sums have been obtained by taking the average of Eurostat's monthly market exchange rates for each national currency, using a 12-month average for 1986-87 and a 13-month average for 1987-88. They do not, however, accurately reflect levy payment in the member states concerned because levy is not paid evenly throughout the course of the year. Information is not available on the monthly pattern of levy payments. This is why the figures originally provided were in national currency terms.

## Set-aside Land

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for East Lothian on 19 July, if he will give the average acreages of the whole farms which have been set aside in each county in England and Wales.

**Mr. Maclean:** The table shows county averages of the area set aside per farm by those participants in the scheme who in the crop year 1988-89 set aside the whole area used in the base year 1987-88 for relevant arable crops.

| | *Average area set-aside (Hectares)* |
|---|---|
| *England* | |
| Avon | 24·3 |
| Bedfordshire | 51·2 |
| Berkshire | 29·5 |
| Buckinghamshire | 33·8 |
| Cambridge | 36·6 |
| Cheshire | 12·3 |
| Cleveland | 15·1 |
| Cornwall | 29·7 |
| Cumbria | 153·1 |
| Derbyshire | 14·6 |
| Devon | 15·3 |
| Dorset | 29·4 |
| Durham | 26·0 |
| Essex | 31·5 |
| Gloucestershire | 31·3 |
| Hampshire | 36·0 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 28·6 |
| Hertfordshire | 46·3 |
| Humberside | 9·7 |
| Isle of Wight | — |
| Kent | 32·4 |
| Lancashire | — |
| Leicestershire | 26·7 |
| Lincolnshire | 76·0 |
| Greater London | 38·1 |
| Greater Manchester | — |
| Merseyside | — |
| West Midlands | 19·3 |
| Norfolk | 13·6 |
| Northamptonshire | 32·2 |
| Northumberland | 54·7 |
| Nottinghamshire | 55·1 |
| Oxfordshire | 26·5 |
| Shropshire | — |
| Somerset | 40·9 |
| Staffordshire | 28·1 |
| Suffolk | 18·6 |
| Surrey | 51·0 |
| East Sussex | 27·5 |
| West Sussex | 30·4 |
| Tyne and Wear | — |
| Warwickshire | 25·8 |
| Wiltshire | 54·0 |
| North Yorkshire | 17·5 |
| South Yorkshire | 13·7 |
| West Yorkshire | 16·4 |
| England average | 29·8 |
| *Wales* | |
| Dyfed | 18·7 |
| Gwent | 38·4 |
| Wales average | 24·6 |

## Brussels Agricultural Council

**Mr. Gill:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Brussels Agricultural Council held on 24 and 25 July.

**Mr. Gummer:** The major issue at this meeting was the completion of the nine-month long negotiations over reform of the Community sheep regime, in which changes are required as part both of the CAP reforms generally and of the completion of the single market. After long and difficult discussions, in which many conflicting interests had to be reconciled, the Council reached agreement on the main elements of a new regime. Our key objectives —fair competition and no limit on the number of ewes eligible for premium—have been achieved. Other major points are:

- the introduction by 1 January 1993 of a single system of ewe premiums applicable throughout the Community;
- the replacing of intervention buying by provision for private storage aid;
- arrangements for transition from the various arrangements which member states apply now—including the phasing out of the variable premium in Great Britain by 1993;
- phasing out of clawback charges on Great Britain exports;
- after 1990, the sensitive area arrangements which have protected French and Irish markets from New Zealand imports will end;
- the separate stabiliser for Great Britain will end along with the variable premium;
- a separate all-Ireland region while the variable premium is being phased out, to protect the returns and competitive position of producers in Northern Ireland.

This was a very satisfactory outcome for the United Kingdom. The new regime will provide United Kingdom producers with a stable basis for the future and improve prospects for exporting. When the variable premium ends the new regime will be operating in such a way as to give our producers full and fair opportunities for trading within the Community. Flexibility will be allowed over the time table for phasing out the variable premium, and I shall be having discussions with the industry on this.

The proposals for headage limit were very significantly improved at the end of the negotiations as a result of sustained pressure from my right hon. Friend. The Commission had, with the support of most member states, proposed setting ceilings on the number of animals on which each producer could claim premium. It has been agreed instead that the full rate of premium will be paid on up to 1,000 ewes in the less favoured areas and up to 500 ewes elsewhere, and producers will receive 50 per cent. of the premium on all additional ewes without limit. This is a significant benefit for producers compared with the original proposals.

Some important details remain to be worked out and legal texts will come to the Council for consideration in the autumn. The Commission, however, has given clear assurances that it expects the measures to be budgetarily neutral from the end of transition. The Commission is to make proposals before the end of this year on changes in the stabiliser for the sheep sector.

The Council indicated willingness to adopt new arrangements for the import of mutton and lamb from New Zealand, on the terms negotiated some months ago by the Commission, when regulations on the new sheep regime are adopted, but was not—because of Greek opposition—able to achieve the required unanimity to pass new arrangements for the import of New Zealand butter. It was agreed instead to extend the present arrangements by a further two months.

The Council reviewed at length the state of the cereals sector including the operation of set-aside and the impact of drought. Many member states argued that because of reduced yields the Commission should take early action to suspend the operation of the additional coresponsibility levy. My right hon. Friend was prepared to agree with this if the Agriculture Commissioner proposed action, on condition that it was accompanied by provisions for a correction when firmer information was available and that next year's levy should be adjusted to take account of any inaccuracy this year. The Agriculture Commissioner, however insisted that, with information about the Community harvest still being uncertain, such action would be premature. My right hon. Friend yet again pressed the case for a fundamental review of the coresponsibility levy system for cereals, urging the Commission to come forward with the report promised in the last price review.

The Council had a first discussion of Commission proposals for changes in the milk quota system designed to bring down the volume of production in excess of quota, and to make additional quota available for certain groups of producers. These proposals will be considered further in September.

Finally, to give effect to part of the programme of assistance for Poland on which the Community recently decided, the Council agreed the emergency supply to Poland of stocks of various foodstuffs.

## Potato Marketing Board

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many employees of the Potato Marketing Board are based at Between Towns road, Cowley.

**Mr. Curry:** A total of 125 employees are based at Between Towns road, Cowley.

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he will be in a position to make a statement on the future of the Potato Marketing Board.

**Mr. Curry:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) on 20 July.

## Straw and Stubble Burning

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about his assessment of the impact on the environment including the ozone layer, of the burning of straw and stubble.

**Mr. Maclean:** The effect of straw burning on the ozone layer or global warming is negligible. My Department will, in 1990-91, be initiating research to measure dioxin emissions from straw burning. The careless burning of straw may cause nuisance, or damage trees, hedges or wildlife. This is why we have urged farmers to adopt alternative methods of disposal wherever possible; and to observe the local bye-laws and the NFU code of practice when burning has to be carried out.

## Fishing Vessels

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any proposals for the introduction of a de-commissioning system for fishing vessles which does not require any such vessel to be in possession of a pressure stock licence; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry:** The possible introduction, and scope, of a decommissioning grants scheme remains as one of a number of options under consideration for reducing fleet capacity.

## Food Irradiation

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will outline his Department's procedure for consultation with outside bodies, including representatives of the food industry, consumer groups and pressure groups, prior to formal announcements of Government policy.

**Mr. Maclean:** When I am considering regulations or the amendment of regulations relating to food, I am required by section 118(6) of the Food Act 1984 to consult such organisations as appear to me to be representative of the interests likely to be substantially affected by the proposals in question. On other food matters both my colleagues and I and the officers of my Department maintain an ongoing dialogue where appropriate with the food industry, consumer groups and enforcement interests on the issues of the day and the possible solutions thereto.

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list those outside bodies he consulted and met prior to the formal announcement of Government policy on food irradiation; and if he will list the dates and durations of the meetings.

**Mr. Maclean:** Formal consultations were not undertaken prior to the recent announcement of Government policy on food irradiation: such consultations will be appropriate when detailed proposals are made.

## Conservation

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields of 22 June, *Official Report*, columns *252-53*, if he will list the year and the region in which the 20 conservation courses were held for agricultural development advisory service officers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maclean** *[holding answer 18 July 1989]*: The following is the information:

| | *1987* | *1988* | *1989 (to 22 June 1989)* | *1989 (planned)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern | — | 1 | — | 1 |
| Midlands and Western | 2 | 4 | 3 | — |
| Eastern | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| South-Eastern | 1 | 2 | — | 2 |
| South-Western | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Wales | — | 1 | — | 1 |

Taking ADAS as a whole, most front-line advisory officers will have received conservation training by the end of the year.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Youth Training Scheme

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give for Great Britain and each region the number of YTS trainees in training as at December 1987 and December 1988, showing for each gender the numbers in each training occupational group.

**Mr. Eggar:** Due to the length of the reply, I will write to the hon. Member with the information and place a copy in the Library.

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the latest available information from the YTS leavers' survey showing the earnings of those who remain in employment following the completion of YTS for both male and female, by each ethnic group and for each United Kingdom region.

**Mr. Eggar:** The information requested is not available from the YTS leavers survey as the survey does not request earnings details.

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the figures from the latest YTS leavers survey of the number of YTS leavers who recorded themselves as having some disability or handicap which affects the type of work they can do or the type of conditions they can work in, broken down to show whether they had been in YTS with (i) the private sector, (ii) the public sector, (iii) information technology centre, (iv) voluntary organisation and (v) for all types of providers.

**Mr. Eggar:** The latest period covered by the YTS leavers survey, March 1987 to February 1989, gives the results in the following table.

*Table to show the number of young people self certified as disabled or handicapped which affects the type/conditions of work*

| | *Type of work* | *Conditions can work in* |
|---|---|---|
| Private | 5,753 | 7,095 |
| Public | 4,656 | 4,875 |
| ITeC | 304 | 350 |
| Voluntary | 1,728 | 2,003 |
| All schemes | 12,441 | 14,323 |

### European Social Fund Schemes

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if, pursuant to his written answer of 13 July to the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) if he will list for the northern region the individual employment and training schemes receiving assistance from the European social fund for the current year.

**Mr. Eggar:** The following is the list of employment and training schemes in the northern region receiving assistance from the European social fund in the current year.

Access for the Disabled
Albright and Wilson Ltd.
Artcare Workshops

Blyth Star Enterprises Ltd.
Blyth Valley Borough Council

Cadcam Application and Training Ltd.
Carnegie Centre for the Unemployed
City Farm Byker
Cleveland Co-operative Agency Ltd.
Cleveland County Council
Courtaulds Films, BCL Cellophane
Cramlington Adult Information Technology Centre
Cumbria County Council

Derwentside District Council
Durham Co-operative Development Association Ltd.
Durham County Council
Durham University Business School

Electrolux Cookers

Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
Grove Coles Cranes Ltd.

Hartlepool Borough Council
Haswell and District Society for Mentally Handicapped
The House of Mayfair Ltd.

Microelectronics Applications Research
Middlesborough Borough Council
Middlesborough Music Collective

National Trust
NEI Clarke Chapman Limited
Newcastle Children's Adventure Group
Newcastle City Council
Newcastle Trades Council Centre Against Unemployment
Newcastle upon Tyne Council for Voluntary Service
Newcastle upon Tyne University
Northern Regional Health Authority
Northern Region Co-operative Development Agency Limited
Northumberland County Council
North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

Owners Limited

Projects UK

Scotswood Employment Project
Sheltered Housing and Workshop
Shildon and Sedgefield District Development Agency
South Tyneside Borough Council
St. Anthony of Padua Community Association
Sunderland Common Ownership Enterprise Resource
Sunderland Polytechnic
Sunderland Youth Employment

Teesside Polytechnic
Tolag Products and Company Limited
Torrens Maritime Trust
Training Agency
Tyne and Wear Enterprise Trust Limited
Tyneside Economic Development Company

Urban Craft Design Limited

Washington Microtechnology Centre
West Cumbria Open Learning Trust
Workers Educational Association Northern

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he now has information on how the 1989 European social fund allocation was divided in *(a)* actual cash, and *(b)* percentage terms between (i) central Government, (ii) local government, (iii) the voluntary sector and (iv) others.

**Mr. Eggar** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The United Kingdom has been allocated £418 million from the European Social Fund for 1989. The breakdown in cash and percentage terms are as follows:

| | *£ million* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Central Government | 236·0 | 56·5 |
| Local Government | 116·5 | 27·9 |
| Voluntary Sector | 25·9 | 6·2 |
| Others | 39·6 | 9·4 |

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Eggar:** The number of letters received from hon. Members by departmental Ministers in January 1989 was 419; and 3,783 in the whole of this session up to 1 July 1989.

The number of letters sent to hon. Members by departmental Ministers in January 1989 was 358; and 3,766 in the whole of this session up to 1 July.

Information on the number of letters received from and sent to hon. Members by the rest of the Department is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Training

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the revised numbers of approved places allocated under employment training, what are the area budgets for the programme, and what are the allocations of supplementary grant, for each training agency area.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Up to 265,000 employment training places have been allocated for 1989-90. Detailed regional and area plans are under consideration by the Training Agency head office.

### Liverpool City Council (Black Employees)

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the percentage of black people employed by the Liverpool city council at the latest date.

**Mr. Moynihan:** I have been asked to reply.

This information is not separately distinguishable in statistics held centrally.

### Benefit Claimants

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many claimants in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow and *(b)* Strathclyde were suspended from receipt of unemployment benefit during the period April 1988 to May 1989 for failing to demonstrate good cause for the termination of their last employment.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Information is not available in the precise form requested.

For the period 1 January 1988 to 31 March 1989, the number of persons in Scotland, who were disqualified for receiving unemployment benefit because they were considered to have left their employment voluntarily without just cause was 32,128.

Figures on the number of persons disqualified for leaving their employment voluntarily without just cause in the Greenock and Port Glasgow and Strathclyde areas are not collected separately, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Race Relations (Liverpool)

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if, in the light of the report of the Liverpool 8 inquiry into race relations in Liverpool, he will initiate further Government measures in Liverpool 8 with a view to substantially reducing black unemployment in the area; and if he will give a report.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My Department operates a wide range of employment and training programmes designed to give unemployed people throughout the country the skills, confidence and motivation they need to compete for jobs. In many deprived areas these programmes are tailored to the needs of disadvantaged groups, including ethnic minorities, and we will continue to give a high priority to districts such as Liverpool 8. For example, Liverpool has been selected as one of the pilot areas for the new job interview guarantee which will give employers more incentive to recruit unemployed people from the inner cities. The pilot will be targetted on the Toxteth and Williamson square jobcentres.

### Labour Statistics (Liverpool)

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many black persons were unemployed in Liverpool 8 at the latest date; and what this represents as a percentage of the population;

(2) how many young black people have been unemployed in Liverpool 8 for more than *(a)* two years and *(b)* five years respectively.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The information requested is not available.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Eggar** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* The Government's priorities in helping small businesses are to create a climate in which they can flourish and to provide measures that support and stimulate their development. An improved climate has been achieved primarily through the Government's measures to control inflation and to reduce both the rates of taxation and the level of unnecessary burdens placed on small firms.

Measures operated by my Department to assist small businesses include:

The Small Firms Service which provides information and business counselling to new and established businesses. In the last financial year, the service answered over 281,000 enquiries (an increase of 6 per cent. on 1987-88), handled over 30,000 new counselling cases (an increase of 12 per cent. on 1987-88), and conducted over 43,000 counselling sessions (an increase of 10 per cent. on 1987-88);

The loan guarantee scheme. Over the past 12 months usage of the scheme has greatly increased. Applications are currently averaging 240 a month compared with last year's average of 164 per month. This increase has been due in part to the introduction of simplified procedures for loans up to £15,000 and a re-launch of the scheme in April 1989 when it was extended and enhanced following a major evaluation exercise. Changes made included increasing the maximum loan size fom £75,000 to £100,000;

The enterprise training element of employment training and the business enterprise programme. These help people set up in business through the provision of targeted training in all the basic aspects of business. The combined number of entrants to these programmes increased by 22 per cent. from 43,489 in 1987-88 to 53,003 in 1988-89. In addition, the graduate enterprise programme helps graduates take the first steps to setting up businesses on their own. The number of entrants to this programme rose from 155 in 1987-88 to 1,150 in 1988-89. Business growth training has now been introduced to provide help to established firms to develop their business and management skills.

My Department also provides financial assistance through the enterprise allowance scheme and makes substantial grants available to "Business in the Community", local enterprise agencies and the Prince's youth business trust, among others.

The Department monitors it's schemes with a view to assessing additionality, job creation, displacement and other relevant factors. Evaluation reports on particular schemes are published. Overall the success of these measures has been reflected in substantial and accelerating growth of the small business sector.

Over the period 1980 to 1986 the net increase in the number of VAT-registered businesses averaged nearly 500 per week. The average figure increased to nearly 900 a week in 1987 and indications are that the rate of increase in 1988 has been even faster, perhaps as much as 1,200 per week. Between 1979 and 1989 the number of self employed people increased by 61 per cent. to approximately 3·1 million.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Social Fund Refusals

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people in *(a)* Doncaster and *(b)* Mexborough areas of South Yorkshire, who were refused loans by social fund officers during the period April 1988 to the end of June 1989, on the basis that they had insufficient income to repay these loans, were advised to apply for community care grants; and, of this total, how many were granted.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The guidance in the "Social Fund Manual" (a copy of which is in the Library), makes it clear to social fund officers that on receipt of an application for a loan, they should bear in mind the possibility that a community care grant may be appropriate. It is not necessary for the applicant to be advised to apply separately for a grant and therefore the information requested is not collected. However, statistical information is available which shows that between April 1988 and the end of June 1989, on 122 occasions in the Doncaster area covered by the Doncaster, East and Doncaster, West local offices, and on 66 occasions in the Mexborough area covered by the Wath on Dearne local office, a grant was awarded instead of a loan for which an application was made.

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people in *(a)* Doncaster and *(b)* Mexborough areas of South Yorkshire have been refused loans by social fund officers for the period April 1988 to the end of June 1989 on the basis that they have insufficient income to repay these loans.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Information is not collected on the number of people refused loans or grants. The figures collected are based on applications. Between April 1988 and the end of June 1989, on 148 occasions in the Doncaster area covered by the Doncaster, East and Doncaster, West ILOs, and on 18 occasions in the Mexborough area, covered by the Wath on Dearne ILO, the social fund officer refused a loan application giving as a reason the applicants' inability to repay.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people in *(a)* Greenock and *(b)* Port Glasgow who were refused loans by social fund officers during the period April 1988 to the end of June 1989, on the basis that they had insufficient income to repay these loans, were advised to apply for community care grants; and, of this total, how many were granted.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The guidance in the "Social Fund Manual" (a copy of which is in the Library), makes it clear to social fund officers that on receipt of an application for a loan, they should bear in mind the possibility that a community care grant may be appropriate. It is not necessary for the applicant to be advised to apply separately for a grant and therefore the information requested is not collected. However, statistical information is available which shows that between April 1988 and the end of June 1989, on 18 occasions in the Greenock area, and on 78 occasions in the Port Glasgow area, a grant was awarded instead of a loan for which an application was made.

### Family Incomes

**Mr. Lester:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will update his reply to the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) of 30 March, *Official Report,* columns *545-8,* showing *(a)* net spending power for a lone mother with two children aged four and eight years when (i) not working, (ii) earning £20 a week for part-time work, (iii) earning £40 a week for part-time work and (iv) working full-time and earning £60 through to £200 a week in steps of £10, *(b)* net spending power for a single-wage married couple with two children aged four and six years,

(i) not working, (ii) earning £20 a week part-time, (iii) earning £40 a week part-time and (iv) working full time and earning £60 through to £200 a week in steps of £10.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The information requested is set out in the tables. It shoud be noted that the results are hypothetical because the results are based on average local authority housing charges and do not reflect the wide variety of rents and domestic rates that people actually pay.

*Tax and benefit system from April 1989—lone mother with two children aged 4 and 8 (assuming average local authority rent and rates)*

| | *Not working 1 year on benefit* | *Working part-time £20 earnings* | *Working part-time £40 earnings* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Income Support | 49·10 | 44·10 | 24·10 |
| Gross Earnings | 0·00 | 20·00 | 40·00 |
| Tax | 0·00 | 0·00 | 0·00 |
| National Insurance | 0·00 | 0·00 | 0·00 |
| Rent | 21·50 | 21·50 | 21·50 |
| Rent Rebate | 21·50 | 21·50 | 21·50 |
| Rates | 9·00 | 9·00 | 9·00 |
| Rates Rebate | 7·20 | 7·20 | 7·20 |
| Child Benefit | 19·70 | 19·70 | 19·70 |
| Free School Meals | 2·70 | 2·70 | 2·70 |
| Free Welfare Milk | 1·83 | 1·83 | 1·83 |
| Net Income After Housing Costs | 71·53 | 86·53 | 86·53 |

*Lone mother with two children aged 4 and 8 October 1989 (assuming average local authority rent and rates)*

| *Gross earnings* | *Tax* | *National insurance* | *Take home pay* | *Family credit* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rates rebate* | *Total net income* | *Net income after housing costs* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 2·39 | 57·61 | 46·23 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 123·54 | 93·04 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 3·29 | 66·71 | 39·86 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 126·27 | 95·77 |
| 80·00 | 0·00 | 4·19 | 75·81 | 33·49 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 129·00 | 98·50 |
| 90·00 | 1·47 | 5·09 | 83·44 | 28·15 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 131·29 | 100·79 |
| 100·00 | 3·97 | 5·99 | 90·04 | 23·53 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 133·27 | 102·77 |
| 110·00 | 6·47 | 6·89 | 96·64 | 18·91 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 135·25 | 104·75 |
| 120·00 | 8·97 | 7·79 | 103·24 | 14·29 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 137·23 | 106·73 |
| 130·00 | 11·47 | 8·69 | 109·84 | 9·67 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 139·21 | 108·71 |
| 140·00 | 13·97 | 9·59 | 116·44 | 5·05 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 141·19 | 110·69 |
| 150·00 | 16·47 | 10·49 | 123·04 | 0·00 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 142·74 | 112·24 |
| 160·00 | 18·97 | 11·39 | 129·64 | 0·00 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 149·34 | 118·84 |
| 170·00 | 21·47 | 12·29 | 136·24 | 0·00 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 155·94 | 125·44 |
| 180·00 | 23·97 | 13·19 | 142·84 | 0·00 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 162·54 | 132·04 |
| 190·00 | 26·47 | 14·09 | 149·44 | 0·00 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 169·14 | 138·64 |
| 200·00 | 28·97 | 14·99 | 156·04 | 0·00 | 19·70 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 175·74 | 145·24 |

*Tax and benefit system from April 1989—single wage married couple with two children aged 4 and 6 (assuming average local authority rent and rates)*

| | *Not working 1 year on benefit* | *Working part-time £20 earnings* | *Working part-time £40 earnings* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Income Support | 70·30 | 55·30 | 35·30 |
| Gross Earnings | 0·00 | 20·00 | 40·00 |
| Tax | 0·00 | 0·00 | 0·00 |
| National Insurance | 0·00 | 0·00 | 0·00 |
| Rent | 21·50 | 21·50 | 21·50 |
| Rent Rebate | 21·50 | 21·50 | 21·50 |
| Rates | 9·00 | 9·00 | 9·00 |
| Rates Rebate | 7·20 | 7·20 | 7·20 |
| Child Benefit | 14·50 | 14·50 | 14·50 |
| Free School Meals | 2·70 | 2·70 | 2·70 |
| Free Welfare Milk | 1·83 | 1·83 | 1·83 |
| Net Income After Housing Costs | 87·53 | 92·53 | 92·53 |

*Single-wage married couple with 2 children aged 4 and 8, October 1989 (assuming average local authority rent and rates)*

| *Gross earnings* | *Tax* | *NI* | *Take home pay* | *Family credit* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rate rebate* | *Total net income* | *Net income after housing costs* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 2·39 | 57·61 | 46·23 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 6·20 | 9·00 | 2·49 | 127·03 | 96·53 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 3·29 | 66·71 | 39·86 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 4·42 | 9·00 | 1·95 | 127·44 | 96·94 |
| 80·00 | 0·00 | 4·19 | 75·81 | 33·49 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 2·65 | 9·00 | 1·40 | 127·85 | 97·35 |
| 90·00 | 1·47 | 5·09 | 83·44 | 28·15 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 1·16 | 9·00 | 0·94 | 128·19 | 97·69 |
| 100·00 | 3·97 | 5·99 | 90·04 | 23·53 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·55 | 128·62 | 98·12 |
| 110·00 | 6·47 | 6·89 | 96·64 | 18·91 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 130·05 | 99·55 |
| 120·00 | 8·97 | 7·79 | 103·24 | 14·29 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 132·03 | 101·56 |
| 130·00 | 11·47 | 8·69 | 109·84 | 9·67 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 134·01 | 103·51 |
| 140·00 | 13·97 | 9·59 | 116·44 | 5·05 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 135·99 | 105·49 |
| 150·00 | 16·47 | 10·49 | 123·04 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 137·54 | 107·04 |
| 160·00 | 18·97 | 11·39 | 129·84 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 144·14 | 113·64 |
| 170·00 | 21·47 | 12·29 | 136·24 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 150·74 | 120·24 |

| Gross earnings | Tax | NI | Take home pay | Family credit | Child benefit | Rent | Rent rebate | Rates | Rate rebate | Total net income | Net income after housing costs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 180·00 | 23·97 | 13·19 | 142·84 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 157·34 | 126·84 |
| 190·00 | 26·47 | 14·09 | 149·44 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 163·94 | 133·44 |
| 200·00 | 28·97 | 14·99 | 156·04 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 21·50 | 0·00 | 9·00 | 0·00 | 170·54 | 140·04 |

## Benefits (South Yorkshire)

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people in *(a)* Doncaster and *(b)* Mexborough areas of South Yorkshire are in receipt of *(a)* retirement pensions, *(b)* widows' benefits, *(c)* unemployment benefit, *(d)* sickness benefit, *(e)* invalidity benefit, *(f)* industrial disablement benefits, *(g)* industrial death benefit, *(h)* maternity allowance, *(i)* non-contributory retirement pension, *(j)* war pension, *(k)* attendance allowance and *(l)* invalid allowance.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I regret that information is not available in the precise form requested. Nor are local figures held of the numbers of people receiving *(a)* retirement pensions, *(b)* widows' benefits, *(f)* industrial disablement benefits, *(g)* industrial death benefit, *(i)* non-contributory retirement pension, *(j)* war pension, *(k)* attendance allowance and *(l)* invalid care allowance.

With the exception of unemployment benefit the table shows, as at 30 June 1989, the latest date for which the information is available, the numbers of sickness/invalidity benefit and maternity allowance claimants at the Department's local offices at Doncaster, East, Doncaster, West and Mexborough which serve the Don Valley constituency although their boundaries are not conterminous.

| | Doncaster East | Doncaster West | Mexborough |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sickness/Invalidity Benefit[1] | 4,708 | 6,099 | 2,261 |
| Maternity Allowance | 29 | 50 | 4 |

| Unemployed claimants | Doncaster Local Authority Area | Mexborough Election Ward |
|---|---|---|
| As at 8 June 1989 | 14,158 | 1,015 |

Source:
100 per cent count of cases in action. The figures quoted may include a number of cases not actually in receipt of benefit. Data are provisional and subject to amendment.
Notes:
[1] The local office count of cases in action does not distinguish between sickness and invalidity benefit.
[2] Numbers shown are included in the figure for the Doncaster local authority area.

## Turkish Asylum-seekers

**Mr. Goodlad:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will ensure that asylum-seekers from Turkey who have entered the United Kingdom with a limited leave visa are eligible for income support.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** In cases where a Turkish asylum-seeker is given only limited leave to enter this country, income support at a reduced rate may be claimed.

## Residential Homes

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the current minimum and maximum difference in *(a)* Inverclyde and *(b)* Strathclyde between charges levied by private residential homes and the maximum weekly payment made by his Department; and how many elderly people have been removed from residential homes in Inverclyde and Strathclyde in each of the last three years.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The level of charges in a residential care home is a matter between the residents and the owners of the home. Information on the fees charged by individual homes and the numbers of people removed from homes is not collected centrally.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the maximum weekly payment made by his local offices in *(a)* Inverclyde and *(b)* Strathclyde to support elderly people in private residential and private nursing homes.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The maximum weekly payments from income support towards fees in residential care homes and nursing homes respectively are:

| | £ | £ |
|---|---|---|
| For the elderly | 140 | 190 |
| For the very dependent elderly | 155 | — |
| For the terminally ill | — | 230 |

## Attendance Allowance

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing the latest figures for the number of people caring for another person who, because a claim for attendance allowance has not been determined within the 26 weeks allowed, either *(a)* are required to be available for work as a condition of getting income support, or *(b)* would not be treated as available for work but are paid reduced income support, with the voluntary unemployment deduction applied on grounds of hardship.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I regret the information requested is not available.

## Family Support

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour), *Official Report,* 18 July, column *39-40,* if he will show the amount of support received in 1978-79 and 1988-89 by the following categories *(a)* single payments for maternity expenses and any other single payments identifiable as support for families such as beds, safety gates and high chairs: *(b)* expenditure on welfare foods for pregnant women and under-fives and *(c)* free school meals.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I regret that the information is not available in the form requested. The single payments scheme came into existence in November 1980—succeeding exceptional needs payments for which there is no information on maternity expenses. The first data collected were in the December 1981 "Annual Statistical Enquiry". This showed that single payments totalling £2·6 million has been made for maternity expenses. However, as the information relates to payments made in the 12 months preceding the inquiry to claimants in receipt of benefit at the time of the inquiry it does not record all the single payments made in the year.

Social fund maternity payments replaced the single payments provision in April 1987. Payments totalling £15 million were made in 1988-89.

Neither the single payments nor social fund data identify payments made as support for families.

Responsibility for expenditure on welfare foods and school meals lies with my hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science, respectively.

### Income Support

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Leeds, West, of 4 July, *Official Report*, column *137*, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table accounting for the differences between the illustrative income support rates in the technical annex to the 1985 White Paper and the rates introduced in April 1988, showing the effect of each of the factors contributing to those differences.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** As made clear in the document, the rates published in the technical annex to the 1985 White paper were purely illustrative. The actual income support rates were set taking account of the circumstances at the time.

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what amount of deduction in the calculation of the April 1988 income support rates the adjustments to provide help towards the requirement to make a minimum contribution to domestic rates referred to in the reply to the hon. Member for Leeds, West, of 4 July, *Official Report*, column *137*, was included for the purpose of meeting part of the cost of that help; and what were the amounts of the adjustments before and after such deductions.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** There were no deductions from the adjustments referred to.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what continuing monitoring he is making of the effect of the reform of social security; and what is his latest estimate of the percentage of claimants on income support who are receiving less than they would have under the previous rules for supplementary benefit uprated for price inflation.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** We are continuing to monitor all aspects of the social security reforms.

Estimates of the effects of the reforms on income support beneficiaries were set out in the booklet "Impact Of The Reformed Structure Of Income-Related Benefits" published in October 1987, a copy of which is in the Library.

### Social Fund

**Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he will publish the annual report of the social fund commissioner.

**Mr. Newton:** I am pleased to announce that I have today published the social fund commissioner's annual report for 1988-89. I have placed copies in the Library.

The report describes, as required by statute, the standards of review achieved by social fund inspectors. I am grateful to the commissioner for this, for the advice and assistance she has given the social fund inspectors in undertaking their important role of independent review of social fund officers' decisions, and for setting up the organisation in this first and crucial year.

**Mr. Allen Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many applications were made for grants from the social fund in the year 1988-89 in the Paisley, North constituency.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The Paisley, North constituency is served by the Department's office at Paisley.

Between 11 April 1988 and 31 March 1989, 1,308 applications for community care grants from the social fund were made to the Paisley office.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people in *(a)* Greenock and *(b)* Port Glasgow have been refused loans by social fund officers for the period April 1988 to the end of June 1989 on the basis that they had insufficient income to repay these loans.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Information is not collected on the number of people refused loans or grants. The figures collected are based on applications. Between April 1988 and the end of June 1989, on 112 occasions in the Greenock area, and on 87 occasions in the Port Glasgow area, the social fund officer refused a loan application giving as a reason the applicant's inability to repay.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what independent research into the social fund he has commissioned.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I refer the hon. Member to my hon. Friend the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State's reply to the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) on 24 May 1989 at columns *544-45*.

### Community Care

**Mr. Allen Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many community care grants were refused by his Department's office in Paisley to people living in the areas of priority treatment known as Ferguslie, Shortroods and Moorpark, Renfrew; and if he will list the total number of clients refused in the Paisley, North constituency in 1988-89;

(2) how many community care loans were made to constituents of Paisley North and how much was loaned to clients in areas of priority treatment in *(a)* Ferguslie, *(b)* Moorpark and *(c)* Shortroods in 1988-89.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many applications have been made for community care grants at the social security offices in *(a)* Paisley, *(b)* Johnstone, *(c)* Port Glasgow and *(d)* Greenock.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The information for the period 11 April 1988 to 30 June 1989 is contained in the table.

| *Office* | *Applications for grants* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* Paisley | 1,899 |
| *(b)* Johnstone | 1,179 |
| *(c)* Port Glasgow | 1,169 |
| *(d)* Greenock | 1,461 |

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people were refused community care grants at each Renfrewshire social security office.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The Department's offices in Renfrewshire are Paisley, Port Glasgow, Greenock, and Johnstone, but the boundaries are not conterminous.

The information requested can be obtained from the data in the Library.

### Ministerial Visit (Crosby)

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement on his official visit to Crosby.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** My right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State visited the Department's local office in Crosby on 30 June 1989. Crosby is one of 23 pilot offices which are rigorously testing three major computer systems in our computerisation programme—the operational strategy—before it is extended to cover the rest of our local office network from October. The purpose of the visit was to meet the staff and to see how the operational strategy was performing in a pilot office. The office was open to the press on the day of the visit so that they could see the systems demonstrated. Despite industrial action by some staff my right hon. Friend was able to meet other members of staff and the visit was both informative and successful.

### Loans (Renfrewshire)

**Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people received loans from each of his Department's offices in Renfrewshire since 1988-89.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The Department's offices in Renfrewshire are Paisley, Port Glasgow, Greenock, and Johnstone, but the boundaries are not conterminous.

Details of loan applications processed and awards made for each of the offices are available in the Library.

### Local Government Finance

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list by each charging authority in Wales the income level at which *(a)* a single person aged under 25 years, *(b)* a single person aged over 25 years, *(c)* a single pensioner, *(d)* a pensioner couple and *(e)* a couple with two children, all with no savings, would lose entitlement to a community charge rebate assuming the safety-netted community charge figures for 1989-90 with the latest safety net arrangements.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State on 15 June at column *531-34* which gave the information requested using the assumption that the full safety net was in operation. The implications for the safety net of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales announcement on 20 July on local government finance in Wales in 1990-91 have yet to be determined.

### Lone Parents

**Mr. Lester:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much of benefit expenditure on lone parents including lone parent benefit, income support, family credit and housing benefit, is recouped from the absent parents; and what proportion of total outlay this amount represents.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* The Department has power to recoup benefit expenditure on lone parent families only where income support is in payment. Where parents are divorced or unmarried recovery applies only to benefit in respect of the children.

Based on the latest available figures for May 1988, lone parents receive income support of £1,789 million per annum net of £88 million maintenance paid direct to the lone parent. The Department collects a further £43 million from the absent parents. It is also estimated that a possible further £25 million may be saved in cases where DSS takes action on maintenance and the need for benefit is removed altogether.

Benefit expenditure saved therefore amounts to approximately 8 per cent. of what is estimated would have been spent on lone parent families but for the Department's action on maintenance. It is not possible to say how much of the total was recoverable.

### Pensioners

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) of 3 July, *Official Report,* column *43,* if he will place in the Library his calculation showing that the living standards of pensioners have risen by 23 per cent. since 1979 in real terms; if he will break his calculation down by decile and quintile group, with and without housing benefits; and if he will use equivalised and non-equivalised figures in each case.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* In 1979 pensioners average total net income was £72·90; by 1986 this had risen to £89·80 (both at 1986 prices and rounded to 10p). This represents a real terms increase of 23 per cent.

The real terms increase in pensioners average total net income by quintile is as follows:

*Per cent.*

| | *Non-equivalised* | *Equivalised* |
|---|---|---|
| Q1 (lowest) | 20 | 17 |
| Q2 | 23 | 20 |
| Q3 | 21 | 20 |
| Q4 | 20 | 21 |
| Q5 (highest) | 27 | 30 |
| All | 23 | 23 |

*Source:* Family Expenditure survey 1986.

The real terms increase in pensioners average total net income by decile is as follows:

*Per cent.*

| | *Non-equivalised* | *Equivalised* |
|---|---|---|
| D1 (lowest) | 18 | 16 |
| D2 | 21 | 18 |
| D3 | 23 | 19 |
| D4 | 23 | 20 |
| D5 | 21 | 20 |
| D6 | 21 | 20 |
| D7 | 21 | 20 |
| D8 | 20 | 22 |
| D9 | 22 | 23 |
| D10 (highest) | 29 | 35 |
| All | 23 | 23 |

*Source:* Family Expenditure Survey 1986.

It is not possible to perform the calculation with and without housing benefits because until 1983 help with housing costs was provided partly through supplementary benefit.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Private Tenancies

10. **Mr. Callaghan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has made any estimate of the increase in the number of private tenancies as a result of the provisions of the Housing Act 1988.

**Mr. Chope:** No. The provisions of part I of the Housing Act 1988 deregulating the private rented sector have been in force for only just over six months and it is too soon to evaluate their impact. We shall carry out a detailed evaluation as soon as practicable.

### Council House Sales

14. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the level of council house sales in Lambeth at the latest date for which figures are available.

**Mr. Howard:** Lambeth sold about 520 dwellings in 1988-89.

48. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the level of council house sales in Tower Hamlets at the latest date for which figures are available.

**Mr. Chope:** Tower Hamlets has reported 1,276 sales under the right to buy, for the financial year 1988-89, this excludes May and June 1988 for which no monthly reports were made.

58. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council houses have been sold to sitting tenants in England since May 1979.

**Mr. Chope:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him on 28 June 1989 at column *480,* by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier).

### Housing Allocation (Leicester)

16. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the housing allocation made to Leicester city council for the years 1989-90.

**Mr. Chope:** Leicester's basic allocation of £8,955 million was the largest for any local authority of comparable size outside London.

### Local Authorities (Trading Practices)

18. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take action against those local authorities which attempt to evade the provisions of the Local Government Act 1988 by unfair trading practices.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Yes.

### Local Government Finance

19. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the number of people, in percentage terms, who have complied with the community charge registration process in England and Wales.

**Mr. David Hunt:** We shall not have information on the total number included in community charges registers until December 1989. It is clear, however, that in most authorities the first stage of the registration process is proceeding well.

23. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the possible options for need assessments under the new system of local government finance; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** On 12 July we discussed a report by officials, which contains a range of options for standard spending assessments, with the Consultative Council on Local Government Finance. My right hon. Friend will not be taking any final decisions until the autumn.

24. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the cost of introducing a system of local government finance based on capital value rates plus local income tax.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The Labour party's two-tax system could cost up to four times as much to administer as the existing rating system.

32. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the level of safety net for local authorities under Her Majesty's Government's new system of local government finance.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The safety net is the result of the old system of local government finance. I refer the hon. Member to the statement made to the House on 19 July by my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for the Environment, which contained full details of the proposed safety net.

40. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he intends to take to ensure that tenants in the private rented sector are not put in the position of paying the community charge without a corresponding deduction in the rate element of their rent.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Protected tenants paying rents which include rates will have the normal protection of the Rent Act 1977 for tenancies entered into before 15 January 1989, and may register fair rents which are exclusive of rates. The Housing Act 1988 will apply to most tenancies entered into after that date, and any rents determined by the rent assessment committee under that Act will be exclusive of rates. Any reductions in inclusive rents arising from the introduction of community charge should be settled on the basis of individual contracts. The Department will be producing shortly a booklet on the impact between the community charge and rents in the series "You and the Community Charge".

63. **Mr. Caborn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what medical advice he has considered in deciding to exclude severe dementia sufferers from community charge exemption.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) on 28 June at column *482*.

75. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from Professor Elaine Murphy of Guy's hospital, London as to the viability of assessing severe dementia for the purposes of community charge exemption; and what response he has made.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Professor Murphy wrote to my right hon. Friend the then Minister for Local Government on 6 July about this matter. I am now considering her letter and have agreed to meet professor Murphy to discuss it.

78. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further consideration he has given to the impact of poll tax registration on the levels of electoral registration in the light of early experience of registration.

**Mr. David Hunt:** If there is any impact of community charge registration on electoral registration it can be connected only with the misleading use of the term "poll tax" for party political purposes.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any illustrative figures to show the level of poll tax to be levied in Nottingham in 1990-91.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I have no illustrative comunity charge figures for 1990-91. Illustrative community charges published on 19 July reflect 1989-90 local authority responsibilities and levels of expenditure.

**Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the criteria determining whether a local authority should be *(a)* a gainer or *(b)* a loser from the community charge safety net (i) in the estimates given for hypothetical community charges in 1988-89 and (ii) in the estimates given on 19 July for hypothetical community charges in 1989-90.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Areas which are shown as gaining from the safety net are those in which the total of community charges assumed to be raised from residents is higher than the total of domestic rates. Conversely, areas contributing to the safety net are those where the total of community charges are assumed to be lower.

Details of the calculations for illustrative community charges for 1988-89 and 1989-90 were contained in the explanatory notes accompanying the tables placed in the Library on 23 June 1988 and 19 July 1989, respectively.

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each charging authority the average rate per adult charged in 1989-90, showing also the averages for each region, inner London, outer London and the rest of the south east separately, and for England as a whole.

**Mr. David Hunt:** A rate per pound of rateable value was charged by each charging authority in 1989-90. There was no rate per adult.

**Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what a senior ward sister currently living in a flat in Battersea would pay for her local services under *(a)* the community charge, and *(b)* a system of capital value rates and local income tax allocated on an 80/20 basis.

**Mr. David Hunt:** In 1989-90 a ward sister earning £15,000 living alone in a flat Battersea worth £70,000 would pay a community charge of £375 (disregarding the transitional safety net) and £639 under a system of capital value rates plus local income tax.

## Homelessness

20. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has developed any fresh proposals to reduce homelessness.

**Mr. Chope:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given earlier today by my right hon. Friend to the hon. Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) and for Leyton (Mr. Cohen).

25. **Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will seek powers to redirect the resources currently spent on bed-and-breakfast accommodation for homeless people towards the provision of purpose built accommodation for them.

**Mr. Chope:** I am currently reviewing the homelessness legislation and hope to announce conclusions soon. But it is for local authorities to determine how to direct resources to meet their local housing needs. My Department has consistently advised that the best use must be made of existing stock to house the homeless before recourse to temporary accommodation and that bed-and-breakfast hotels should be used only as a last resort, especially for families.

## New Town Housing (Warrington)

21. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many new town houses have been built in Warrington since the inception of the new town development corporation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** A total of 13,126 owner-occupied and rented dwellings have been provided in Warrington under the new town development programme, an excellent achievement by the development corporation.

## International Initiatives

22. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps the Government are taking to develop international initiatives to conserve the world's environment.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Global climate change represents the greatest threat to the world's environment and the

Government have called for the support of all nations in preparing an international framework convention. This call was endorsed by the governing council of the United Nations environment programme (UNEP) in June and by the economic summit in Paris on 16 July. The summit also supported the United Kingdom's proposals to phase out the use of chlorofluorocarbons, to give added momentum to international work on integrating environment and economic decision making, to safeguard tropical forests and to strengthen the United Nations environmental institutions, especially UNEP.

### Town Halls

27. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on expenditure by local authorities on the construction of new town halls.

**Mr. David Hunt:** In the financial year 1987-88, capital expenditure on new construction for general adminstration by local authorities in England was £123 million.

### Vacant Properties

28. **Mrs. Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to ensure that local authority houses are not left vacant.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State awaits the results of a survey by our Department of local authority empty property and will then consider action, in consultation with the local authority associations.

### Housing Corporation

29. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the expected level of provision of the Housing Corporation for 1991-92.

**Mr. Howard:** Current plans provide for gross capital expenditure by the Housing Corporation in 1991-92 of £1,328 million.

47. **Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the level of funding for the Housing Corporation in 1988-89.

**Mr. Howard:** The Housing Corporation's gross capital expenditure in 1988-89 was £791·3 million.

### Unified Business Rate

30. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the transitional mechanisms to be introduced in connection with the unified business rate.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Some 150 initial responses have been received to our consultation paper and we have had many more representations subsequently.

44. **Sir John Hunt:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the National Hairdressers Federation in respect of the likely impact of the unified business rate upon hairdressing salons; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The National Hairdressers' Federation's letter of 29 May was taken into account in settling the transitional arrangements announced by my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State on 19 July.

### English Heritage

31. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the chairman of English Heritage; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. David Hunt:** My right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State met Lord Montagu on 5 May when he opened English Heritage's new offices in Newcastle and discussed a number of heritage issues.

### Ivory Imports

33. **Mr. Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he gave to the position of the legitimate ivory trade in imposing a unilateral ban on ivory imports.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** We recognised that the ban would affect the legitimate ivory trade, but this was outweighed by the need for immediate action to protect the African elephant pending decisions on a long-term strategy for its future survival.

### Mortgage Repayments

34. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to assist people getting into difficulties with mortgage repayment.

**Mr. Chope:** Any person who falls into difficulty with mortgage repayments should contact his or her lender as soon as possible. Responsible lenders will be sympathetic and willing to help.

There are also independent organisations which offer advice to people in this situation. The Government give grants to 20 voluntary bodies which provide such a service.

### Environmental Safety (Symbols)

35. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has discussed for introducing a recognisable symbol for environment safety on consumer products.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Officials, together with officials from the Department of Trade and Industry, have recently studied the issues raised by environmental labelling for consumer products and have spoken to a range of interested parties, including representatives of consumers, producers, retailers and environmentalists. This study has taken account of the experience of the Blue Angel environmental labelling scheme in the Federal Republic of Germany, and of developments in the European Community. We shall make known our conclusions on this study in due course.

### Information Office

36. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he proposes to establish an information office which will provide detailed evidence as to the state of the environment.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Government are considering how best to present the public with the facts about the quality of the environment.

### Unleaded Petrol

37. **Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of new cars are capable of running on unleaded petrol.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Ninety six per cent. of new cars registered in May could use unleaded petrol. 70 per cent. could run on unleaded petrol straight away and the remaining 26 per cent. after adjustment.

### Rugby Union

38. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next expects to meet representatives of the Rugby Union; and what subjects he expects to discuss.

**Mr. Moynihan:** I have nothing to add to the answer I gave the hon. Member on 22 June at column *202*.

### Large Firms

41. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has had any recent discussions on environmental matters with the firms BP, Barclays Bank, Inchcape, BAT Industries or Shell.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I meet representatives of the oil industry to help promote the use of unleaded petrol. I discuss environmental matters generally with individuals, local authorities, voluntary organisations and industry on all possible occasions.

### Local Government Services (Contracting Out)

42. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of councils in England and Wales now contract out local government services; and how much has been saved since 1981 as a result of such contracting out.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Under part I of the Local Government Act 1988, all authorities in England and Wales are required to introduce competition for certain services, starting on 1 August 1989. Previous studies of voluntary competition indicate that savings of 20-30 per cent. have been achieved.

### Pollution

43. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment at what date part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 was implemented.

**Mr. Moynihan:** The main provisions of part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 were brought into force between July 1984 and October 1986. These provided for more effective protection of inland, surface and underground waters, the extension of controls to cover all coastal and estuarial waters and public involvement, for the first time, in the water pollution control system. These provisions are re-enacted and where appropriate strengthened in the Water Act.

### Toxic Waste

45. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much toxic waste per annum is generated and treated or landfilled in the United Kingdom.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** In 1987-88 the estimated arisings of special waste in the United Kingdom were 2,036,000 tonnes.

### Sewerage Charges

46. **Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the construction industry about the likely cost of sewerage and water connection charges following privatisation of the water industry.

**Mr. Howard:** I have had one meeting with representatives of the House Builders Federation, and my officials have held two meetings with them to discuss the detailed arrangements for introducing a charge at the time new connections are made to water mains and public sewers under powers included in the Water Act 1989.

### Bathing Water

49. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many years were given to member states to identify a full list of bathing waters for the purposes of the 1975 bathing waters directive.

72. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many bathing waters complied with the 1975 European Community bathing waters directive in*(a)* May 1979 and *(b)* May 1989.

**Mr. Howard:** I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan).

### Estate Action

50. **Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much estate action money will be allocated to Lambeth this year.

**Mr. Chope:** This largely depends on Lambeth's progress in finalising its proposals for estate action work. The Department's estimate is that some £1 million will be allocated to the borough.

### Open Spaces (Bristol)

51. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received concerning action by the Bristol urban district council to acquire land used by people of Bristol as open space for unscheduled development; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Moynihan:** Bristol city council made representations, after it was consulted about the proposed vesting of land at St. Anne's road which is likely to be needed for a road junction improvement. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment decided not to proceed with the vesting order but to allow an opportunity for negotiation to see whether the development corporation can acquire the land by agreement.

### Merseyside Development Corporation (Jobs)

52. **Mr Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many jobs have been created within the area covered by the Merseyside development corporation since its inception.

**Mr. Moynihan:** Since the Merseyside development corporation was established, 3,500 permanent jobs have been created in the designated area. The corporation's regeneration programme has also led to on site construction jobs of about 1,000 man years work annually.

### City Waterways

53. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received concerning the cleaning and dredging of city waterways.

**Mr. Howard:** The Department has no record of any recent representations.

### Rents

54. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether his Department has made any assessment of the increase in rents in the private sector following the introduction of market rents for new tenancies in January of this year.

**Mr. Chope:** It is too soon to make such an assessment.

62. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has made any assessment of affordable rent levels in the private and public rented sector.

**Mr. Chope:** Housing Benefit is intended to ensure that assistance is available to households whose rent might otherwise not be affordable.

### First-time Buyers

55. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any further plans to assist first-time buyers.

**Mr. Chope:** Under this Government the number of owner-occupiers has risen dramatically by over 3 million. More people now own their homes than ever before. We do not believe that further general incentives to owner-occupation are necessary.

However, we are funding through the Housing Corporation shared ownership schemes run by housing associations which allow people to enter the housing market by purchasing part of the equity in their homes, and paying rent on the balance.

60. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider making changes to section 52 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 to help local first-time buyers along similar lines to those the Welsh Office has announced it is considering for Wales.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** My right hon. Friend's statement of 3 February at column *433* indicated the basis on which planning authorities in rural areas in England may wish to release small additional sites for development where there is evidence of a local need for low cost housing. The draft planning guidance issued by the Welsh Office on 30 June is on broadly similar lines, but with specific reference to conditions in Wales. It proposes no amendment of section 52.

My right hon. Friends the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Wales issued a consultation paper on 11 July (*Official Report*, column *483*) which invited comments on separate proposals to amend section 52. In that context we shall consider any views on the need for changes to section 52 to facilitate the provision of low cost rural housing. Comments are invited by 11 September.

### Competitive Tendering

56. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to be able to publish figures showing the savings accruing to local authorities as a result of competitive tendering.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The Department will shortly be issuing a questionnaire to authorities seeking information about the outcome of the first round of competition under the Local Government Act 1988, which starts on 1 August of this year. The results of this survey should be available early next year.

### Chlorofluorocarbons

57. **Mr. Tredinnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress he has made in persuading aerosol manufacturers to ban the inessential use of chlorofluorocarbons.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 24 May 1989 to my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) at column *584*.

68. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the United Kingdom to meet the 50 per cent. reduction in chlorofluorocarbons use laid down in the Montreal protocol.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 18 May 1989 to my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford (Dr. Clark) at column *262*.

### Litter

59. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell) of 28 June, *Official Report*, column 485, when he now expects to make an announcement on fixed penalties for littering.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State on 20 July 1989 to my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) at columns 347-48.

### Building and Maintenance (Competition)

61. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from organisations on his proposals to change the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, with respect to competition for building and maintenance work; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) earlier today.

### Emergency Expenditure (Grant Penalty)

64. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received concerning clause 125 of the Local Government and

Housing Bill and the question of grant penalty being applied in the event of emergency expenditure; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I have received a number of representations concerning what is now clause 142 of the Local Government and Housing Bill. One of the features of the new local government finance system is that there will be no link between an authority's spending and the amount of revenue support grant it receives. Expenditure on emergency work will not, therefore, result in any grant penalty.

### Vacant Properties

65. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council properties in the London borough of Wandsworth were empty on 10 July.

**Mr. Chope:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 24 July 1989 by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier).

### City Grant

66. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he takes to ensure that his discussions with developers and local authorities on city grant applications do not conflict with his position as the final authority on planning applications; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moynihan:** City grant applications are not accepted for appraisal unless planning permission for the project has already been granted or is due to be considered shortly by the local planning authority. Projects are discussed and appraised only in relation to the criteria for City grant and, until there is a final determination of planning permission, I do not take a decision on the city grant application.

### Hostels

67. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has developed any proposals to meet the permanent housing needs of residents of hostels and special needs housing projects in England and Wales.

**Mr. Chope:** The increased resources made available by the Government for capital expenditure on housing will enable more subsidised permanent accommodation to be provided, which can be used for residents of hostels and shared housing where appropriate. In addition, the future arrangements for Government support for special needs housing by housing associations are under consideration in consultation with the Housing Corporation, the National Federation of Housing Associations and representatives of the hostels movement.

### Countryside Commission

69. **Mr. Rathbone:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what meetings he has had recently with the chairman of the Countryside Commission; and what matters were discussed.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I have met the chairman of the Countryside Commission, Sir Derek Barber, along with ministerial colleagues, on several occasions this year to discuss issues related to the work of the commission and the development of policies for the countryside.

### Landfill

70. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next intends to review the controls on landfill operations in England and Wales.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** A thorough review of legislation relating to waste management is nearing completion. New legislation, which will include many measures to improve the control of landfills, will be introduced at the earliest opportunity.

### Association of District Councils

71. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the Associtіon of District Councils; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. David Hunt:** My right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State met leaders of the Association of District Councils at the meeting of the Consultative Council on Local Government Finance on Wednesday 12 July. The consultative council discussed the terminology for the new system of local government finance; projections of local authorities' spending in 1990-91; proposals for new standard spending assessments; and arrangements for the future review of standard spending assessments.

### GREA (Barnsley)

73. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the grant related needs assessment for Barnsley metropolitan district council; and whether he will provide extra resources to that authority.

**Mr. David Hunt:** My right hon. Friend the then Minister for Local Government met a delegation from Barnsley metropolitan borough council with the hon. Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) on 29 June. At that meeting, and in a letter subsequently received from the Leader of the council, Barnsley made representations on standard spending assessments, on the overall level of grant and on its own resources. Before taking any decisions on the grant settlement, we shall consider all respresentations made, including those by Barnsley.

### Electricity Generation

74. **Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his assessment of the long-term relative environmental friendliness of the main alternative means of electricity generation.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** No means of electricity generation are entirely free of environmental effects. Both nuclear power and renewable energy sources have a valuable contribution to make to the aim of limiting the emission of environmentally damaging gaseous pollutants and of greenhouse gases, which result from the burning of fossil fuels.

### Planning Appeals

76. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning appeals in the last 12 months for which figures are available have resulted in decisions which are contrary to local plans where these have been in place.

**Mr. Chope:** I regret that this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Marine Nature Reserves

77. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last discussed the status and numbers of marine nature reserves; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North (Mr. Howells) on 28 June 1989 at column *492*. Officials of the Department are in regular contact with NCC on these matters.

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice he has received from the Nature Conservancy Council as to the difficulties experienced in progressing marine nature reserve designations; if he has any plans to review *(a)* the existing consultation procedure or *(b)* section 36 and 37 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** My Department is in close touch with the Nature Conservancy Council on all matters connected with the designation of marine nature reserves, including consultation procedures. There are no plans at present to revise sections 36 and 37 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

### Sports Council

79. **Mr. John Carlisle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the chairman of the Sports Council; and what matters were discussed.

39. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next intends to meet the chairman of the Sports Council; and what subjects he intends to discuss.

**Mr. Moynihan:** My last formal meeting with the chairman of the Sports Council was on 3 July when we discussed the council's corporate plan. We meet at regular intervals to discuss issues relating to sport.

### Data Protection

80. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many poll tax registration forms have been referred to the data protection registrar for alleged breaches of data protection principles.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I understand that the data protection registrar has requested all community charges registration officers to provide him with a copy of the form they are using to compile the community charges register.

### White Paper

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, for each of the last three White Papers issued by his Department, for which legislation has been started, he will state the time elapsed between their publication and the First Readings of any Bills connected with them; and if he will do the same for the last three White Papers issued by his Department prior to May 1979.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** The last three White Papers published by my Department, in which legislation was proposed and has been subsequently started or completed, were "Privatisation of the Water Authorities in England and Wales", "Housing: The Government's Proposals" and "The Conduct of Local Authority Business—The Government Response to the Report of the Widdicombe Committee of Inquiry". These were published in February 1986, September 1987 and July 1988 respectively; and the First Readings of the Water Bill and Local Government and Housing Bill which resulted from them took place in the record of the last Government in this matter, but the information requested should be available in the Library of the House and the *Official Report*.

### River Quality

**Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of United Kingdom rivers are in class 1 of river water quality and what is the comparable percentage figure for the European Community as a whole.

**Mr. Howard:** The 1985 river quality surveys indicated that about 83 per cent. of river lengths in the United Kingdom were classified as being of class 1 (good) quality. Comprehensive information on a comparable basis for other EC member states is not available. However, a study published in 1988 by the water research centre, in reviewing classification schemes across member states, showed that on the basis of comparisons made using the United Kingdom river classification scheme, only 39 per cent. of rivers in the European Community as a whole were of good quality. Only one other member state—Ireland at 84 per cent.—had a greater proportion of "good" quality rivers. A summary of these results is published in the Water Authorities' Association publication "Water Facts 1988".

### 97-107 Shaw Street, Liverpool

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the future of 97-107 Shaw street, Liverpool; and whether he will intervene to prevent the demolition of these properties.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is not aware of any representations following the then Secretary of State's decision on the Liverpool city council order. This decision was issued on 30 March 1989 and the city council has a five-year period within which it must take action.

A total of five statutory and 102 non-statutory objections were received in response to the compulsory purchase order, all of which were considered by my right hon. Friend before he issued his decision.

### Civil Service (Relocation)

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress is being made in his Department's review, in line with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for the further relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the south east; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Around 38 per cent. of the Department of the Environment's staff of approximately 6,000 (excluding the Property Services Agency) are already located outside London, 24 per cent. outside the south east. All other posts have been assessed for relocation potential, and some 1,350 posts have been identified for detailed investigation. Studies covering 320 posts are complete, leading to proposals to move some 90 out of London, which are now being implemented. Studies covering the other posts will be carried out over the next two years or so, as operational requirements allow.

Seventy per cent. of the PSA's staff of 22,800 (including the Crown Suppliers) are already located outside London, 45 per cent. outside the south east. The agency is being restructured to become a more commercial organisation, and the scope for further relocation is being examined through the business planning process.

### Aggregates (Demand)

**Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the demand for aggregates.

**Mr. Chope:** When I announced the publication of MPG6 in March, I said that its purpose was to ensure that the construction industry continues to receive an adequate and steady supply of minerals at the best balance of social, environmental and economic costs; and that there was a need to apply the national and regional guidelines at the mineral planning authority level and that the Government believed that this should be treated as a priority task by the mineral planning authorities and the regional aggregates working parties.

I have now been advised by the national co-ordinating group that the recent and current level of demand for construction aggregates is running at a level substantially higher than that envisaged when MPG6 was prepared. I am also advised that in some parts of the country, the guidelines contained in MPG6 have not yet been fully implemented.

In these circumstances, the Government believe that it is very important that both industry and mineral planning authorities take positive steps to respond to the present situation. In particular both should ensure that the guidance given in MPG6 is implemented as a matter of priority. The following three points are of particular importance.

First, for aggregate minerals the aim should be to provide for the release of land to maintain a stock of permissions (a landbank) for an appropriate local area, sufficient for at least 10 years extraction unless exceptional circumstances prevail. This is not the case in many areas and industry and mineral planning authorities should consider urgently what steps should be taken to make further provision.

Secondly, the guidelines suggested how provision could be made for the period up to 2005. At present rates of consumption it will be needed over a shorter period than that. Authorities should recognise that to maintain landbanks in accordance with MPG6 and to ensure that future demand can be met, this provision may well need to be brought forward and made available at an earlier point in the period.

Thridly, when preparing and altering development plans, mineral planning authorities should have regard to the current situation, and policies should be formulated with an appropriate degree of flexibility.

The Department is making provision for an up-to-date survey of aggregates—AM89. It is important that this should be completed by the end of 1990. At that time we shall also be in a position to take account of such important factors as the results of our current research projects into alternative sources of supply and the planning considerations which affect minerals extraction. In the light of changing circumstances work on a revised forecast will begin soon in order that the results can be taken into account for the next edition of the guidelines.

Finally I would like to reiterate that the Secretaries of State attach importance to the speedy and effective implementation of the policies and guidelines contained in MPG6. These aim to ensure that the needs of society for minerals are satisfied with due regard to the protection of the environment. They look to mineral planning authorities and the industry to achieve this and they will have regard to this statement in considering development plans, planning applications and appeals.

I am drawing this statement to the attention of all mineral planning authorities and to the planning inspectorate and I am asking that national co-ordinating group to monitor the situation and provide a progress report in six months' time.

### Landfill Sites (Harmful Gases)

**Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to issue further policy guidance about planning powers in relation to landfill sites which may be generating harmful gases; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friends the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Wales have today published a circular "Landfill Sites: Development Control" (Doe circular 17/89, Welsh Office circular 38/89). Copies of which will be placed in the Library.

The circular, which takes account of comments on a draft issued last December, gives further advice to local authorities about the use of their planning powers in relation to landfill sites in England and Wales which may be generating harmful gases.

### Polymer Modified Bitumens

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those city councils who specify polymer modified bitumens.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** This information is not collected by the Department.

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies he has made of the environmental improvement to the atmosphere that would be achieved if county council surveyors specified polymer modified bitumens.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Warren Spring laboratory, on behalf of the Department, is assessing the emissions of volatile organic compounds to atmosphere and the options for their control. Work on unmodified, thermal and blown bitumens is not yet complete.

### Water Authorities (Advertising)

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the cost of the Yorkshire water board's advertising annually from 1979 to 1989;

(2) what is the cost of the water authorities advertising in the current financial year both in total throughout the country and by region.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** These are questions for the individual water authorities concerned.

### Noisy Parties

**Mr. Cartwright:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he plans to take any steps to strengthen the powers of the police to deal with complaints about noisy late night parties.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The police have no powers to act against noise nuisance from premises. The Control of Pollution Act 1974 provides local authorities with adequate powers to control such nuisance.

### Shellfish Farms

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how shellfish structures or associated shore-based developments are classified under the planning system; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what powers he has to control the siting of shellfish farms and associated shore-based structures; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** The breeding and keeping of livestock (which can include fish and shellfish) for the production of food falls within the definition of "agriculture" in section 290(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971. Class A of part 6 of schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988 grants permitted development rights for the carrying out on agricultural land of building works or any excavation or engineering operations reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture, subject to a range of conditions. In national parks and some adjacent areas the exercise of some of these rights is subject to approval by the local planning authority.

Class C of part 6 grants additional permitted development rights to carry out operations to construct fishponds or other engineering operations on agricultural land for the purposes of a fish or shellfish farming business registered under the Diseases of Fish Act 1983, again subject to a range of conditions. Any fish or shellfish farming development that does not satisfy the conditions of part 6 requires specific planning permisson. The Department's consultation paper on possible new permitted development rights in the countryside, issued on 8 May, invited views on whether it would be desirable to curtail permitted development rights for fish farming in national parks. Responses to this consultation paper are now being considered.

### Shooting Rights

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list *(a)* instructions, *(b)* advice or *(c)* requests he has given to the Nature Conservancy Council, or other bodies, concerning the prohibition of or making agreements regarding shooting rights in environmentally sensitive areas together with the relevant dates; what advice he sought or received from bodies with relevant interests; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** There is agreement between the Department and the NCC that traditional country rights and uses of land should be interfered with only where they are in conflict with conservation interests.

### Liverpool City Council (Employees)

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the number of black people employed by the Liverpool city council, *(a)* at the latest date and *(b)* in 1980.

**Mr. Moynihan:** This information is not separately distinguishable in statistics held centrally.

### Information

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the assembly and dissemination of environmental information.

**Mr. Patten:** I am concerned at the tendency for factual environmental information to be treated as political statements. I am therefore exploring ways of ensuring that objective assessments of environmental issues are taken out of political dispute.

### Environmental Risk (Advice)

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will establish an independent and authoritative national agency for monitoring and advising on environmental risk and regulatory performance.

**Mr. Patten:** Effective pollution control is best promoted through organisations tailor-made to regulate specific issues such as the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution and local pollution control agencies. There is no need for a new national agency.

### Hazardous Waste

**Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the Government are going to respond to the fourth report of the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee on hazardous waste disposal.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** We are today publishing a full response to the Committee's report. We are pleased to note that there are many points on which the Committee support the Government's present policies and proposals for legislative change. In particular both the Government and the Committee have expressed concern over the waste disposal control framework, delays by local authorities in completing waste disposal plans, landfill gas management and the control of imports. These are all matters on which we have already made progress.

We could not accept the Committee's recommendations on certain issues such as the registration of hazardous waste producers and statutory regional groupings of waste disposal authorities. Our response has included the reasons.

We welcome the opportunity the Committee's fourth report has provided for discussing the important issues. The Government have made advance towards solving the problems and improving the system of control since the Committee last reported in 1981.

### Rate Support Grant (Calderdale)

**Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of the total rates in Calderdale was represented by the rate support grant in each year from 1979 to 1988.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 10 April 1989]:* The percentage of Calderdale's expenditure, as defined for the purposes of calculating grant, which is represented by rate support grant in each year from 1981 to 1988 is as follows:

| | *Per cent.* |
|---|---|
| 1981-82 | 71 |
| 1982-83 | 65 |
| 1983-84 | 68 |
| 1984-85 | 67 |
| 1985-86 | 67 |
| 1986-87 | 56 |
| 1987-88 | 59 |
| 1988-89 | 56 |

It is not possible to provide information for 1979-80 and 1980-81 in the form requested, as the rate support grant system used prior to 1981-82 did not separately identify grant paid in respect of districts and counties.

### Recycling

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he is taking to encourage the recycling of *(a)* used batteries, *(b)* household chemical wastes and *(c)* cloth; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* The Government encourage recycling whenever it makes economic and environmental sense.

Many batteries are already recycled. For example, some 80 per cent. of all lead acid automotive batteries are fully reclaimed. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will be considering how to respond to the proposed European Community directive on batteries.

Advice on the disposal of awkward household wastes was published in 1974 by HMSO. This includes guidance on chemical waste reclamation.

The recycling of textiles is a matter in the first instance for industry, which will encourage the recovery of all textiles for which there is a viable market.

### Bottle Banks

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the ratio of bottle banks to head of population for all the European countries for which figures are available.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 6 February 1989 to the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) at col. *518*.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Chris Patten** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* My Department contributes to the Government policy of creating a climate in which small businesses can flourish, in particular by simplifying and removing unnecessary controls on them. The major deregulation initiatives carried through and in progress are set out in the White Paper "Releasing Enterprise" (Cm. 512). They include substantial changes to the planning system, the development of integrated pollution control, and the reform of the building regulations, all of which simplify procedures and remove unnecessary burdens on businesses of all sizes. Separate information on small businesses is not available.

### Water Authorities

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to use those statutory powers available to him to prosecute water authorities which do not comply with EEC directives.

**Mr. Howard** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* Where my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has enforcement powers relevant to implementation of EC directives, he will consider using them in appropriate circumstances.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will bring up to date the figures given in his written reply dated 16 December 1986, *Official Report,* column *438,* concerning the specified rate of return on net assets for each water authority, together with a forecast for 1990-91; and if he will include figures showing (i) the net assets in 1987-88 in each case, (ii) the realised profit in 1987-88 in percentage and cash terms, (iii) the corresponding forecast for the current financial year, (iv) the target rate of return after privatisation and (v) the estimated effect the target rate would have on the cash margin in the current financial year.

**Mr. Howard:** The water authorities' performance against their specified return on assets is set out in their published annual accounts for 1987-88, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House.

Copies of their unaudited accounts for 1988-89 were placed in the Library of the House on 6 July. Copies of their final reports and accounts, which will contain a statement of their performance against the specified return on assets will be laid before Parliament in August.

No target rates of return have been set for 1989-90 or for subsequent years.

### Anti-abortion Rally, Westminster

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the use of Abingdon street gardens, Westminster, for an anti-abortion gathering, for the purposes of filming and sound recording, on 27 and 28 June, was authorised under the appropriate byelaws; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* The Department's press office facilities officer granted written permission to the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children for a photocall with Members of

Parliament, at Abingdon street gardens, Westminster, on 27 and 28 June under the Royal and Other Parks and Gardens Regulations 1977, section 4, paragraph (7) and (16).

The permit generally covered filming, photography and sound recording.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Thursday 27 July 1989*

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Prison Dog Handlers

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the prison department has withdrawn payment of the grooming or care allowance to those prison officer dog handlers obliged to care for the dogs at home in their own time.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Prison officer dog handlers used to receive one hour plain time overtime per day to cover the time spent grooming, exercising and feeding the dog.

Fresh start working abolished overtime beginning in 1987. We accept the need to recompense dog handlers for their continuing responsibility for the care and maintenance of their dog and have made two offers to the Prison Officers' Association, both of which have been rejected. Negotiations should be resumed in the near future.

### Conservative Party Conference 1988

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Sussex on the number of individuals upon whom he has records on computer relating to the 1988 Conservative party conference; for how long it is proposed to keep them; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** No. This is an operational matter for the chief constable.

### Immigration

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any circumstance applies, which is neither exceptional nor compelling under his guidelines, but which has arisen because of *(a)* a mistake or *(b)* a misrepresentation of a relevant fact by an immigration officer, resulting in a proposed removal, in which he will accept representations from right hon. or hon. Members; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether (i) a mistake or (ii) a misrepresentation of a relevant fact is an exceptional and compelling circumstance enabling representations to him from right hon. or hon. Members.

**Mr. Renton:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to his previous question, on 16 June 1989 at column 565.

### Political Asylum

**Mr. Cartwright:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the Immigration Service Union about the granting of exceptional leave to remain in the United Kingdom to political asylum seekers as a result of his Department's backlog criteria; and what has been his response.

**Mr. Renton:** Officials in the refugee unit have corresponded with the metropolitan liaison officer at the union's national executive committee, answering inquiries about a range of issues relating to asylum procedures, including the granting of exceptional leave to remain.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions, including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** From the beginning of the 1988-89 parliamentary Session to 26 July 1989, 107 statutory instruments were issued by the Home Office, of which 10 were subject to affirmative resolution, and 44 to the negative resolution, procedure. For the four preceding parliamentary Sessions, I refer the hon. Member to the respective Journals of the House.

### Prisons (Pin-up Pictures)

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether all offensive pin-ups have now been removed from prison offices, particularly from rule 43 units for sex offenders.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Circular instruction 12/1989 (a copy of which is in the Library) advised governors in March this year that regional directors would be consulting and issuing guidance on the action which should be taken to prevent the display of offensive material in public and shared areas of prisons. This work is being carried forward, but information is not available centrally on the present position in individual establishments.

### Prisons (Drug Addicts)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the available facilities in gaols in England and Wales for the treatment of known drug addicts; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** As the hon. Member is aware, the possibility of history of drugs misuse is one of the factors medical officers enquire into during the course of their examination of inmates being received into prison custody. The nature and extent of medical help offered is determined by the medical officer's clinical assessment of the individual case.

The policy statement and guidelines, copies of which are in the Library, referred to in answer to the question from the hon. Member on 9 February at column *760* describe the framework for the development of help for drug misusers in prison.

### Prisoners (Ethnic Minorities)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the percentage of male and female prisoners in England and Wales who derived from ethnic minority origin in *(a)* 1985, *(b)* 1986, *(c)* 1987, *(d)* 1988 and *(e)* at the latest available date; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the total number of female prisoners currently being held under sentence or on remand in a gaol in England and Wales who derive from ethnic minority origin; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Information for each of the years 1985-88 was published in table 6 of "The Prison Population in 1988" (Home Office statistical bulletin, issue 12/89), a copy of which is in the Library. The latest readily available information is given in the table.

*Population in Prison Service establishments on 31 March 1989: by ethnic origin, and sex*

| | *White* | *West Indian, Guyanese, African* | *Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi* | *Chinese, Arab, Mixed origin* | *Other, not recorded (including refusals)* | *All persons in Prison Service establishments* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Males | 39,204 | 4,812 | 1,287 | 877 | 1,226 | 47,406 |
| Females | 1,202 | 341 | 29 | 63 | 139 | 1,774 |
| Total | 40,406 | [illegible]53 | 1,316 | 940 | 1,365 | 49,180 |
| *Females by type of prisoner* | | | | | | |
| Remand | 292 | 84 | 4 | 19 | 77 | 476 |
| Sentenced | 906 | 253 | 25 | 44 | 61 | 1,289 |
| Civil | 4 | 4 | — | — | 1 | 9 |

## Prisons (Heroin)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the total number of heroin finds in gaols in England and Wales for each of the last two years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** For the years to 31 May 1988 and 31 May 1989 there were, respectively, 17 and 31 reported finds of heroin.

Measures to prevent and detect illicit drugs are kept continuously under review.

## "Custody and the Community"

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those organisations and individuals who responded to his Department's document entitled "Custody and the Community" published in July 1988; if he will indicate which of those listed organisations and individuals favoured a supervision and restriction order, and which favoured the creation of a new sentence that combines probation and community service; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** I have nothing to add to the replies given to questions from the hon. Member on 2 May at column *31* and from the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) on 22 June at column *187*.

## Female Prisoners (Drug Offences)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of female prisoners currently being held under sentence or on remand in a gaol in England and Wales whose area of origin is either west Africa, Latin America or Pakistan, and who have been convicted or are charged with a drug-related offence; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The offences with which remand prisoners are charged are not recorded centrally until the completion of court proceedings. On 30 June 1988, the latest date for which information is readily available, about 90 females serving custodial sentences in prison service establishments for drugs offences were known to be citizens of Pakistan or west African or Latin American countries.

## Prisoners (Drug Users)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of prisoners currently remanded or sentenced in gaols in England and Wales who are known to be drug users; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The number of inmates reported by medical officers as having some degree of dependence on drugs at the time of their reception into custody is included in the medical statistics on page 78 of the report on the work of the prison service April 1987-March 1988 (Cm. 516) a copy of which is in the Library. They show that 2,628 were so reported during that year.

## Prisoners (Drugs Offences)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of prisoners in England and Wales who have been sentenced to a period of custody for a drug-related offence; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The latest readily available information, for 30 June 1988, was published in table 8 of "The Prison Population in 1988" (Home Office statistical bulletin, issue 12/89), a copy of which is in the Library.

## Prisoners (Suicide Attempts)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of prisoners who attempted to commit suicide during 1987-88 in gaols in England and Wales who were known to be drug addicts; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** This information is not available.

## Prisoners (Suicides)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of prisoners who committed suicide during 1987-88 in England and Wales who were known to be drug addicts; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given on 25 July to a question from the hon. Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle) at column *613*.

### Contaminated Goods (Prosecutions)

**Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have been initiated in accordance with section 38 of the Public Order Act 1986 concerning the contamination of or interference with goods with intention of causing public alarm or anxiety; how many persons have been convicted *(a)* on indictment and *(b)* summarily; and what penalties were imposed.

**Mr. John Patten:** Information available to me, which may be incomplete, shows no persons prosecuted in 1987 under section 38 of the Public Order Act 1986. Figures for 1988 are not yet available.

### CS Gas and Water Cannons

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is considering use of *(a)* water cannons and *(b)* CS gas by police forces; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Following an evaluation of water cannon, my hon. Friend the Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg) announced on 18 March 1987 at column 529 in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) that it was not proposed to add water cannon to the range of equipment available to the police. That remains the position.

As the House was informed at the time, plastic baton rounds and CS equipment for use in dealing with serious public disorder were made available to police forces in Great Britain following the riots in 1981. My right hon. Friend announced the arrangements for supply of this equipment to police forces and the issue of guidelines covering its use in answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) on 19 May 1986 at columns 15 and 16.

### Aid

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all countries which received assistance from his Department during the past 12 months.

**Mr. Hurd:** We have provided assistance to a number of countries in a variety of fields including the fight against drugs; training of police officers, prison officers and immigration officers; forensic science service assistance and training; and the provision of equipment.

The countries we have assisted in this way include Bermuda, Colombia, the Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Finland, France, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Lesotho, Oman, Pakistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey and the United States of America. In addition, one of Her Majesty's inspectors of fire service led a small team of London fire brigade officers to help in the aftermath of the earthquake in Armenia. A full list of the countries which we have assisted could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### London Fire Stations (Closures)

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has regarding proposals to close six London fire stations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** I understand that London fire brigade's chief fire officer has recently completed a review of fire risk categorisation and standards of fire cover. The chief fire officer has yet to present his report and findings to the London fire and civil defence authority. Her Majesty's chief inspector of fire services was consulted by the chief fire officer about the methodology used in the review.

A fire authority which proposes to close a fire station is required to seek my approval to the closure under section 19 of the Fire Servcie Act 1947. No application for approval has yet been made. I remain committed to maintaining nationally recommended standards of fire cover.

### Police National Computer

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any private limited company has ever had access to police files or to the police national computer.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** No non-Government organisations have ever had direct access to the Police National Computer, but arrangements exist for information from police records, including records held on PNC, to be disclosed to selected organisations where this is clearly in the public interest. Access to force records is a matter for chief officers.

### Tamils

**Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the Tamils referred to in his answer of 3 December 1987, *Official Report*, column 682 have *(a)* since left the United Kingdom, *(b)* been given leave to enter and *(c)* have their cases still under consideration.

**Mr. Renton:** I shall write to the hon. Member and deposit a copy of the reply in the Library.

### Football Matches (Arrests)

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the total arrests at, and ejections from, football matches in England and Wales in each of the last five seasons; and of these how many were *(a)* women, and *(b)* persons aged 65 years or over; and what information he has as to comparable statistics for Scottish League clubs over the same period.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

### Committal Procedure

**Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any proposals for reform of committal procedure.

**Mr. Hurd:** I am placing in the Library a copy of a consultation paper which my Department is issuing today, jointly with the Lord Chancellor's Department, on possible reform of committal proceedings. The purpose of the paper is to obtain comments from practitioners and others on the suitability, practicability and implications for resource use of a possible new scheme to replace existing arrangements for mode of trial procedure and committal. Comments are requested by 3 November. In the light of the comments received, we shall consider further whether and, if so, how to bring forward detailed proposals for legislative reform.

### Parking

**Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in his consideration of the report of the parking enforcement working party.

**Mr. Hurd:** We have given careful consideration to the report's conclusions. We have decided that no change should be made at present to the operation of parking enforcement outside London. The problems of parking enforcement in London raise many complex issues, to which we are giving urgent consideration.

### Durham Prison

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many strip searches have been carried out on women in Her Majesty's prison, Durham, in each of the last six months; and how many forbidden or dangerous items have been found.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Comprehensive records of strip searches are available only in respect of category A women prisoners, of whom there were four in Durham during the last six months. These records show that from 1 January 1989 to 30 June 1989 each category A prisoner was strip-searched 2·4 times per month on average. No unauthorised article was found.

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has received the report on Durham H wing by Anthony Lester, QC and Dr. Pamela Taylor, commissioned by Women in Prison, Prison Reform Trust, National Council for Civil Liberties and the Howard League; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** We have received the report and its recommendations are currently being considered.

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will authorise an increase in the amount of time allowed for exercise to women prisoners in Her Majesty's prison, Durham.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I will consider this in the light of the recent report by Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons.

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average number of prisoners who are employed; and what is the average working week, in Durham H wing.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Of the 37 women held in H wing of Her Majesty's prison, Durham, 36 are employed. The average working week is 25 hours.

### Women Prisoners

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will establish a full Home Office review of women prisoners' needs, environment and management.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The nature and requirements of the female prison population are already kept under regular review.

### Phan Ngoc Lan

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Phan Ngoc Lan, a Vietnamese refugee, wife of Di Quang Tri of 6 Gosport way, North Peckham estate, SE15, will be admitted to the United Kingdom from China.

**Mr. Renton:** Instructions for the issue of a visa have now been sent to the British embassy in Peking. Arrangements will be made through UNHCR as soon as possible for Phan Ngoc Lan to travel to the United Kingdom.

### Litter

**Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions for leaving litter there have been in each of the past three years *(a)* in the borough of Taunton Dene, *(b)* in the London borough of Lambeth and *(c)* in England.

**Mr. John Patten:** The information available to the Home Office, which may be incomplete, is given in the table. Figures for 1988 are not yet available.

*Persons proceeded against for litter offences*

| | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Taunton Dene, petty sessional division | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Lambeth, petty sessional division | — | — | — |
| England | 1,354 | 1,392 | 1,671 |

## WALES

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** The information is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Letters received from hon. Members during January 1989 | 257 |
| Letters sent to hon. Members during January 1989 | 246 |
| Letters received from hon. Members during the whole of this session up to 1 July 1989 | 2,233 |
| Letters sent to hon. Members during the whole of this session up to 1 July 1989 | 2,169 |

### Inward Investment

**Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he intends to publish the Government's response to the report by the Welsh Affairs Select Committee on inward investment into Wales.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** I am pleased to announce that the response has been published today.

### Rural Initiatives

**Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has reached a decision on the future of the DRIVE grant scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** The evaluation of the DRIVE grant scheme has demonstrated that the scheme has made a positive contribution to overcoming the problems of rural Wales. I have therefore decided that the scheme will be re-introduced from 1 September and will continue to be operated by the Development Board for Rural Wales and the Welsh Development Agency. The relaunched scheme will be competitive and will have the aim of increasing private sector investment on economic projects which create jobs and help to overcome deprivation in rural Wales. The scheme is expected to run until 1994-95 with up to £5 million of grant assistance available, and the scheme has the potential to generate more than £20 million of private sector investment and create over 1,000 jobs.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** The total number of statutory instruments issued by my Department from November 1984 to 26 July 1989, for each calendar year, is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| November and December 1984 | 20 |
| 1985 | 96 |
| 1986 | 110 |
| 1987 | 80 |
| 1988 | 83 |
| 1989 | 48 |

Total figures are not readily available for each parliamentary Session.

The number of negative and affirmative statutory instruments issued by my Department for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions is detailed in the following table:

| | *Negative* | *Affirmative* |
|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 8 | — |
| 1985-86 | 2 | — |
| 1986-87 | 12 | 13 |
| 1987-88 | 14 | 4 |
| 1988-89 | 6 | — |

These figures are in respect of statutory instruments issued solely by my Department relating only to Wales and do not include statutory instruments made jointly which cover England and Wales.

### National Curriculum

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many national curriculum documents he has despatched to local education authority schools by heading and by volume; what is the estimated cost of *(a)* production and *(b)* despatch; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The following documents in connection with the national curriculum have been distributed to local education authorities and schools by the Welsh Office. Most of the documents are produced and distributed by the Department and costs cannot be separately identified:

Circular 14/89: National Curriculum Mathematics and Science Orders.

Circular 15/89: The School Curriculum and Assessment.

Circular 32/89: Modern Foreign Languages in the National Curriculum.

Draft Circular and draft Regulations: National Curriculum Temporary Exceptions for Individual Pupils.

Draft Circular and draft Regulations: Information for Parents.

Draft Regulations: Exemptions from English at Key Stage 1.

Circular letter to Headteachers: National Curriculum Implementation.

Guidance Note: LEA Training Grant Scheme and ESG —National Curriculum Development Plans.

Education (National Curriculum) (Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study in Mathematics) Order 1989. Preceded by the Proposals of the Secretaries of State and consultation documents.

Education (National Curriculum) (Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study in Science) Order 1989. Preceded by the Proposals of the Secretaries of State and consultation documents.

Education (National Curriculum) (Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study in English) Order 1989. Preceded by the Proposals of the Secretaries of State and consultation documents.

Design and Technology for ages 5-16. Proposals of the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the Secretary of State for Wales.

English for ages 5-16. Proposals of the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the Secretary of State for Wales.

Welsh for ages 5-16. Proposals of the Secretary of State for Wales.

TVEI and the National Curriculum in Wales: The Way Forward.
Teachers Guide to the National Curriculum.
National Curriculum: Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT)—report.
English for ages 5-11: booklet.
English and the National Curriculum Key Stage 1: booklet.

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he will take to assist those schools and local education authorities who are having difficulty in obtaining in good time national curriculum documents; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The distribution of national curriculum documents from the Department to schools normally takes place through local education authorities but some urgent documents have been distributed to local education authorities and all schools directly. Both methods have involved tight delivery schedules and material has been distributed as quickly as possible. Officials continue to seek improvements in the efficiency and speed of the distribution network.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1988-89.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** The amount spent on official hospitality in 1988-89 was £28,693·89.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### Central America

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance in terms of *(a)* programme and *(b)* value was made available in 1988-89 to *(a)* El Salvador, *(b)* Honduras, *(c)* Guatemala, *(d)* Costa Rica, *(e)* Panama, *(f)* Nicaragua, *(g)* Cuba, and *(h)* Belize; and what is projected for 1989-90.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Figures for the financial year 1988-89 are not yet available for all these countries. Latest provisional figures of bilateral aid in the calendar year 1988 are as follows:

| | *£ thousand* |
|---|---|
| El Salvador | 154 |
| Honduras | 1,212 |
| Guatemala | 4 |
| Costa Rica | 1,550 |
| Panama | 988 |
| Nicaragua | 180 |
| Cuba | 2 |
| Belize | 3,176 |

This aid was in the form of technical co-operation, apart from:

*(a)* Commonwealth Development Corporation investment of £817,000 in Costa Rica and £340,000 in Belize;

*(b)* Capital aid of £1,547,000 for Belize and £615,000 for Honduras;

*(c)* Financial aid under the aid and trade provision of £854,000 for Panama; and £47,000 for Belize;

*(d)* £20,000 provided to Costa Rica and £180,000 to Nicaragua for relief measures following Hurricane Joan; further relief was provided in 1989;

*(e)* £140,000 provided to El Salvador for refugee relief.

These figures do not include our contribution through the European Community or to development projects jointly funded with British voluntary agencies.

In 1989-90 we expect our aid to the region to remain at about the same level.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Jurors

**Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Attorney-General (1) if he will increase the levels of compensation paid for loss of earnings to those on jury service;

(2) what plans he has to increase the level of compensation paid for loss of earnings to self-employed people on jury service.

**The Solicitor-General:** The financial loss allowance, which may be paid to cover loss of earnings, was increased by a little less than nine per cent. on 3 July last.

Where the period over which earnings or benefit are lost or additional expense is incurred is not more than four hours in any day, the maximum sum now payable is £16·15; where the period is more than four hours, the sum is £32·35; and where a juror has served on more than 10 days, for each day over the tenth the sum may exceed that specified but shall not exceed £64·70. These limits are reviewed annually in accordance with Treasury guidelines. All such sums are tax free. No distinction is made between those who are self-employed and others.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Delors Report

Q13. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the Delors report on economic and monetary union.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes; a considerable number from a wide variety of organisations and individuals.

### Horticulture

Q25. **Mr. Marland:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the horticultural industry.

**The Prime Minister:** Since 1 April 1989 I have received representations regarding the horticultural industry on the subject of pesticides, research and development and the Apple and Pear Development Council.

### United Nations Secretary General

Q42. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to meet the Secretary General of the United Nations.

**The Prime Minister:** I last met the Secretary General on 14 June. I have no plans for a further meeting in the immediate future.

### Quality of Goods

Q47. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the quality of goods produced in the United Kingdom.

**The Prime Minister:** I am frequently reminded of the importance to business of consistently reaching high standards of quality in order to succeed in competitive markets. I strongly support British business in its efforts to achieve this, and the Department of Trade and Industry provides help to industry in this area through its quality and design initiatives.

### Army

Q49. **Mr. Browne:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the Army.

**The Prime Minister:** I regularly receive representations regarding the Army.

### Unemployment

Q59. **Mr. Leigh:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the level of unemployment.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a number of representations about the level of unemployment, which has shown a sustained fall over the past 35 months.

### Eastern Europe (Democracy)

Q79. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on Britain's role in assisting the achievement of democracy in eastern Europe.

**The Prime Minister:** We believe in giving practical encouragement to the growth of democracy in eastern

Europe. For example, we have offered Poland £25 million over five years to help develop the expertise needed to run democratic institutions and a market-based economy. I am glad that the Paris summit decided to co-ordinate such efforts internationally. I welcome the seminar for Hungarian politicians being organised this week by the Great Britain/east Europe centre and look forward to further such ventures. We are ready to help other east European countries which embark on the road to democracy.

### Health Care

Q92. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Prime Minister what representations she has received regarding the Government's achievements in expanding health care.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received a number of such representations. Since 1979, the level of resources for the NHS has increased by 40 per cent. in real terms and gross annual capital expenditure now stands at £1·25 billion. The numbers of those providing care has also increased, with 14,000 more doctors and dentists and 67,000 more nurses and midwives. There are now 1·5 million more in-patient cases treated in a year, 3·75 million more out-patient attendances and over 500,000 extra day cases. Considerable improvements have been made on screening, transplants and infant mortality. The Government have received much support for their commitment and record on expanding and improving the level of health care and for their proposals to build on these successes to create a service which is even more responsive to the needs of local communities whilst allowing patients improved choice.

### Litter

Q107. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a further statement on the Government's proposals for dealing with the litter problem.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government announced on 20 July our proposals for legislation to combat the menace of litter.

### Environmental Protection

Q110. **Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Prime Minister what consideration she has given to an environmental protection commission, similar to the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States of America, to co-ordinate the activities of various Government Departments on green issues.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government considered the case for an environmental protection agency or commission in their reply to the second report from the Environment Committee on toxic waste (Cm. 679). The Government do not accept the need for structural changes.

Q121. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Prime Minister what action she is taking to co-ordinate the work of Government Departments on environmental policies.

**The Prime Minister:** Regular contacts between Departments, at all levels, ensure that the Government's policies on environmental issues are fully co-ordinated.

### Common Fisheries Policy

Q119. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to raise the common fisheries policy for discussion at the next European Council meeting.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

### Secondary Education

Q129. **Sir Hugh Rossi:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding secondary education.

**The Prime Minister:** I have not received any recent representations about secondary education. The introduction of the national curriculum from autumn this year will help to improve the standards achieved by maintained secondary schools.

### Steel Industry

Q131. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the steel industry.

**The Prime Minister:** No.

### House of Lords (Abolition)

Q145. **Mrs. Roe:** To ask the Prime Minister what representations she has received seeking the abolition of the House of Lords.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government receive representations from time to time advocating abolition or reform of the House of Lords.

### Higher Education

Q157. **Sir Anthony Grant:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding higher education.

**The Prime Minister:** I receive many representations on education matters, including the Government's policies for higher education, which are aimed at increasing participation beyond the record levels already achieved.

### Administration of Justice

Q169. **Mr. Malins:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has received recent representations regarding the administration of justice.

**The Prime Minister:** I have received representations about a number of matters relating to the administration of justice.

### Biggin Hill (Selection Centre)

Q209. **Sir John Hunt:** To ask the Prime Minister what response she has made to the petition handed in to No. 10 Downing street on 14 July, with regard to the proposed closure of the RAF officer and aircrew selection centre at Biggin Hill.

**The Prime Minister:** I noted the petition carefully and I readily understand the strong feelings of those who wish to see the RAF's historic links with Biggin Hill retained.

Nevertheless, the RAF ceased flying from Biggin Hill in 1959 and the officer and aircrew selection centre is now the only unit based at the station. The decision to transfer this unit to the RAF college, Cranwell, was taken in the interests of efficiency, economy and the present day needs of the Royal Air Force. The memorial chapel will be retained at Biggin Hill as a permanent tribute to the station's role in the Battle of Britain.

### Ministerial Responsibilities

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** To ask the Prime Minister what is the target date for the issue of the Cabinet Office's list of ministerial responsibilities encompassing the recent ministerial changes.

**The Prime Minister:** As soon as possible during the summer recess.

### Ministerial Correspondence

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she will remind Ministers to ensure that during the holiday period their private offices do not omit to send hon. Members a copy as well as an original of all ministerial letters.

**The Prime Minister** My right hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury has written to Ministers accordingly.

### Retired Ministers

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Prime Minister what will be the total amount paid to Ministers retired from ministerial office following her latest announcements; and if any such Minister will not receive compensation.

**The Prime Minister:** Severance payments arising from the resignations announced on 24-25 July total £41,929. These will be made to outgoing Lords Ministers under the provisions of section 13 of the Parliamentary Pension Act 1984. The severance scheme recommended by the TSRB for Commons Ministers has not yet been implemented.

### Engagements

**Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**Mr. Stern:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 27 July.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

## ENERGY

### Petrol Prices

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the average sterling equivalent pump price per litre of premium grade petrol over the first four months of 1989 *(a)* excluding retailers' margin and Government taxes and duties and *(b)* including all Government taxes and duties in each European Community member state.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** The Department of Energy does not have data on retailers' margins. The figures from the Commission of the European Communities on the pump price (in pence per litre) of premium grade petrol in each of the member states, over the first four months of 1989 is as follows:

| | *Excluding Tax and Duty* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *January* | *February* | *March* | *April* |
| Belgium | 12·41 | 13·11 | 13·22 | 16·72 |
| Denmark | 12·61 | 13·37 | 13·93 | 16·58 |
| West Germany | 11·11 | 12·08 | 12·32 | 16·49 |
| Greece | 9·85 | 10·38 | 11·05 | 14·00 |
| Spain | 12·26 | 12·87 | 13·31 | 14·66 |
| France | 10·24 | 10·34 | 10·90 | 13·75 |
| Eire | 14·36 | 14·11 | 14·49 | 14·61 |
| Italy | 12·34 | 12·37 | 13·03 | 15·73 |
| Luxembourg | 12·85 | 12·85 | 14·02 | 15·74 |
| Netherlands | 12·86 | 13·55 | 14·53 | 17·96 |
| Portugal | 13·68 | 14·32 | 14·28 | 15·62 |
| United Kingdom | 11·86 | 12·86 | 13·34 | 15·33 |

| | *Including Tax and Duty* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *January* | *February* | *March* | *April* |
| Belgium | 37·44 | 38·32 | 38·82 | 43·41 |
| Denmark | 52·06 | 52·83 | 54·01 | 57·76 |
| West Germany | 35·36 | 36·47 | 37·11 | 42·09 |
| Greece | 28·42 | 28·25 | 28·47 | 28·44 |
| Spain | 36·25 | 36·52 | 39·96 | 37·40 |
| France | 44·63 | 44·89 | 46·19 | 49·95 |
| Eire | 48·10 | 48·65 | 49·63 | 50·06 |
| Italy | 56·80 | 56·95 | 57·66 | 58·25 |
| Luxembourg | 30·70 | 30·71 | 32·28 | 34·36 |
| Netherlands | 42·58 | 43·44 | 44·95 | 49·28 |
| Portugal | 44·51 | 44·51 | 44·94 | 45·23 |
| United Kingdom | 37·14 | 38·30 | 38·85 | 41·14 |

### Efficiency

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what progress has been made towards achieving the aim of 20 per cent. energy saving in the United Kingdom economy, as identified by the Energy Efficiency Office.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** When the Energy Efficiency Office was established in 1983, we believed that the nation could improve its energy efficiency by 20 per cent. leading to savings of £7 billion in our annual energy bill. At our last calculation in December 1987, the UK had so improved its energy efficiency as to be saving some £2.3 billion per year at 1983 prices. At this rate, the £7 billion or 20 per cent. saving is likely to be achieved by 1995.

### On-shore Licensing

**Mr. Maples:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any plans to announce a third round of onshore licensing.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** I have today placed in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of a notice inviting applications for landward exploration licences in a third round of onshore licensing. The notice will be published in the *London* and *Edinburgh Gazettes* at the earliest possible opportunity. Applications will be invited for any currently unlicensed areas in the United Kingdom within the boundaries defined by the Petroleum (Production) (Landward Areas) Regulations 1984, and in accordance with the guidance given in the *Gazette* notice. In addition, holders of old-style exploration licences (XLs) will be allowed to convert them to new exploration licences provided that they are ready to carry out a drilling programme.

Successful applicants will be offered landward exploration licences under the terms of the Petroleum (Production) (Landward Areas) Regulations 1984. The licences will be offered for a non-extendible term of six years and will entitle the licensee to carry out seismic survey and deep drilling work, subject to the need to obtain consent from the appropriate mineral planning authorities.

Application forms and guidance notes will be available from my Department. Applicants will be expected to offer a suitable programme of exploration, which will generally involve both seismic survey and drilling work, designed to cover the whole of the area they are applying for.

Applications will be returnable on 17 and 18 October 1989. I hope to be able to announce awards within a few months thereafter.

## Renewable Energy Sources

**Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will estimate the contribution of renewable energy sources to Britain's energy needs in the years 1995, 2000 and 2010.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The most recent estimates of the potential contribution from renewable energy sources were published in energy paper 55, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House. The Government intend to set orders for up to 600 MW of renewable energy capacity during the 1990s, in addition to whatever is contracted by the end of this year under the non-fossil fuel obligation in the Electricity Bill. The proposed levels of these special tranches will be kept under review to ensure that when the obligations are laid they take fully into account the potential availability of renewable capacity.

## Coal Mining

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, what assessment he has made of the impact on the local economy, of the rundown in the deep coal mining industry of *(a)* the south Yorkshire and *(b)* the north Yorkshire areas.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** While no such specific assessments have been carried out, my Department helps to alleviate the difficulties caused by colliery closures through its funding of British Coal Enterprise Ltd.

## Coal-fired Power Stations

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the coal-fired power stations operating in the United Kingdom, their opening date and anticipated closing date.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** This is an operational matter for the CEGB. I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Member direct.

## Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wakeham:** The number of statutory instruments made by Ministers in my Department during each of the last five parliamentary Sessions, including the present Session to date, is:

| *Parliamentary Session* | *Total* | *Negative* | *Affirmative* | *Not required to be laid before Parliament* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 195 | 4 | 3 | 188 |
| 1985-86 | 146 | 10 | 2 | 134 |
| 1986-87 | 56 | 6 | 2 | 48 |
| 1987-88 | 89 | 16 | 5 | 68 |
| 1988-89 | 34 | 6 | 3 | 25 |

## Councillor Bett (Letter)

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on his response to the letter from Councillor Graham Bett, the chair of Leicester city council's policy and resources (development schemes) sub-committee, dated 21 July.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** My right hon. Friend received a letter from Councillor Bett on 25 July and will be responding to him shortly.

## Combined Heat and Power

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the benefits of the combined heat and power schemes.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Where it is economic, combined heat and power technology produces net benefits which stem from its higher fuel efficiencies compared with conventional plant. There are likely to be environmental benefits as a result of the reduction in the amount of fuel needed to meet a given demand for heat and power compared with using separate technologies. It is in recognition of these benefits that the Government have supported and promoted the development of economic CHP schemes. They have introduced measures in the Electricity Bill to enable CHP to compete with other established electricity suppliers. For example, licensed CHP operators will have new powers to break streets to lay electricity lines and heat mains. The Bill also enables the Director of Electricity Supply to monitor and collect information on the use and application of CHP. Output from CHP schemes based on non-fossil fuels such as refuse or landfill gas will count towards the non-fossil fuel obligation.

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the level of cash guarantee demanded by the East Midlands electricity board in respect of the combined heat and power scheme in Leicester.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** This is a commercial matter between the East Midlands electricity board and Leicester Energy Ltd.

### Leicester Energy Limited

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, in relation to the meeting held between Leicester Energy Ltd. and officials from his office in the recent past, he will state *(a)* the length of the meeting, *(b)* the date of the meeting, *(c)* the names of the officials attending and *(d)* what action was proposed by the Government to assist the project.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Officials of my Department's electricity division and Energy Efficiency Office have met representatives of Leicester Energy Ltd. on a number of occasions. Representatives of Leicester Energy Ltd. and of the East Midlands electricity board last met my officials on 19 July. The parties confirmed that their decision not to proceed with the Leicester project was taken on commercial grounds and therefore the issue of Government assistance was not raised.

### Energy Conservation

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is, for each year since 1974, the total public expenditure on energy conservation schemes.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** Expenditure by my Department on energy efficiency programmes since 1979 is as follows:

| *Year* | *£ millions* |
|---|---|
| 1979/80 | 2·4 |
| 1980/81 | 4·5 |
| 1981/82 | 6·9 |
| 1982/83 | 9·4 |
| 1983/84 | 11·4 |
| 1984/85 | 17·5 |
| 1985/86 | [1]22·5 |
| 1986/87 | [1]24·5 |
| 1987/88 | 18·6 |
| 1988/89 | 18·5 |

[1] 1986 was Energy Efficiency Year.

Budget allocation for 1989-90 is £15 million. Information on years before 1979-80 is not readily available on a comparable basis.

### Atomic Energy Authority

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what scope he envisages for the diversification of the business of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority.

**Mr. Michael Spicer** *[pursuant to the reply, 24 July 1989, c. 723.]* The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (AEA) recently commissioned consultants to assist it with its longer-term strategic thinking. In line with the consultants' recommendations, the AEA has decided to restructure its activities into a series of distinct businesses under the new corporate identity of AEA Technology. The businesses will be focused on the areas of work with the best commercial prospects. Each will have its own chief executive, who will be responsible for its efficient and profitable development. I understand that a number of key appointments will be announced shortly. The businesses will serve customers worldwide and will spearhead the effective commercial exploitation in selected markets of the unique skills which the AEA has built up over the years, largely in the service of the nuclear industry.

The Government welcome these developments. I believe that the AEA has the potential to improve the performance of a wide range of British industry. The Government also support its drives for increased exports and for greater efficiency.

The AEA has recently submitted a revised corporate plan on the basis of the new business structure. My Department will be discussing this with the AEA in the coming months. It will also be consulting the authority about any changes which may be needed in the working relationship between the Department and the authority to reflect these developments and to secure the best value for money from the authority's operations.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Post Office Counter Services

**Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made by the Post Office in the implementation of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report on Post Office Counter Services at Crown offices.

**Mr. Ridley:** The Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report (Cmnd. 398) was published on 23 June 1988. In September 1988 the Post Office produced an initial progress report detailing its response to the 80 recommendations made by the MMC on various aspects of the operation of Crown offices and wider issues. Of these, 35 were identified as of priority. As indicated by the then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in a written answer on 31 December, *Official Report*, column 271, the Post Office accepted 68 of the Commission's recommendations, rejected one and had reservations or qualifications about the remaining 11. The reply also indicated that my Department had agreed a detailed timetable for implementation of the accepted recommendations, many of which needed an extended period for implementation, and would be monitoring the Post Office's progress on the basis of reports in June 1989 and June 1991.

I have now received the Post Office's report on progress to May 1989 and I am placing copies in the Library of the House. Good progress has been made in a number of areas. The report indicates that 18 of the recommendations which were wholly or partly accepted, including eight of the priority recommendations, have been implemented. They include improvements to budgetary arrangements, management information and working procedures; and the inclusion in this year's corporate plan, which we are currently considering, of the analysis of options for the business recommended by the MMC.

Most of the remaining recommendations, including 24 of the priority recommendations, are on course for implementation within the agreed timetable. There has, however, been slippage on 14 of the recommendations. My Department will continue to monitor implementation of the outstanding recommendations and will pay particular attention to progress on those which are behind schedule. A further formal report will be made in June 1991.

### Lloyd's

**Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on implementation of the recommendations of the Neill committee on regulatory matters at Lloyd's.

**Mr. Redwood:** Lloyd's was asked to implement the substance of the Neill report within two years. The Neill report contained 70 recommendations, of which 69 were addressed to Lloyd's, with the purpose of ensuring that regulatory arrangements at Lloyd's give protection for names comparable to that provided for investors under the Financial Services Act. The chairman of Lloyd's has sent me a memorandum which shows that, of the 70 recommendations, 65 have now been implemented. I will place copies of this memorandum in the Library.

The one recommendation which was for Government to implement called for Lloyd's to be put in the same position as the Securities and Investments Board and the self-regulatory organisations in relation to exceptions to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary intends to lay a draft order before Parliament in the autumn.

Of the four other recommendations not yet implemented, Lloyd's has issued consulation papers relating to its proposals for a Lloyd's members' compensation scheme, and for financial standards applicable to underwriting agents. Lloyd's will implement these two recommendations as soon as possible after the process of consultation has been completed. Another Neill recommendation related to inception date accounting under which greater precision would be given to allocating risks to years of account. This is still being considered by Lloyd's and I have asked the chairman to keep in touch with me on the resolution of the difficulties. The remaining recommendation requires Lloyd's to consider at the end of 1991, if there is no marked shift in the distribution of auditing work, limiting the number of syndicates which may be audited by any one firm. Lloyd's is keeping this under continuing review and will take action as necessary.

The implementation of the substances of the Neill report has been a massive task for Lloyd's, and I commend the council of Lloyd's for the vigour with which it has tackled it. The objective of the Neill report in providing increased protection for names has been achieved.

As the council of Lloyd's recognises, regulation requires constant vigilance and review and regulatory arrangements cannot be set for all time. I will continue to keep in close touch with the chairman of Lloyd's on these matters.

## Commodity Futures

**Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he proposes to take following the United States Commodity Futures Trading commission's assertion of extraterritorial jurisdiction implicit in the terms of the exemption order issued on 15 May 1989.

**Mr. Redwood:** My hon. Friend the Member for Warwickshire, North (Mr. Maude) wrote on 12 May to the chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to express the Government's concerns about the need for moderation and restraint in the exercise of powers by one authority in respect of problems arising in the jurisdiction of another. In particular, he made clear our view that the CFTC should rely exclusively on the United Kindom regulatory system for the protection of United States investors who place unsolicited futures business with United Kingdom firms. We are continuing to pursue this issue with CFTC representatives, keeping in close contact with the AFBD and other interested parties in the United Kingdom, with the aim of securing satisfactory arrangements which safeguard the public interest in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has on the terms and conditions attached to the exemption order issued by the Commodity Futures Trading Commissionon 15 May 1989 under rule 30.10 of its rules, setting out the terms on which United Kingdom firms are permitted to transact business on United Kingdom markets for United States customers; and what assessment he has made of the problems which the exemption order will cause United Kingdom commodity trading companies.

**Mr. Redwood:** The terms and conditions attached to the exemption order issued by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission on 15 May were published in the United States Federal Register on 19 May. I am placing a copy of the relevant extract in the Library of the House. The order will enable those United Kingdom Commodity trading companies which seek exemption under it to market United Kingdom futures products in the United States without being subject to the full range of United States regulatory controls. As a condition of exemption, the CFTC has insisted on one main departure from United Kingdom regulatory requirements. Under SIB's Financial Services (Clients' Money) Regulations, experienced and professional United Kingdom clients are allowed to release firms from the obligation to hold their funds on trust in separate client accounts. This option would not be available to American investors whose funds must be segregated in all cases, in line with current domestic United States practice. The Government consider that on balance the exemption order will benefit British firms trading in the United States. We have however made clear to the American authorities our objection to the jurisdictional reach of the order, in particular its implied application to unsolicited business placed by United States clients with United Kingdom firms in the United Kingdom. We are seeking a satisfactory resolution to this problem in discussions with the CFTC.

## Financial Reporting Council

**Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to make an announcement about the appointment of a chairman of the financial reporting council.

**Mr. Redwood:** I shall make an announcement as soon as the appointment has been made. It is too early to say when that will be.

## Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Forth:** The answer to the question is contained in the following table:

| *Session* | *Parliamentary procedure of the statutory instrument* | | | *Total number of SIs* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *negative* | *affirmative* | *non layers* | |
| [1]1988-89 | 82 | 5 | 11 | 98 |
| 1987-88 | 123 | 30 | 5 | 158 |
| 1986-87 | 34 | 11 | 16 | 61 |
| 1985-86 | 54 | 16 | 13 | 83 |
| 1984-85 | 71 | 14 | 14 | 99 |

[1] The number of Statutory Instruments for the 1988-89 session is up to and including 25 July 1989.

## European Single Market

**Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many firms have approached his Department for information on 1992 to date; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Forth:** The DTI has recorded over 246,000 requests for published information and other advice on the single market since the 'Europe open for business' campaign was launched in March 1988. The large majority of these requests have been from firms and business organisations. In addition, DTI Ministers and officials have spoken at more than 1,150 single market conferences and seminars since the campaign began; again mainly to business audiences.

## Cans

**Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has made representations to the canning industry or the large retail groups against the use of cans combining aluminium and steel.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No.

## Recycling

**Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps has he taken this year to encourage recycling in industry; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** This year, my Department has continued to encourage recycling wherever economically viable. In addition, my right hon. Friend announced on 10 May details of the Department's new environment programme, which is aimed at raising industry's awareness of environmental issues, encouraging companies to take advantage of the growing market opportunities, at home and abroad, for environmentally benign products and pollution abatement and clean technology, and promoting waste minimisation, recovery and recycling. We are already among the leading nations in reclaiming such metals as copper, lead and zinc from scrap, and industry, local authorities, voluntary organisations and the general public are collaborating more and more to boost recovery of post-consumer wastes, such as glass, paper, aluminium and steel cans, and plastic bottles.

Most recently, my Department has established a new business and environment unit to give even more focus to our initiatives in this important area.

## Balance of Trade (Manufactures)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing in terms of sterling at specified rates of exchange the overall and per capita surplus/deficit on trade in manufactures in 1959, 1967, 1977 and 1988 in the case of the United Kingdom, United States of America, Germany, Japan, France and Italy.

**Mr. Redwood:** The information is in the following tables:

*Trade in Manufactured Goods*[1]
*Balances*

*£ billion*

| | *United Kingdom* | *USA* | *FR Germany* | *Japan* | *France* | *Italy* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1959 | 1·9 | 1·1 | 1·9 | 0·8 | 0·9 | 0·3 |
| 1967 | 3·3 | 1·6 | 3·9 | 2·4 | 0·5 | 1·0 |
| 1977 | 3·2 | 0·1 | 16·8 | 22·5 | 3·2 | 6·1 |
| 1987 | −5·7 | −56·0 | 37·5 | 58·4 | −1·6 | 9·9 |
| 1988 | −11·0 | −49·1 | 40·2 | 61·3 | −3·5 | 8·9 |

[1] Standard International Trade Classification Sections 5-8.

*Surplus/Deficit Per Capita*

*£*

| | *United Kingdom* | *USA* | *FR Germany* | *Japan* | *France* | *Italy* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1959 | 35·7 | 6·2 | 33·7 | 8·7 | 20·1 | 5·9 |
| 1967 | 60·3 | 8·2 | 65·5 | 23·6 | 10·5 | 18·6 |
| 1977 | 57·1 | 0·5 | 273·0 | 197·8 | 60·2 | 108·3 |
| 1987 | −100·7 | −229·8 | 612·0 | 478·0 | −28·4 | 172·8 |
| 1988 | −192·7 | −199·4 | 656·9 | 499·7 | −63·0 | 155·1 |

*Sources:* OECD, UN and IMF.

*National currencies/sterling exchange rates*

| | *USA US dollar* | *FR Germany Deutsche Mark* | *Japan Yen* | *France Franc* | *Italy Lire* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1959 | 2·80 | 11·76 | 1,008 | 13·82 | 1,739 |
| 1967 | 2·77 | 11·62 | 996 | 13·66 | 1,729 |
| 1977 | 1·75 | 4·05 | 468 | 8·57 | 1,540 |
| 1987 | 1·64 | 2·94 | 236 | 9·84 | 2,123 |
| 1988 | 1·78 | 3·12 | 228 | 10·60 | 2,315 |

*Source:* IMF, CSO.

## Imports

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish in the *Official Report* for the latest available date the figures for the share of the United Kingdom market taken by imports from the European Economic Community corresponding to ratio 1 in table 10 of the "Monthly Digest of Statistics"; and if he will provide a forecast in both cases for December 1988 based on the trade returns.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I assume the hon. Member is referring to table 15.10 of the "Monthly Digest of Statistics". It is estimated that, in 1987, 20 per cent. of the United Kingdom market for manufactured goods was taken by imports from the European Community. These estimates are readily available only on an annual basis, and there are no figures available yet for 1988.

## Exports

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his estimate of the increase in imports and loss of exports as a result of access to the domestic and overseas markets of British companies acquired by foreign competitors.

**Mr. Redwood:** There are no estimates of the trade effects of acquisitions of British companies by foreign competitors. Such acquisitions can provide important benefits to the economy and also have to be balanced against British company acquisitions of overseas companies.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster *if he will list the top 10 exports in each of the last 10 years; and if he will show the total value of each in each year.*

**Mr. Redwood** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Information on the divisions of the standard international trade classification accounting for the greatest value of exports is given in the following table.

*United Kingdom top ten exports 1979 to 1988*

*Value in £ million*

| *Division* | | *1979* | *1980* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33 | Petroleum, petroleum products and related materials | 4,158 | 6,133 | 9,108 | 10,686 | 12,501 | 14,852 | 16,134 | 8,208 | 8,466 | 5,576 |
| 75 | Office machines and automatic data processing machines | — | — | — | 1,600 | 2,049 | 3,047 | 3,747 | 3,562 | 4,483 | 5,297 |
| 78 | Road vehicles (including air cushion vehicles) | 3,148 | 3,158 | 3,170 | 3,109 | 3,092 | 3,319 | 3,911 | 3.954 | 4,877 | 4,992 |
| 77 | Electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, n.e.s. and electrical parts thereof | 1,457 | 1,799 | 1,759 | 2,117 | 2,292 | 2,805 | 3,380 | 3,383 | 3,786 | 4,343 |
| 89 | Miscellaneous manufactured articles, n.e.s. | 1,537 | 1,730 | 1,909 | 2,023 | 2,393 | 2,921 | 3,175 | 3,539 | 4,357 | 4,326 |
| 79 | Other transport equipment | 1,802 | 2,380 | 1,726 | 2,034 | 2,342 | 2,766 | 2,737 | 3,081 | 3,759 | 3,965 |
| 71 | Power generating machinery and equipment | 1,789 | 2,231 | 2,642 | 2,809 | 2,473 | 2,709 | 3,061 | 3,251 | 3,241 | 3,885 |
| 74 | General industrial machinery and equipment, n.e.s. and machine parts, n.e.s. | 1,960 | 2,317 | 2,306 | 2,412 | 2,334 | 2,557 | 2,937 | 3,037 | 3,098 | 3,578 |
| 72 | Machinery specialised for particular industries | 2,313 | 2,574 | 2,558 | 2,601 | 2,335 | 2,677 | 3,078 | 3,101 | 3,300 | 3,288 |
| 51 | Organic chemicals | — | — | 1,496 | — | — | 2,382 | 2,743 | 2,571 | 2,831 | 3,138 |
| 66 | Non-metallic mineral manufactures, n.e.s. | 3,396 | 3,551 | 1,538 | 1,610 | 1,996 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 65 | Textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles, n.e.s. and related products | 1,339 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 68 | Non-ferrous metals | — | 1,771 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |

*Notes:*

1. 1988 figures are provisional.
2. Divisions listed in descending order based on 1988 values.

*Source:* Overseas Trade Statistics.

## Manufacturing Output

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the percentage increase in output between 1959 and 1973 and 1973 and 1988 in, respectively, electrical engineering and instrument engineering goods together with (i) the percentage increase for the group using, respectively, 1959, 1970, 1975 and 1985 weights and (ii) the increase in import penetration between 1968 and 1977 and 1968 and 1988.

**Mr. Redwood:** I regret that an answer could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the percentage increase in output between 1959 and 1973 and 1973 and 1988 in, respectively, food, drink and tobacco, paper, printing and publishing, coal and petroleum products, cement, bricks, pottery, glass etc., timber, furniture etc. and other miscellaneous manufacturing together with (i) the percentage increase for the group using, respectively, 1959, 1970, 1975 and 1985 weights and (ii) the increase in import penetration between 1968 and 1977 and 1968 and 1988.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I regret that an answer could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the percentage increase in United Kingdom output between 1959 and 1973 and 1973 and 1988 in, respectively, chemicals, manmade fibres, textiles clothing and footwear and leather, motor vehicles, trains, ships, aircraft etc. and mechanical engineering together with (i) the percentage increase for the whole group using, respectively 1959, 1970, 1975 and 1985 weights and (ii) the increase in import penetration between 1968 and 1977 and 1968 and 1988.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I regret that an answer could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

## Competitiveness

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will bring up to date the index on competitiveness given in his answer of 22 October 1979, *Official Report*, columns *56-60.*

**Mr. Redwood:** The current estimates for the indices provided in the previous answer are available in tables D3 and F3 of the "Annual Supplement to the Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics", a copy of which is in the Library.

## BAT Industries

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will refer the bid by Hoylake for BAT Industries to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

**Mr. Redwood:** The bid by Hoylake for BAT is currently under consideration by the Director General of Fair Trading, who will advise my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in the normal way on whether the proposed acquisition should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. It would be inappropriate to comment on this case in advance of the director general's advice.

## Professions (Competence)

**Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what criteria determine that examinations for competence are not considered a restriction to entry into a profession, with potentially undesirable consequences for competition, for dentists, doctors, solicitors, barristers, chartered accountants and stockbrokers, but are for members of FIMBRA who practice as independent financial advisers.

**Mr. Redwood:** FIMBRA has not introduced such a requirement, and so far as I am aware no such proposal has been discussed with the Director General of Fair Trading or his staff. No determination of the possible competitive effect of such a requirement has therefore been made. If such a requirement is introduced, it will in the first instance be for the director general to consider its effects on competition.

## Exhibitions

**Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many exhibitions Ministers from his Department have visited in an official capacity in the last 12 months or other convenient period, both within the United Kingdom and overseas; and if he will give comparable figures for the previous 12 months.

**Mr. Ridley:** Specific records are not kept, but I understand that previous Ministers in my Department visited at least 10 overseas exhibitions in the last 12 months compared with at least four in the previous 12 months. It would be too costly to identify figures of visits to United Kingdom exhibitions.

## Trade Statistics

**Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) how he intends to maintain reliable intra-European Community trade statistics post-1992 without adding to the form-filling burdens on business establishments;

(2) what assessment he has made of the rôle of reliable intra-European Community trade statistics for post-1992 business marketing and investment purposes.

**Mr. Redwood:** Following completion of the single market in 1992, the current source of intra-European Community trade statistics—customs' documentation—will probably disappear. An EC Commission proposal for a revised collection system has been put forward to be considered by EC Ministers later this year. This system involves collecting trade statistics directly from industry. However, with the elimination of customs' documentation and formalities, importers and exporters within the Community will benefit from a major reduction in costs and overall form-filling burden.

The Government's aim is to ensure that any new statistical system achieves a reasonable balance between the burdens imposed on those who have to provide statistics and the needs of Government and industry for reliable figures.

In order to assess these two aspects of any new system, a consultation exercise has recently been undertaken to obtain the views of industry. Individual businesses, trade associations and freight forwarders have all been included in the consultation. The results of this exercise are currently being assessed and will be used to help decide the United Kingdom's negotiating position in discussion on the new collective system.

More information about the proposed new statistical system and details of the consultation exercise were included in an article in *British Business* on 19 May 1989.

## Multi-fibre Arrangement

**Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will ensure that any changes in multi-fibre arrangement quotas within the member states, consequent upon the fulfilment of the single European market, post 1992, will not add further to import penetration of textiles, knitted and clothing products in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Redwood:** The present extension of the multi-fibre arrangement expires in 1991. Its future is a matter for negotiation in the current Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiatons.

It is the Commission's general view that the maintenance of indiviudal member state quotas will be inconsistent with the completion of the single market after 1992. How far this might extend to the treatment of textiles and clothing and, in that event, the likely implications for trade flows have yet to be discussed. Current arrangements in the Community's bilateral textile agreements already provide however for automatic transfer or quotas between member states up to a certain percentage which increases annually.

## Anti-dumping Rules

**Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make it his policy to seek immediately a change in the European Community's application of the anti-dumping rules so that given a prima facie case of dumping a provisional duty could be introduced, with the required onus of proof, thereafter, being placed on the supplying country.

**Mr. Redwood:** The GATT anti-dumping code to which the EC is a party permits provisional anti-dumping duties only when a preliminary finding of dumping has been made and there is sufficient evidence of injury. However, the provisions of the code are under review in the current Uruguay round negotiations.

## Socks

**Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has on the increase in the level of sock imports from Indonesia *(a)* between 1987 and 1988 and *(b)* between 1 January and 30 April 1989; and if he intends to support the introduction of the multi-fibre arrangement quota on socks originating in Indonesia.

**Mr. Redwood:** Imports from Indonesia of socks and certain other hosiery products covered by multi-fibre arrangement category 12 rose from 2,365,000 pairs in 1987 to 10,767,000 pairs in 1988, an increase of 355 per cent. In the first four months of 1989, 3,276,000 pairs of these products were imported, compared with 1,095,000 pairs in the same period in 1988, an increase of 199 per cent. These imports accounted for 4·4 per cent. of the United Kingdom market for category 12 products in the first quarter of 1989, compared with 1·5 per cent. in the same period in 1988.

My Department is currently considering a request from the Knitting Industries Federation for restraint action against these imports under the terms of the EC-Indonesia bilateral textiles agreement. United Kingdom producers currently hold almost 70 per cent. of a domestic market which has been growing and I will need to take this and other factors into account when assessing their case. In particular, it will be necessary to demonstrate clearly that the imports from Indonesia are causing or threatening to cause disruption to the United Kingdom market before a decision could be taken to submit the case to the EC Commission for consideration by the Community.

**Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has on the level of sock imports from Turkey *(a)* between 1987 and 1988 and *(b)* in the first four months of 1989; and if he intends to invoke the safeguard mechanism in the European Community-Turkey agreement in this respect.

**Mr. Redwood:** Imports from Turkey of socks and certain other hosiery products falling within multi-fibre arrangement category 12 rose from 6,775,000 pairs in 1987 to 13,692,000 pairs in 1988, an increase of 102 per cent. In the first four months of 1989, 3,542,000 pairs were imported, compared with 2,544,000 pairs in the same period in 1988 an increase of 39·2 per cent. These imports accounted for 4·8 per cent. of the United Kingdom market for category 12 products in the first quarter of 1989, compared with 3·4 per cent. in the same period in 1988.

In order to invoke the safeguard mechanism of the EC-Turkey association agreement, it is necessary to provide evidence to the EC Commission and Council which clearly demonstrates serious injury as a result of imports from Turkey. Such evidence is not available at present. However following representations from the Knitting Industries Federation, officials are monitoring the situation closely.

Certain categories of knitwear and clothing imports from Turkey are covered by informal voluntary restraint arrangements agreed between Turkish garment exporters associations and the EC Commission. The United Kingdom has already taken the opportunity of consultations within the framework of these arrangements to ensure that the EC Commission raised our concerns about sock imports with the Turks. Consultations will continue in September.

## Philippines

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will estimate the volume and value of trade in fruit between the Philippines and the United Kingdom; and what tariff or other conditions apply to this trade.

**Mr. Redwood** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The United Kingdom imported 15,300 metric tonnes (£6·6 million) of fruit from the Philippines in 1988. There were no exports.

Full details of specific customs duties are given in the integrated tariff of the United Kingdom, chapters 8 and 20, a copy of which is available in the Library. Imports of prepared or preserved pineapples comprise some two thirds of fruit imports from the Philippines; these receive a general scheme of preferences concession on the normal full tariff rate.

There are plant health standards that have to be met by certain fresh fruit imports.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are the principal trading goods and commodities between the United Kingdom and the Philippines.

**Mr. Redwood:** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The principal traded goods have been defined in terms of divisions of the standard international trade classification. The information is given in the following tables:

*United Kingdom imports from the Philippines in 1988*

| *Division* | *Value £ million* |
|---|---|
| 24 Cork and wood | 45·3 |
| 77 Electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances and electrical parts thereof | 40·6 |
| 63 Cork and wood manufactures (excluding furniture) | 35·9 |
| 84 Articles of apparel and clothing accessories | 32·9 |
| 05 Vegetables and fruit | 10·7 |
| 89 Miscellaneous manufactured articles nes | 7·7 |
| 82 Furniture and parts thereof (including bedding) | 7·3 |
| 03 Fish (not marine mammals, crustaceans, molluscs etc and preparations thereof | 5·1 |
| 29 Crude animal and vegetable materials nes | 4·7 |
| 26 Textile fibres and their wastes (not manufactured into yarn or fabric) | 4·7 |

## Scottish Trade Missions

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the total amount spent by his Department in each year since 1979 on assisting Scottish trade missions; and if he will provide comparable information in respect of each planning region of England.

**Mr. Redwood** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* The table is based on readily available information. Although the costs are shown by organising sponsors located in the areas specified, it is important to note that participation in a mission is on a United Kingdom-wide basis and that consequently all companies are eligible for consideration irrespective of their or a sponsor's location.

*Outward Mission Payments: Financial Year*

*£'000*

|  | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 1,446 | 1,395 | 1,301 | 1,278 |
| of which: |  |  |  |  |
| Scotland | 175 | 125 | 129 | 151 |

| | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 600 | 564 | 585 | 524 |
| West Midlands | 211 | 239 | 140 | 183 |
| East Midlands | 57 | 89 | 62 | 77 |
| Northern | 74 | 81 | 68 | 70 |
| North West | 99 | 84 | 67 | 70 |
| Yorks and Humberside | 119 | 126 | 152 | 120 |
| South West | 54 | 34 | 46 | 53 |
| Wales | 47 | 46 | 36 | 26 |
| Northern Ireland | 10 | 7 | 16 | 4 |

## Electrical Installations

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list for the last 20 years how many deaths and serious accidents are attributable to faulty electrical installations.

**Mr. Forth** [*holding answer 24 July 1989*]: The information is not available either in the form requested or for the whole of the last 20 years.

Fatal and non-fatal casualties from fires in dwellings due to faults in electical appliances:

| *Year* | *Fatal* | | *Non-Fatal* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Fault in mains circuit* | *Fault in appliance* | *Fault in mains circuit* | *Fault in appliance* |
| 1978 | 11 | 37 | 133 | 379 |
| 1979 | 13 | 52 | 143 | 485 |
| 1980 | 6 | 38 | 108 | 407 |
| 1981 | 11 | 41 | 109 | 459 |
| 1982 | 8 | 33 | 108 | 443 |
| 1983 | 26 | 42 | 148 | 498 |
| 1984 | 15 | 33 | 183 | 502 |
| 1985 | 9 | 40 | 175 | 620 |
| 1986 | 11 | 38 | 178 | 600 |
| 1987 | 10 | 23 | 180 | 571 |

*Source:* Home Office Fire Statistics.

*Electrocutions: Fatal home accidents involving electrical products in England and Wales*

| *Year* | *Fault in mains circuit* | *Fault in appliances* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 4 | 23 |
| 1980 | 4 | 17 |
| 1981 | 4 | 15 |
| 1982 | 1 | 32 |
| 1983 | 8 | 28 |
| 1984 | 2 | 14 |
| 1985 | 3 | 20 |

*Source:* HADD

*HASS: Electric current accidents, Hospital admissions*

| *Year* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1980 | 11 |
| 1981 | 15 |
| 1982 | 19 |
| 1983 | 12 |
| 1984 | 12 |
| 1985 | 14 |
| 1986 | 12 |
| 1987 | 9 |

*Source:* HASS

## Mergers

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will refer the proposed merger between Hodgson Holdings undertakers and Kenyon Securities undertakers to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

**Mr. Redwood:** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* The proposed merger between Hodgson Holdings and Kenyon Securities is currently under consideration by the Director General of Fair Trading who will advise my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in the normal way on whether the proposed merger should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. It would be inappropriate to comment in detail on the case in advance of the director general's advice.

## Exports

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what is his estimate of the percentage United Kingdom content of United Kingdom exports in 1959, 1970, 1979 and 1988 or the latest available date of finished manufactures less erratics made in the United Kingdom, taking into account the increase in imports of basic materials, semi-manufactures and intermediate finished manufactures;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the percentage United Kingdom content in 1959, 1970 and 1988 of United Kingdom exports of, respectively, motor cars, commercial vehicles, clothing, textiles, mechanical engineering products and electrical engineering products, taking into account the increase in imports of materials and components used in each of these industries and assuming that the import content of exports is the same as that for the sector as a whole.

**Mr. Redwood:** I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

## North East Shipbuilders Ltd.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether any meetings took place or written correspondence was exchanged between his Department and the European Commission relating to the sale of North East Shipbuilders Ltd. between 17 April and the date of the meeting between the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) and Sir Leon Brittan.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** A full account of exchanges between my Department and the European Commission is contained in the note that my right hon. Friend has recently placed in the Library.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to the reply by the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton), to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), *Official Report*, 13 July, column 1151, whether it was his Department or British Shipbuilders who informed the bidders for NESL of the anticipated difficulties with the European Commission; and whether this advice was provided in writing.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Advice was given orally by my officials.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on which date the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) met Sir Leon Brittan to discuss the sale of North East Shipbuilders Ltd.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** My right hon. Friend met Sir Leon Brittan to discuss this matter on 27 June 1989.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date his Department was first made aware of a renewed interest in the purchase of North East Shipbuilders Ltd by the Egon Oldendorff line of West Germany.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** British Shipbuilders informed my Department on 13 April that an approach it had received from a further interest in North East Shipbuilders Ltd would be confirmed in writing that day.

### Balance of Trade (Manufactures)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, further to his reply of 30 November, *Official Report*, column *251*, showing the balance of trade in manufactures in terms of 1988 prices, he will provide the outturn figure for 1988 and that for the first five months of 1989 together with the figures for each year in current prices; and if he will provide the corresponding figures for trade in manufactures with the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Redwood:** The figures for manufactures, excluding erratics, for 1988 and 1989 to date at 1988 prices are:

*Manufactures less erratics (BOP basis) at 1988 prices*

*£ billion*

| | *Exports* | *Imports* | *Balance* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1988 | 59·3 | 74·8 | −15·6 |
| [1]1989 | 62·5 | 82·7 | −20·2 |

[1] The figures for 1989 are for January to May 1989 at an annualised rate.

Figures for earlier years at current prices are shown in the following table:

*Table 2*

*Manufactures less erratics (BOP basis) at current prices*

*£ billion*

| | *Exports* | *Imports* | *Balance* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1970 | 6·3 | 3·7 | +2·6 |
| 1971 | 7·1 | 4·0 | +3·2 |
| 1972 | 7·2 | 4·9 | +2·3 |
| 1973 | 9·0 | 7·2 | +1·7 |
| 1974 | 12·2 | 10·0 | +2·2 |
| 1975 | 14·6 | 10·2 | +4·4 |
| 1976 | 18·8 | 13·7 | +5·1 |
| 1977 | 23·3 | 17·0 | +6·4 |
| 1978 | 25·5 | 20·4 | +5·1 |
| 1979 | 28·1 | 25·4 | +2·8 |
| 1980 | 31·0 | 25·1 | +5·9 |
| 1981 | 31·8 | 27·6 | +4·2 |
| 1982 | 33·9 | 32·6 | +1·3 |
| 1983 | 35·7 | 39·2 | −3·5 |
| 1984 | 41·9 | 47·0 | −5·1 |
| 1985 | 48·0 | 51·9 | −3·9 |
| 1986 | 49·1 | 56·5 | −7·4 |
| 1987 | 54·7 | 64·3 | −9·6 |

Estimates for trade in manufactures with the European Community are available only at current prices, and including the erratic items.

*Table 3*

*United Kingdom trade with the EC*

*Manufactures including erratics (BOP basis) at current prices*

*£ billion*

| | *Exports* | *Imports* | *Balance* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1970 | 2·2 | 1·5 | +0·6 |
| 1971 | 2·3 | 1·8 | +0·4 |
| 1972 | 2·5 | 2·5 | — |
| 1973 | 3·3 | 3·7 | −0·4 |
| 1974 | 4·7 | 5·2 | −0·5 |
| 1975 | 5·1 | 5·7 | −0·6 |
| 1976 | 7·2 | 7·7 | −0·5 |
| 1977 | 9·3 | 9·8 | −0·5 |
| 1978 | 10·2 | 12·0 | −1·7 |
| 1979 | 12·6 | 15·2 | −2·6 |
| 1980 | 14·0 | 15·2 | −1·2 |
| 1981 | 13·2 | 15·9 | −2·6 |
| 1982 | 14·6 | 18·9 | −4·3 |
| 1983 | 15·9 | 23·1 | −7·2 |
| 1984 | 18·8 | 27·0 | −8·1 |
| 1985 | 21·8 | 30·5 | −8·7 |
| 1986 | 23·9 | 34·0 | −10·1 |
| 1987 | 28·0 | 38·4 | −10·4 |
| 1988 | 31·5 | 44·0 | −12·6 |

### British Tourists

**Mr. Thorne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in giving protection to British tourists travelling abroad by making tour operators responsible to British courts for statements made in their brochures.

**Mr. Forth:** Negotiations on a draft EC directive on package travel continue. Meanwhile, the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) has recently revised its code of conduct for tour operators in consultation with the Office of Fair Trading.

I welcome the new code. I believe that consumers will benefit in particular from the clear statement of their responsibilities which tour operators will now be required to provide in their brochures and booking conditions.

### Salmon Farm, Sian Bay

**Mr. Morley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish the advice that the Nature Conservancy Council submitted on the recent granting of a sea-bed lease for the purpose of salmon farming at Sian bay, Sutherland; whether the applicant submitted an assessment of the likely environmental impact of the salmon farm; and if he will publish the names of all those conservation or environmental organisations which objected to the proposal.

**Mr. Lawson** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I have been asked to reply.

The Crown Estate does not publish submissions made on applications for sea-bed leases. Such submissions may, of course, be obtained from the parties concerned. The scale of the development at Sian bay was below the level requiring an environmental impact assessment. Submissions were received from the Nature Conservancy Council, the Countryside Commission for Scotland and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

### Liverpool Freeport

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether city grants will continue to be made available for the next stage of the Liverpool Freeport park development.

**Mr. Moynihan** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* I have been asked to reply.

The availability of the Government funding will depend upon whether the proposed development can satisfy all the criteria of city grant and in particular whether the project offers good value for money.

## TRANSPORT

### 40-tonne Lorries

**Mr. Waller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many bridges on the A1 trunk route are unable to carry 40-tonne lorries.

**Mr. Atkins:** In November 1987 we announced a programme of assessment and strengthening of bridges on motorways and all-purpose trunk roads to ensure that they can carry modern heavy lorries. This programme is continuing. It is too early to say how many, if any, of the bridges on the A1 require strengthening.

**Mr. Waller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has given any indication in the European Community Council of Ministers that the United Kingdom will move towards 40-tonne lorries on its roads before 31 December 1998 if it becomes practicable to do so.

**Mr. Atkins:** Last month the EC Transport Council agreed 31 December 1998 as the date when the deregulations from EC road vehicle weights will end. We undertook to use our best endeavours to advance this date as far as practicable. We have suggested that an addendum reflecting these statements at the Council meeting be made to the minutes of the meeting.

### Clapham Train Accident

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consideration the railway inspectorate has given to the possible implication of the Clapham train disaster that a large number of people standing could result in more casualties, when considering London Underground Ltd's specification for new rolling stock involving fewer seats and more standing space per train; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** The railway inspectorate has considered the relevant evidence given to the formal investigation into the railway accident at Clapham junction. This indicates little significant difference in the type of severity of injuries received by passengers in a severe railway accident, whether they are sitting or standing. However, some lessons have been learned regarding the interior design of railway rolling stock. These will be borne in mind when considering the specification for London Underground Ltd's new rolling stock and before that stock obtains formal approval.

### Airport Capacity, South-East

**Sir Barney Hayhoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will ensure that the letter dated 14 July from the Federation of Heathrow Anti-Noise Groups about airport and runway capacity in the south-east is carefully considered; and if he will make appropriate arrangements to establish reliable forecasts for future air passenger demand and for the size of aircraft that will be in the airline fleets to meet that demand.

**Mr. McLoughlin:** The federation's letter will of course be given careful attention. A copy is being passed to the Civil Aviation Authority, who will be advising my right hon. Friend next summer on strategic options for meeting demand at United Kingdom airports in the long term. My Department last published air traffic forecasts in December, and will be updating these in due course. The authority will be concerned with average passenger loads in carrying forward its present commission.

### Buses (Wheelchair Access)

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many buses currently in operation on London Regional Transport routes are accessible to wheelchair users.

**Mr. Portillo:** London Regional Transport has 45 buses which operate scheduled services and are accessible to users of wheelchairs. Additionally, London Regional Transport funds the London Dial-a-Ride service which operates 141 wheelchair accessible buses, providing door-to-door services.

### Underground Stations (Exits)

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many London Underground stations have only one public exit from the platforms to the street; and what proposals he has discussed with London Underground Ltd. to provide these stations with secondary exiting.

**Mr. Portillo:** There are 118 stations with only one exit at street level, of which 29 are deep-level stations. In pursuit of recommendation 124 of the Fennell report, London Underground Ltd. has embarked on a programme of surveying stations with disused lift-shafts and passageways, to identify possible secondary exits and to establish the cost of conversion.

### Routemaster Buses

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Routemaster buses have been sold by London Buses Ltd *(a)* to other operators within the United Kingdom, *(b)* for scrap and *(c)* to foreign owners.

**Mr. Portillo:** The disposal of surplus vehicles is a matter for London Buses Ltd.

### Harbours (ERDF Funding)

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list, in respect of each county in England and Wales, those harbour projects which have been funded or part-funded by the European Community regional development fund during the period April 1979 to March 1989; and if he will state the level of funding in each case.

**Mr. McLoughlin:** The information requested is not immediately available. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible, hopefully within a few days.

### Bus Deregulation, London

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what timetable he now envisages for the deregulation of bus services in London.

**Mr. Portillo:** No decisions have yet been taken on the timetable for deregulation of bus services in London, but it is our stated aim to achieve this by the early 1990s.

### East London Rail Study

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department will publish the east London rail study.

**Mr. Portillo:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) on 26 July.

### Roadworks

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Government have any plans to introduce legislation to oblige local authorities to recover their costs plus a margin for profit from suppliers of services seeking road closures and to charge a full rent at a rising daily rate in all cases of roadworks for the installation, repair and renewal of such services based on the amount of traffic diverted or inconvenienced and the duration of the work.

**Mr. Atkins:** Proposals for legislation to reform the Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 were circulated in May to interested parties for comment. A copy of these proposals is in the Library. The proposals included a provision to enable highway authorities to recover from utilities certain of their costs such as those incurred by making temporary traffic orders. A provision to oblige highway authorities to charge rent for roadworks was not included. We have received several responses putting forward suggestions aimed at reducing the impact of utilities' works on road users, including charging for the road space occupied by those works. We are considering the responses to consultation.

### Dock Labour Scheme

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to ensure that those dockers formerly employed at Denton's Wharf and G. E. Grays, but who were on the temporary unattached register at the abolition of the dock labour scheme, are paid full compensation for redundancy.

**Mr. McLoughlin:** The liability for paying the compensation due to the former registered dock workers employed by Denton's Wharf Limited and G. E. Gray and Son (Shipping) Limited rests with those companies. The Department has explained the position to them and has repeatedly urged them to resolve the matter quickly. I understand that Denton's Wharf Limited has accepted its liability and will be taking steps to pay the compensation shortly, but that G. E. Gray and Son (Shipping) Limited is still awaiting legal advice. Under the terms of the statutory compensation scheme, the Department can pay the full amount of compensation due to redundant former registered dock workers only in cases where a company has become insolvent.

### Road Humps

**Mr. Waller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on road hump regulations.

**Mr. Atkins:** The Department consulted over 125 bodies on proposals for revised road hump regulations and over 50 responded. The consultation was in two parts. On relaxation of criteria currently set in the regulations, the response was almost uniformly favourable. On the wider relaxation encompassing proposals for the introduction of sub-30 mph speed limits, again responses were generally favourable.

We are now proceeding towards making new regulations which will implement all the new proposals. A number of points of detail were raised and we shall be dealing with these in new advice for local highway authorities.

The new regulations are a further step forward in civilising the motor car and in giving local authorities greater freedom of action.

### Seat Belts

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to carry out research into the practicality of fitting seat belts on school buses; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* We are satisfied that it is practicable to fit seat belts in coaches and minibuses, although they would not be justified in city buses.

It is our firm belief, on the basis of all the accident experience, that seat belts can make a major contribution to the survival of accidents in most types of motor vehicle, including coaches and minibuses.

We regard it as one of our priorities, as we work towards a single set of safety requirements for Europe after 1992, that good quality, easy-to-use retractable seat belts should be fitted to all the seats in coaches and minibuses, and that they should be worn. We are taking every opportunity to press the European Commission, the member states and the bus industry on this point.

### M25

**Mr. Ground:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the review of the M25 referred to in the White Paper "Roads for Prosperity" will be published.

**Mr. Parkinson:** The M25 review is being published today. The consultants, Rendel Palmer and Tritton, have produced a range of recommendations which will need careful study. The proposal to widen the motorway to dual four lanes has already been announced in the recent roads White Paper. We shall need to weigh up the traffic and environmental implications of their recommendations with care. We shall consult widely, and shall announce further plans for action later this year. The consultants' views do not necessarily represent Government policy.

I am placing copies in the House Libraries.

## A1

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the current works of repair to the A1 between London and Dishforth, the dates works started and the expected completion dates.

**Mr. Atkins:** The following major maintenance works are in progress on the A1 between London and Dishforth.

| *Location* | *Works* | *Start date* | *Expected duration* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cambridgeshire Wothorpe | Bridge repairs | 17 July | 9 weeks |
| Lincolnshire Cromwell to Muskham | Carriageway repairs | 5 June | 19 weeks |
| Foston | Carriageway and bridge repairs | 18 July | 13 weeks |
| South Yorkshire A1(M)/M18 interchange northwards for 1·5 miles | Carriageway repairs | 28 June | 23 weeks |
| West Yorkshire Leeds, A64 junction northwards for 1·5 miles | Carriageway | 19 July | 3 weeks |

## Motorways

**Mr. Moate:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list all the motorways in England which are two lanes each way and for which widening plans have not been announced.

**Mr. Atkins:** No widening plans have been announced for the following sections of dual two-lane trunk motorway:

| *Motorway* | | *Length (miles)* |
|---|---|---|
| M2 | Junctions 3–7 | 21·0 |
| M3 | Junction 8–A33 | 12·5 |
| M4 | Junction 1–Boston Manor | 3·0 |
| M10 | Junction 1–M1 | 3·0 |
| M18 | Junctions 2–5 | 11·0 |
| M20 | Junctions 12–13 | 1·0 |
| M23 | Gatwick link | 0·8 |
| M26 | | 9·0 |
| M27 | Spurs to A36 (Junction 2) and A33 (Junction 4) | 3·5 |
| M41 | | [1] 0·8 |
| M42 | Junctions 9–11 | 13·0 |
| M45 | | 8·0 |
| M50 | | 21·0 |
| M54 | M6–Junction 5 and Junction 6–A5 | 17·0 |
| M56 | Junction 3/J4–M63 | 1·0 |
| M58 | Switch Island–Junction 1 | 2·0 |
| M65 | Junctions 8–9 | 2·0 |
| M66 | Edenfield–Junction 2 | 6·0 |
| M180 | Junctions 3–4 | 7·0 |
| M181 | M180–A18 | 2·5 |
| M271 | A3057–Southampton | 2·0 |
| M606 | M62–Bradford | 3·0 |
| M621 | Gildersome–Leeds | [1] 5·0 |
| A1(M) | Darlington–Sunderland | [2] 34·0 |
| A1(M) | Darlington Bypass | 7·5 |
| A1(M) | Doncaster Bypass | 15·5 |
| A3(M) | Bedhampton–Homedean | 5·0 |
| A40(M) | Wood Lane–Bramley Road and Paddington slip roads–Marylebone Flyover | 2·0 |
| A66(M) | A1–A66 | 2·5 |
| A102(M) | Blackwall Tunnel–Rochester Way relief road | 1·3 |
| A308(M) | M4 Junction 9–A4 West of Maidenhead | 0·6 |
| A423(M) | M4 Junction 9–A308 South of Maidenhead | 4·0 |
| A627(M) | | 4·0 |
| TOTAL | | 231·5 |

[1] Denotes dual 2-lane motorway with short stretches of dual 3-lanes or climbing lanes.

[2] "Roads for Prosperity" (Cm. 693) announced a study into the capacity of this section of the A1(M).

**Mr. Moate:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are his current plans for widening the M2; and what are the statistical bases for his decision to not yet announce plans to make it a three-lane each way motorway for its full length.

**Mr. Atkins:** A scheme for widening the M2 to dual three-lanes between junctions 1 and 3 is programmed. Subject to detailed investigation, it might also provide for the third southbound lane to continue some way beyond junction 3 as a crawler lane.

Taking account of a transfer of Channel-bound traffic to the M20 on its completion, the forecast traffic flows do not justify widening the remainder of M2. The position will be kept under review.

## Rail Accident, Temple Mills

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the railway accident involving a train carrying nuclear material at Temple Mills on the evening of 18 May; what steps he is taking to avoid its reccurrence; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** A locomotive hauling a wagon which contained a nuclear flask overturned after the driver had passed a shunting signal which was showing no aspect. The signal should have been showing a red (danger) aspect but its light bulb had been damaged by vandals. The incident occurred at a low speed and the wagon holding the nuclear material was not derailed. Health physicists from the CEGB Bradwell nuclear power station examined the flask and confirmed that there had been no leakage and no contamination. British Rail has investigated the incident, established the cause and has taken appropriate steps.

The incidence of vandalsim is to be deplored. I understand that there was no previous record of malicious damage to the signal in question which controlled the passage of trains within a siding. If a signal on a running line is damaged to the extent that it shows no aspect, it is detected and the previous signal would automatically revert to danger. British Rail is fully aware of the need to safeguard against such interference but it cannot totally prevent trespass.

## M11 Link Road

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what criteria he selected land to replace land lost in Leyton at the Eastway sports centre due to the proposed M11 link road; what assessment he made of the benefits for Leyton residents; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins:** My right hon. Friend is required to apply the same criteria in all cases when selecting exchange land for public open space proposed to be taken for trunk road schemes. The land must generally be not less in area than the open space to be acquired and it must be equally advantageous to the public. Lee Valley regional park authority has accepted the exchange land offered as a suitable replacement for Eastway sports centre. The centre provides facilities for the public from a wide area well beyond the immediate locality of Leyton and Hackney. The area of land to be taken is relatively small and in our view will result in no significant loss of amenity for users of the centre. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has been consulted about the suitability of the exchange land and is considering whether to issue a notice of intention to grant a certificate under section 19 of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981. If he does, the notice will invite interested persons to make objections to, or representations about, the proposals. Any unresolved objection would be likely to be heard at the public local inquiry into the draft compulsory purchase order for the road scheme arranged to start in Leyton on 12 September.

### Bus Doors

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what responses his Department has received to his draft regulations which include provisions relating to the risk of people being trapped in power-operated bus doors; whether he proposes to improve the regulation or provide additional funds for more widespread application of the safe centre exit door mechanism on buses; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** There was general support for the measures proposed for centre exit doors. A number of consultees wished to see the measures applied to buses already in service. We shall be consulting the bus industry further on that point. We aim to make the regulations in the autumn.

### M2 (Maintenance Work)

**Mr. Cartwright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many lane closures have been imposed on the M2 motorway as a result of maintenance work between May and September in each of the past 10 years.

**Mr. Atkins:** The information is not readily available in the form or for the period requested.

The incidence of lane closures—affecting both carriageways of the motorway and involving contraflow working—for major maintenance work between May and September in each of the last three years was as follows:

| *Year* | *Length (junction to junction)* | *From* | *To* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1989 | 3-4 | 1 May | Present |
| | 5-6 | 19 June | Present |
| 1988 | 5-6 | 1 May | 30 September |
| | 5-7 | 9 May | 2 July |
| 1987 | 5-7 | 9 June | 30 September |

In addition there were periods when lanes were closed for minor repairs such as barrier repairs and patching. The majority of these occurred in off-peak periods between 09.30 and 16.00 hours.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins:** The number of Department of Transport statutory instruments made in each of the last five parliamentary Sessions, including the 1988-1989 Session, is:

| *Parliamentary Session* | *Total* | *Negative* | *Affirmative* | [1]*Others-printed* | [2]*Local-not printed* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 (November 1984 to October 1985) | 659 | 61 | 9 | 125 | 464 |
| 1985-86 (November 1985 to November 1986) | 735 | 134 | 18 | 122 | 479 |
| 1986-87 (November 1986 to May 1987) | 435 | 45 | 3 | 62 | 325 |
| 1987-88 (June 1987 to November 1988) | 1,174 | 113 | 11 | 191 | 859 |
| 1988-89 (uncompleted November 1988 to June 1989) | 485 | 63 | 10 | 92 | 320 |

[1] Mainly commencement orders, trunk road orders and light railway orders.

[2] Mainly road traffic regulation orders.

### Underground Train Safety

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what regulations cover the evacuation of driver-only underground trains should a fire break out while it is in a tunnel.

**Mr. Portillo:** There are no statutory regulations. The matter is one for the railway operator. Every effort is made to design underground rolling stock so that the risk of fire breaking out is minimised or, if fire does occur, that it will not disable the train. In the event of a fire the driver's first responsibility is to get the train to the nearest station and inform the line controller by radio. No passenger has been injured by a fire on a train within the period 1984 to date. I understand from London Underground Ltd. that a programme to remove inflamable material from rolling stock has begun.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1988-89.

**Mr. Atkins:** The Department spent £121,014 in 1988-89 on the full range of official hospitality.

### Car Sales

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his estimate of the number and value of new cars leased or sold in the United Kingdom in 1988 and 1989 to date together with his estimate of the proportion (i) imported and (ii) paid for directly as a business expense; and what proportion of the real cost of owning a comparable car is now added to the income of employees for tax purposes.

**Mr. Atkins:** From January 1988 to the end of June 1989, 3·5 million new cars were registered in the United Kingdom. Of those registered in Great Britain, 54 per cent. were imported and 52 per cent. were registered in the name of a company.

The benefit of a company car provided for a director or employee earning £8,500 a year or more is taxed by reference to a set of scale charges. Both the scale charge applicable to a particular company car and the cost of owning a comparable car depend on a number of factors. The proportion of the cost of private ownership represented by the scale charge will therefore vary from case to case.

Information on the value of these cars is not available.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Crack

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Warrington, South, 29 June, *Official Report*, column *535*, if he will explain the reasons which led to the conclusion that it would be counterproductive to reveal the inner-city areas targeted by drugs education co-ordinators in their campaign to persuade teenagers to say no to crack.

**Mr. Alan Howarth:** The Government believe that the threat of crack is best tackled locally, since the nature and scale of the problem, and hence the most suitable response, will vary from place to place. Drugs education co-ordinators and their colleagues in local youth, community and voluntary organisations are well placed to assess actual or potential problems in their areas and initiate responses. We have made clear to local agencies our readiness to provide appropriate support for their initiatives.

### Civil Service Dispersal

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what progress is being made in his Department's review, in line with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for further relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the south-east; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** As a first step in its review, the Department has considered what work could be relocated from London and the south-east to the existing office in Darlington. Thirty posts were transferred in 1988; a further 50 posts will be transferred in 1990 and will be filled mainly by locally recruited staff. A scrutiny will be mounted later this year to consider a longer-term strategy. I expect the results to be available by mid-1990.

### Special Educational Needs

**Mr. Cartwright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he intends to publish the replacement circular for DES circular 1/83 on special educational needs.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend hopes to publish the new circular in the foreseeable future.

### Schools (Meals and Transport)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1978-79 public expenditure on (i) school meals and (ii) school transport in cash and in real terms.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The information requested is as follows:

*Expenditure[1] on school meals and home to institution transport 1978-79 to 1987-88—England*

*£ million*

| | *School meals* | | *Transport* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Cash* | *Real terms[2]* | *Cash* | *Real terms* |
| 1978-79 | 388 | 793 | 117 | 239 |
| 1979-80 | 422 | 740 | 136 | 238 |
| 1980-81 | 397 | 587 | 160 | 237 |
| 1981-82 | 397 | 535 | 174 | 234 |
| 1982-83 | 411 | 517 | 184 | 232 |
| 1983-84 | 427 | 513 | 195 | 234 |
| 1984-85 | 432 | 495 | 199 | 228 |
| 1985-86 | 435 | 472 | 208 | 226 |
| 1986-87 | 459 | 483 | 215 | 226 |
| 1987-88 | 443 | 443 | 222 | 222 |

[1] The figures are based on LEA expenditure returns to the Department of the Environment.

[2] The cash figures for the earlier years have been repriced to 1987-88 prices using the Gross Domestic Products (Market Prices) Deflator.

*Note:* The figures in the table are all net of income received from pupils and adults who pay for their meals or their transport.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** Details of statutory instruments subject to parliamentary control made by the Secretary of State during the last five Sessions, are as follows:

| *Year* | *Total* | *Negative Instruments* | *Affirmative Instruments* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1988-89 | 52 | 50 | 2 |
| 1987-88 | 33 | 30 | 3 |
| 1986-87 | 22 | 20 | 2 |
| 1985-86 | 17 | 13 | 4 |
| 1984-85 | 12 | 10 | 2 |

### Haberdashers' Aske's Schools, Deptford

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will consider public representations on an application for leave under section 14 of the Education Act 1944: if he will postpone a decision on the application being made by the governors of the Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham schools in Deptford until after the school holidays, so as to allow parents and the governors of neighbouring schools sufficient opportunity to make representations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend, the former Secretary of State, set out the factors he would take into account in considering an application for leave under section 14 of the Education Act 1944 in his answer of 23 January 1989 to my hon. Friend the Member for Dartford, (Mr. Dunn) *Official Report* column 383. Plainly, these will include the views of governors, parents, and others. My right hon. Friend will take a decision as soon as he is in a position to do so.

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, in deciding whether to grant leave to the governors of Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham girls school, Deptford, to discontinue the school for the purpose of establishing a city technology college he will take into consideration the no vote by a majority of parents to the question, "Do you wish the school to become one of a pair of city technology colleges?"

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend, the former Secretary of State, set out the factors we would take into account in deciding such an approach by the governors of the Haberdashers' Aske's schools in his statement of 23 January 1989 at column 307. These will include such views as were expressed to the governors during the public consultations they undertook before they made this approach.

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science in the event of city technology colleges being established on the site of the Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham schools in Deptford, what requirements he will place on the admission policy and catchment area of these city technology colleges to ensure that they benefit children drawn from the north Lewisham and the Deptford task force areas in particular; and how the catchment area for the city technology schools will relate to that of the proposed Bacons city technology college in docklands.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** As we shall shortly be considering this approach by the governors of the Haberdashers' Aske's schools under the provisions of section 14 of the Education Act 1944, it would be inappropriate to comment on these questions of detail in advance of that decision. The catchment area of each city technology college is subject to a specific agreement between the sponsors and my right hon. Friend; and we have always made it clear that each will focus on disadvantaged areas.

### Teacher Training

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what funds are available for the training of teachers in the new national curriculum; what are his plans to help already trained teachers with in-house training; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** Specific grants are available for additional expenditure by local education authorities to support the introduction of the national curriculum, including in-service training for teachers. These will support £100 million expenditure in 1989-90. We have allowed schools two extra closure days for training, and the National Curriculum Council has provided advice and training materials.

### County Councils

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what limit he intends to impose on county council spending on capital projects in the public sector; and if he has any plans to allow the county councils to spend their own money, above the capital allocation approved by the government, for the refurbishment and maintenance of ageing school buildings.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The Local Government and Housing Bill which is currently before the House provides for a new system for the control of local authority capital finance. Under that system, which we propose to introduce in 1990-91, the Government will not control an authority's spending on capital projects but it will limit the level of such spending which can be financed by borrowing or the use of other credit arrangements. Authorities will be free to incur additional capital spending which might be financed from revenue or by the use of the permitted proportion of capital receipts. Decisions about the appropriate level of credit approvals for 1990-91 and future years will be announced in the autumn.

### Higher Education (Grants)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has to increase capital grant for higher education; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jackson:** Decisions on the level of public provision for the education service, including provision for higher education capital, will be taken during the current public expenditure survey round.

### Academic Pay

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what proposals he has under consideration to enhance academic pay in higher education to achieve closer parity with recent graduates and postgraduates working in comparable non-academic professions; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what proposals he has under consideration for increased levels of pay for research in higher education, and for similar enhancement of postgraduate awards; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jackson:** My right hon. Friend is not at present considering any such proposals in respect of pay: a settlement has recently been made, with his agreement, for salaries of academic and related staff in the universities, including those engaged in research. The employers are negotiating salaries with representatives of the lecturers. In the Government's view, salaries should be set so as to recruit, retain and motivate the staff concerned.

The levels of postgraduate studentships are determined by the award-making bodies, in consultation as appropriate with the Department and amongst themselves, in the light of all the relevant factors, including the number and quality of applications for support and other claims on their resources for training and research funding. My right hon. Friend has, however, recieved advice on this and other matters from the Advisory Board for the Research Councils. This is being published today.

## City Technology Colleges

**Mr. Straw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what agreements have been entered into, and what draft proposals for agreement are in existence, between him and any promoters of any city technology college, under *(a)* section 105 of the Education Reform Act and *(b)* any other relevant provision; what are the main elements of those agreements; and if he will deposit copies in the Library.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend has entered into a number of preliminary agreements with individual CTC sponsors to purchase land or buildings for CTC development and to incur transitional costs to be met before CTCs open. These are confidential to each project. All CTCs will be subject to a detailed funding agreement made under section 105 of the Education Reform Act 1988. This will cover capital and recurrent expenditure and set out the terms and conditions on which grant will be paid. A model which forms the basis of such agreements is being placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

**Mr. Straw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has available to his Department as to the salaries of teachers and head teachers in city technology colleges.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** Our recurrent grant to city technology colleges is based on an average of expenditure by local education authorities on secondary schools in similar areas. This includes expenditure on the salaries of teachers and headteachers. The precise level of staff salaries in CTCs is a matter for their boards of governors.

**Mr. Straw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the expenditure per pupil on *(a)* books, *(b)* computers and allied equipment, *(c)* other equipment, *(d)* head teachers' salaries and *(e)* teachers' salaries in respect of (i) pupils in city technology colleges and (ii) pupils in maintained schools.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The latest available data on outturn recurrent expenditure in maintained secondary schools are set out in the table. Comparable data for city technology colleges are not yet available.

*Average Expenditure[1] per Pupil in Maintained Secondary Schools*

| *England 1987-88* | *£* |
|---|---|
| Text and library books | 15 |
| Educational equipment[2] | 47 |
| Teacher salaries[3] | 1,075 |

[1] The figures are based on LEA expenditure returns to the Department of the Environment and pupil number returns to the DES. They are given in cash terms.

[2] A breakdown of expenditure on different types of educational equipment is not available.

[3] A breakdown of expenditure between head teachers' salaries and other teachers' salaries is not available. The teacher salaries figure given in the table includes the salaries of head teachers.

## Examinations

**Mr. John Carlisle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will consider setting a minimum required amount of coursework or attendance before a school pupil is allowed to sit a public examination.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** It is for individual schools to enter their pupils as candidates for public examinations. In doing so, they must naturally have regard to pupils' fitness to sit the examination, including such matters as the courses they are undertaking and the standards they have attained.

## Advisory Board for the Research Councils

**Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has received advice from the Advisory Board for the Research Councils in relation to the public expenditure survey for 1989; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jackson:** The advice is being published today and copies are available in the Library. I would like to express my appreciation to Sir David Phillips and the board for the work which has gone into its preparation. I shall be considering the advice in the normal way during the 1989 public expenditure survey discussions.

## Universities (Grants)

**Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will list the grants made available to universities in Great Britain in the financial year 1988-89, on the advice of the University Grants Committee and the computer board.

**Mr. Jackson:** The information is as follows:

*1988-89*

*Grants to universities and colleges, etc.*

| | *For Recurrent Grants* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *General Purposes* | *Overseas Research Student Awards Scheme* | *Redundancy* | *Total Subhead C1* | *Computers Subhead D2* |
| | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* |
| Aston University | 19,296 | 32 | 625 | 19,953 | 244 |
| Bath University | 17,911 | 53 | 992 | 18,956 | 788 |
| Birmingham University | 45,925 | 91 | 1,281 | 47,297 | 427 |
| Bradford University | 18,185 | 14 | 612 | 18,811 | 260 |
| Bristol University | 37,871 | 59 | 1,208 | 39,138 | 295 |
| Brunel University | 15,947 | 2 | 679 | 16,628 | 176 |
| Cambridge University | 53,482 | 1,189 | 0 | 54,671 | 533 |
| City University | 15,085 | 18 | 1,570 | 16,673 | 109 |
| Durham University | 20,788 | 38 | 732 | 21,558 | 87 |
| East Anglia University | 17,515 | 26 | 2,118 | 19,659 | 174 |
| Essex University | 10,817 | 41 | 469 | 11,327 | 195 |
| Exeter University | 19,469 | 18 | 1,088 | 20,575 | 126 |
| Hull University | 18,344 | 12 | 1,339 | 19,695 | 243 |

| | | | *For Recurrent Grants* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *General Purposes* | *Overseas Research Student Awards Scheme* | *Redundancy* | *Total Subhead C1* | *Computers Subhead D2* |
| | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* |
| Keele University | 10,013 | 14 | 1,954 | 11,981 | 181 |
| Kent University | 14,299 | 10 | 188 | 14,497 | 216 |
| Lancaster University | 17,062 | 28 | 729 | 17,819 | 174 |
| Leeds University | 50,450 | 211 | 1,490 | 52,151 | 417 |
| Leicester University | 22,704 | 19 | 412 | 23,135 | 172 |
| Liverpool | 45,161 | 55 | 1,249 | 46,465 | 328 |
| London Business School | 2,070 | 3 | 4 | 2,077 | 17 |
| London University, including its College and Schools | 299,383 | 969 | 21,087 | 321,439 | 6,580 |
| Loughborough University of Technology | 24,040 | 19 | 678 | 24,737 | 317 |
| Manchester Business School | 1,323 | 0 | 156 | 1,479 | 66 |
| Manchester University | 60,368 | 191 | 1,532 | 62,091 | 3,963 |
| Manchester University Institute of Science and Technology | 20,969 | 407 | 1,583 | 22,959 | |
| Newcastle upon Tyne University | 38,294 | 64 | 1,065 | 39,423 | 361 |
| Nottingham University | 34,717 | 31 | 459 | 35,207 | 375 |
| Oxford University | 54,583 | 821 | 1,401 | 56,805 | 496 |
| Reading University | 22,632 | — | 249 | 22,881 | 219 |
| Salford University | 16,759 | 13 | 1,462 | 18,234 | 205 |
| Sheffield University | 37,932 | 101 | 3,739 | 41,772 | 300 |
| Southampton University | 32,456 | 70 | 637 | 33,163 | 376 |
| Surrey University | 15,695 | 43 | 1,750 | 17,488 | 190 |
| Sussex University | 18,420 | 70 | 1,627 | 20,117 | 189 |
| Warwick University | 24,602 | 26 | 197 | 24,825 | 194 |
| York University | 15,432 | 17 | 126 | 15,575 | 130 |
| University of Wales, including University Colleges and Institute of Science and Technology | 89,677 | 149 | 2,632 | 92,458 | 971 |
| Aberdeen University | 26,345 | 57 | 1,229 | 27,631 | 223 |
| Dundee University | 18,794 | 50 | 639 | 19,483 | 135 |
| Edinburgh University | 57,970 | 184 | 2,025 | 60,179 | 612 |
| Glasgow University | 55,849 | 127 | 1,852 | 57,828 | 313 |
| Heriot-Watt University | 15,139 | 21 | 811 | 15,971 | 171 |
| St. Andrews University | 15,007 | 62 | 903 | 15,972 | 138 |
| Stirling University | 11,255 | 11 | 563 | 11,829 | 130 |
| Strathclyde University | 31,604 | 145 | 811 | 32,560 | 293 |
| Other payments | [1]684 | [2]89 | [3]87 | 860 | [4]1,060 |
| Total | 1,512,323 | 5,670 | 68,039 | 1,586,032 | 23,169 |

[1] £662,000 paid direct to the University Central Council on Admissions and £22,000 in respect of the National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride.

[2] £63,000 paid to Cranfield Institute of Technology, £23,000 to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals for administration of the Overseas Research Student Fees Support Scheme and £3,000 to the Royal College of Art.

[3] £87,000 paid to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

[4] £311,000 fees paid to the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA) for negotiating contracts and £749,000 paid to the Rutherford and Appleton Laboratories (SERC) for networking projects.

*1988-89*

*Grants to universities and colleges, etc.*

| | *For capital expenditure* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Universities etc.* | *Medical and dental schools* | *[1]Equipment and furniture* | *Computers* |
| | *Subhead A1(1)* | *Subhead A1(2)* | *Subhead A2* | *Subhead B1* |
| | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* | *£000* |
| Aston University | — | — | 1,496 | — |
| Bath University | 167 | — | 1,423 | 2,311 |
| Birmingham University | — | 4 | 3,321 | 3 |
| Bradford University | — | — | 1,288 | 11 |
| Bristol University | 34 | — | 2,423 | 768 |
| Brunel University | — | — | 1,268 | 1 |
| Cambridge Univerity | 26 | 1 | 5,353 | 1,437 |
| City University | — | — | 872 | — |
| Durham University | — | — | 2,033 | 209 |
| East Anglia University | 19 | — | 901 | — |

| | *For capital expenditure* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Universities etc. Subhead A1(1) £000* | *Medical and dental schools Subhead A1(2) £000* | [1] *Equipment and furniture Subhead A2 £000* | *Computers Subhead B1 £000* |
| **Essex University** | **—** | **—** | **684** | **4** |
| **Exeter University** | **1,008** | **185** | **944** | **99** |
| **Hull University** | **—** | **—** | **1,060** | **54** |
| **Keelle University** | **52** | **—** | **568** | **389** |
| **Kent University** | **—** | **—** | **694** | **110** |
| **Lancaster University** | **—** | **—** | **1,212** | **493** |
| **Leeds University** | **—** | **—** | **3,651** | **155** |
| **Leicester University** | **—** | **356** | **1,677** | **—** |
| **Liverpool University** | **—** | **—** | **3,355** | **223** |
| **London Business School** | **—** | **—** | **126** | **—** |
| **London University, including its Colleges and Schools** | **683** | **8,700** | **22,680** | **5,211** |
| **Loughborough University of Technology** | **—** | **—** | **1,806** | **67** |
| **Manchester Business School** | **—** | **—** | **66** | **—** |
| **Manchester University** | **—** | **—** | **4,891** | **1,787** |
| **Manchester University Institute of Science and Technology** | **127** | **—** | **2,051** | |
| **Newcastle upon Tyne University** | **—** | **2,324** | **2,880** | **210** |
| **Nottingham University** | **—** | **2** | **2,630** | **—** |
| **Oxford University** | **825** | **122** | **5,429** | **304** |
| **Reading University** | **45** | **—** | **1,885** | **22** |
| **Salford University** | **1,671** | **—** | **1,533** | **90** |
| **Sheffield University** | **—** | **16** | **2,730** | **44** |
| **Southampton University** | **618** | **—** | **2,953** | **105** |
| **Surrey University** | **—** | **—** | **1,496** | **44** |
| **Sussex University** | **—** | **—** | **1,242** | **89** |
| **Warwick University** | **—** | **—** | **1,373** | **46** |
| **York University** | **—** | **—** | **1,132** | **60** |
| **University of Wales, including University Colleges and Institute of Science and Technology** | **2,198** | **—** | **6,739** | **761** |
| **Aberdeen University** | **—** | **—** | **1,713** | **14** |
| **Dundee University** | **131** | **—** | **1,355** | **153** |
| **Edinburgh University** | **—** | **—** | **4,371** | **265** |
| **Glasgow University** | **512** | **2** | **4,336** | **532** |
| **Heriot-Watt University** | **4,465** | **—** | **1,899** | **9** |
| **St. Andrews University** | **—** | **—** | **858** | **43** |
| **Stirling University** | **—** | **—** | **532** | **6** |
| **Strathclyde University** | **382** | **—** | **2,333** | **—** |
| **Other payments** | **—** | **—** | **—** | **647** |
| **TOTAL** | **12,963** | **11,712** | **115,262** | **16,776** |

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**[1] The sums provided from Subhead A2, earmarked for individual universities as shown, were transferred to a Deposit Account with the Paymaster General from which issues were made as required towards meeting the costs of furniture and equipment. The balance remaining in the Deposit Account at 31 March 1989, which is not liable to surrender to the Consolidated Fund, was £18,737,000. This sum includes £1,725,000 in respect of the Engineering and Technology Programme.**

***Note:* In addition a further £72,000 was transferred to the Deposit Account to meet expenditure by Universities for the Engineering and Technology Programme. Other payments comprise £647,0000 paid to the Rutherford and Appleton Laboratories (SERC) for networking projects.**

*Grants and loans for long terms capital projects, universities etc. (Subhead A1(1))*

*1988-89*

*Details of expenditure on works services costing more than £1,000,000 shown in Table 1 to the Estimate*

| *Project* | *Provision £000* | *Expenditure £000* | *Expenditure compared with provision* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *Less than provided £000* | *More than provided £000* |
| **Building projects and purchase of existing buildings:** | | | | |
| **New and on-going projects originally expected to cost £1 millionor more** | | | | |
| **Bath university: Building 6 East** | **310** | **168** | **142** | **—** |
| **Bristol university: Veterinary School** | **425** | **34** | **391** | **—** |
| **Cardiff university/UWIST: Joint Faculty Building** | **1,900** | **8** | **1,892** | **—** |
| **Cardiff/UWIST Mechanical and Civil Engineering** | **400** | **124** | **276** | **—** |
| **Dundee university: Library** | **365** | **131** | **234** | **—** |
| **Exeter university: Education** | **945** | **31** | **914** | **—** |
| **Glasgow university: Chemistry Rationalisation II** | **1,035** | **72** | **963** | **—** |
| **Heriot-Watt university** | | | | |
| **(a) Chemical and Process Engineering** | **135** | **54** | **81** | **—** |
| **(b) Library Phase II** | **285** | **303** | **—** | **18** |
| **(c) Brewing and Biological Science** | **1,145** | **2,086** | **—** | **941** |
| **(d) Economics and Social Studies** | **880** | **968** | **—** | **88** |
| **London university:** | | | | |
| **Queen Mary College—Library** | **340** | **481** | **—** | **141** |

| *Project* | *Provision* £000 | *Expenditure* £000 | *Expenditure compared with provision* *Less than provided* £000 | *More than provided* £000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperial College, Chemistry II | 900 | — | 900 | — |
| UMIST: Library | 145 | 125 | 20 | — |
| Oxford university: Electrical Engineering/Computer Science (ETP) | 735 | 824 | — | 89 |
| Salford university: | | | | |
| (a) Physical Restructuring | 1,220 | 56 | 1,164 | — |
| (b) Library II | 680 | 82 | 598 | — |
| Southampton university: Library | 85 | 209 | — | 124 |
| Strathclyde university: Royal College rationalisation II | 235 | 382 | — | 147 |
| Total (Subhead A1(1)) | 12,165 | 6,138 | 7,575 | 1,548 |

*Grants and loans for long term capital projects: Medical and dental schools, (Subhead A1(2))—1988-89*
*Details of expenditure on works services costing more than £1,000,000 shown in table 2 to the estimate*

| *Project* | *Provision* *£'000s* | *Expenditure* *£'000s* | *Expenditure compared with provision* *Less than provided* *£'000s* | *More than provided* *£'000s* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Building projects and purchase of existing buildings: | | | | |
| 1. New and on-going projects originally expected to cost the UGC £1 million or more | | | | |
| London University: St. Mary's HMS, phase IB | 183 | 65 | 118 | — |
| London University: Institute of Child Care, Cardiac wing, remedial works | 227 | 51 | 176 | — |
| London University: Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Cyclotron building, remedial works | 98 | — | 98 | — |
| London University: Cardiothoracic Institute, Cardiothoracic centre, phase I | 714 | — | 714 | — |
| London University: Institute of Dermatology, relocation at St. Thomas' hospital | 872 | — | 872 | — |
| Manchester University: Royal Infirmary, phase II | 920 | — | 920 | — |
| London University: Queen Mary College | 3,727 | 618 | 3,109 | — |
| Newcastle University: Royal Victoria Infirmary, phase V | 2,781 | — | 2,781 | — |
| 2. New and on-going phased medical projects, the total contribution to all phases expected to be £1 million or more | | | | |
| London University: Royal Postgraduate Medical School, redevelopment of Hammersmith Hospital, phase I | 155 | — | 155 | — |
| London University: Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Redevelopment of Hammersmith Hospital catering centralisation | 250 | — | 250 | — |
| London University: University College Middlesex, HMS Whittington Hospital redevelopment, phase I | 371 | — | 371 | — |
| London University: University College Middlesex Hospital Medical School, resiting clinical areas | 623 | — | 623 | — |
| SUB TOTAL | 10,921 | 734 | 10,187 | — |
| 3. Projects expected to start in 1988-89 on which the UGC contribution not yet agreed | 400 | — | — | — |
| 4. On-going projects not separately identified | 306 | — | — | — |
| 5. Furniture on health-controlled schemes | 300 | — | — | — |
| 6. Sites and leases | 700 | — | — | — |
| TOTAL (MEDICAL AND DENTAL SCHOOLS) (SUBHEAD A1(2)) | 12,627 | 734 | 10,187 | — |
| TOTAL (UNIVERSITIES, ETC.) (SUBHEAD A1(1) (TABLE 1)) | 12,165 | 6,138 | 7,575 | 1,548 |
| TOTAL SUBHEAD A1 | 24,792 | 6,872 | 17,762 | 1,548 |

1988-89

*Grants for expenditure long term capital computer projects, (subhead B1)*
*Details of expenditure on computer projects costing more than £1,000,000 payable under subhead B1*

| *Project* | *Provision* | *Expenditure* | *Expenditure compared with Provision* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *Less than Provided* | *More than Provided* |
| | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Projects costing £1 million or more[1] | | | | |
| Aberdeen University (new computer) | 301 | 6 | 295 | — |
| Bristol University (new computer) | 1,330 | 1,323 | 7 | — |
| Glasgow University (new computer) | 470 | 470 | — | — |
| Kings College, London (new computer) | — | 917 | — | 917 |
| Manchester University (new computer national centre) | 41 | 21 | 20 | — |
| Loughborough University (new computer) | 1,195 | — | 1,195 | — |
| Oxford University (new computer) | 303 | 283 | 20 | — |
| Sub Total | 3,640 | 3,020 | 1,537 | 917 |
| Projects costing less than £1m | | | | |
| End-year flexibility | 13,151 | 13,756 | — | 605 |
| Total (Subhead B1) | 16,791 | 16,776 | 1, 537 | 1,522 |

[1] All projects are for the replacement of centrally managed computer facilities whose total Computer Board contribution exceeds £1,000,000. The purchases are made on the basis of fixed price contracts when payment profiles extend over more than one year.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### British Telecom Services

**Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he has any plans to require British Telecom to introduce itemised billing within the next 12 months for its services to the House.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The monitoring of British Telecom's operation in the House over the next 12 months is not expected to involve the preparation of itemised bills.

**Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Lord President of the Council how much it will cost to maintain the British Telecom monopoly provision of services to the House of Commons over the next 12 months; and what is the figure with the option of using Mercury's services.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* On the basis of figures given for 1988 in appendix 1 of the first report of the Services Committee for Session 1988-89 (HC 143), the total cost of telecommunications services for the 12 months to 31 March 1990 is estimated to be £1,689,000, of which call charges will account for some £618,600. It is estimated that a change to Mercury outgoing telephone lines as proposed by CCTA would save some £50,000 to £75,000.

**Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will ensure that Oftel's policy of promoting competing telecom operators, for the benefit of consumers, is adopted by the House.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The effect on the House of Oftel's national policy of promoting effective competition between telecommunications organisations was considered by the Services Committee in its first report of this Session (HC 143). I have nothing to add to the statements made in that report.

**Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will ensure that there will be close and careful monitoring of the existing services provided by British Telecom to the House during the next 12 months.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* Such an exercise is already being considered by the authorities of the House in response to the first report of the Services Committee of this Session (HC(1988-89)143) on "Telecommunications: The Provision of Services to the House."

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Ivory

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if any consignments of ivory have been seized or detained at ports of entry since 12 April.

**Mr. Ryder** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Yes, but records of such seizures held centrally are incomplete at this stage. Records of detentions are not maintained centrally and the information sought could be obtained only at disproportionate expense.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has regarding cargoes of raw and worked ivory currently held at British ports of entry; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Consignments of ivory continue to be intercepted by Customs and may be detained or seized according to the circumstances. The Department of the Environment is consulted as necessary in individual cases.

### Gross Domestic Product

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the elements of economic activity by which he measures gross domestic product; and whether there are any significant differences in measurement between the United Kingdom and other members of G 7.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Economic activity, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP), includes all those activities which result in the production of goods and services exchanged for money. These include the production of physical commodities, that is, the products of the agriculture, extractive, manufacturing and construction industries. It also covers service-producing activities: transport and communication, wholesale and retail distribution, hotels and catering, financial services, hospitals and education, as well as public administration and defence.

Additionally, some activities not exchanged for money are included. Three main examples are: the provision of owner-occupied housing; the non-trading use of fixed assets owned by the Government and by private non-profit-making bodies; and the cost of employees' income in kind.

Further information on measurement of GDP may be found in the introductory section of the 1988 edition of "United Kingdom National Accounts", otherwise known as the "CSO Blue Book", and "United Kingdom National Accounts: Sources and Methods", both of which are available from the House of Commons Library.

GDP and other national accounts estimates supplied to international organisations are based on the United Nations system of national accounts (SNA). These estimates are similar to the Central Statistical Office's estimates appearing in the CSO Blue Book and other CSO publications, with small variations mainly reflecting presentation rather than differences of substance.

### Balance of Payments

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing the balance of payments surplus or deficit in each year from 1964 to the nearest available date.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Figures for the current account balance are published in *Economic Trends*, annual supplement, 1989 edition, table 29 (for the years 1964 to 1987) and in *Economic Trends*, June 1989, table A1 (giving the latest estimate for 1988). Copies of these publications are in the Library.

### Independent Taxation

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress towards the introduction of independent taxation in April 1990.

**Mr. Lilley:** Preparations are well in hand for the introduction of independent taxation in April 1990.

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Cash:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer by how much total employment has risen since 1983.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Since March 1983, the work force in employment has increased by 3,123,000.

### CBI

**Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met the chairman of the Confederation of British Industry; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Adams:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next expects to meet representatives of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss United Kingdom economic policy.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** My right hon. Friend meets representatives of the CBI from time to time, and a wide range of subjects is discussed.

### Economic Growth

**Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the rate of economic growth in the lastest year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The output measure of gross domestic product is estimated to have grown by 2½ per cent. in the year to the first quarter of 1989. But this figure was depressed by accidents in the North sea oil sector. Excluding North sea oil, output grew by 4 per cent. in the year to the first quarter of 1989.

### Public Spending Planning

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will makes statement on the public spending planning total.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The public expenditure planning total is the aggregate used by the Government for planning and control purposes. The outturn for 1989-90 is expected to be in line with the plan of £167·1 billion.

### Public Expenditure

**Mr. Callaghan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps the Treasury is taking to ensure adequate levels of efficiency and value for money in Her Majesty's Government's public expenditure programmes.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I refer the hon. Member to the speech my predecessor gave on 21 June, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. This speech describes the very considerable progress which the Government are making to secure greater efficiency and value for money in the public services.

### Income Tax

**Mr. John Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the income of a single person on ~~half average~~ earnings went on income tax in 1979-80 and 1988-89.

**Mr. Lilley:** In 1979-80 a single person on half average male earnings paid 16·4 per cent. of his earnings in income tax. In 1988-89, he paid 15·2 per cent.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has revised the figures given in his reply dated 10 April, *Official Report*, column *348*, concerning the number of tax units and tax liability by range of total income; and whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table breaking down the figures to show (i) steps of £1,000 between £10,000 and £15,000 (ii) for £15,000-£17,499 (iii) £20,000-£24,999 and (iv) £100,000 and above.

**Mr. Lilley:** The figures in the reply of 10 April to the hon. Member, *Official Report*, column *348*, have not been revised.

I regret that reliable estimates for more detailed income ranges are not available, as estimates are based on a projection of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes. All estimates are provisional and subject to some degree of uncertainty.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people make up the 1 per cent. of taxpayers who pay the most tax; and at what level of income this 1 per cent. begins.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* In 1989-90 the top 1 per cent. of income tax payers includes about 210,000 single people and married couples with income of over £60,000 per annum. This estimate is based on their income subject to tax, before deduction of tax reliefs and personal allowances.

### Manufacturing Profitability

**Mr. Jack:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the increase in manufacturing profitability during the latest full year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The latest full-year estimate of manufacturing companies' profitability, as indicated by the net rate of return on capital employed, is for 1987. Manufacturing profitability increased from 7·5 per cent., in 1986 to 9·2 per cent. in 1987. The level of manufacturing profitability in 1987 was the highest since 1969.

### Stamp Duty

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will provide an up-to-date estimate of the yield of stamp duty on the sale of domestic premises in the current financial year and in 1988-89, with a breakdown by regions where possible.

**Mr. Lilley:** I shall answer when resources permit.

### Interest Rates

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the effect of high interest rates on *(a)* the inflow of short-term capital, *(b)* the supply of credit and *(c)* the supply of money; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1970 the rate of inflation, the average rate of interest, the public sector deficit, the trade deficit and the estimated inflow of foreign funds.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall answer when resources permit.

### Foreign Funds

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what was the inflow of foreign funds in 1988 to finance the purchase of *(a)* British companies and *(b)* other assets; and if he will provide an estimate for this year to date;

(2) what effect the inflow of foreign funds is having on asset prices and on the rate of inflation.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall answer when resources permit.

### Current Account Deficit

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how much of the budget surplus in 1988 was used to neutralise the effect on credit and the money supply of the current account deficit; and how this was achieved;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the monetary counterpart of the current account deficit in 1988 and in the first five months of the current year;

(3) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1970 the balance of payments with the EEC and with the rest of the world on current account less viable trade at current and at 1988 prices; and to what he ascribes the change of mind.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall answer when resources permit.

### Lending (Overseas Residents)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the amount of sterling lending to overseas residents in each of the past 10 years.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall answer when resources permit.

### Output Statistics

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the information on output per head of the working population given in his reply of 8 November, *Official Report*, column 111.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The information requested is given in the following table:

| | *Output*[1] |
|---|---|
| 1959 | 69·2 |
| 1963 | 74·8 |
| 1968 | 87·3 |
| 1972 | 95·1 |
| 1973 | 99·1 |
| 1974 | 97·6 |
| 1975 | 94·8 |
| 1976 | 95·6 |
| 1977 | 96·8 |
| 1978 | 99·2 |
| 1979 | 99·9 |
| 1980 | 96·2 |
| 1981 | 94·4 |
| 1982 | 95·8 |
| 1983 | 98·4 |
| 1984 | 98·7 |
| 1985 | 100·0 |
| 1986 | 102·2 |
| 1987 | 106·4 |
| 1988 | 110·9 |

[1] Output per head of work force excluding class 13 (1985 = 100).

| | *Average annual increase Per cent.* |
|---|---|
| 1959 to 1973 | 2·6 |
| 1973 to 1988 | 0·7 |
| 1979 to 1988 | 1·2 |

*Notes:*

1. Based on mid-year estimates of the work force.
2. 1959 is given as the first year because consistent figures on employees are not available earlier.
3. Figures refer to United Kingdom.

### European Single Market

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what effect he expects the single market to have on the balance of trade with the EEC in invisibles; and if he will list the sectors for which exports are expected to increase faster than imports.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall answer when resources permit.

### Taxation

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the percentage of total personal income taken by *(a)* direct taxes on household including rates and *(b)* employees social security contributions in 1973-74, 1978-79 and 1988-89.

**Mr. Lilley:** I will answer when resources permit.

### Pension Fund Holidays

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the value in 1988 and the current year to date of pension fund contribution holidays taken by employers and employees respectively, together with his estimate of the amount of tax due thereon.

**Mr. Lilley:** I shall answer when resources permit.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** As at 25 July, the figures for the current Session, 1988-89, were as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Affirmative Statutory Instruments | 7 |
| Negative Statutory Instruments | 38 |
| Total | 45 |

For early parliamentary Sessions, I refer the hon. Member to the respective sessional Journals of the House of Commons.

### Finished Manufactures

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of United Kingdom exports of finished manufactures now consist of imports of personal computers and of the products of screwdriver plants; how many constituents of the index of manufacturing output are based on other than net output; and what is their weight.

**Mr. Redwood:** I have been asked to reply.

Information in respect of personal computers and screwdriver plants is not available.

For an explanation of the methods and sources used for the index of manufacturing output, I refer the hon. Member to the article "The Rebased Index of Production" which was published in *Economic Trends* (February 1989), a copy of which is available in the Library.

### Manufacturing Output

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for 1973, 1978, 1987 and 1988 the estimated increase in the value and weighted average volume of output of manufacturing industries less food, drink and tobacco, paper, printing and publishing and other minerals and mineral products.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I have been asked to reply.

The values of output required may be derived from the summary tables to the annual census of production for the years in question. The index of production for the required aggregate is given in the table:

*Index of Industrial Production (1985 = 100)*
*Manufacturing industries less food, drink and tobacco, paper, printing nd publishing, and extraction of minerals n.e.s.*

| | *Value* |
|---|---|
| 1973 | 113·0 |
| 1978 | 107·4 |
| 1987 | 106·2 |
| 1988 | 114·0 |

### Tax Incentives

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to amend the tax reforms to give incentives to mothers who choose not to go out to work but stay at home to raise their families.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* I have no plans to do so.

### Millionaires

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the number of millionaires in Britain.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The latest provisional estimate is that about 18,000 individuals owned wealth exceeding £1,000,000 in 1986.

### Public Spending

**Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his assessment of the implications for public spending of the sustained fall in unemployment.

**Mr. Nicholas Scott:** I have been asked to reply.

We estimate that spending on the Social Security programme would be about £3·3 billion higher than planned in the current year if the sustained fall in unemployment over the last three years had not taken place.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Lacky Bridge Checkpoint

**Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many soldiers were released for other duties as a result of dismantling Lacky bridge permanent vehicle checkpoint.

**Mr. Cope:** Although I am not prepared to give specific information about the number of troops involved in particular tasks, the removal of the permanent vehicle checkpoint will mean a useful addition to the number of soldiers available for other duties in the Lacky bridge area, and will allow them to operate in a more flexible, mobile and unpredictable manner.

### Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

**Mr. McCusker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of the 13 confirmed cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Northern Ireland have been in dairy cows; and how many have been in beef cattle.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** There have been 15 confirmed cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Northern Ireland, the most recent being confirmed on 18 July.

All the animals affected were cows belonging to dairy breeds and all originated in dairy herds. By the time of diagnosis, two of these cows had been transferred to suckler herds used to raise calves for beef production.

### Fixed Penalty Tickets

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fixed penalty tickets have been issued in the last 12 months; and how many of these have been paid.

**Mr. Cope:** In the 12 months ended 31 May 1989, 64,539 fixed penalty notices were issued of which 55,822 have been paid to date.

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many fixed penalty tickets have been issued by traffic wardens in the Lenadoon and Ardoyne areas of west Belfast and how many have been paid in the last 12 months;

(2) how many fixed penalty tickets have been issued in respect of parking in an area unmarked by double yellow lines or other road markings adjacent to bollards at the car park entrance to Murrayfield shopping centre;

(3) how many fixed penalty tickets have been issued in Larne, County Antrim by traffic wardens in the last 12 months; and how many of these have been paid.

**Mr. Cope:** Records are not maintained of the geographical distribution of fixed penalty notices and this information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Traffic Wardens

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many traffic wardens are employed in Larne, county Antrim.

**Mr. Cope:** Four.

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many traffic wardens are employed in the Lenadoon and Ardoyne areas of west Belfast.

**Mr. Cope:** None.

### Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will amend the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order (S.I., 1983, No. 764) by deleting at line 4 of section 33 the word "shall" and replacing it with the word "may" and by deleting the word "shall" at line 8 of the same section and replacing it by the word "may".

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** No. The existing provisions of article 33 of the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 were designed to replace the permissive provisions of previous legislation which were clearly not having the desired effect of requiring dog owners to keep their animals under control. This was a matter of serious public concern at the time of making the order.

The reason for the inclusion of article 33 (1) in its mandatory form was to effect the removal of an anomaly in the existing law whereby humans did not have the same protection from attack as livestock.

Before the introduction of the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 the provisions of the Dogs Act 1906 as amended by the Livestock (Protection from Dogs) Act (Northern Ireland) 1968, section 3, required courts to order the destruction of a dog which had caused injury to sheep. There was no comparable provision for humans and this, naturally, led to considerable Government and public concern when biting dogs were free to repeat their attacks. This point was also reflected in the report of the 1976 working party on dogs.

The making of a destruction order does not, of course, necessarily mean that a dog will automatically be put down since the Dogs Order makes provision for appeal.

### Prisoners (Transfers)

**Mr. Hume:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list any cases in the past seven years where transfers of prisoners from Great Britain were refused by the Northern Ireland Office.

**Mr. Cope** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The Northern Ireland Office does not have overall responsibility for decisions on transfer requests from inmates in Great Britain. The final decision is taken by the Secretaries of State for the Home Department or for Scotland as appropriate. Twenty-eight requests have been refused on the Northern Ireland Office's recommendation since 1982. It would be a breach of confidentiality to name the individuals who made these requests.

### Fishing Industry

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time fishermen there are; and if he is in a position to estimate the number of people employed (i) full-time and (ii) part-time in the non-catching section of the fishing industry.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The information is as follows:

| *Enterprise* | *Full-time staff* *Male* | *Female* | *Total* | *Part-time staff* *Male* | *Female* | *Total* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Catching | 956 | — | 956 | 295 | — | 295 | 1,251 |
| Processing | 329 | 441 | 770 | 61 | 102 | 163 | 933 |
| Wholesalers | 26 | 4 | 30 | 6 | — | 6 | 36 |
| Boatbuilding | 44 | 5 | 49 | — | — | — | 49 |
| Harbour staff/others | 24 | 9 | 33 | 12 | 1 | 13 | 46 |
| Retail outlets | 29 | 3 | 32 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 36 |
| TOTAL | 1,408 | 462 | 1,870 | 376 | 105 | 481 | 2,351 |

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fishing vessels operate out of each of the fishing ports; and what is their overall size and their approximate age.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The information is as follows:

*Table A*

*Vessels over 10 metres registered length classified according to registered length and home port at 31 December 1988*

| *Port* | *Registered length of vessels (metres)* *10 to 11·9* | *12 to 17·9* | *18 to 23·9* | *24 to 32·9* | *33 to 41·9* | *42+over* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kilkeel | 8 | 31 | 63 | 7 | 2 | — | 111 |
| Portavogie | 1 | 30 | 41 | — | — | — | 72 |
| Ardglass | 1 | 12 | 3 | — | — | — | 16 |
| Others | 14 | 8 | 3 | — | 1 | 1 | 27 |
|  | 24 | 81 | 110 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 226 |

*Table B*

*Vessels over 10 metres registered length classified according to age at 31 December 1988*

| *Age* | *Registered length of vessels (metres)* *10 to 11·9* | *12 to 17·9* | *18 to 23·9* | *24 to 32·9* | *33 to 41·9* | *42+over* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Under 10 years | 12 | — | 17 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 32 |
| 11-20 years | 11 | 17 | 25 | 2 | 2 | — | 57 |
| 21 years and over | 1 | 64 | 69 | 3 | — | — | 137 |
| Total | 24 | 81 | 111 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 226 |

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list in the *Official Report* the weight and value of landings of fish in each of the fishing ports in each of the past 10 years.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The weight and value of fish landings in each of the fishing ports in each of the past 10 years are set out in the table:

*Live weight and estimated value of all fish landed in Northern Ireland*

| *Year* | *Total* *Tonnes* | *£* | *Ardglass* *Tonnes* | *£* | *Kilkeel* *Tonnes* | *£* | *Portavogie* *Tonnes* | *£* | *Other N.I. ports* *Tonnes* | *£* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 12,817·51 | 6,616,813 | 2,390·44 | 1,181,582 | 6,317·27 | 3,309,119 | 3,792·27 | 1,949,250 | 317·53 | 176,862 |
| 1980 | 13,636·55 | 4,622,052 | 3,483·62 | 1,120,791 | 6,425·46 | 2,294,712 | 3,288·05 | 1,088,534 | 439·42 | 118,015 |
| 1981 | 21,134·07 | 6,510,404 | 4,219·87 | 1,225,651 | 8,175·17 | 2,455,314 | 8,263·10 | 2,612,878 | 475·93 | 216,561 |
| 1982 | 34,074·19 | 9,625,534 | 3,265·05 | 1,006,335 | 11,112·93 | 4,449,450 | 9,290·84 | 2,956,618 | 10,405·37 | 1,213,131 |
| 1983 | 36,989·64 | 10,646,732 | 2,811·29 | 1,018,966 | 9,276·61 | 4,623,889 | 5,895·32 | 2,573,299 | 19,006·42 | 2,430,578 |
| 1984 | 31,923·24 | 9,418,010 | 2,224·30 | 757,544 | 8,085·41 | 3,876,137 | 7,660·82 | 2,817,243 | 13,952·71 | 1,967,086 |
| 1985 | 23,272·97 | 10,264,507 | 3,037·35 | 1,370,338 | 8,562·07 | 4,488,573 | 10,095·19 | 4,112,725 | 1,578·36 | 292,871 |
| 1986 | 21,935·66 | 13,547,228 | 2,283·67 | 1,344,238 | 8,683·86 | 6,459,041 | 9,633·38 | 5,268,811 | 1,334·75 | 475,138 |
| 1987 | 21,444·48 | 15,232,415 | 2,781·84 | 1,601,166 | 9,781·92 | 7,659,284 | 7,939·15 | 5,475,568 | 941·57 | 496,397 |
| 1988 | 23,814·52 | 15,813,829 | 4,440·94 | 1,985,599 | 9,564·38 | 7,116,720 | 8,105·62 | 5,428,954 | 1,703·58 | 1,282,556 |

## THE ARTS

### South Bank

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has regarding the impact on the activities of the south bank arts complex by the proposed works for British Rail's Channel tunnel link.

**Mr. Luce:** I understand that representatives of the South Bank board will be having discussions with British Rail in the near future.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### Creches

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Minister for Civil Service if he has received any recent representations about pilot or permanent workplace creches and similar incentives further to encourage the return to employment of women in the Civil Service; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce** *(holding answer 25 July 1989):* My officials recently had an ad hoc meeting with the Council of Civil Service Unions to review developments. I am encouraging

Departments to assist recruitment and retention by setting up and supporting value for money child care schemes. In my Department, to date, the Civil Service college, Sunningdale, has plans for a nursery and the equal opportunities division co-ordinates the Westminster multidepartmental holiday scheme for five to 12-year-olds.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Members (Overseas Visits)

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many overseas visits by hon. Members or former hon. Members his Department has sponsored in the past two years.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Fourteen hon. Members have travelled to the United Nations General Assembly in New York under FCO sponsorship (seven in 1987-88, seven in 1988-89). There have been no visits under the FCO sponsored visitors scheme. That figure does not include visits overseas by FCO Ministers, or hon. Members travelling in a ministerial capacity.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions, including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The details are as follows:

| *Session* | *Number of SI's issued* | *Negative resolution* | *Affirmative resolution* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 37 | 4 | 15 |
| 1985-86 | 28 | 4 | 8 |
| 1986-87 | 52 | 13 | 3 |
| 1987-88 | 48 | 9 | 9 |
| 1988-89[1] | 26 | 5 | 2 |

[1] To date

### Malaysia

**Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, consequent upon the execution of Derrick Gregory, he will make it his policy to review all British aid to Malaysia; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** We have already expressed our disappointment that the Malaysian Government were unable to respond favourably to our appeals for clemency. Nonetheless, Derrick Gregory was fairly tried under Malaysian law. He himself never denied his guilt. It is not appropriate to link this case with United Kingdom aid to Malaysia.

### Bulgaria

**Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to what extent there has been an increase in the United Kingdom's diplomatic activities in Bulgaria over the past year.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** There has been no increase in United Kingdom activities in Bulgaria over the past year. We have consistently pressed the Bulgarian authorities to respect the rights of the ethnic Turkish minority and to fulfil all their CSCE commitments.

### Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1988-89.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The forecast outturn for spending on official hospitality by both wings of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the financial year 1988-89 is estimated to be £5·3 million.

### African Elephants

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will hold discussions with the Governments of Botswana and Zambia about compensation for forgoing elephant cropping; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I have no plans to do so. In preparation for the next meeting of parties to the convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora in October, the Republic of Cameroon is consulting African Governments on how best to afford protection under the convention of the African elephant.

### Overseas Opposition Parties

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement concerning guidelines followed when offering assistance to opposition parties overseas, and when they were first formulated.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** There are no general guidelines on assistance to opposition parties overseas. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will provide details of the assistance offered to opposition parties overseas for the most appropriate period for which such details are readily available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Hong Kong

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, pursuant to his answer of 20 July, *Official Report*, columns *333-34*, he will give details of the two seizures made by the special task force in Hong Kong.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** On 21 June 1989, a cargo of 58·9 kg. of ivory tusks was seized. The importer was fined HK$ 10,000, and the ivory has been mandatorily confiscated in accordance with Hong Kong law. The second case is still sub judice.

## Democracy (Warsaw Pact Countries)

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent offers have been made to Warsaw pact countries to assist in strengthening internal political democracy; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We very much welcome steps taken in some Warsaw pact countries towards a more democratic system. We are glad to offer practical help where we can. We have, for example, established a "know-how fund" for Poland to help develop the skills needed to run a democratic and market-based economy.

## Israel

**Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will ask the Israeli Government for an explanation of the circumstances of the death of Yasser Abu Ghosh of Beitunia.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** No. We hope that the inquiry announced by the Israeli authorities will be thorough and impartial.

## European Parliament

**Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he anticipates giving the further reply promised in his answer to the hon. Member for Northampton, North of 10 April, *Official Report*, column *358*, relating to European Parliament Members' expenses.

**Mr. Maude:** The information is as follows:

(a) The figures for 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1988 are:

| | *ECU* |
|---|---|
| *1985*<br>(1·6989 ECU =£1) | |
| Secretarial expenses | 14,934,557<br>(£8,790,721) |
| Travel and subsistence | 16,894,616<br>(£9,944,444) |
| Other | 9,881,776<br>(£5,816,573) |
| *1986*<br>(1·4948 ECU=£1) | |
| Secretarial expenses | 18,999,805<br>(£12,710,600) |
| Travel and subsistence | 23,691,177<br>(£15,849,061) |
| Other | 12,381,859<br>(£8,283,288) |
| *1987*<br>(1·4138 ECU=£1) | |
| Secretarial expenses | 21,640,304<br>(£15,306,481) |
| Travel and subsistence | 24,176,592<br>(£17,100,432) |
| Other | 13,308,058<br>(£9,412,970) |
| *1988*<br>(1·5057 ECU=£1) | |
| Secretarial expenses | 22,129,579<br>(14,697,203) |
| Travel and subsistence | 26,904,820<br>(17,868,645) |
| Other | 13,606,824<br>(£9,036,876) |

(b) The average amounts per member for 1988 were:

| | *ECU* |
|---|---|
| Secretarial expenses | 42,721<br>(£28,373 at<br>1·5057 ECU) |
| Travel and subsistence | 51,940<br>(£34,496 at<br>1·5057 ECU) |
| Other | 26,268<br>(£17,446 at<br>1·5057 ECU) |

Separate figures for accommodation and travel are not available.

## Chile

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the co-operation of Her Majesty's Government with the democratic opposition in Chile in the light of the next presidential election there.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** We welcome the good progress being made towards a restoration of democracy in Chile. With our partners in the Twelve, we continue to encourage that process. We regularly invite to Britain representatives of Chilean political parties.

## Namibia

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on United Kingdom help to the United Nations for fair and free elections in Namibia; and what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the presence in Namibia of South African troops during pre-election time.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We are giving our full support to the United Nations operation in Namibia. We have contributed a signals unit to the UN force (UNTAG) and are making a major financial commitment to the cost of UNTAG. We have contributed £500,000 towards the costs of repatriating Namibian refugees and have also contributed about £650,000 worth of food aid. We support the provisions in the United Nations plan for the restriction to base and phased withdrawal of South African forces from Namibia.

## Central America

**Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement regarding Her Majesty's Government policy towards the Esquipulas II agreement and dialogue with those central American countries parties to it.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** We have consistently supported efforts to promote a peaceful negotiated settlement to the various conflicts in central America within the framework of the Esquipulas II and subsequent agreements. With our EC partners, we participate actively in the dialogue with the central American countries through the San Jose series of conferences.

### Peru

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, since prisoners in Peruvian gaols have to provide for their own upkeep, what steps are being taken by Her Majesty's Government to ensure British nationals detained in Lurigancho prison have sufficient funds to obtain sustenance.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[pursuant to the reply, 20 July 1989, c. 335]:* The Peruvian prison authorities provide sustenance for all persons detained in their prisons. The food served is Peruvian fare.

All British nationals currently detained in Lurigancho prison are in receipt of funds from their relatives and friends in the United Kingdom for additional prison comforts.

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information he has about the detention of John Boxall and Brian Tristram in a Peruvian gaol since 6 December 1988 and the reasons they have been detained without trial.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[pursuant to the reply, 20 July 1989, c. 335]:* Mr. Boxall and Mr. Tristram were detained by the Peruvian police on 6 December 1988 on suspicion of drug trafficking. They were formally charged on 27 December 1988 and remanded to Lurigancho prison. The judicial investigatory process is continuing. The delay in bringing them to trial is not unusual.

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken to ensure that John Boxall and Brian Tristram both of the county of Bedfordshire will be speedily brought to trial in Peru.

**Mr. Sainsbury** *[pursuant to the reply, 20 July 1989, c. 335]:* Mr. Boxall and Mr. Tristram are legally represented and it is for their legal representative to seek to ensure that their trial is held as speedily as possible. He has taken action to this end. It would be contrary to internationally accepted practice for us to seek to interfere in the judicial process of an independent sovereign state. We would not tolerate such interference in our own judicial processes.

## EMPLOYMENT

### White Papers

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if, for each of the last three White Papers issued by his Department, for which legislation has been started, he will state the time elapsed between their publication and the First Readings of any Bills connected with them; and if he will do the same for the last three White Papers by his Department prior to May 1979.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The last three White Papers produced by this Department for which legislation has started are: "Building Businesses . . . Not Barriers", Command 9794, 22 May 1986; "Employment for the 1990s", Command 540, 5 December 1988 and "Employment in the Ports: The Dock Labour Scheme", Command 664, 6 April 1989. Proposals first published in Command 9794 were incorporated in the 1988 Employment Bill which was first read in the Commons on 30 November 1988. Clause 21 of the Bill (now the Employment Bill 1989) was incorporated on 16 March of this year and derives from Command 540. The Dock Work Bill had its First Reading on 7 April of this year.

It is not for me to answer for the record of the last Government in this matter, but the information requested should be available in the Library of the House and the *Official Report*.

### Training

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will place a copy of the Atkinson/Revington study of regional office organisation in the Training Agency in the Library; and what monitoring Training Agency regional offices will carry out with regard to training and enterprise councils.

**Mr. Eggar:** The document is an internal organisational review and is not appropriate for deposit in the Library. Training Agency regional officers will monitor a TEC's performance to check contract compliance and to ensure that each TEC is performing in line with the targets and objectives set out in the agreed business plan.

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many YTS places were agreed by each payment type; how many young people were in training by each training type; and what was the proportion of those in training relative to the number of agreed places by standard Training Agency region, for Great Britain as a whole, and for each of the last three months.

**Mr. Eggar:** Since the introduction of the new funding structure for YTS in April of this year, the number of agreed places is no longer available by payment type. The tables give the other figures requested.

*Table 1*

*In-training as a proportion of agreed places*

| *Region* | *April* | *May* | *June* |
|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 68·5 | 68·0 | 68·1 |
| London | 69·6 | 70·2 | 70·5 |
| South West | 71·7 | 71·7 | 72·3 |
| West Midlands | 64·1 | 63·4 | 68·0 |
| East Midlands and Eastern Region | 74·1 | 72·7 | 75·3 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 74·1 | 72·6 | 77·2 |
| North West | 76·1 | 76·6 | 79·5 |
| Northern | 77·9 | 76·6 | 80·3 |
| Wales | 84·6 | 83·8 | 86·1 |
| Scotland | 78·8 | 77·5 | 82·2 |
| Great Britain | 73·4 | 72·8 | 75·7 |

*Table 2*

*Number in-training by payment type by region as at the last three months*

| | *Basic* | | | *Premium* | | | *ITEC* | | | *Additional Units* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *April* | *May* | *June* | *April* | *May* | *June* | *April* | *May* | *June* | *April* | *May* | *June* |
| Scotland | 38,514 | 37,584 | 39,620 | 8,434 | 8,226 | 8,304 | 1,196 | 1,160 | 1,310 | 323 | 375 | 368 |
| Northern | 20,768 | 20,014 | 20,982 | 8,101 | 7,880 | 8,087 | 854 | 832 | 851 | 297 | 455 | 660 |
| North West | 45,255 | 44,591 | 46,455 | 11,663 | 11,402 | 11,439 | 1,779 | 1,844 | 1,968 | 471 | 569 | 682 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 36,528 | 35,449 | 37,355 | 7,153 | 6,709 | 7,105 | 908 | 865 | 906 | 497 | 667 | 839 |
| Midlands | 36,036 | 35,159 | 36,785 | 6,097 | 5,899 | 6,015 | 970 | 888 | 994 | 136 | 258 | 412 |
| Wales | 17,925 | 17,638 | 18,110 | 5,166 | 4,972 | 5,123 | 656 | 736 | 738 | 157 | 223 | 315 |
| South West | 26,417 | 25,765 | 25,587 | 2,874 | 2,729 | 2,848 | 590 | 569 | 592 | 82 | 119 | 180 |
| South East | 35,169 | 34,362 | 34,473 | 3,172 | 3,052 | 3,061 | 1,078 | 1,042 | 1,018 | 240 | 351 | 362 |
| London | 16,882 | 16,642 | 16,693 | 3,065 | 3,109 | 3,128 | 651 | 649 | 655 | 203 | 257 | 319 |
| East Midlands and East | 39,958 | 38,849 | 39,985 | 4,986 | 4,781 | 4,980 | 893 | 873 | 874 | 168 | 275 | 339 |
| Total | 313,452 | 306,053 | 316,045 | 60,711 | 58,759 | 60,090 | 9,575 | 9,458 | 9,906 | 2,575 | 3,549 | 4,476 |

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the numbers of accidents on YTS, broken down by fatal, major and minor, for the latest available three-month period; and how many YTS placements were closed or not accepted in that period and in the three preceding months.

**Mr. Eggar:** Table A provides YTS accident figures for the period 1 April 1989 to 30 June 1989.

*Table A*

| | *Accidents*[1] |
|---|---|
| Fatalities | 2 |
| Major injuries[2] | 126 |
| Minor injuries | 599 |

Table B provides the closure and non-acceptance figures for the quarters 1 January 1989 to 31 March and 1 April to 30 June 1989. These figures are provisional.

*Table B*

| | *1 January 1989 to 31 March 1989* | *1 April 1989 to 30 June 1989* |
|---|---|---|
| Placements closed | 39 | 3 |
| Placements not accepted | 19 | 3 |

[1] Training Agency figures have been compiled on a similar basis to those prepared by Health and Safety Executive on employed persons. However, the Training Agency's figures will include a number of accidents to trainees in educational establishments and road traffic accidents which may not have been reportable to the Health and Safety Executive had the individuals been employed.

[2] Major injuries are classified according to the severity criteria laid down in the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985.

**Mr. Trotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the average length of stay of trainees on YTS for the most recent convenient period by Training Agency region.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The average length of stay of YTS trainees is not available by region; however the national figure is around 69 weeks for trainees with two-year entitlement and 36 weeks for trainees with one-year entitlement.

**Mr. Trotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the average length of stay of 16, 17, 18 and 19-year-olds, respectively, on YTS by Training Agency region for the most recent convenient period.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Average length of stay is calculated using a complex model; the information requested can be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Trotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the numbers of 16, 17, 18 and 19-year-olds, respectively, on YTS by Training Agency region for the most recent convenient date.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The table gives the information requested as at 30 June 1989.

*Table to show the number in training by age at 30 June 1989 by region*

| *Region* | *16* | *17* | *18* | *19* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 5,835 | 18,566 | 13,460 | 1,051 |
| London | 2,892 | 9,189 | 7,523 | 1,191 |
| South West | 4,697 | 14,017 | 9,824 | 668 |
| West Midlands | 8,838 | 20,409 | 14,236 | 718 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 8,575 | 21,388 | 14,918 | 1,297 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 9,543 | 21,111 | 4,657 | 892 |
| North West | 11,829 | 27,952 | 19,159 | 1,603 |
| Northern | 5,875 | 14,502 | 9,781 | 422 |
| Wales | 4,672 | 11,217 | 7,903 | 494 |
| Scotland | 5,116 | 21,873 | 11,979 | 628 |

*Note:* The ages given are made up of banded age groups as follows:
16—under 17 years old
17—over 17 and under 18
18—over 18 and under 19
19—19 and over.

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, if he will publish up-to-date figures for Great Britain and each Training Agency region the characteristics of all entrants to employment training, showing how many were *(a)* men and *(b)* women, time they had been out of work, their ethnic backgrounds, and whether they had any disabilities.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The latest available figures for entrants to employment training, cumulative to 14 July are given in table 1. Figures for entrants showing what proportion are men and women, duration of unemployment prior to joining the programme, their ethnic background and whether disabled or having a health problem are given in table 2. The proportions are cumulative to the end of April (to the end of March for people with disabilities), and are the latest available.

*Table 1*
*Employment Training Entrants*[1]

| *Region* | *Cumulative 5 September-14 July* |
|---|---|
| South East | 22,700 |
| London | 32,100 |
| South West | 19,700 |
| West Midlands | 40,400 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 29,100 |
| Yorkshire and Humber | 49,600 |
| North West | 56,500 |
| Northern | 38,400 |
| Wales | 27,200 |
| Scotland | 43,300 |
| Great Britain total | 359,200 |

[1] Combined regional figures may not equal Great Britain totals because of rounding.

*Table 2*

*Employment training characteristics of entrants (September-April)*
*(all figures are percentages, figures may not total 100 because of rounding)*

| *Region* | *Men* | *Women* | *Unemployment duration (months)* | | | | *Ethnic origin*[1] | | | | | *PWD*[2] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *0-6* | *6-12* | *13-23* | *24+* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *Yes* | *No* |
| South East | 64 | 36 | 25 | 28 | 12 | 34 | 91 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 15 | 85 |
| London | 58 | 42 | 14 | 32 | 16 | 37 | 51 | 25 | 11 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 90 |
| South West | 68 | 32 | 24 | 33 | 13 | 30 | 93 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 15 | 85 |
| West Midlands | 68 | 32 | 17 | 27 | 13 | 42 | 79 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 88 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 72 | 28 | 12 | 34 | 14 | 39 | 88 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 86 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 74 | 26 | 20 | 31 | 14 | 35 | 90 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 90 |
| North West | 72 | 28 | 19 | 31 | 14 | 37 | 92 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 89 |
| Northern | 74 | 26 | 17 | 35 | 15 | 34 | 96 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 91 |
| Wales | 71 | 29 | 19 | 36 | 14 | 31 | 95 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 89 |
| Scotland | 73 | 27 | 12 | 32 | 17 | 39 | 96 | .. | .. | 1 | 2 | 11 | 89 |
| Great Britain total | 70 | 30 | 18 | 32 | 14 | 36 | 88 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 88 |

[1] Ethnic origin
1—White
2—Black/African/Caribbean
3—Indian/Pakistan/Bangladeshi/Sri Lankan
4—None of those
5—Prefer not to say.

[2] PWD—People with disabilities. Those trainees answering whether they had a long-term health problem or disability which affected the type of work they could do.

.. = less than 0·5 per cent.

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish up-to-date figures for Great Britain and each Training Agency region for each month since September 1988, of the cumulative number of *(a)* referrals to employment training from the employment service to training agents, *(b)* agreed employment training action plans at training agents and *(c)* starts at employment training managers.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The information requested is given in the following tables. Employment service referrals are provided in table 1, by employment service region as the information is not available by Training Agency region. Action plans and starts are provided by Training Agency region in tables 2 and 3.

*Table 1*
*Cumulative employment service referrals to employment training: September 1988 to June 1989*

| *Employment service region* | *September* | *October* | *November* | *December* | *January* | *February* | *March* | *April* | *May* | *June* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| London and South East | 20,700 | 38,600 | 55,500 | 69,600 | 87,800 | 106,000 | 124,700 | 141,000 | 157,100 | 176,100 |
| South West | 5,100 | 9,500 | 13,400 | 16,900 | 21,800 | 26,700 | 31,800 | 36,100 | 39,900 | 43,300 |
| West Midlands | 10,300 | 19,000 | 28,100 | 36,300 | 46,800 | 57,200 | 67,900 | 76,500 | 84,400 | 94,100 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 7,500 | 14,200 | 20,500 | 25,100 | 31,800 | 38,400 | 45,000 | 51,600 | 57,000 | 63,900 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 10,100 | 19,200 | 28,100 | 35,700 | 45,800 | 54,700 | 64,700 | 74,100 | 81,900 | 91,100 |
| North West | 12,700 | 24,100 | 35,300 | 44,400 | 58,100 | 71,000 | 85,700 | 98,500 | 109,500 | 123,900 |
| Northern | 12,500 | 20,100 | 26,600 | 32,200 | 40,500 | 48,300 | 56,000 | 63,100 | 69,500 | 77,400 |
| Wales | 5,200 | 10,600 | 16,300 | 21,400 | 27,500 | 33,800 | 40,100 | 45,900 | 50,900 | 56,300 |
| Scotland | 12,300 | 23,900 | 36,100 | 46,500 | 59,600 | 73,600 | 89,400 | 100,500 | 111,800 | 127,000 |
| Great Britain | 96,500 | 179,400 | 259,800 | 328,100 | 419,700 | 509,600 | 605,300 | 687,700 | 761,900 | 853,100 |

*Table 2*

*Cumulative employment training action plans at training agents: September 1988 to June 1989*

| *Training agency region* | *September* | *October* | *November* | *December* | *January* | *February* | *March* | *April* | *May* | *June* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 1,200 | 4,900 | 9,100 | 13,400 | 17,200 | 20,900 | 25,100 | 28,700 | 31,700 | 34,900 |
| London | 3,400 | 8,000 | 13,200 | 17,900 | 23,400 | 29,400 | 35,800 | 40,300 | 44,500 | 49,300 |
| South West | 1,700 | 3,800 | 6,400 | 8,200 | 10,700 | 12,800 | 15,500 | 17,800 | 19,900 | 22,200 |
| West Midlands | 2,700 | 7,800 | 13,500 | 18,000 | 23,400 | 29,300 | 36,100 | 41,000 | 44,900 | 49,500 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 3,100 | 6,700 | 10,300 | 13,000 | 16,700 | 20,400 | 24,400 | 28,000 | 31,000 | 34,400 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 4,200 | 9,300 | 15,000 | 19,400 | 25,200 | 31,200 | 36,800 | 41,900 | 47,000 | 51,800 |
| North West | 4,100 | 9,900 | 16,400 | 21,500 | 28,100 | 35,600 | 42,800 | 49,200 | 54,500 | 60,900 |
| Northern | 4,400 | 8,700 | 13,200 | 16,800 | 21,900 | 27,700 | 33,000 | 37,600 | 42,000 | 46,800 |
| Wales | 1,900 | 4,400 | 7,500 | 9,900 | 13,100 | 16,800 | 20,200 | 23,000 | 25,800 | 28,500 |
| Scotland | 4,100 | 9,100 | 15,700 | 21,200 | 27,300 | 34,600 | 42,400 | 48,100 | 53,500 | 59,700 |
| Great Britain | 30,800 | 72,700 | 120,200 | 159,400 | 206,900 | 258,700 | 312,100 | 355,800 | 395,000 | 438,000 |

*Table 3*

*Cumulative starts at employment training managers: September 1988 to June 1989*

| *Training agency region* | *September* | *October* | *November* | *December* | *January* | *February* | *March* | *April* | *May* | *June* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 1,500 | 3,600 | 5,600 | 7,300 | 9,600 | 12,100 | 14,200 | 16,500 | 18,100 | 20,500 |
| London | 2,500 | 5,600 | 8,700 | 11,100 | 14,900 | 18,300 | 22,100 | 25,200 | 27,700 | 30,900 |
| South West | 1,100 | 2,800 | 4,800 | 6,600 | 8,700 | 11,200 | 13,500 | 15,500 | 17,200 | 19,100 |
| West Midlands | 2,500 | 6,200 | 10,000 | 13,300 | 17,700 | 22,700 | 27,600 | 31,700 | 35,000 | 38,800 |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 1,800 | 4,500 | 7,400 | 9,600 | 12,500 | 16,100 | 19,300 | 22,400 | 24,800 | 27,600 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 3,000 | 7,500 | 13,000 | 17,400 | 22,900 | 29,000 | 34,300 | 39,200 | 43,300 | 47,800 |
| North West | 3,000 | 8,000 | 13,500 | 17,700 | 23,100 | 30,200 | 36,700 | 42,400 | 47,300 | 53,600 |
| Northern | 2,400 | 5,600 | 9,300 | 12,200 | 15,800 | 20,600 | 25,200 | 29,000 | 32,300 | 36,300 |
| Wales | 1,400 | 3,300 | 6,000 | 8,200 | 11,100 | 14,700 | 17,900 | 20,900 | 23,200 | 25,800 |
| Scotland | 2,300 | 5,500 | 9,500 | 13,400 | 17,100 | 22,500 | 28,500 | 32,900 | 36,800 | 41,700 |
| Great Britain | 21,500 | 52,500 | 87,800 | 116,600 | 153,300 | 197,300 | 239,400 | 275,700 | 305,700 | 342,100 |

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the number of accidents on employment training *(a)* fatal, *(b)* major and *(c)* minor, from the start of the scheme to the latest available date; and how many (i) employer-based work and (ii) project-based work placements have been either rejected or closed on health and safety grounds during the same period.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Table A gives the accident figures since the inception of employment training on 5 September 1988 to date.

*Table A*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Fatal | Nil |
| Major | 109 |
| Minor | 618 |

Separate figures for closures and rejections for employer-based and project-based work placements are not kept. However, table B gives the figures of closures and rejections on health and safety grounds from 5 September to 30 June 1989. These figures are provisional.

*Table B*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Closed | 10 |
| Rejected | Nil |

## Job Start

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish up-to-date figures showing the total number of payments made under the job start scheme, together with a breakdown of the wages of jobs covered by the scheme in the same format used in the reply given on 10 December 1987, *Official Report*, columns *231-32.*

**Mr. Nicholls:** The total number of payments made under the job start programme from 1 July 1986 to 30 June 1989 is 35,393. The breakdown of wages of jobs covered by the scheme is as follows:

*1 July 1986 to 30 June 1989*

| *Wages* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| £ | |
| Under 40 | 1,064 |
| 40 to 49 | 919 |
| 50 to 59 | 4,199 |
| 60 to 69 | 7,512 |
| 70 to 79 | 14,779 |
| 80 to 90 | 6,441 |

Information not available 479.

## Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** The number of statutory instruments made by the Department of Employment in the last five parliamentary Sessions is as follows:

| *Year* | *Negative resolution* | *Affirmative draft* |
|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 32 | 8 |
| 1985-86 | 23 | 8 |
| 1986-87 | 24 | 9 |
| 1987-88 | 34 | 7 |
| 1988-89 | 26 | 7 |

## Agricultural Inspectors

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many agricultural inspectors have been employed by his Department for each year since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The total number of agricultural inspectors employed by the Health and Safety Executive in each year since 1979 is as follows:

| *1 April* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 190 |
| 1980 | 178 |
| 1981 | 176 |
| 1982 | 166 |
| 1983 | 159 |
| 1984 | 154 |
| 1985 | 162 |
| 1986 | 163 |
| 1987 | 166 |
| 1988 | 158 |
| 1989 | 165 |
| *1 July* | |
| 1989 | 167 |

The commission and executive plan to have 175 agricultural inspectors in post by April 1990.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of environmental training courses that have been organised for agricultural inspectors for each year since 1986; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Environmental training for agricultural inspectors has formed part of the Health and Safety Executive's training programme for enforcement of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 (FEPA). Thirteen FEPA courses were held between February 1986 and February 1987. Such training also forms part of the intensive training of all new agricultural inspectors recruited to HSE.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement about the role and duties of his agricultural inspectors.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Her Majesty's agricultural inspectors are appointed by HSE under the provisions of section 19(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 for carrying into effect the relevant statutory provisions within their field of responsibility namely, agriculture, horticulture, forestry and allied industries. Their work also involves an enforcement role under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985.

Inspectors are responsible for seeing that HSE's objectives are met. The aim is through selective inspection, advice, persuasion and where necessary the enforcement of legal requirement, to secure good standards of health and safety in the agricultural industry and to see that reasonable steps are taken to ensure that agricultural activities do not endanger the public.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what new areas of responsibility were placed on his agricultural inspectors as a result of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1986; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Health and Safety Executive's agricultural inspectors are authorised to enforce the Control of Pesticides Regulations (CoPR) 1986 made under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985. The regulations provide protection for the users of pesticides, the public and the environment by imposing statutory controls on the sale, supply, advertisement, storage and use of pesticides. Inspectors provide advice and guidance on the legislation and carry out enforcement duties on those premises where HSE is already the enforcing authority.

The Government increased the commission's financial provision for 1988-89; the additional resources will be used in part to increase numbers of inspectors in the agricultural inspectorate to enforce CoPR.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to increase the number of agricultural inspectors employed by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Ministers agreed in the last public expenditure round to increase financial provision to the Health and Safety Commission and Executive for 1989-92, and this will allow for an increase in the total number of agricultural inspectors employed.

The commission and executive plan to have 175 agricultural inspectors in post by April 1990, compared with 167 in post on 1 July 1989.

A recruitment board has just completed interviewing candidates, and offers of appointment will be made shortly; a further recruitment exercise is planned for later in the year.

## Dock Labour

**Mr. Peter Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what financial provision has been made to finance the dissolution of the National Dock Labour Board.

**Mr. Fowler:** The Department of Employment is seeking to make provision of £6,000,000 for the dissolution of the National Dock Labour Board; and for connected purposes. Parliamentary approval will be sought in a supplementary Supply Estimate for the Department of Employment: employment programmes and central services, Class VII, Vote 2. Pending that approval urgent expenditure will be met by repayable advances from the contingencies fund.

## Collieries (Safety)

**Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many underground fires occurred in British Coal collieries between April 1987 and September 1988; and at how many collieries there were three or more such fires;

(2) how many cases of underground fires at British Coal collieries between April 1987 and September 1988 fire or smoke alarms or similar monitoring devices were alerted; and what were the reasons for any failures.

**Mr. Nicholls** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* During this period there were 99 outbreaks of fire below ground at British Coal collieries and eight had three or more such occurrences. Information is not available on the number of devices alerted or failures that have occurred.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Family Incomes

**Mr. Lester:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how would his estimate of the number of working families affected by marginal tax rates of over 40 per cent. be affected if take up of family credit and housing benefit were 100 per cent. and if the effects of the parental contribution to student grants were also taken into account.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The information requested in the first part of the question is not available. Any overlap between families with children on income-related benefits and parents making a contribution to mandatory awards is likely to be negligible. Questions concerning parental contributions to mandatory grants are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

### Retirement Pensions

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has studied the state pension schemes in other European Economic Community countries with a view to the completion of the internal market in 1992; and if he will publish the comparable figures for retirement pensions for each of the European Economic Community countries for an adult male worker with a lifetime's contribution record.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The Department has kept itself informed about the pension schemes in other European Community countries, and since 1977 has published an annual review of the various schemes in the form of the "Tables of Social Benefit Systems in the European Communities", copies of which are in the Library.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each group listed in his answer of 14 November 1988, *Official Report*, columns 517-18, the number of state pensioners receiving income support; the total number of state pensioners in that group; and the cumulative cost at each incremental stage of increasing the level of income support for the elderly by six successive increments of £1 and £1·50 for singles and married couples.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The latest available estimates are as follows:

| | *Millions* |
|---|---|
| *Number receiving Income Support and Retirement Pension* | |
| Singles | 1·27 |
| Couples | 0·20 |

| | *Millions* |
|---|---|
| *Number receiving Retirement Pension* | |
| Singles | 4·6 |
| Couples | 2·6 |

*Cumulative costs (at 1989 rates) of increasing income-related benefits for those aged 60 and over by 6 successive increments of £1 for singles and £1·50 for couples*

| | *Singles (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| £1 | 100 |
| £2 | 200 |
| £3 | 305 |
| £4 | 410 |
| £5 | 515 |
| £6 | 620 |

| | *Couples (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| £1·50 | 55 |
| £3 | 110 |
| £4·50 | 175 |
| £6 | 240 |
| £7·50 | 300 |
| £9 | 360 |

### Claimants (Credit Transfer)

**Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will make it his policy to encourage claimants to opt for automatic credit transfer.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Current policy is to encourage people to have their benefits paid into bank accounts by automated credit transfer. This method of payment is cheaper, more convenient for many, and reduces the risk of fraud. A leaflet explaining the advantages of ACT is included with retirement pension and child benefit claim forms.

At present, 38 per cent. of new pensioners and 32 per cent. of new recipients of child benefit choose to be paid by this method.

### Mortgages

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many and what percentage of families with children have mortgages, distinguishing between working and out-of-work families and between those who earn *(a)* under £150 per week, *(b)* £150-£200, *(c)* £200-£300 and *(d)* over £300.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I will write to my right hon. Friend.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions, including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The information is in the table. For earlier Sessions, the figures are for only those statutory instruments issued by the Department of Health and Social Security which relate to social security matters.

| *Session* | *Affirmative instruments* | *Negative instruments* |
|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 12 | 51 |
| 1985-86 | 9 | 46 |
| 1986-87 | 13 | 56 |
| 1987-88 | 19 | 121 |
| 1988-89 | 8 | 32 |

## Mobility Allowance

**Mrs. Ann Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give the numbers of *(a)* appeals to a medical board for mobility allowance and *(b)* allowances then awarded over the latest 12-month period for each area in England;

(2) what was the number of claims for mobility allowance made over the latest 12-month period for each area in England;

(3) what was the number of claims for mobility allowances over the latest 12-month period which have been successful at the first stage, after examination of doctor's reports, for each area in England.

**Mr. Scott:** I regret that it is not possible to provide information in the form requested. For the information which is available, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) on 17 January 1989 at column *120*.

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his estimate of the number of people who, but for their age, would be eligible for mobility allowance.

**Mr. Scott** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* We estimate that there are a further 1,150,000 people who would qualify for mobility allowance if the age limits were abolished, thus tripling the current caseload at a cost of nearly £1½ billion. This estimate is based on projections of the numbers who are already receiving the allowance.

## Housing Benefit

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the increase in public expenditure in 1988-89 and his forecast for 1989-90 as a result of the increases in housing benefit required to compensate for increases in, respectively, rents and rates.

**Mr. Scott:** Increases in rents above the level of inflation increased housing benefit expenditure by an estimated £140 million in 1988-89 and by a further £210 million in 1989-90.

Rate rebates are not treated as public expenditure but real increases in rates are estimated to have increased spending in these years by about £30 million and £35 million respectively in England and Wales.

|  | *Real increase rents 1988-89 per cent.* | *Cost of 1 per cent. increase in 1988-89 £ million* | *Increase on HB in 1988-89 £ million* | *Real increase rents 1989-90 per cent.* | *Cost of 1 per cent. increase in 1989-90 £ million* | *Increase on HB in 1989-90 £ million* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | *(1)* | *(2)* | *(1) × (2)* |  |  |  |
| Rent rebates |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| England | 1·7 | 26·1 | 44·4 | — | — | — |
| Wales | 3·5 | 1·8 | 6·3 | — | — | — |
| Scotland | 3·5 | 4·3 | 15·1 | — | — | — |
| Great Britain | — | — | — | [1]2·5 | 35·0 | 87·5 |
| Total rent rebates | — | 32·2 | 65·7 | — | 35·0 | 87·5 |
| Rent Allowances Great Britain | 5·5 | 13·5 | 74·3 | [2]8·0 | 15·6 | 124·8 |
| Total rents (rebates + allowances) | — | — | 140·0 | — | — | 212·3 |
| Rate rebates |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| England | 1·7 | 15·1 | 25·7 | [3]2·2 | 15·7 | 34·5 |
| Wales | 3·7 | 1·0 | 3·7 | [3]2·6 | 1·0 | 2·6 |
| Total (England and Wales only) | — | — | 29·4 | — | 16·7 | 37·1 |

[1] Assumption quoted in paragraph 48 of Cm. 615 (1989 PEWP); latest information and GDP deflator consistent with it.

[2] Assumption quoted in Cm. 615; no information on actual position presently available.

[3] Based on latest information and consistent with GDP deflator; no forecast in Cm. 615.

## Transfer of Work

**Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether the trial exercise to transfer certain accounting work presently carried out at the Post Office at Chesterfield and Edinburgh to the Department of Health and Social Security in Northern Ireland has been successfully carried out.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The trial has been fully evaluated in consultation with the Post Office and results have shown that the work can be carried out more efficiently and economically at the paid order store in Northern Ireland.

It has been agreed that the remainder of the work should be transferred to Northern Ireland on a phased basis, starting with Scotland in October 1989. It is planned to be completed by March 1991.

The transfer will have no affect on the counter network.

## Widows

**Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what information he has and from what sources, on the proportion of widows, under 45 years who remarry.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[pursuant to the reply, 22 May 1989, column 435]:* I regret that the reply given has been found to contain an error. The amended reply is as follows:

> Latest available information indicates that the proportion of widows under 45 remarrying in 1987 was approximately 10 per cent.

Table 3 of the article by John Haskey, of OPCS, entitled "Widowhood, widowerhood and remarriage", published in "Population Trends" No. 30 (January 1983), shows that of those widows aged 40-44 who had remarried in 1980-81, 90 per cent. had done so within 10 years of their being widowed.

## Family Income Supplement

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing how many children there are in families who did not take up their entitlement to supplementary benefit and family income supplement.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 15 February 1989]:* In 1985, families eligible for supplementary benefit but who did not claim are estimated to have included 160,000 children. The corresponding figure for family income supplement, based on the two years 1985 and 1986 and excluding the self-employed, was 231,000.

## Pensioners

**Mr. Andrew Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many pensioner couples not entitled to income support will receive *(a)* an increase in rent rebate of £2·28, *(b)* an increase in rent rebate of 70p, *(c)* an increase in community charge rebate of 53p and *(d)* become newly entitled to housing benefit in October;

(2) what is the number of single pensioners not entitled to income support who, *(a)* will become entitled to housing benefit, *(b)* will receive an increase in weekly rent rebate of £1·63, *(c)* will receive an increase in weekly rate rebate of 50p and *(d)* will receive an increase in weekly community charge rebate of 38p when applicable amounts are raised in October.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 14 July 1989]:* The numbers likely to be affected by the October 1989 pensioner premium changes in housing benefit only are estimated in the table.

*Housing benefit: Pensioner premium changes, October 1989*

| | *000s* |
|---|---|
| *Rent rebate/allowance* | |
| *Newly qualified* | |
| Singles gaining > £1·63 | * |
| Couples gaining > £2·28 | * |
| Singles/couples gaining £1·63/£2·28 or less | 5 |
| *Existing Claimants* | |
| Singles gaining £1·63 | 240 |
| Couples gaining £2·28 | 155 |
| Singles gaining < £1·63 | 75 |
| Couples gaining < £2·28 | 60 |
| Do not gain | * |
| Total (including starred groups and after rounding) | 545 |
| *Rate rebate (as if in place throughout GB)* | |
| *Newly qualified* | |
| Singles gaining > 50p | 20 |
| Couples gaining > 70p | 15 |
| Singles/couples gaining 50p/70p or less | 10 |
| *Existing Claimants* | |
| Singles gaining 50p | 320 |
| Couples gaining 70p | 210 |
| Singles gaining < 50p | 100 |
| Couples gaining < 70p | 65 |
| Do not gain | 5 |
| Total (after rounding) | 740 |
| *Community Charge rebate (as if in place throughout GB)* | |
| *Newly qualified* | |
| Singles gaining > 38p | 5 |
| Couples gaining > 53p | 5 |
| Singles/couples gaining 38p/53p or less | * |
| *Existing Claimants* | |
| Singles gaining 38p | 375 |
| Couples gaining 53p | 330 |
| Singles gaining < 38p | 120 |
| Couples gaining < 53p | 70 |
| Do not gain | 5 |
| Total (including starred group and after rounding) | 900 |

1. Numbers rounded to nearest 5,000. Starred groups denote numbers less than 2,500.
2. Existing claimants already receiving maximum HB do not gain extra rebates or allowances.
3. The Scotland only effects of CC rebate cannot be separately identified. The table shows alternative figures (a) on the assumption that rate rebate was in place throughout GB in 1989-90, and (b) on the assumption that Community Charge rebate was in place.

## Benefits

**Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he will publish new estimates of the take-up of supplementary benefit, housing benefit and family income supplement; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I have today placed in the Library technical notes setting out take-up estimates for supplementary benefit and housing benefit for 1985. A further note provides family income supplement take-up estimates based on the two years 1985 and 1986. These estimates confirm previous results and indicate that overall almost £9 out of every £10 of available income-related benefit expenditure is claimed. They also show that overall almost four out of every five people who are eligible for these benefits claim them. This demonstrates that income-related benefits are an efficient and effective way of helping those in financial need.

**Mrs. Beckett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list all the changes in social security law since May 1979 which have affected the entitlement of *(a)* 16 to 17-year-olds, *(b)* 18 to 20-year-olds and *(c)* 21 to 25-year-olds to supplementary benefit or any other benefit or which have affected the entitlement to any benefit of their parents in the same format as his answer to the hon. Member for Derby, South of 20 December 1985, *Official Report*, column *422*.

**Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will set out the main changes in social security law since the end of 1985 specifically affecting the entitlement of young people and their parents, showing who was affected by the change and the relevant legislation in the same form as in the *Official Report*, 20 December 1985, column *422-6*.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answers 12 June and 29 June 1989]:* I refer the hon. Members to the reply given to the hon. Member for Derby South (Mrs. Beckett) on 20 December 1985, at columns *422-26*. This listed the main changes from May 1979 to November 1985 in social security law specifically affecting the entitlements of young people and their parents. The following information lists the main changes from November 1985 to June 1989.

| *Date* | *Change* | *Persons Affected* | *Legislation* |
|---|---|---|---|
| November 1985 | Extension to the categories of those aged 25 or less who can be treated as in board and lodging accommodation. | Boarders aged 25 or less | Supplementary Benefits (Requirements and Resources) Miscellaneous Provisions No. 2 Regulations 1985—SI 1985 No. 1835. |
| 1986 | Secretary of State empowered to recognise as education being received at home as full time education, if it began before the child became 16. | Claimants aged 16-19 | Social Security Act 1986 |
| November 1986 | Students: convenanted parental contribution contributable only to grant-aided period; excess taken into account over whole year—reduces loss of benefit during long vacation. | Claimants aged 16-25 | The Supplementary Benefit (Requirements and Resources) Miscellaneous Amendment Regulations 1986—SI 1986 No. 1293. |
| November 1986 | i. definition of "course of advanced education"; and<br>ii. redefinition of "student". Students excluded from entitlement to Supplementary Benefit during Christmas and Easter vacations. | Young people in higher education | Supplementary Benefits (Conditions of Entitlement) Amendment Regulations 1986—SI 1986 No. 1010. |
| April 1987 | Easter school leavers who still have examinations to take cannot claim Supplementary Benefit until their examinations are completed. | Claimants aged 16-19 | The Supplementary Benefit (Conditions of Entitlement) Amendment Regulations 1987—SI 1987 No. 358. |
| April 1987 | Defect in SI 1982 No. 907 (estranged 19 year olds) amended. Also entitlement to Supplementary Benefit extended to 16-19 year olds who cannot be supported because their parent(s) are chronically sick, in prison, or unable to enter the country. | Claimants aged 16-19 | The Supplementary Benefit (Conditions of Entitlement) Amendment Regulations 1987. (SI 1987 No. 358). |
| April 1987 | Disregard of excess of a custodianship allowance over child scale rate. | Custodians of young people under 19 | The Supplementary Benefit (Resources) Amendment Regulations 1987. (SI 1987 No. 660). |
| April 1987 | Students: to be treated as possessing income equal to assessed parental/spouse's contribution to a student grant. Excess grant/covenant income to be taken fully into account | Claimants aged 16-25 | The Supplementary Benefit (Resources) Amendment Regulations 1987—SI 1987 No. 660 |
| April 1987 | Child Benefit to continue to be paid where a child leaves school before compulsory school age; it can be paid up to the terminal date after he attains compulsory school age | Claimants aged 16-17 | SI 1987 No. 357 |
| April 1987 | Revised definitions of "advanced education" and "full-time education" | Claimants aged 16-19 | SI 1987/No. 357 |
|  | Child Benefit to continue to be payable in certain cases where a child has been entered for an external examination | Claimants aged 16-19 | SI 1987/No. 357 |
| April 1988 | 19 year olds still in non-advanced education no longer treated as members of their parent's families—able to claim in their own right | 19 year olds in non-advanced education | Income Support (General) Regulations 1987 —SI 1987 No. 1967 |
| April 1988 | Full disregard in Income Support, Housing Benefit, Family Credit for payments by Local Authorities under Section 1 of the Child Care Act 1980 | Young people under 18 | Income Support (Gen.) Regs. 1987—SI 1987 No. 1967 |
| April 1988 | Local education authority awards to young people in further education and Educational Maintenance Allowances disregarded in full | Parents of 16-19 years olds | The Income Support (General) Regulations 1987. (SI 1987 No. 1967) |

| *Date* | *Change* | *Persons Affected* | *Legislation* |
|---|---|---|---|
| April 1988 | Custodianship payments disregarded in full in child's capital in excess of £3,000 | Custodians of young people under age 19 | The Income Support (General) Regulations 1987. (SI 1987 No. 1967) |
| April 1988 | Adoption Allowances disregarded in full in child's capital in excess of £3,000 | Adopters of young people under age 19 | The Income Support (General) Regulations 1987. (SI 1987 No. 1967) |
| April 1988 | Shared children, only the party with primary responsibility can receive the Income Support dependency addition | Parents of Young People under 19 | Income Support (General) Regulations 1987. (SI 1987 No. 1967) |
| April 1988 | Young person's/child's income may not be treated as claimant's above child's young persons applicable amount—disregard no longer restricted to boarding out or fostering/adoption allowances | Aged 16-25 | Housing Benefit General Regulations 1987 (No. 1971) |
| April 1988 | Earnings disregards: complete disregard of all earnings of a child/young person who is still in full time education. £15 disregard for a lone parent £10 (£5 each) for a couple, £5 for a single claimant. £15 for a couple unemployed two or more years | 16-18 year olds | Housing Benefit General Regulations 1987 (No. 1971) |
| April 1988 | Dependant child's or young person's capital not treated as belonging to claimant | 16-18 | Housing Benefit General Regulations 1987 (No. 1971) |
| August 1988 | Definition of "youth training scheme" introduced into regulations | 16-19 | SI 1988/1227 |
| September 1988 | Cessation of entitlement to income support for people under 18 years old except for those in certain specified categories. | 16-17 | Social Security Act 1988<br>Income Support (General) Amendment No. 3 Regulations 1988. |
| September 1988 | A young person who has ceased full time education can nonetheless continue to be treated as a child for a short period after the terminal date if he is registered for work or for the youth training scheme. | 16-17 | SI 1988/1227 Social Security Act 1988. |
| September 1988 | Period when most young people are ineligible for Income Support on leaving relevant education extended. | Single people aged 16-17 and couples both of whom aged less than 18 who are required to be available for work. | Income Support (General) Amendment No. 3 Regulations 1988—SI 1988 No. 1228. |
| September 1988 | Introduction of employment training; training premium and training bonus not taken into account for Income Support purposes. | 18-25 | Income Support (General) Amendment Regulations 1988 Income Support (General) Amendment No. 4 Regulations 1988. |
| April 1989 | Increase in personal allowances by 50p in excess of the amount needed to cover inflation. | All young people aged 16-17 on Income Support, and parents claiming for 16-18 year olds. | The Social Security Benefits Uprating Order 1989—SI 1989 No. 43 |
| April 1989 | Increase in personal allowances by 50p in excess of the amount needed to cover inflation. | All young people aged 16-18 who are independently liable for housing costs and therefore able to claim Housing Benefit. | The Social Security Benefits Uprating Order 1989—SI 1989 No. 43. |
| April 1989 | Increase in personal allowances by 50p in excess of the amount needed to cover inflation. | For Family Credit, parents claiming for 16-17 year olds inclusive. | The Social Security Benefits Uprating Order 1989—SI 1989 No. 43. |
| June 1989 | Extra help for 16 and 17 year olds in receipt of Income Support who have to live independently. This group will get the personal allowance normally appropriate to 18-24 year olds. | 16-17 | Family Credit and Income Support (General) Amendment Regulations 1989. SI 1034. |
| June 1989 | All 16-17 year old Housing Benefit claimants will get the same Personal Allowance as 18-24 year olds. | | Housing Benefit (General) Amendment No. 3 Regulations 1989. |

### National Insurance

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what is his estimate of the cost to the national insurance fund in the current financial year of restoring the earnings-related supplement on the basis which applied before the Social Security (No. 2) Act 1980 for unemployed people only; what would be the saving in tax and other benefits; and how many males and females would benefit;

(2) what is the current reduced rate of national insurance contribution for *(a)* married women and *(b)* widows; how many are still paying contributions at this rate, and what is the forecast for 1990-91; how many would otherwise be paying at the rate of nil per cent., five per cent. and seven per cent.; and what is the estimated cost to the national insurance fund in the current financial year;

(3) whether he will bring up to date for the current financial year the information given in his answer of 10 December 1986, *Official Report,* column *204,* to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby, concerning the distribution of incomes and national insurance contributions, adding *(a)* the saving on the abolition of the reduced rate contribution and *(b)* the numbers contracted-in and contracted-out together with their contributions;

(4) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the estimated income of the national insurance fund from national insurance contributions in the current financial year, the income which would accrue if the upper earnings limit on all contributions is removed and the income which would be lost if (i) the contribution rate for single persons is reduced to 5·5 per cent., (ii) the rate for married persons is dropped to 4 per cent., (iii) £3,000 is deducted from earned income for contribution purposes, rising to £6,000 for a contributor with a non-earning spouse and (iv) the reductions in (i) to (iii) are in operation at the same time;

(5) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for those contracted-in and for those contracted-out, the national insurance contributions rates, including the class 2 and class 4 contributions and the reduced rate, in 1989-90 together with (i) the total number in each category, their sex and their maritial status and (ii) the aggregate contributions in each category and the earnings to which they relate;

(6) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for those below and those above pensionable age the estimated number of earned incomes subject to employers' national insurance contributions in steps of £1,000 between £15,000 and £25,000 and in £5,000 steps thereafter, showing single persons and one-earner and two-earner married couples together with the amount collected;

(7) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of male and female contributors expected to pay national insurance contributions *(a)* in the current financial year, and *(b)* in 1978-79, broken down into each class and at each rate together with the numbers contracted in and contracted out; and if he will add his forecast of the amount paid or due in each case at current and 1989-90 prices.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I will write to the hon. Member.

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how the figures for the expected yield of national insurance contributions in the current year, as stated in the oral answer of 3 July to the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway), *Official Report,* column 11, and in the written answer of the same date to the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers), *Official Report,* column *40,* were calculated, what the actual yield is expected to be; and whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table accounting for the difference between the expected yield and the estimate of £27,887 million given in the Government Actuary's report on the 1988 Uprating Order (Cm. 537).

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 17 July]:* The estimates of the expected net yield of national insurance contributions, as stated in the reply given by my hon. Friend the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) on 3 July at column *11,* and the estimates of national insurance fund contributions as stated in the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled to the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) on 3 July at column *40* were calculated by the Government Actuary and are consistent. The figures differ because the estimated total net yield of national insurance contributions at column *11* includes the National Health Service allocation, which is paid out of contributions and meets part for the cost of the National Health Service. The NHS allocation is not paid into the national insurance fund. The total amount of money collected by contributions is equal to the sum of the national insurance fund's contribution income which are given at column 40 and the National Health Service allocation. Both estimates were consistent with Budget estimates of national insurance contributions.

A full reconciliation of the estimates published in the Government Actuary's report on the 1988 Uprating and Rerating Orders (Cm. 537) and the estimates published on the 3 July 1989 in the *Official Report* is contained in the table.

The recently announced extra growth in the numbers of personal pensions means that the Budget estimates of the net yield of contributions in the final line of the table and the net income of the national insurance fund from contributions, but not the estimates of the NHS allocation, might be about £2 billion less than previously estimated. Fuller details of these, and other, estimate changes that will have occurred since the Budget will be published in the autumn statement.

*Estimated net yield from National Insurance contributions and contributions income of the National Insurance fund Great Britain 1989-90*

*£ million*

| *Source of estimate* | *Estimated net income from contributions of the National Insurance fund* | *Estimated National Health Service allocation* | *Estimated net yield from contributions* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Government Actuary's Report on the Uprating and Rerating Orders estimates excluding State Scheme premiums (Cm. 537) | 27,887 | 4,084 | 31,973 |
| Government Actuary's Report estimates including State Scheme premiums (Cm. 537)[1] | 28,137 | 4,084 | 32,223 |
| Government Actuary's Report estimates restated to nearest £100 million (Cm. 537) | 28,100 | 4,100 | 32,200 |
| Changes caused by faster earnings growth compared to Cm. 537[2] | +500 | +100 | +600 |
| Other estimating changes | +400 | — | +400 |
| Effect of Budget Proposals[3] | −800 | −200 | −1,000 |
| Budget Estimates[4] | 28,200 | 4,000 | 32,300 |

*Notes:*

All estimates are net of Statutory Sick Pay and Statutory Maternity Pay and include, except where stated otherwise, State scheme premiums. (All Budget estimates are rounded to the nearest £100 million: figures do not add up to totals due to rounding.)

[1] State scheme premiums were estimated to be £250 million in 1989-90 in the Government Actuary's Report (Cm. 537). State scheme premiums are included in estimated net yield of contributions and in the estimates of the National Insurance Fund's income from contributions. The Fund's estimated income form contributions was given as £28·1 billion on this basis in the answer to the honourable member at *Official Report*, 12 July at Column 504.

[2] The Government Actuary in preparing his report on the Uprating and Rerating orders was instructed to assume that average earnings would rise by 7·5 per cent. between 1988-89 and 1989-90. The estimates reflect more up to date estimates of earnings growth in 1989-90 which were used when the Budget estimates were framed. Estimate given in *Official Report*, July 3 at Column 40.

[3] Estimates were published in the Financial Memorandum to the House of Lords Print of the Social Security Bill. The full cost of the Budget changes on the National Insurance Fund given at *Official Report*, July 3 at Column 40 was calculated as £800 million foregone contributions income arising from the Budget changes to primary Class 1 contributions and £200 million extra expenditure arising from the abolition of the retirement pension earnings rule.

[4] The estimate of net contributions collected in 1989-90 was given as "more than £32 billion" in the *Official Report*, 3 July 1989 Column 11 and the estimate of the National Insurance Fund's income from contributions (£28,200 million) was given in *Official Report*, 3 July 1989 at Column 40. These estimates are on a Great Britain basis: estimates in the Financial Statement and Budget Report were on a United Kingdom basis.

## SCOTLAND

### Council House Sales

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many right-to-buy sales of *(a)* detached houses, *(b)* semi-detached houses, *(c)* terraced houses, *(d)* flats or maisonettes and *(e)* four in a block type dwellings by each local authority in Scotland and for Scotland as a whole were completed during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The breakdown requested was not collected prior to 1986. Information collected centrally prior to 1986 does not differentiate between sales under the right-to-buy provisions and voluntary sales to sitting tenants. Tables giving the information available have been placed in the House Library.

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the value of right-to-buy discounts in thousands of pounds by each local authority in Scotland and for Scotland as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Information collected centrally prior to 1986 does not differentiate between sales under the right-to-buy provisions and voluntary sales to sitting tenants. The available information is set out in the following table.

*Local Authority Right to Buy sales, Scotland, 1980-81 to 1988-89. Value of discount (£'000)*[1]

| *District* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Berwickshire | 112 | 236 | 225 | 314 | 612 | 234 | 791 | 535 | 1,195 |
| Ettrick and Lauderdale | 19 | 521 | 535 | 1,164 | 1,630 | 949 | 950 | 1,362 | 1,774 |
| Roxburgh | n.a. | 827 | 449 | 846 | 1,344 | 644 | 1,059 | 1,573 | 2,311 |
| Tweeddale | n.a. | 341 | 282 | 367 | 229 | 207 | 228 | 399 | 327 |
| Clackmannan | 558 | 501 | 541 | 1,267 | 1,079 | 769 | 966 | 2,447 | 4,110 |
| Falkirk | 294 | 1,413 | 3,419 | 5,521 | 4,778 | 3,943 | 4,139 | 8,351 | 14,223 |
| Stirling | 192 | 304 | 552 | 1,987 | 2,034 | 1,766 | 2,803 | 3,539 | 5,270 |
| Annandale and Eskdale | 71 | 1,047 | 915 | 657 | 707 | 788 | 897 | 1,387 | 1,989 |
| Nithsdale | 226 | 1,285 | 1,056 | 1,190 | 961 | 1,397 | 2,020 | 2,831 | 4,418 |
| Stewartry | 359 | 705 | 392 | 238 | 411 | 370 | 476 | 906 | 795 |
| Wigtown | 46 | 1,047 | 438 | 851 | 728 | 599 | 698 | 1,009 | 1,287 |
| Dunfermline | 6 | 3,521 | 3,252 | 5,436 | 4,142 | 3,163 | 2,963 | 5,535 | 8,854 |
| Kirkcaldy | 1,553 | 812 | 2,614 | 3,470 | 4,902 | 5,342 | 3,647 | 5,632 | 8,140 |
| North East Fife | 783 | 1,596 | 2,133 | 2,145 | 1,517 | 1,654 | 2,000 | 2,398 | 3,340 |
| Aberdeen | n.a. | 1,170 | 5,328 | 7,007 | 8,721 | 5,353 | 4,656 | 6,435 | 9,574 |
| Banff and Buchan | 705 | 6089 | 1,406 | 2,433 | 2,817 | 2,866 | 2,411 | 2,381 | 3,208 |
| Gordon | n.a. | 816 | 1,565 | 2,710 | 2,225 | 1,320 | 1,604 | 1,065 | 928 |
| Kincardine and Deeside | 637 | 746 | 738 | 879 | 703 | 1,028 | 629 | 787 | 773 |
| Moray | 567 | 1,326 | 1,034 | 2,090 | 2,716 | 2,562 | 2,468 | 3,288 | 4,323 |
| Badenoch and Strathspey | n.a. | 524 | 140 | 240 | 159 | 144 | 449 | 424 | 567 |

| *District* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Caithness | 125 | 682 | 502 | 507 | 423 | 559 | 514 | 943 | 839 |
| Inverness | n.a. | 1,264 | 1,371 | 1,148 | 772 | 1,325 | 1,040 | 1,311 | 1,871 |
| Lochaber | 54 | 303 | 242 | 332 | 380 | 382 | 882 | 1,276 | 1,337 |
| Nairn | n.a. | 297 | 204 | 222 | 401 | 223 | 231 | 169 | 259 |
| Ross and Cromarty | 169 | 833 | 496 | 729 | 388 | 519 | 851 | 743 | 792 |
| Skye and Lochalsh | 109 | 144 | 66 | 70 | 143 | 177 | 226 | 174 | 344 |
| Sutherland | 140 | 212 | 144 | 136 | 81 | 154 | 132 | 255 | 240 |
| East Lothian | n.a. | 623 | 3,558 | 2,820 | 4,073 | 2,471 | 3,218 | 7,419 | 9,161 |
| Edinburgh | 3,988 | 5,561 | 6,066 | 7,479 | 8,395 | 10,101 | 7,362 | 16,219 | 38,827 |
| Midlothian | n.a. | 531 | 3,022 | 4,246 | 3,034 | 2,255 | 2,293 | 4,393 | 8,268 |
| West Lothian | 1,217 | 865 | 1,209 | 2,130 | 1,949 | 2,345 | 2,277 | 3,738 | 6,801 |
| Argyll and Bute | 8 | 674 | 794 | 1,160 | 1,091 | 1,392 | 1,359 | 1,400 | 1,594 |
| Bearsden and Milngavie | 425 | 393 | 244 | 523 | 413 | 296 | 140 | 219 | 619 |
| Clydebank | n.a. | 8 | 744 | 691 | 544 | 822 | 1,507 | 2,706 | 6,213 |
| Clydesdale | n.a. | 230 | 199 | 360 | 390 | 759 | 913 | 1,359 | 3,864 |
| Cumbernauld and Kilsyth | 128 | 232 | 126 | 346 | 253 | 507 | 817 | 1,273 | 2,334 |
| Cumnock and Doon Valley | 155 | 504 | 276 | 493 | 356 | 435 | 1,197 | 1,072 | n.a. |
| Cunninghame | 1,451 | 983 | 858 | 1,169 | 1,827 | 1,818 | 2,647 | 5,643 | 8,757 |
| Dumbarton | n.a. | 325 | 636 | 796 | 856 | 787 | 1,101 | 1,978 | 4,573 |
| East Kilbride | 44 | 410 | 188 | 170 | 226 | 335 | 454 | 633 | 1,044 |
| Eastwood | 490 | 436 | 232 | 296 | 367 | 235 | 660 | 827 | 1,003 |
| Glasgow | n.a. | 1,660 | 13,854 | 8,169 | 6,223 | 8,106 | 10,989 | 27,703 | 46,086 |
| Hamilton | 161 | 411 | 1,751 | 1,275 | 1,442 | 1,447 | 2,664 | 6,377 | 8,411 |
| Inverclyde | 262 | 550 | 819 | 1,338 | 1,416 | 2,907 | 2,176 | 3,512 | 3,594 |
| Kilmarnock and Loudoun | n.a. | 928 | 464 | 1,400 | 1,238 | 1,613 | 2,302 | 3,020 | 6,037 |
| Kyle and Carrick | 1,505 | 627 | 1,335 | 2,101 | 2,553 | 3,270 | 4,455 | 7,126 | 9,176 |
| Monklands | n.a. | 550 | 839 | 674 | 687 | 1,176 | 3,117 | 1,709 | n.a. |
| Motherwell | 96 | 912 | 1,471 | 1,406 | 1,423 | 2,570 | 2,948 | 5,894 | 9,972 |
| Renfrew | n.a. | 2,319 | 4,617 | 3,166 | 3,443 | 4,048 | 4,917 | 12,722 | 19,116 |
| Strathkelvin | 500 | 1,603 | 1,087 | 1,429 | 1,025 | 1,761 | 2,384 | 4,525 | 6,487 |
| Angus | 349 | 1,567 | 1,827 | 2,843 | 2,931 | 2,309 | 2,274 | 3,235 | 3,978 |
| Dundee | 240 | 744 | 1,410 | 1,581 | 3,134 | 3,246 | 3,348 | 5,915 | 9,135 |
| Perth and Kinross | 1,191 | 1,901 | 3,839 | 3,015 | 2,879 | 2,301 | 2,336 | 3,546 | 5,303 |
| Orkney | 338 | 441 | 164 | 96 | 97 | 116 | 308 | 368 | 564 |
| Shetland | n.a. | 470 | 426 | 444 | 232 | 285 | 308 | 453 | 523 |
| Western Isles | 213 | 781 | 207 | 625 | 346 | 364 | 281 | 307 | |
| Scotland | 19,484 | 50,315 | 82,300 | 96,199 | 97,845 | 98,510 | 110,598 | 192,421 | 304,835 |

[1] Including sales to sitting tenants on a voluntary basis prior to 1986.
n.a. = Not available.

**Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what was the *(a)* market valuation and *(b)* actual selling price of (i) detached houses, (ii) semi detatched houses, (iii) terraced houses, (iv) flats or maisonettes, and (v) four-in-a-block type dwellings for each local authority in Scotland and for Scotland as a whole during each year from 1980-81 to 1988-89.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The breakdown requested was not collected prior to 1986. Tables giving the information available have been placed in the House Library.

## Greater Glasgow Health Board

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many joint consultative committees exist within the Greater Glasgow health board; and what is the management representation on each.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** There are two joint consultative committees at board level. The management representation on both comprises the chairman of the health board, the vice-chairman, one other board member, the general manager, the director of personnel, the director of administration, the director of finance (as required), the chief administrative medical officer and the chief area nursing officer. There are also a number of other local joint consultative committees below board level.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the conferences attended by the general manager of Greater Glasgow health board since his appointment; what was the location and duration; and what were his expenses for each conference.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** This is a matter for the health board.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will publish a list of hospital visits made by the chairman of the Greater Glasgow health board in each of the past 12 months;

(2) if he will publish a list of hospital visits made by the general manager of the Greater Glasgow health board in each of the past 12 months;

(3) if he will publish a list of the visits made to hospitals by members of Greater Glasgow health board other than the chairman and general manager, in each of the past 24 months.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** This information is not held centrally.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the attendance record of the members of the Greater Glasgow health board for the past two years.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** No.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the names of members of the Greater Glasgow health board and indicate the part of the city in which they reside; and if he will state their jobs and ages.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The information requested is as follows:

| Name | Area of residence | Occupation |
|---|---|---|
| Dr. T. J. Thomson, CBE | Jordanhill | Retired consultant physician |
| Mrs J. E. Cameron | Bearsden | Housewife |
| Rev. R. D. M. Campbell | Newton Mearns | Minister of religion |
| Dr. W. K. Davidson, CBE | Stepps | General medical practitioner |
| Miss E. Donnachie | Johnstone | Director of midwifery services |
| Mr. A. D. Garland | Cathcart | Chartered quantity surveyor |
| Mrs A. Gilchrist | Newton Mearns | Director, Robert Gilchrist and Son Ltd. |
| Lady S. Goold | Clarkston | Housewife |
| Mr. P. W. Holst | Maryhill | Insulation contractor, managing director |
| Mrs. A. Jarvis | Lenzie | Company director |
| Mr. B. A. Maan | Pollok | Company (managing) director |
| Mr. A. J. Mack | Cathcart | Consultant surgeon |
| Mr. C. MacKay | Bearsden | Consultant surgeon |
| Prof. R. M. Mackie | Bearsden | Professor of dermatology |
| Mr. C. Macreath | Troon | Solicitor |
| Mrs M. McGarry | Clydebank | Housewife |
| Mr. N. M. Naftalin | Newton Mearns | Solicitor |
| Mr. J. A. Peel | Bearsden | Medical laboratory scientific officer |

Their ages range from 37 to 66.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the terms and conditions, including salary and fringe benefits, of the general manager of Greater Glasgow health board; and what percentage increase in salary he has received in each year since his appointment.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The remuneration and conditions of service of health board general managers are set out in circulars SHHD/DGM(1986)37, SHHD/DGM(1986)40, SHHD/DGM(1987)18, SHHD/DGM(1987)21, SHHD/DGM(1987)71 and SHHD/DGM(1988)64. Copies of these circulars are being placed in the Library.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what have been the total of expenses claimed by the general manager of Greater Glasgow health board in each year since his appointment.

**Mr Michael Forsyth:** This information is not held centrally and is a matter for the health board to deal with in conformity with guidance issued in 1985 by the Scottish Home and Health Department.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what responses to date Greater Glasgow health board has received from its advertisements of works' contracts in the official journal of the European Communities dated 30 June.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Greater Glasgow health board has received expressions of interest from a number of sources.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when was the last joint consultative committee meeting within Greater Glasgow health board at which clinical biochemists and other scientific staff raised questions about the board's future plans for alternative methods of delivering pharmacy, radiology and laboratory services.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Wednesday 14 June 1989.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether Greater Glasgow health board took independent legal advice or sought legal advice through his office about where dilictual liability falls in the contract documents which have been prepared in respect of the works contracts advertised in the official journal of the European Communities dated 30 June 1989.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** No such contract documents have been prepared.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland why the Greater Glasgow health board decided that clinical services might benefit from being tested in the market place before receiving a report of the strategic review undertaken for them by the laboratory consultants in Glasgow.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Health boards are expected to apply a market test to services where advantage may accrue from competitive tendering.

## Hospital Visits

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish details of visits to hospitals undertaken by the relevant junior Minister in each of the past twenty-four months.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** My visits were as follows:

| Hospital | Date visited |
|---|---|
| | 1987 |
| Seafield Hospital, Ayr | 28 July |
| Edinburgh Royal Infirmary | 15 September |
| Annan Hospital, Annan | 22 September |
| Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow | 30 September |
| Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow | 30 September |
| Lennox Castle, Glasgow | 30 September |
| Woodilee Hospital, Glasgow | 30 September |
| State Hospital, Carstairs | 14 October |
| Stirling Royal Infirmary | 21 December |
| Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow | 23 December |
| | 1988 |
| Western Infirmary, Glasgow | 22 February |
| Ross Hall Hospital, Glasgow | 22 February |
| Biggart Hospital, Prestwick | 29 February |
| Lennox Castle, Glasgow | 6 June |
| Aberdeen Royal Infirmary | 22 July |
| Princes Street Day Hospital, Stirling | 7 September |
| Kincardine O'Neil War Memorial Hospital, Torphins | 14 September |
| Dr. Gray's Hospital, Elgin | 15 September |
| Ninewells Hospital, Dundee | 20 September |
| Edinburgh Royal Infirmary | 5 October |
| Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow | 1 December |
| | 1989 |
| Lennox Castle, Glasgow | 23 January |
| Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh | 6 February |
| Borders District General Hospital | 17 March |
| Haylodge Hospital, Peebles | 17 March |
| Western General Hospital, Edinburgh | 20 March |
| Western Infirmary, Glasgow | 20 March |
| Perth Royal Infirmary | 10 May |
| Astley Ainslie Hospital, Edinburgh | 24 July |

## Health Boards

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he or his responsible Minister personally interview prospective chairpersons of health boards before deciding on their appointments.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** It is not the practice of my right hon. and learned Friend to appoint to such important posts persons of whom he has inadequate knowledge.

## Dog Bites

**Mr. Michael J. Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were treated in the Greater Glasgow health board area for dog bites for the years 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** This information is not collected.

## NHS Staff

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for the last year for which figures are available the number of physiotherapists, radiographers, chiropodists and nutritionists employed by the National Health Service.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Provisional figures for whole-time equivalent numbers of qualified staff employed in the NHS in Scotland at 31 March 1989 are given in the table for physiotherapists, radiographers (including both diagnostic and therapeutic services), chiropodists and dietitians. Separate figures for nutritionists are not available centrally.

| | *WTE* |
|---|---|
| Physiotherapists | 1,211·6 |
| Radiographers | 973·6 |
| Chiropodists | 516·8 |
| Dietitians | 211·5 |

## Litter

**Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to deal with the problem of litter in public places; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** We are determined to take vigorous and effective action to deal with the problem of litter. I am today publishing details of our proposals for legislation designed to improve the appearance and standards of cleanliness of public places in Scotland, and to enable and encourage local authorities, other landowners and individual citizens to take more effective action against litter and those who drop it. These proposals are broadly similar to those published on 20 July by my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment, for Transport and for Wales to apply in England and Wales.

Our proposals include:

a power for district and islands councils to introduce fixed penalty schemes for littering;

an increase in the maximum fine for littering under the Litter Act 1983 from £400 to £1,000;

a duty on local authorities to keep clean all land in their beneficial occupancy or control, open to the air and to which the public have access; this duty would include both litter and dog faeces;

a similar duty on certain landowners with statutory functions;

a power for district and islands councils to impose by designation order a similar duty on owners of certain defined categories of land in other ownership (such as car parks, shopping precincts and forecourts of commercial premises);

rationalising street cleaning responsibilities by making district and islands councils wholly responsible for cleaning of all roads (except motorways);

a statutory code of practice to which all those under the duty would be required to have regard, specifying standards of cleanliness and advising on the best means of achieving these;

a system of enforcement whereby *(a)* an aggrieved citizen can apply for a court order directing a local authority, or any other landowner under the duty to keep clean, to discharge the duty; *(b)* the local authority has power to issue litter abatement notices requiring a private landowner to discharge his duty; and *(c)* the local authority has default powers to carry out cleaning work itself, and recover costs; and

the extension of section 1 of the Litter Act 1983 to all areas covered by the duty to keep clean, and the widening of its scope.

I am arranging for copies of the consultation document to be placed in the Library of the House. Copies are also being sent to interested parties, inviting comments by 29 September. Subject to responses to the consultation, the Government intend to introduce the necessary legislation at the earliest opportunity.

## Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions, including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The information requested concerning statutory instruments prepared in the Scottish Office for the calendar years from 1984 to date is as follows:

| *Year* | *Total orders issued* | *Negative orders issued* | *Affirmative orders issued* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1984 | 230 | 100 | 7 |
| 1985 | 190 | 93 | 22 |
| 1986 | 210 | 90 | 12 |
| 1987 | 255 | 100 | 11 |
| 1988 | 281 | 154 | 13 |
| 1989[1] | 139 | 73 | 9 |

[1] to date

## Sand-eels

**Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research has been undertaken since 1 January into the sand-eel population in waters around Scotland, and in particular, around Shetland.

**Mr. Lang:** Regular samples have been taken of commercial catches both at Shetland and off the west coast of Scotland since the fishery began in April. In addition, a survey of the spawning grounds around Shetland was undertaken in February 1989, and larval and 0-group sand-eels around Shetland were assessed in May and June. A survey of the fishing grounds at Shetland is also to be undertaken later this summer.

**Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he proposes to increase the amount and extent of research being undertaken by his Department into the sand-eel population in the waters around Scotland, and in particular around Shetland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** Scientists from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland marine laboratory regularly sample commercial catches of sand-eels in Scottish waters, and earlier this year undertook surveys of larval and 0-group sand-eels and the spawning grounds around Shetland. A further survey of the Shetland fishing grounds is planned for later in the summer. The programme for further research on sand-eels in 1990 and subsequent years is currently under consideration.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, following from his announcement on licensing arrangements for the Shetland sand-eel fishery, whether he will estimate the level of fishing which the Shetland sand-eel stocks will be able to support during the first six months of 1990.

**Mr. Lang:** An assessment will be made before the end of the year of the appropriate level of fishing for 1990.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any proposals to introduce a licensing system for the sand-eel fishery in the Minch similar to the one recently introduced for the Shetland sand-eel fishery; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** A licensing scheme for sand-eel fisheries in Scottish inshore waters (including the Minch) was introduced with effect from 1 July 1989 under the Sand-eel Licensing Order 1989. The detailed arrangements applying to west coast sand-eel fisheries for 1989 were announced on 13 July by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is considering the introduction of alternative methods of estimating sand-eel stocks to the present retrospective method, virtual population analysis; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** New methods for assessing fish stocks are continually under development and scientists at the Aberdeen marine laboratory are in the process of refining the present methods for sand-eels using detailed fishing effort data and the results of research surveys. Given the data presently available, however, there is no known method of estimating the sand-eel stock size that is likely in the near future to provide a more accurate assessment than is obtained by virtual population analysis.

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the percentage of stock of 1 group sand-eels that was taken by the Shetland fishery prior to and after the end of June in each of the past 15 years.

**Mr. Lang:** The information requested, which has been derived from the most recent assessment by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, is as follows:

*Percentage of stock of 1-group taken in Shetland fishery*

| | *Before end of June* | *After end of June* |
|---|---:|---:|
| 1974 | 5·0 | 5·8 |
| 1975 | 2·8 | 1·0 |
| 1976 | 11·9 | 4·1 |
| 1977 | 18·9 | 3·0 |
| 1978 | 23·0 | 3·8 |
| 1979 | 17·1 | 3·4 |
| 1980 | 4·0 | 1·8 |
| 1981 | 15·1 | 4·5 |
| 1982 | 22·4 | 1·6 |
| 1983 | 10·0 | 3·1 |
| 1984 | 6·0 | 1·6 |
| 1985 | 10·7 | 2·5 |
| 1986 | 6·3 | 1·1 |
| 1987 | 11·1 | 1·4 |
| 1988 | 4·1 | 0·4 |

## Water Pollution

**Sir Hector Monro:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what responses have been received on his Department's consultative proposals for tighter controls over the most dangerous substances entering water; and if he will make a statement.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Scottish Office proposals were set out in a consultation paper issued on 19 December 1988. Responses were received from 20 organisations representing industrial, environmental, agricultural, water and local authority interests. A summary has been placed in the Library.

The respondents generally gave a strong welcome to the Government's proposals for the principle of a unified approach involving the use of both environmental quality standards and technology-based emission standards for controlling discharges of the most dangerous substances. Comments were invited and received on a number of matters of detail, and these have been taken into account in the conclusions reached.

A key element of the proposals which was welcomed by many respondents, was the drawing up of a priority Red List of dangerous substances. The provisional list included in the consultation paper has been slightly amended in the light of the consultations and of new and corrected data now received. The initial priority Red List will be:

| *Substance* | *CAS number* |
|---|---|
| Mercury and its compounds | |
| Cadmium and its compounds | |
| gamma-Hexachlorocyclohexane | 00058-89-9 |
| DDT | 00050-29-3 |
| Pentachlorophenol | 00087-86-5 |
| Hexachlorobenzene | 00118-74-1 |
| Hexachlorobutadiene | 00087-68-3 |
| Aldrin | 00309-00-2 |
| Dieldrin | 00060-57-1 |
| Endrin | 00072-20-8 |
| Polychlorinated Biphenyls | 01336-36-3 |
| Dichlorvos | 00062-73-7 |
| 1,2-Dichloroethane | 00107-06-2 |
| Trichlorobenzene | 12002-48-1 |
| Atrazine | 01912-24-9 |
| Simazine | 00122-34-9 |
| Tributyltin compounds | |
| Triphenyltin compounds | |
| Trifluoralin | 01582-09-8 |
| Fenitrothion | 00122-14-5 |
| Azinphos-methyl | 00086-50-0 |
| Malathion | 00121-75-5 |
| Endosulfan | 00115-29-7 |

This list is the same as that announced by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the

Environment in the House on 10 April, (*Official Report*, volume 150, column 405). In making his decision, my hon. Friend took account of the comments and suggestions expressed in the Scottish consultation exercise.

Further substances may be added to the list from time to time where there are sound scientific reasons for doing so. These will be identified along the broad lines set out in the annex to the consultation paper. The selection scheme is being further developed and modified in the light of comments received. Candidate substances identified by the scheme will be subject to a second-stage assessment, taking particular account of the risk posed for the aquatic environment, and to consultation before addition to the list.

Those respondents to the consultative paper who commented on the mechanism of control all favoured the principle that discharges from prescribed processes should be subject to control by the Scottish river purification authorities rather than controlled centrally. Strict environmental quality standards should be set for all Red List substances where they do not exist at present. River purification authorities' discharge consents will ensure that these standards are met as a minimum requirement. Enabling powers for this purpose are available in schedule 23 to the Water Act 1989, which substitutes new and amended provisions in part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

Such discharges would be subject to a requirement, to be introduced progressively for existing plant, that the process should be operated according to the best available technology not entailing excessive costs with a view to minimising discharges of the most dangerous substances.

We shall be issuing shortly a further consultation paper which considers how the work of the river purification authorities in dealing with Red List substances should be co-ordinated with that of other pollution control agencies.

The 1988 consultation paper discussed the question of inputs of Red List substances to water through indirect or diffuse sources. Several respondents agreed with the paper that diffuse sources are an important input for many dangerous substances. After considering the comments received, we still believe that existing controls over the supply, use and disposal of substances should generally be sufficient to deal with any potential problem from diffuse sources, but we shall be asking river purification authorities to put in hand more rigorous monitoring for priority substances and we are considering the need for new powers relating to the storage and more general use of certain hazardous substances.

Measures are also required for controls over discharges to sewers where these discharges contain Red List substances. We shall be making proposals for how this should be done in the consultation paper referred to earlier.

## DEFENCE

### Aldermaston

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what staffing and recruitment initiatives he is taking to ensure that the atomic weapons establishment, Aldermaston, has sufficient resources to manage the research work on a warhead for a new air-launched missle.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** Every effort is made to ensure that the atomic weapons establishment has sufficient manpower for its priority tasks, including where appropriate work related to possible future systems. Special pay additions have been introduced, and major recruitment campaigns are maintained. The situation is kept under close and careful review.

### Exercise Migrant Merlin

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the purpose of, and what numbers are involved in, exercise Migrant Merlin to take place in October.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Exercise Migrant Merlin is 15 Infantry Brigade's annual exercise and will be held between 7 and 21 October on Salisbury plain. It is designed to provide battalion and brigade level training in essential wartime tasks. These include area defence, observation, patrolling, and limited attack exercising. A maximum of 3,000 troops are expected to participate at any one time; with the exceptions of the brigade headquarters, these will all be Territorial Army personnel.

### Civil Service Dispersal

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress is being made in his Department's review, with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for the further relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the south-east; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The most significant element of MOD relocation planning has revolved around two major groups within the procurement executive.

The proposed move of 1,500 quality assurance posts from Woolwich and Bromley to Teesside was announced in the House on 9 March 1989. Consultations are continuing with the trade union side about the move, which would take place over the period 1993-95.

A feasibility study report of relocating some 3,500 posts in the land and air systems controllerates is currently with Ministers. Given reasonably early agreement on site selection, the effective date for these moves could be in the timescale 1993-95.

Additionally, a number of smaller moves, totalling about 1,000 posts from London, have been agreed (and some have taken place) since the 1988 relocation initiative.

The MOD will continue to pursue a policy of relocating work from London and the south-east to less advantaged regions whenever possible and the TU side will continue to be consulted on all relocation studies.

### RAF Depots

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the RAF aircraft storage depots in Britain.

**Mr. Neubert:** There are four RAF aircraft storage depots in Britain, which are located at Abingdon, Kemble, St. Athan and Shawbury.

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the RAF equipment supply depots in Britain.

**Mr. Neubert:** There are three RAF equipment supply depots in Britain which are located at Carlisle, Quedgley and Stafford.

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the RAF petroleum supply depots in Britain.

**Mr. Neubert:** Following the transfer of former Department of Energy depots to the Ministry of Defence on 1 April 1989, there are now some 44 RAF petroleum supply depots at various locations within the United Kingdom. However, it would not be in the public interest to give details of these sites.

### USAF Petroleum Depots

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the United States Air Force petroleum supply depots in Britain.

**Mr. Neubert:** There are no United States petroleum supply depots in the United Kingdom. Storage facilities are made available as necessary at RAF depots.

### Defence Estimates

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the reasons for the increase in project cost for the Sonar 2054, set out in the major equipment projects tables in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989" and the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988".

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I presume that the hon. Gentleman is questioning the difference in the figures given in the Statement on the Defence Estimates (SDE) 88 and SDE 89. The £310 million given in SDE 88 represents the then approved programme. The £400 million given in SDE 89 includes further production orders and pay and price variations.

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the reason for the slippage of one year in the in-service date for the type 2400 submarine, set out in the major equipment projects tables in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989" and the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1988".

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The slippage of one year to the delivery date for the type 2400 submarine is due, first, to industrial action at VSEL during 1988; and secondly, because of the number of technical problems with new to service equipment on this, the first of a new class of diesel-electric submarines.

### European Fighter Aircraft

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the provision of a constant speed drive generating unit on the new European fighter aircraft; whether he has considered the Lucas system and that of Bendix/Ferranti; and if he has considered the respective weights and efficiency of power supplies in reaching a decision between the competing systems.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The United Kingdom and our EFA partners, in conjunction with the EFA prime contractor (Eurofighter), are in the process of evaluating the merits of the competing bids for the EFA main generating system development contract. All relevant factors, including those mentioned by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton), are being taken into account and a decision is expected in the very near future. In the circumstances it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the respective merits of either bid.

**Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his counterpart in the Federal Republic of Germany to discuss progress on the contract awards for the EFA project.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decision has been reached on the development contract for the European fighter aircraft radar.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration has been given to the development and production of two different versions of the European Fighter Aircraft, based upon two different radar systems.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will write to the hon. Members.

### RAF Finningley

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what studies have been carried out at RAF station Finningley, along the lines of those carried out at RAF station Manston, in respect of using RAF station Finningley as a joint military-civil airport; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Neubert:** RAF Finningley is a busy training station and the scope for civil flying is limited. My Department has not undertaken any studies on the greater civil use of the airfield but remains ready to discuss any viable proposals with the appropriate authorities.

### Chlorofluorocarbons

**Sir Hugh Rossi:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the guidelines issued by the Property Services Agency containing advice on the use of chlorofluorocarbons on the Government estate extend to cooling systems for munitions storage, Her Majesty's ships and submarines and communications network; and what plans exist to ensure the safe disposal of chlorofluorocarbon refrigerant material and chlorofluorocarbon 11 from such cooling systems.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The guidelines issued by the Property Services Agency (18 May 1989) on the use of CFCs in Government estate contain principles which were already being implemented within MOD. Government policy is being applied to CFCs in Her Majesty's ships and submarines and communications network. The means of ensuring the safe disposal of CFCs already in MOD possession is the subject of current discussion.

### Trident

**Mr. Franks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of the Trident programme.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The Trident programme continues to progress to time and to budget.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about progress on the Trident programme.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Nuclear Tests

**Mr. David Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how military and reconnaissance aircraft were disposed of at sea, following British nuclear tests; and what purposes were served by such dumping.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I am not aware that any British military or reconnaissance aircraft were disposed of at sea. However, it was noted that a Grumman Avenger aircraft from HMS Warrior at operation Grapple was lost overboard in an accident.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in what manner water was imported into Christmas Island during British nuclear tests there in the 1950s; from where; and how it was monitored.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** Royal Navy ships fitted with special distillation equipment delivered on average 100 tons of fresh water per day for use ashore on Christmas Island. This was in addition to the main source of supply of treated surface water in which no radioactivity associated with the nuclear tests was detected. I refer the hon. Member to the replies given on 7 November 1988 columns *31-32* and 31 October 1988 column *528* which answered similar questions. The RAF was mainly responsible for monitoring all water and ensuring that it met public health standards.

### Nuclear Test Veterans

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the 12th Independent Field Squadron are now deceased; and what information he has as to the causes of death.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to a similar question on 22 December 1988 at column *376*.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if Fijian forces have been studied by the National Radiological Protection Board; and if he has received representations from the Fijian Government about the health and welfare of their nuclear test veterans.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** Fijian forces were not included in the study carried out by the NRPB and ICRF. I am not aware of any representations from the Fijian Government about the health and welfare of their nuclear test veterans.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will release details of unit/service mortality amongst British nuclear test veterans and the causes of this mortality.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The information can be obtained only at disproportionate cost and, depending on the level of detail, could in any case be subject to the Data Protection Act.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what conclusions he draws with regard to his policy towards the compensation of British nuclear test veterans from the report of Dr. Karl Morgan of the health physics division of Oak Ridge national laboratory in Tennessee, dealing with the consequences of United States veterans' exposure during nuclear tests in the 1950s and 1960s.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** Government policy on this matter is based on the conclusions reached in the National Radiological Protection Board report released last year, which concluded that no harm due to ionising radiation was suffered by participants in the United Kingdom nuclear test programme. However, the Government would be ready to pay compensation to those participants who suffer ill health from a disease if it could be shown, even on a balance of probabilities, that the incidence of that disease was linked to participation in the United Kingdom nuclear test programme. Individual reports, such as that to which the hon. Member refers, will not change Government policy unless they influence the NRPB conclusions; that is a matter for the NRPB who are the independent experts on these matters. I also refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 23 May 1989, at column *464*.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what studies have taken place into beta dose erythema conditions amongst British nuclear test veterans.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** No studies of beta dose erythema have been carried out on British nuclear test veterans.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the function of the RAF balloon unit during British nuclear tests in the 1950s; to what proximity members of the unit approached ground zero; and with what frequency.

**Mr. Clark:** The function of the balloon unit was to operate a balloon system for hoisting devices under test to the prescribed altitude ready for detonation. Members of the balloon unit were withdrawn to a safe distance of not less than 12·5 km from ground zero at the time of detonation. After detonation balloon unit personnel returned to ground zero only when the induced radiation had fallen to such levels that the exposures were not sensibly greater than zero.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which military unit or squadron spent the most time in active service in the Christmas islands, during British nuclear tests there *(a)* cumulatively and *(b)* consecutively.

**Mr. Clark:** HMS Resolution remained in active service in the Christmas islands during the British nuclear tests from December 1957 until June 1964. 73 E and M Squadron RE remained in service from December 1957 to January 1964 and the RAF Unit Christmas Island was present from October 1957 until June 1964.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who undertook the descaling of desalination tanks on Christmas Island, during British nuclear tests there in the 1950s; where these samples were taken for examination; and if the results of these examinations are publicly available.

**Mr. Clark:** The storage of drinking water at Christmas Island was the responsibility of the Army. The checking of the quality of fresh and raw water from ground sources and shore distillers prior to and in storage was the responsibility of the RAF medical service. There was no reason to descale the desalination tanks since they were only for the storage of clean potable water. The RAF medical service reports, under normal rules, would have been destroyed after two years.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why an operation/biopsy took place on Mr. Andrew Dickson of Wakefield during his active service on Christmas Island; what was the purpose of this operation; and why it took place on the island rather than via referral to Honolulu.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** It is not the policy of this Department to discuss the detail of individual medical cases, which are covered by the rules concerning medical confidentiality. This policy accords with that of the NHS.

### Radiation Contamination

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what threshold of radiation contamination exists with respect to genetic effects.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The assumption is made for radiation protection purposes that there is no threshold for the types of radiation effect that produce mutations in the hereditary information in cells.

### Saudi Offset Committee

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what current proposals have been (i) discussed and (ii) agreed with the Saudi Government offset committee; what are the estimated amounts involved; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** In addition to the venture proposals referred to by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement to the hon. Member on 19 June 1989, col *56*, I am pleased to say that three further venture proposals have subsequently been put to the Saudi Government offset committee for its consideration.

As announced in a news release by my Department today the third proposal involves an imaginative series of potential collaborations from Royal Ordnance plc to develop jointly Saudi Arabia's defence industrial infrastructure. The fourth proposes that the United Kingdom company Technicare International Limited and the Saudi company Yusuf Bin Ahmed Kanoo collaborate on setting up a number of computer training centres in Saudi Arabia and number five is for a joint venture between Fryma Fabrics Limited of the United Kingdom and Nafa Enterprises of Riyadh to establish a manufacturing plant in Saudi Arabia to produce polyethylene yarn and tape and also to knit the yarn into agricultural and horticultural netting. All five initial proposals are presently being considered by the Saudi Government offset committee.

All of the proposals will be the subject of further detailed feasibility studies before implementation and it is not yet possible to give an accurate assessment of the investment which will be involved. The present indication is that the total investment in the five project proposals should be in excess of £100 million over a period of 10 years or more.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Nimrod Airframe

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how long the Nimrod airframe is likely to remain in RAF service; and whether his Department is currently looking at replacement options.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** We expect the Nimrod to give many more years of useful service. The question of a replacement will be addressed at the appropriate time.

### Tornado

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Tornado aircraft have crashed since the aircraft entered service.

**Mr. Neubert:** Since the aircraft entered service, 20 RAF Tornado aircraft have been damaged irreparably in accidents. The public release of aircraft accident statistics for other nations is a matter for the respective Governments.

### Procurement Executive

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many senior officials in the Ministry of Defence procurement executive have had previous long-term experience of working in the defence industry or any other manufacturing industry.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The information requested is not readily available. The majority of the senior staff in the procurement executive are career civil servants and comparatively few have worked for a prolonged period in industry. However, the commercial experience of staff in the procurement executive is steadily increasing as a result of a substantial programme of interchange with industry and through increased efforts to recruit those who have worked in the defence and other industries.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any plans to appoint more civilians who have had long-term experience working in defence-related industries to the procurement executive.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** Yes. We are already running continuous recruitment campaigns seeking to fill posts at the lower and middle management levels of the procurement executive with people who have worked in industry. At the more senior level, we shall shortly be seeking to recruit two or three project managers with industrial experience.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is the current target for the employment of civilian specialist computer science staff in the procurement executive;

(2) what is the total number of civilian specialist computer science staff currently employed in the procurement executive;

(3) what the target for the employment of civilian staff in the procurement executive in each year between 1980 and 1989;

(4) what was the total number of civilian staff employed in the procurement executive in each year between 1980 and 1989.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Property Disposal

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the Army establishments, estates or property his Department intend to close or sell in the next five years;

(2) if he will list the RAF establishment estate or property that his Department intends to close or sell in the next five years;

(3) if he will list the Royal Navy and Royal Marine shore establishments, estates or property which his Department intends to close and sell in the next five years.

**Mr. Neubert:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Co-operation Projects (France)

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the current collaborative projects or co-operative arrangements that involve the French.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** A list of the collaborative equipment projects in which both the United Kingdom and France participate, reflecting the position as at 1 March 1989, appears at table 6, chapter 4 of volume 1 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989.

In addition, an Anglo-French reciprocal purchasing initiative was launched in September 1987. Under this initiative, we have set up machinery to establish closer links between the two countries and each now publishes its contract opportunities in bulletins available to industry in both countries.

### Nuclear Delivery System

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration his Department is giving to the use of the multinational MSOW as a nuclear delivery system.

**Mr. Neubert:** None.

### Defence Industry

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent study of the capability of the United Kingdom defence industry has been carried out by his Department; and what judgment he has as to which area of domestic defence manufacturing capability should be preserved for strategic reasons.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The Ministry of Defence keeps the capability of the United Kingdom defence industry under review. Our aim is to achieve value for money in the supply of equipment to our armed forces and our consideration includes, on a case-by-case basis, the advisability of ensuring a continuing United Kingdom source of supply.

### Senior Officials (Appointments)

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what records are kept by his Department of the number of senior Ministry of Defence officials and senior service personnel who have left his Department to take up appointments in defence-related industries.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** This information is not available.

### Hong Kong

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he or any other Minister in his Department last visited British forces in Hong Kong; and when he or any other Minister from his Department next intends to visit.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The last MOD ministerial visit to Hong Kong was that made by my predecessor in January 1988. A further visit should take place within the next 12 months.

### Helicopters

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the other helicopter options that are being looked at as an alternative to EH101 to fill the Royal Air Force's battlefield support requirement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** In accordance with normal procurement practice, we shall consider all appropriate helicopter types, including—where relevant—combinations of types, in order to determine whether the utility version of the EH101 helicopter continues to represent the most cost-effective solution for meeting the future requirement for support helicopters. This work will be taken forward during the project definition phase of the RAF EH101 programme, the first stage of which will be completed by April 1990.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has had with representatives of McDonnell Douglas concerning the possible purchase of Apache helicopters for the Army Air Corps.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will write to the hon. Member.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any Army Air Corps or RAF pilots have been involved in any recent trials of the Blackhawk helicopter.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The Ministry of Defence has not undertaken any recent trials of the Blackhawk. However, a flight observer from A&AEE, Boscombe Down, has flown in a Blackhawk which is used by Rolls-Royce as its flight test vehicle for the RTM 322 engine, as part of the MOD's monitoring of the RTM 322 development.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any Army Air Corps personnel or pilots from ETPS, Boscombe Down have recently test flown the AH64 Apache.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** A number of Army Air Corps pilots and test pilots from A&AEE, Boscombe Down, have flown the AH64 Apache during the last 12 months.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Royal Navy variant of EH-101 is to be fitted with a ship sonar when it becomes operational.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** It is intended that the RN anti-submarine warfare (ASW) variant of the EH-101 helicopter will be equipped with sonobuoy systems for the detection of submarines under water. Consideration is also being given to fitting an active dipping sonar but no decision on the choice of equipment has yet been taken.

### Mig Crash (Belgium)

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any RAF interceptor aircraft were airborne in the vicinity of the pilotless Mig 23 aircraft that crashed in Belgium earlier this month.

**Mr. Neubert:** No.

### Martin Maineth SLAT System

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Royal Navy or RAF have tested or taken part in the testing of the Martin Maineth SLAT system.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Basic Trainer Aircraft

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether, in line with his Department's objective of achieving value for money, there has been any recent cost/benefit analysis of his Department's choice of the Tucano basic trainer over the PC-9.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Ships (Leasing)

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Royal Navy or RFA vessels are currently leased to other countries.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** None.

### Rating Reform

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer to the Member for Western Isles on 20 June, *Official Report*, column 75, (1) whether he plans to issue written guidance to armed service units in respect of poll tax payments in England and Wales;

(2) if he will publish the written guidance issued to armed service units in respect of poll tax payments in England and Wales.

**Mr. Neubert:** Such guidance has already been issued, and I have placed copies in the Library of the House. It has been widely promulgated within the services and substantially reflected in a practice note published by the Department of the Environment. I have no plans for any further publication.

### United States Defence Secretary

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the subjects discussed in the course of his meetings with Mr. Cheney, United States Secretary for Defence, during his recent official visit to the United States of America.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** During his recent visit to Washington my right hon. Friend discussed a wide range of matters of mutual interest with Mr. Cheney.

### Air-to-Surface Missile

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on the possible procurement of a tactical air-to-surface missile.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I have nothing to add to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) on 17 July at column *71*.

### Central America

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which central American countries have received assistance from his Department in the past three years; and which countries are currently receiving assistance.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Belize has had an established programme of military assistance from the Ministry of Defence since independence in 1981 and that assistance continues. In addition, in 1987, one cadet from El Salvador attended the basic officer course at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

### Russian Speakers

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many military personnel are fluent Russian speakers; and what this figure was in each of the last 10 years.

**Mr. Neubert:** A total of 162 serving military personnel are qualified as Russian interpreters, of whom 32 serve in the Royal Navy, 94 in the Army and 36 in the Royal Air Force. Records are not held in a form which would enable the historical information requested by the hon. Gentleman to be readily provided, but I understand that the number of Russian interpreters has increased modestly in recent years.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what incentives are currently operating to encourage military personnel to take Russian language training.

**Mr. Neubert:** Financial rewards are provided in the form of lump sum grants for successful completion of the various levels of Russian language training in the services, with smaller grants being awarded upon requalification in that language. Additionally, members of the Services are encouraged to participate in Russian language training provided at voluntary weekend courses at university and other self-help courses, for which some financial assistance is given.

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current level of funding for Russian language training for military personnel, and what it was for each of the last 10 years.

**Mr. Neubert:** I regret that the detailed information sought by the hon. Gentleman concerning expenditure over the last 10 years is not readily available. However, Russian language training at the Defence School of Languages at Beaconsfield is being provided at a cost of about £420,000 in the current year. There is no reason to believe that this differs to any significant degree from the general level of expenditure in the past.

### Nuclear Weapons

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his assessment of the efficiency of current technology to ascertain whether nuclear weapons are being carried at sea.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Defence Procurement

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if, pursuant to his answer of 20 July, *Official Report*, column *322*, he will place copies of all the articles and speeches in which Ministers and senior officials have addressed the implications of 1992 for defence procurement in the Library;

(2) if he will place a copy of the proceedings of the forum held by his Department for industry on the future of defence procurement in Europe in April in the Library.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Nuclear Waste

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state the annual level of production of intermediate-level nuclear waste by his Department for each year prior to 1983 for which data is available.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### NATO Exercises (Observers)

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what was the annual cost in 1987 and in 1988 to his Department of providing appropriate facilities for Warsaw pact military personnel to observe NATO military exercises under the auspices of the Stockholm agreement;

(2) what was the annual cost in 1987 and in 1988 to his Department of providing appropriate facilities to Warsaw pact military personnel to enable them to make challenge inspections of NATO military exercises.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### HMS Dreadnought

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the agreement on charges paid for HMS Dreadnought to be stored at Rosyth.

**Mr. Alan Clark** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* Dreadnought has been stored afloat at Rosyth since 1983. Although she occupies a berth inside the basin (ie inside the licensed area) no specific provision was made in the term contract for payment to be made by the Ministry of Defence to BTL by way of berthing charges for her.

### Exercise Wintex 89

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how may home service force personnel took part in Exercise Wintex 89.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* No member of the home service force took part in exercise Wintex 89.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Naval Reserve personnel took part in Exercise Wintex 89.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* Over 600 personnel of the Royal Navy Reserve took part in exercise Wintex 89.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army personnel took part in exercise Wintex 89.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* About 500 personnel of the Territorial Army took part in exercise Wintex 89.

### Venture Glider

**Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has reached a decision on the type of motor glider selected to replace the Venture at volunteer gliding schools.

**Mr. Alan Clark** *[pursuant to the reply, 13 July 1989, column 588]:* Following a competition, the Grob 109B motor glider, of GRP construction, has been selected to re-equip the air training corps. An order was placed with Burkhart Grob on 25 July 1989 for 53 aircraft. The order also includes the provision of a fatigue test specimen, training and the supply of spares.

## HEALTH

### Regional Health Authorities (Staff)

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by each regional health authority for each year since 1979 the numbers of staff expressed as a whole-time equivalent and as actual full-time and part-time members in the following categories *(a)* ancillary, *(b)* administration and clerical, *(c)* nurses and midwives and *(d)* professional and technical.

**Mr. Mellor:** Such information as is available has been placed in the Library. Information for the years 1979 and 1982 (inclusive) is available on a whole-time equivalent basis only.

"Actual full-time and part-time members" has been interpreted as numbers (headcount).

### Management Consultants

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current annual expenditure in the National Health Service on management consultants; what have been the comparable figures over the past 10 years.

**Mr. Mellor:** The employment of management consultants is a matter for individual health authorities and their accounts do not separately identify any expenditure consequently incurred.

### Community Health Councils

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give a list of the community health councils in England together with their expenditure of public funds in the latest available year.

**Mr. Freeman:** The expenses of community health councils are met by and form part of the total expenditure of the health authorities concerned. Information derived from the annual accounts of district health authorities in England for 1987-88 (the latest year available) have been placed in the Library.

### NHS Pay

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make a statement about pay in the Health Service.

**Mr. Mellor:** Increases for doctors, nursing and midwifery staff and the professions allied to medicine have been implemented following recommendations of review bodies. Settlements have also been negotiated for certain other groups. Just over 90 per cent. of all NHS staff are covered by these settlements for 1989-90.

### Civil Service Dispersal

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in his Department's review, in line with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for the further relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the south-east; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mr. Mellor:** A team of officials is close to completing a thorough, systematic review of the location of our headquarters work. We expect to have a report of the team's findings shortly.

### Drugs Budgets

**Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list those factors that family practitioner committees will take into account in deciding whether a general practitioner is justified in exceeding his indicative drugs budget.

**Mr. Mellor:** A GP practice will be considered justified in exceeding its indicative drug budget if this should prove necessary to provide patients with the drugs they need.

**Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what sanctions regional health authorities will be able to impose should the majority of general practitioners in all or any of their family practitioner committee areas overspend their drugs budgets.

**Mr. Mellor:** Those GPs who overspend their indicative budgets will face disciplinary proceedings only as a last resort and solely when there is clear evidence of over-prescribing which, by definition, would be to the detriment of their patients.

**Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the allocation of drugs budgets to regional health authorities under the reorganisation of the National Health Service will be fixed.

**Mr. Mellor:** Each year each regional health authority will be allocated a firm budget to cover expenditure on medicines in the family practitioner services within the region. The budgets will be set at sensible and realistic levels to ensure that patients receive the medicines they need and that medicines will be paid for at reasonable prices.

**Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether, in his proposals for the National Health Service, the allocation of drugs budgets by regional health authorities to family practitioner committees will be in the form of a fixed amount of indicative spending limits.

**Mr. Mellor:** Regional health authorities will allocate their firm budgets for actual expenditure on medicines among their family practitioner committees (FPCs) which will in turn determine individual FPCs' overall indicative prescribing budgets.

**Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether, in his proposals to reorganise the National Health Service, he intends to fix a cash limit for the drugs budget of the family practitioner services; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The financial arrangements for drug budgets are set out in working paper 4 of the NHS review series "Indicative Prescribing Budgets for General Medical Pracititioners". The precise mechanisms are still under consideration.

### Eye Test Charges

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current estimated saving from eye test charges; and what was the original estimate.

**Mr. Mellor:** The latest estimate of savings in a full year is £90 million (England). The original estimate for the current year was some £70 million.

### Scientists

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish the report of the Whitley council management side working party on recruitment and retention of scientists; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** I understand that the report of the management side working party on recruitment and retention of scientists is confidential to the management side and will not be published.

**Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will establish a pay review body for medical scientists working in the National Health Service, and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) on 24 July at column *536*.

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to improve recruitment and retention of biochemists, physicists, other scientists and clinical psychologists in the National Health Service.

**Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve the level of remuneration, recruitment and retention of medical scientists working in the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* I refer my hon. Friend and the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) on 16 June at columns *101-02*.

**Mr. Dixon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, following the report of the inquiry on the recruitment and retention of physicists, scientists and clinical psychologists, what steps he intends to take to ensure that National Health Service contracts are attractive to scientist graduates and to put right the erosion in their salaries.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) on 16 June at columns *101-02*.

## Skoal Bandits

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to announce his decision concerning the production and sale of Skoal Bandits; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** We are considering the detailed and extensive representations we have received on this matter and we will announce a decision as soon as possible.

## Hospital Physiotherapists (Pay Settlement)

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health from what date the pay settlement for hospital physiotherapists runs.

**Mr. Mellor:** From 1 April.

## Solid Radioactive Waste

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the hospitals in the Trent regional health authority which currently store solid radioactive waste on site; and what controls exist for monitoring and ensuring safety.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested is not available centrally. Hospitals are subject to the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 and guidance on good practice is contained in "Guidance Notes for the Protection of Persons Against Ionising Radiations Arising from Medical and Dental Use" issued in 1988 by the health departments, the National Radiological Protection Board and the Health and Safety Executive.

## NHS Staffing

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give for the last year for which figures are available the number of nutritionists, physiotherapists, radiographers and chiropodists employed by the National Health Service.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information is shown in the table. "Nutritionists" has been interpreted as dietitians.

*NHS qualified staff in post at 30 September 1987 England*

| | *Whole time equivalents*[1] |
|---|---|
| Dietitians | 1,140 |
| Physiotherapists[2] | 9,330 |
| Radiographers | 8,250 |
| Chiropodists | 2,640 |

*Source:* Department of Health (SM13) Annual Census of NHS Non-Medical Manpower.

[1] Figures are independently rounded to the nearest ten (10) whole-time equivalents.

[2] Includes Remedial Gymnasts.

## Medical Records

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will review advice given to general practitioners concerning the time for which patients' medical records should be kept and the information to be retained; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** Under present arrangements, doctors are required to keep adequate records of the treatment of their patients for their patients' lifetimes. After this, the records pass to the local family practitioner committee (FPC) where they are retained for a minimum of three further years. We are currently reviewing these arrangements. Any changes need to be considered carefully, not least because of the resource implications for FPCs of storing records for longer periods.

## Community Care

**Mr. Goodlad:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many severely mentally ill patients he expects to be discharged from hospital into the community between now and 1991; what is the current cost of maintaining them in hospital; and what is his estimate of the additional cost of looking after them in the community;

(2) what is his estimate of the additional cost of caring for the severely mentally ill in the community over the cost of caring for them in hospital.

**Mr. Freeman:** Forecasts of future discharges from hospital of people with a mental illness are not made or collected centrally. The average inpatient cost per day in England for hospitals categorised "mental illness" in 1986-87, the latest year for which information is available, was £44·05 cash, equivalent to £308·35 per week. No comparable information is available centrally about the costs of caring for such patients outside hospital.

## Elderly Patients (Collection of Information)

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health who will own the information collected by general practitioners on the lifestyle and relationships of elderly patients, as will be required by paragraph 11 of appendix B of the new contract document; whether family practitioner committees or health authorities will be entitled to have access to this information; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** General practitioners collect and maintain information for the purpose of the treatment and care of their patients. Ownership of such information lies with the relevant family practitioner committee. FPCs will be entitled to have access to this information but, in accordance with the Department's policy on confidentiality of medical records, only in exceptional cases. A health circular and guidance for FPCs on the subject of ownership and confidentiality of data will be issued shortly.

## Land Development

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what extent in the proposed land transactions of health authorities with developers to upgrade, purchase and build community facilities for the mentally ill, capital receipts would be offset against regional health authority allocations to district health authorities.

**Mr. Freeman:** The policy is that district health authorities should benefit from the proceeds of sale of surplus property but the "Handbook on Land Transactions" makes it clear that the closure of hospitals for the mentally ill and mentally handicapped must be preceded by the build-up of comprehensive alternative services covering the whole of the hospital's catchment area. In these cases regional health authorities are required to use their discretion as to the districts which are to benefit from sale proceeds within the general requirement to ensure that the proceeds are specifically used for development of services for the client group concerned.

### Social Care

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will make a statement on the distinction between social care and health care as referred to in his statement of 12 July, *Official Report*, columns 975-79.

**Mr. Mellor:** In relation to community care, health care involves the investigation, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation undertaken by a doctor or by other professional staff to whom a doctor has referred the patient. In addition, it includes health promotion and the prevention of ill health.

Social care consists of non-health care and support provided through the supply of goods and services to maintain or establish people in their own homes, or by residential or non-acute nursing home care, as appropriate to individuals' needs.

Health and social care combined form the basis of community care.

### Mental Illness (Services)

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which bodies and individuals he intends to consult in constructing the substantive statement of good practice regarding the minimum acceptable professional standards for assessing patients prior to discharge, and for follow-up after discharge referred to in his answer of 13 July, to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad), *Official Report*, columns *620-25*.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Royal College of Psychiatrists has been invited to publish a document on good practice for discharge and after-care procedures, following a recommendation (17.24) by the Spokes report (committee of inquiry into the care and after-care of Miss Sharon Campbell), published in July 1988. The college is seeking the views of colleagues in other professions.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which bodies and individuals he will be consulting concerning his consideration of the possibility of proposing new legislation for compulsory treatment in the community referred to in his answer of 13 July to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad), *Official Report*, columns *620-25*.

**Mr. Freeman:** We are awaiting views of the Royal College of Psychiatrists on this issue. If, in the light of the college's views, we believe that it would be appropriate to consider new legislation, we will first consult representatives of health and social services authorities, and other relevant statutory services, appropriate professional associations and voluntary organisations.

### Schizophrenia

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will consider urgently the case for specific grant for training social workers and other local authority staffs in the care of people with schizophrenia, in the light of the Spokes report and his statement to the House on 12 July, *Official Report*, columns 975-79.

**Mr. Mellor:** Special training arrangements already exist for approved social workers working with mentally ill people under the Mental Health Act 1983. We shall keep under review the need for any further training initiatives for social services staff in the light of the future development of community care services.

### Residential Homes

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Government accept Sir Roy Griffiths recommendation that residential homes with less than four residents should be subject to regulation and inspection.

**Mr. Mellor:** As my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State said in his statement in the House on 12 July, the Government have concluded that, for the present, existing statutory functions relating to registration and inspection of residential care and nursing homes should remain unaltered.

### Performance Indicators

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what variations in the performance of health authorities the latest set of Health Service indicators shows.

**Mr. Freeman:** My hon. Friend will be aware that the booklet "Comparing Health Authorities" published by my Department in April 1988, copies of which are in the Library, illustrated wide variations in a number of aspects of performance. I will be placing in the Library tomorrow a copy of some key indicators for 1987-88. These show that variations remain substantial. For example, within England in 1987-88 for general surgery-urology and for all medical specialties, as in earlier years, the average expenditure per cash and average length of stay varied by a factor of about three. The indicators show wide variations in waiting time. For general surgery in some districts no patients had been waiting for more than a year on 31 March 1988 but in others over one third were in this position. Another indicator showing wide variations is the proportion of cases treated as day cases rather than admitted to hospital which ranges from less than 10 per cent. to over 30 per cent. for general surgery-urology and from less than 5 per cent. to over 20 per cent. for general medicine.

Where there is no apparent good clinical explanation for these variations, and in those places where a high cost per case prevails, local management will need to investigate, particularly where other indicators such as waiting times appear to be poor. This critical examination of performance, as a routine part of managing the service, will be particularly important for all those providing, and all authorities purchasing, services if the changes set out in the White Paper are to be fully effective.

### Food Imports

51. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking to ensure the wholesomeness of imported food.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) on 18 July at columns *135-36*.

## Food Businesses (Register)

52. **Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he will consider the need for a register of food businesses.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) on 24 July 1989.

## NHS Reform

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what pricing policy he expects independent National Health Service hospitals to follow under his proposals in the case of operations for which there are long waiting lists everywhere; and how this will effect the budgets of family doctors.

**Mr. Mellor:** We expect all hospitals, whether they are self-governing or directly managed by the district health authority, to follow pricing policies which enable them to compete with other hospitals while covering their costs. Length of waiting lists should not have any particular effect on prices, save that for elective treatments district health authorities and GPs with practice budgets will be able to choose from a far wider range of providers than in other cases. Far more significant will be the effect that waiting lists themselves will have on competition between hospitals, since district health authorities and GPs will be seeking to place contracts with those hospitals that offer the best service to patients.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many different standard formats of computerised letters his Department has in response to those raising their concerns about Her Majesty's Government's proposals for the future of the Health Service; and how many in total have been sent out to date.

**Mr. Mellor:** Many correspondents have raised similar concerns about the proposals and have received similar replies.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library copies of those of the 8,000 representations on the White Paper, "Working for Patients" which do not come from individiuals.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* By far the majority of the responses are from individuals who have questions or concerns about the White Paper. Many of the major organisations responding to the White Paper or the working papers have already made their responses public. For some the responses form the basis of further discussion, which is still continuing. I see no use in combing through the many responses to see which could be usefully placed in the Library and which are already there.

72. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made on the quality initiative proposed in the White Paper, "Working for Patients".

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The chief executive wrote to all health authorities last month to establish a programme for quality improvements. A copy of his letter has been placed in the Library. His letter asked all authorities to establish a framework for broad, unit-based, quality assurance programmes, including provision this year to cover appointment systems, information to patients, and public areas and reception arrangements. £2 million has also been allocated largely for hospital-related medical audit projects, and we hope to announce a number of national quality demonstration projects soon.

## AIDS

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much of the £129·5 million he made available in 1989-90 to the National Health Service for the prevention of HIV infection and the services related to HIV infection and AIDS has been made available to Waltham Forest district health authority; whether any of the money has gone to substantial upgrading of genito-urinary medicine services in Waltham Forest; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** I am advised that Waltham Forest district health authority received £238,000 from North East Thames regional health authority's allocation of £16,655,000 for the prevention of HIV infection and the services related to HIV infection and AIDS. The district is reviewing the provision of genito-urinary medical services for its resident population which are currently provided by Tower Hamlets and Newham health authorities.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what response he has had from Waltham Forest district health authority to his February letter advising them to provide details of all completed and planned developments in genito-urinary medicine services; when they published the relevant report; if he will make a copy of it available to the hon. Member for Leyton; whether the response is in accord with his comments prioritising such services during the debate on AIDS on 13 January; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** I understand that Waltham Forest district health authority has sent the requested AIDS control report to North East Thames RHA, which is due to submit reports from all districts in the region to the Department at the end of July. A copy of the report can be obtained from the local health authority.

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information is available to him on the relative efficacy of medicines prescribed to people with AIDS or AIDS-related complex according to whether they are, or are not, able to afford the high protein and calorie diets recommended to them by their doctors; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* We are not aware of any scientific information relating the efficacy of drug therapies for AIDS or AIDS-related complex to the consumption of high-protein and calorie diets.

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information is available to him on the survival rate of people with AIDS or AIDS-related complex, analysed by level of income; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* We do not hold this information.

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his estimate of the average weekly cost of medicines prescribed to people with AIDS or AIDS-related complex.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* People with HIV disease may be treated for a number of different illnesses with a number of different drugs. We do not have information in the Department on all the drugs administered to all people with AIDS or AIDS-related complex and cannot therefore provide an estimate of the average weekly cost per patient.

**Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) to what extent foreign AIDS and drug dependency patients are treated by the Parkside health authority.

(2) why it took Parkside health authority over six weeks to reply to a letter from the hon. Member for Northampton, North, saying that no information was available.

**Mr. Mellor:** Parkside health authority regrets the delay in replying to my hon. Friend's letter of 25 May which was occasioned by the need to check a number of potential sources of information within the authority. Information of this kind on patients' nationalities is not held centrally and could be extracted clerically from individual records only at disproportionate expense.

### Intra-uterine Device

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the local research ethics committee, including its composition, which approved the trial of the copper intra-uterine contraceptive device on patients in the United Kingdom for experimental purposes; what consideration it gave to the fact that the device had not been approved by the relevant authorities in the United States at that time and to notifying the patients that they were being used for experimental test purposes; and what steps he has taken to avoid United Kingdom patients being unknowingly tested by foreign drug companies occurring again.

**Mr. Mellor:** Information about particular local research ethics committees is not held centrally.

With regard to the testing of medical products and the conditions under which they are administered to patients, I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) at column *542* on 29 June.

**Sir Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints of infertility in women who have used the Copper 7 intra-uterine contraceptive device have been reported to his Department; and when the device was approved by the Department for use.

**Mr. Freeman:** In 20 letters received by the Department, women have expressed the belief that they have been adversely affected by the device, known in this country as the Gravigard. However infertility is not specified either in these individual cases, or in reports received under the scheme whereby doctors are asked to notify suspected adverse reactions.

The Gravigard's product licence was granted on 17 December 1973 and took effect retrospectively from 7 November 1973.

### Audiology Students

**Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will undertake an urgent review of the grading of audiology students.

**Mr. Mellor:** I presume that the hon. Member refers to student physiological measurement technicians specialising in audiology. This is a matter for the professional and technical staffs B Whitley Council. Negotiations are taking place on proposals to introduce a new pay and grade structure for this and other groups of technical staff.

### Hearing Aids

**Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he has taken, or proposes to take, in relation to the proposals on the provision of hearing aids advanced by the hon. Member for Torridge and Devon, West on 23 March, *Official Report*, columns 1299-1303.

**Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what consideration he is giving to developing innovative pilot projects in community delivery of hearing aids;

(2) what plans he has to reduce the time taken to obtain a National Health Service hearing aid;

(3) what steps he is taking to improve the take-up and use of National Health Service hearing aids;

(4) what steps he is taking to make hearing aid services more accessible, particularly to elderly people and to people living in residential homes;

(5) when he intends to respond to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf's fair hearing campaign; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rosie Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what guidance his Department has issued on the direct referral of patients needing hearing aids to hearing aid centres; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what plans he has for the improvement of National Health Service hearing aid services; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what research his Department has conducted into the average waiting time for the testing and fitting of a hearing aid;

(4) what response his Department has made to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf document, "Hearing Aids—the Case for Change";

(5) whether he will take steps to increase the choice of hearing aids available on the National Health Service.

**Mr. Freeman:** I am very grateful to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf for bringing public attention to the difficulties which some people face in obtaining a hearing aid. There is a broad measure of agreement for the idea of making hearing tests and the supply of hearing aids more accessible to people in the community and I am pleased to be able to announce a number of measures towards this end.

First, Sir Donald Wilson, chairman of Mersey regional health authority, which acts as the centre of responsibility for the procurement and distribution of hearing aids in the National Health Service, is meeting representatives of hearing aid manufacturers today to discuss ways of increasing the number of commercial hearing aids and accessories which are supplied to patients by National Health Service audiology departments in addition to the standard National Health Service range of hearing aids. We will also be considering in the Department ways of enabling patients requiring hearing aids to obtain them more easily. We expect to begin consultations in the autumn.

Secondly, I have asked my officials with the help of appropriate outside expert advice to draw up and consult interested bodies on a programme of action commencing in the new financial year to expand the number of direct referral schemes and set up a mechanism to evaluate them to ensure that they are operating with appropriate safeguards and are effective in reducing waiting times. Direct referral schemes would entail National Health Service patients being referred by their GPs direct to the audiology service for a hearing test and dispensing of hearing aids rather than going via hospital-based consultants.

Thirdly, my officials are currently involved in the development of a national vocational qualification in audiology. I have asked them to begin discussions in the autumn with professional bodies and other interested parties to examine the scope for a greater measure of integration between the service provided by National Health Service audiologists and that provided by private hearing aid dispensers.

I expect that these measures, together with the impact of the new Hearing Aid Council Act, which received Royal Assent earlier this month, will result in a substantial measure of improvement in service and greater choice for people who have a hearing impairment.

**Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made by his Department of the likely impact of the forthcoming demographic changes in demand for hearing aid services.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Institute for Hearing Research has produced figures which suggest that the prevalence of hearing loss is greater in people aged 60 and over. However, not all of these people require hearing aids.

### King Edward VII Hospital, Windsor

**Dr. Glyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will ensure that the acute services available at King Edward VII hospital, Windsor, are not reduced to the extent that constituents will be deprived of any local hospital and compelled to rely on facilities for which adequate public transport is not available.

**Mr. Freeman:** I understand that East Berkshire health authority will soon be starting formal public consultation on its proposals to rationalise the provision of acute services within its district. The matter may in due course be referred to Ministers for a final decision and it is therefore inappropriate for me to make any comment at this stage.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions, including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many were affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information is in the table. For Sessions earlier than 1988-89 the figures are only those statuory instruments issued by the Department of Health and Social Security which relate to health matters.

| *Session* | *Affirmative instruments* | *Negative instruments* |
|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 2 | 32 |
| 1985-86 | 1 | 47 |
| 1986-87 | 0 | 25 |
| 1987-88 | 1 | 42 |
| 1988-89 | 3 | 48 |

### Rubella

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many rubella-handicapped adults are estimated to live in England and Wales.

**Mr. Freeman:** This information is not collected centrally. SENSE, the National Deaf-Blind and Rubella Association, estimates that in 1965, during the last major rubella epidemic and, before rubella vaccine was introduced, about 1,000 babies were born in the United Kingdom with congenital rubella syndrome. Since the introduction of vaccine, numbers of such births have fallen to approximately 20 per year.

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to increase funding made available to the National Rubella Council to encourage its work in preventing children being born handicapped by congenital rubella syndrome.

**Mr. Freeman:** Officials will be touch shortly with the council about its section 64 grant for 1989-90 and 1990-91. In addition, there will be further discussions with the council about support for the specific publicity proposals which it has put forward.

### Vaccine (Ethnic Minorities)

**Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to increase the uptake of the mumps, measles and rubella vaccine amongst ethnic minority groups.

**Mr. Freeman:** Leaflets in several ethnic languages were produced jointly by the Health Education Authority (HEA) and the Department of Health as part of the programme to launch MMR immunisation last October, and discussions between the HEA and the Department on future activity will include the need for information aimed at ethnic minority groups.

### General Practitioners (Contract)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he next plans to meet the General Medical Services Committee to discuss changes to the new contract for general practitioners in the light of the completion of the general practitioners' referendum; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** At their request I met the negotiators of the General Medical Services Committee on Monday 24 July. I made it clear that I would have preferred an agreed basis for the new contract and that I had all along made considerable efforts to achieve an agreed solution. The discussions satisfied me that there was no sensible basis on which anyone could now reasonably expect to reopen the issues agreed with them on 4 May. I believe the contract agreed on 4 May to be in the best interests of all patients, as it will improve the standard of care they can expect to receive. I did agree, at the negotiators' request, to extend the deadline for the formal response to the draft regulations to 15 August. I have no present plans for another meeting.

### Blood Donations

**Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many donations of blood were *(a)* used in the National Health Service and *(b)* transferred to the private sector in each of the years 1978 to 1988.

**Mr. Freeman:** I shall write to the hon. Member with such information as is available as soon as possible.

### Salmonella

**Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give details of the illnesses, deaths, cause, source, locations and time period of the recent outbreak of salmonella poisoning in north Derbyshire; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** I understand that during May of this year 61 cases of salmonella typhimurium were recorded in north Derbyshire and neighbouring districts. Pork products were definitely implicated in at least 27 of the cases. The organism was identified in four people who died. Its contribution as a factor in their deaths forms part of the coroners' investigations, which are not yet complete. The outbreak has been fully investigated and appropriate action taken.

### Alzheimer's Disease

**Mrs. Ann Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the number of cases of Alzheimer's disease in each health authority area in England in each of the last 10 years.

**Mr. Freeman:** The table shows admissions to NHS mental illness hospitals and units in each regional health authority in England for the years 1981 to 1986 with a main diagnosis of presenile or senile dementia (ICD 290.0, 290.1, 290.2, 290.3). Alzheimer's disease is included under these diagnosis. The admission figures may be greater than the number of patients treated, as a patient can be discharged and readmitted more than once during the year. Not all cases of Alzheimer's disease will be admitted to hospital. Additional information is not available centrally or could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

*All admissions to mental illness hospitals and units with a diagnosis of presenile or senile dementia*[1]*, by Regional Health Authority of treatment, 1981-86*

| *Regional Health Authority* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| England | 14,855 | 15,908 | 16,707 | 19,183 | 19,931 | 19,727 |
| Northern | 1,163 | 1,050 | 1,215 | 1,499 | 1,496 | 1,270 |
| Yorkshire | 1,086 | 1,230 | 1,557 | 1,587 | 1,732 | 1,744 |
| Trent | 1,190 | 1,225 | 1,397 | 1,721 | 1,935 | 2,045 |
| East Anglian | 834 | 1,000 | 1,100 | 1,409 | 1,299 | 1,237 |
| North West Thames | 799 | 773 | 989 | 1,001 | 1,088 | 1,118 |
| North East Thames | 1,039 | 1,173 | 1,205 | 1,395 | 1,279 | 1,237 |
| South East Thames | 899 | 1,172 | 959 | 920 | 1,085 | 917 |
| South West Thames | 1,084 | 893 | 979 | 1,061 | 1,124 | 1,217 |
| Wessex | 1,580 | 1,563 | 1,638 | 1,836 | 1,646 | 1,551 |
| Oxford | 1,022 | 1,208 | 982 | 1,286 | 1,640 | 1,759 |
| South Western | 1,106 | 1,477 | 1,370 | 1,382 | 1,491 | 1,342 |
| West Midlands | 1,011 | 947 | 1,052 | 1,154 | 1,317 | 1,385 |
| Mersey | 935 | 970 | 889 | 1,280 | 1,352 | 1,342 |
| North Western | 1,085 | 1,214 | 1,349 | 1,628 | 1,431 | 1,542 |
| Special Health Authority | 22 | 13 | 26 | 23 | 18 | 21 |

[1] ICD codes 290.0, 290.1, 290.2, 290.3.

*Source:* Mental Health Enquiry.

### Contraception (Children)

**Mrs. Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any information concerning the numbers of children aged under 16 years who were given contraceptive drugs and devices by family planning clinics and the Brook Advisory Service in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

**Mr. Freeman:** The available information relates to the number of clients seen rather than to the outcome of the consultation. In 1987-88 15,600 young people aged under 16 were seen at community and hospital family planning clinics in England. This figure includes those seen by Brook centres providing services on an agency basis for health authorities.

**Mrs. Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any information concerning the numbers of prescriptions for contraceptive drugs and devices which were issued to children aged under 16 years in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information is not available centrally.

**Mrs. Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent steps he has taken to ensure that his guidelines for National Health Service doctors on the issuing of contraceptives to children aged under 16 years without parental knowledge are also followed by the personnel of the Brook Advisory Service and the Family Planning Association.

**Mr. Freeman:** Voluntary organisations in the family planning field have copies of the guidance issued in March 1986 and I have no reason to believe that the guidance is not being followed.

**Mrs. Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department has given any recent guidance to doctors about the action which they should take when approached by children under the age of 16 years who are the victims on incest and who are seeking contraceptives or abortions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** No guidance on this specific point has been issued recently.

### Hospitals (Self-governing Status)

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the names and status of the sponsors of each of the expressions of interest in self-governing status.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have now moved forward in examining, with the health authorities concerned, the expressions of interests originally submitted to the Department. We see no good purpose in publishing a list which can change from day to day.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the timetable for the preparation of prospectus documents and business plans for self-governing hospitals.

**Mr. Mellor:** We will be issuing guidance in due course.

59. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made with regard to allowing self-governing status to hospitals.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:*I refer my hon. Friend to my response today to my hon. Friend, the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot).

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will deposit in the Library a copy of each of the submissions expressing interest in hospital self-governing status.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* No. Expressions of interest are not formal applications. When applications are prepared RHAs will seek the views of those with an interest.

### Food Safety

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health at what intervals the public health laboratory service central laboratory at Colindale collates regular reports of food contamination from regional laboratories.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* Reports of contaminated food of public health significance are sent to the Communicable Diseases Surveillance Centre (CDSC) on a weekly basis. In the event of an unusual occurrence, PHLS headquarters and CDSC are immediately informed so that appropriate investigations can be instituted and advice given.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incidents of listeria contamination in imported paté have been confirmed by the public health laboratory centre in England and Wales; and if he will list the circumstances under which samples were taken and the outlets involved, by county.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* The results of surveys of paté made by the PHLS, at present available, are that the PHLS Cardiff laboratory examined 73 samples of paté and 37 contained listeria. Of these, 59 samples were produced in Belgium and 32 were positive. In a continuing study in Cardiff further samples have been examined, and positive results obtained, from a variety of retail outlets. A larger national survey is currently in progress.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish details of codes of practice under which the public health laboratory service conducts routine tests on samples submitted to it for analysis as suspected cases of food poisoning.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* Each PHLS laboratory has its own procedures, adapted to local circumstances, based on the standard textbooks. In addition, the PHLS has a set of "Guidelines for the Microbiological Assessment of Foods".

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department assesses to be a potentially inefective dose of listeria.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* In a report "Foodborne Listeriosis" published in 1988, the World Health Organisation concluded that virtually nothing is known about the infectious dose of Listeria monocytogenes in man, nor is there good quantitative information relating to the amount of contaminated foodstuff ingested with the risk of acquiring the disease. It is likely that the infectious dose may be related to host susceptibility hence the early warning to vulnerable groups we issued on 12 July. With present knowledge and experience it is difficult to issue specific guidance on what constitutes a potentially infective dose of listeria.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will instruct the public health laboratory service to conduct tests for listeria during routine examination conducted by them on samples of food submitted by the public health service.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 19 July 1989]:* The type of tests carried out by the PHLS on samples of food taken during routine examination depend upon the type of food and the processing that it has received. It would not be appropriate to examine for listeria in every case. It is a matter for environmental health departments and the PHLS to decide upon the appropriate tests to be conducted according to the circumstances.

### Psychiatric Hospitals (Catering Costs)

**Mr. Bendall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the approximate cost of the daily main meal for patients in psychiatric hospitals; and what is the weekly food budget per patient.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* The cost of providing daily main meals to hospital patients is not available centrally. The average daily cost of catering for patients in psychiatric hospitals in 1986-87 (England) was £2·53, of which £1·35 related to the costs of provisions. However, this excludes the costs of energy and utilities and accommodation overheads.

Figures for 1987-88 are not yet available.

*Source:* Costing returns submitted to the Department by health authorities.

## Prescriptions

50. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the latest figure he has for the total cost of drugs prescribed by general practitioners.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The total cost of the drugs, dressings and appliances dispensed to patients in England in 1988, including prescriptions personally administered to patients by their GP, was £2·219 million. This compares with £1,770 million in 1986.

## District Health Authorities

53. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met the chairmen of district health authorities; and what was discussed.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* We do not have formal meetings with all 190 district chairmen at any one time. However we regularly meet chairmen on an individual and group basis to discuss a wide range of issues.

## Creches

**Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans to encourage health authorities to establish workplace creches and similar incentives further to encourage the return of mothers into the health and caring professions.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* Mothers returning to work have a major contribution to make to staffing the NHS and other caring professions over the next decade. We fully recognise the value of workplace nurseries in attracting and retaining their services. In March this year we introduced a new collaborative venture between the Health Service and the Midland bank to set up and share creche facilities for staff throughout the country. I understand that the scheme has been well received by health authorities and that a number are discussing specific plans with the bank. The national steering group on equal opportunities for women in the NHS has produced a report and a guidance manual which we commended to all health authorities in April. They give detailed guidance on the implementation of workbreak schemes, including child-minding facilities. In addition, the NHS training authority is developing a "return and retain" scheme for staff wishing to take career breaks.

Decisions about the implementation of such schemes are for individual employing authorities. But we take every opportunity to emphasise that there must be improvements and greater flexibility in working practices and recruitment and retention policies to counteract the substantial drop in the number of young people coming on to the labour market in the 1990s, as well as to provide worthwhile job and career opportunities for returning mothers and, for those who are professionally qualified, to secure the best investment from their professional training.

## Hospital Physicists

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy fully to fund any pay settlement negotiated by the employers with hospital physicists during the current year.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* No. Health authorities are expected to meet all costs, including Whitley pay settlements, from their allocations.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set up a pay review board for hospital physicists.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) on 24 July at column *536*.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the salary scales for each of the last five years for hospital physicists.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met the Hospital Physicists Association; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* Neither my right hon. and learned Friend nor I has met the Hospital Physicists Association.

## Minor Operations

**Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give details of minor operations being carried out in general practitioners' surgeries within the areas of the five family practitioner committees in west Yorkshire; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* We do not hold this information.

**Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what training is made available to those general practitioners who wish to carry out minor operations in their own surgeries; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* It is the responsibility of the medical profession to provide such training as is necessary for the provision of general medical services. We are currently discussing the training implications of the GPs' new contract with interested educationists. No decisions have yet been made.

## Griffiths Report

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on proposals for implementation of the Griffiths report.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* As yet we have received only a few representations on our proposals for community care set out in the statement made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health on 12 July. These and other representations will be taken into account in our preparations for the White Paper.

## Fair Hearing Campaign

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met representatives of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf to discuss the fair hearing campaign; if he has any plans to review the provision of National Health Service hearing aids; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* We are currently considering our response to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf's Fair hearing campaign, and will make an announcement in due course.

### Breast Cancer (Screening)

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by district authority the percentage of women in the relevant age group who have so far responded to the national programme for screening for breast cancer.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* Statistics from the breast screening centres will not be available centrally until towards the end of 1990 following the receipt of Korner forms KC62 and KC63 ("Adult Screening Programme: Breast Cancer Screening") by the Department.

Acceptance rates of over 70 per cent. of the women called for screening were, however, reported informally last year by over half the first screening centres.

### Nurses (Grading Appeals)

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State (1) how many nurses have been awarded a higher grade following an appeal to district or regional authorities; and what percentage this represents of all appeals heard to date;

(2) if he will state his latest estimate of *(a)* the number of appeals by nurses against their new grade awaiting a hearing at regional level and *(b)* the number of such appeals so far to complete the appeals process at that level.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* We do not collect information centrally concerning the number of appeals to district health authorities. Approximately 2,600 requests for hearings at regional appeals committee level have been lodged to date, and none has yet reached the hearing stage.

### Water Supply, North Sheffield

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the incidence of unwholesome water supply in the north Sheffield area; if he will take steps to monitor the incidence of ill-health arising from the supply of the Yorkshire water authority; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard:** I have been asked to reply.

I understand that drinking water from the north Sheffield area is supplied from the Yorkshire grid, from the recently built Langsett treatment works and from the Pennine treatment works. Supplies from the Yorkshire grid and Langsett treatment works are normally of very good quality although there may be occasional breaches of the EC drinking water directive standard for iron. These supplies serve the majority of the people of north Sheffield.

Supplies from the Pennine treatment works, notably Loxley and Ewden, regularly fail to comply with the EC directive standards for manganese and aluminium. These substances affect the appearance of drinking water and are not considered to be a risk to health. Remedial works for both treatment plants are included in the Yorkshire water authority's current capital programme.

Monitoring is already being undertaken nationally by the Communicable Diseases Surveillance Centre.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Chironomid Larvae

**Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the presence of chironomid larvae found recently in the water supply emanating from Hampton works; whether there are any dangers to health; whether any pathogenic organisms, including cryptosporidia and aeromonas, could have passed through the works; and what action the communicable disease surveillance centre has taken.

**Mr. Howard:** Thames Water has informed me that it is satisfied that the chironomid larvae problem is under control. Initially five filters were taken out of supply as a precaution. Three were found not to be the cause of the problem and were returned to service. One of the others was marginally affected. This was drained down, inspected and re-sanded and is shortly to go back into service. The other bed which was most affected is undergoing a thorough structural investigation and will be out of service for some time. The contact tank at the Hampton works was also taken out of use in two stages, was cleaned and is now fully operational.

Thames Water has been monitoring intensively the Hampton works and associated distribution system for pathogenic organisms including cryptosporidium. It did not detect salmonellae, entero-viruses or giardia in any of the samples. Aeromonas, an organism which can colonise slow sand filters, was detected in samples of water leaving the works and in the distribution system. It is commonly found in distribution systems and there is no evidence that when present in water supplies it is detrimental to public health.

Thames Water found that many of the samples of water from the works and the distribution system contained low levels of cryptosporidia. As a precaution the Communicable Diseases Surveillance Centre is monitoring the occurrence of human cases of cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis in the parts of London supplied by the Hampton works in order to detect any significant increase in the number of cases, should this occur. So far no such increase has been detected. Thames Water is continuing to monitor samples of the works inlet and outlet for cryptosporidia.

### ERDF Funding (Merseyside)

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about ERDF funding for the Merseyside integrated development operation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend has received letters from a number of hon. Members representing Merseyside constituencies about the level of ERDF funding which may be allocated to the Merseyside integrated development operation. Firm decisions on the allocation of resources have not yet been made by the European Commission, and the Government will be pressing for the best possible outcome for the United Kingdom as a whole and for Merseyside.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Patten:** The number of letters received from right hon. and hon. Members in January was 2,211 and for the whole of this Session up to 1 July the total was 17,991. The number of letters sent to right hon. and hon. Members was 1,802 in January and 15,968 for the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

### Housing Act 1988 (Grants)

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire of 26 May, *Official Report*, column *792*, on the subject of grants under section 29 of the Housing Act 1988, what progress has been made and what discussion he has had with *(a)* the Lichfield district council, *(b)* the Stafford borough council and *(c)* the Cannock Chase district council.

**Mr. Howard:** Twenty-nine local authority cash incentive schemes have now been approved, and others are under consideration. The Department has written to the councils mentioned but none has submitted a scheme for approval.

### House Purchase and Sales

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' working party on ways to simplify the process of buying and selling houses; and whether he will introduce legislation based on the working party's recommendations.

**Mr. Chope:** The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors sent copies of the working party's report to my right hon. Friend the Lord Chancellor and my hon. Friend the Minister for Industry and Consumer Affairs.

The Government wish the process of house buying and selling to be as simple and fair as possible and are therefore considering the report's recommendations together with other representations on the subject.

### Special Waste (Dumping)

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many enforcement officers are employed in Surrey to monitor the illegal dumping of special waste.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Surrey county council employs seven full-time inspectors and two part-time prosecuting officers to carry out enforcement responsibilities regarding waste management in its area.

### Local Government Finance

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the total sum which will be raised by the community charge in England and Wales in the first year of collection.

**Mr. David Hunt:** If English local authorities spend in line with the level of total standard spending proposed by my right hon. Friend on 19 July, and given the level of aggregate external finance he proposed, they would need to raise about £9·7 billion from community charges in 1990-91. The equivalent figure for Wales, announced by my right hon. Friend on 20 July, is £376 million. Not all of these sums would come from chargepayers, because of community charge benefit.

**Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will prepare a leaflet explaining the effect of the community charge upon private tenants and their landlords.

**Mr. David Hunt:** My Department is preparing such a leaflet, which will cover landlords and tenants in the private, public and housing association sectors. It will be available free of charge later this year.

**Mr. Waller:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the maximum percentage reduction in rates from which business will benefit in 1990-91, following the introduction of the uniform business rate; and whether he will make it his policy that any increase in this percentage figure during the transitional period should not be brought about by penalising those businesses liable to higher rate bills.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he plans to issue any guidelines to local authorities in England and Wales in respect of poll tax payments for *(a)* Royal Navy personnel and *(b)* merchant seamen;

(2) what guidelines have been issued to local authorities in England and Wales in respect of poll tax payments for Royal Navy personnel and merchant seamen away from home for a period of more than six months, for both householders and non-householders; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Guidance on United Kingdom service personnel was included in community charge practice note No. 17 published in April this year. Guidance on questions of sole or main residence was contained in community charge practice No. 9 published last November. Copies of all practice notes are in the Library of the House. It is for community charge registration officers to decide where an individual is solely or mainly resident on the facts of each individual case.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the estimated yield in the current financial year of a business rate for *(a)* offices, *(b)* shops, cafes and restaurants, *(c)* hotels and boarding houses based on the capital value and *(d)* other business premises equal to, respectively (i) five per cent. in the City of London, (ii) four per cent. in the rest of London, (iii) three per cent. in the metropolitan districts and (iv) two per cent. elsewhere in the United Kingdom, together with his estimate of the yield in 1988-89 under the present arrangement and under the new arrangements.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The estimated yield in the United Kingdom for 1988-89 from business rates under the present arrangements is as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| Offices | 1,900 |
| Shops and restaurants | 1,800 |
| Hotels and boarding houses | 150 |
| Other businesses | 4,600 |

The other information requested is not available.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will detail the community charge liability of a carer who resides part-time in his other home and the remainder of the time in the home of the persons being cared for when the homes are in different boroughs; whether he will make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the carer pays only the equivalent of one poll tax however that is distributed between the two boroughs concerned; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** My right hon. Friend intends to bring forward regulations providing for a separate class of standard charge property. The new class will include property which is unoccupied as a result of a person receiving care because of illness or infirmity, and will enable relief from the standard charge to be given in respect of such property. The precise details of the relief will be the subject of consultation in due course.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether an individual (i) receiving and (ii) applying for severe disablement allowance will be exempt from the poll tax; whether any doctor can declare a person eligible as required for severe disablement allowance; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Individuals in receipt of severe disablement allowance will be exempt from the personal community charge if they satisfy the definition of severely mentally impaired persons set out in schedule 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Details of the procedure to be followed to qualify for the exemption are set out in practice note 19, copies of which have been available from the Library of the House since 10 May.

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each charging authority area, attributing grant income received by precepting authorities under the current grant system to each area in proportion to the aggregate of rateable values in that area *(a)* the estimated rate support grant for 1989-90, *(b)* the estimated amount of revenue support grant which would have been payable in 1989-90 under the proposed new grant system, had the system been in its first year of operation in 1989-90 within full safety nets and assuming needs assessment at 1989-90 grant-related expenditure levels, *(c)* the estimated amount of revenue grant payable in 1989-90 under the proposed new grant system after the end of safety nets and assuming needs assessment at 1989-90 grant-related expenditure levels, *(d)* the difference between *(a)* and *(b)*, *(e)* the difference between *(a)* and *(c)*, and *(f)* the difference between *(b)* and *(c)*, showing aggregates for each figure for each class of charging authority and for each region, showing inner London, outer London and the rest of the south east separately.

**Mr. David Hunt** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* A table giving the information requested has been placed in the Library.

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each charging authority area, attributing business rate income received by precepting authorities under the current system to each area in proportion to the aggregate of rateable values in that area *(a)* the estimated revenue from the non-domestic rate in 1989-90, *(b)* the estimated amount which would have been raised in revenue by the national non-domestic rate in 1989-90 after the end of transitional arrangements and assuming rateable values at current levels, *(c)* the amount which would have been paid from the national non-domestic rating pool to each area in 1989-90, *(d)* the difference between *(a)* and *(b)*, *(e)* the difference between *(b)* and *(c)* and *(f)* the difference between *(a)* and *(c)* showing aggregates for each figure for each class of charging authority and for each region, showing inner London, outer London and the rest of the south-east separately.

**Mr. David Hunt** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* A table giving the information requested has been placed in the Library. For the purpose of illustration, it is assumed that the national non-domestic rate multiplier is set to raise the same level of income as under the present system.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidance he has given to community charge registration officers on possible penalties and actions against individuals for non-payment of the poll tax in England and Wales; and if he will list these.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Guidance on recovery and enforcement of the community charge has been prepared jointly by the Government and the local authority associations in practice note No. 15 which we intend to distribute to local authorities next week. Copies of the document are available in the Library of the House.

The practice note lists the measures currently available for the enforcement of domestic rates, explains how these are to be applied to community charges, and gives details of additional remedies available to charging authorities through magistrates' courts.

## Yorkshire and Humberside (Heritage and Culture)

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has for further promoting Yorkshire and Humberside heritage and culture.

**Mr. David Hunt:** We shall continue to promote the conservation, preservation and presentation of the heritage in all regions through funding and support to English Heritage, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and a wide range of national and regional voluntary heritage organisations.

## Hertfordshire Groundwork Trust

**Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much grant was paid by the Countryside Commission to the Hertfordshire Groundwork Trust; whether the grant required his approval; and what monitoring of the use made of the grant is undertaken by *(a)* his Department or *(b)* the Countryside Commission.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** In 1988-89 the Countryside Commission paid £7,728 to the Hertfordshire Groundwork Trust by way of grants under the provisions of section 9 of the Local Government Act 1974. The grants did not require the approval of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. Applications for grant in the current financial year are still under consideration.

## Letting Statistics

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the number of dwellings available for letting in each year since 1970 in the private and public sectors, respectively, in total and as a proportion of the housing stock: if he will give a regional breakdown; and what is his estimate of the proportion in France, Germany and Italy.

**Mr. Chope:** The available information has been placed in the Library.

## Housing Associations

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many *(a)* houses and *(b)* flats were built by housing associations in the last year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Chope:** It is estimated that in 1988 housing associations completed 1,900 new houses and 7,200 new flats.

## Sheltered Housing

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many sheltered and very sheltered housing units were started and completed in the last financial year by *(a)* the public sector, *(b)* housing associations and *(c)* the private sector other than housing associations.

**Mr. Chope:** Numbers of new sheltered dwellings started and completed by sector appear in table 1.5 of "Housing and Construction Statistics part 1, No. 37", a copy of which is in the Library. Information about very sheltered housing is not available.

## Housing (Young People)

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many single person flats suitable for young adults were built in the last financial year in *(a)* the public, *(b)* the private and *(c)* housing association sectors; and what information he has on the availability of such accommodation nationally and regionally.

**Mr. Chope:** Housebuilding statistics are not classified in this way. However, regional and national estimates of completions of new one-bedroom flats appear in table 6.8(a) of "Housing and Construction Statistics 1977-1987". For recent quarters, the percentages of new flats with one bedroom (excluding housing association completions) appear in table 1.6 of the quarterly publication "Housing and Construction Statistics. Part 1, No. 37". Copies of both publications are in the Library.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is considering legislation to place a responsibility on local authorities to house single young persons, and to make adequate resources available to local authorities for the new build required.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is reviewing the homelessness legislation and hopes to announce conclusions soon.

## Housing (Capital Resources)

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will give an account of capital resources available to the Yorkshire and Humberside region from the Government for housing purposes for each year from 1979 to 1989;

(2) if he will give an account of capital resources available to Wakefield metropolitan district council, from the Government for housing purposes for each year from 1979 to 1989.

**Mr. Chope:** The information requested is listed in the table. Since 1981-82 local authorities have been able to supplement their allocations by expenditure financed by capital receipts. Nationally, two thirds of local authorities' spending power on housing in 1989-90 is expected to come from capital receipts.

*Total housing investment programme allocations*

*£ thousands*

| | *Wakefield* | *Yorkshire and Humberside region* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 16,577 | 216,000 |
| 1980-81 | 13,459 | 190,027 |
| 1981-82 | 10,177 | 168,366 |
| 1982-83 | 15,367 | 214,813 |
| 1983-84 | 11,267 | 210,798 |
| 1984-85 | 10,026 | 166,769 |
| 1985-86 | 8,474 | 140,326 |
| 1986-87 | 7,136 | 125,312 |
| 1987-88 | 7,897 | 125,103 |
| 1988-89 | 7,654 | 123,706 |
| 1989-90[1] | 4,683 | 91,372 |

[1] Allocations issued to date.

## Winget Houses

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress has been made in establishing an agreed method of repair for Winget-type houses.

**Mr. Chope:** None. Under the housing defects legislation, if reinstatement is not likely to be economic or feasible, assistance will be by repurchase.

## Housing Improvement Grant

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies he has carried out on the cost-effectiveness of *(a)* means-testing of individual applicants for housing improvement grants and *(b)* the present system of block grants.

**Mr. Chope:** Provision has been made in the Department's research programme to monitor the effectiveness of both means-tested renovation grants and block repair schemes.

## Water Disconnections

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of disconnections for non-payment in the year to April 1989 for each of the water authorities and statutory water companies in England and Wales.

**Mr. Howard:** The information requested by my hon. Friend regarding the English water authorities and statutory water companies is contained in the following table. Any request for information on the Welsh water authority, the Chester waterworks company and the Wrexham and East Denbighshire water company should be adressed to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

*Disconnections in 1988-89*
*(Domestic and non-domestic)*

| | *1988-89* |
|---|---|
| *Authorities* | |
| Anglian | 1,880 |
| Northumbrian | 870 |
| North West | 779 |
| Severn Trent | 1,101 |
| Southern | 1,354 |
| South West | 100 |
| Thames | 935 |
| Wessex | 73 |
| Yorkshire | 999 |
| *Water companies* | |
| Bournemouth | 13 |
| Bristol | 108 |
| Cambridge | 177 |
| Cholderton | n/a |
| Colne Valley | 141 |
| East Anglia | 16 |
| Eastbourne | 10 |
| East Surrey | 120 |
| East Worcestershire | 15 |
| Essex | 1,109 |
| Folkestone | 120 |
| Hartlepool | 120 |
| Lee Valley | 420 |
| Mid Kent | 20 |
| Mid Sussex | 20 |
| Mid Southern | 573 |
| Newcastle | 558 |
| North Surrey | 110 |
| Portsmouth | n/a |
| Rickmansworth | 126 |
| South Staffordshire | 1,790 |
| Sunderland | 70 |
| Sutton District | 11 |
| Tendering Hundred | 30 |
| West Hampshire | 110 |
| West Kent | 0 |
| York | 79 |

n/a—Not available.

## Environmental Assessments

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what information, including baseline data, other than that submitted by the developer he has when determining whether environmental assessment is required; and if he will make public all the information used in determining whether or not environmental assessment is required for schedule 2 projects;

(2) what matters other than those referred to in general terms in paragraphs 18-29 and appendix A of circular 15/88 have been taken into account when determining whether environmental assessment is required for schedule 2 projects; and if he will give details of variations and the reasons therefore;

(3) what variations there have been, and on what basis, in adherence to the numerical criteria and thresholds in appendix A of circular 15/88 when directing whether environmental assessment is required.

**Mr. Moynihan:** Environmental assessment is required for any projects of the types listed in schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988 which are likely to have significant environmental effects. Whether or not any particular project is likely to have significant effects so that environmental assessment is required is a matter of judgment from case to case. In exercising that judgment for the purpose of directing whether or not environmental assessment is required for any particular case the Secretary of State takes account of relevant information in his possession about the nature, size and location of the project and will if appropriate seek further information from the developer, the local planning authority or others with information in their possession. The Secretary of State has regard to the general guidance in DoE circular 15/88. That guidance, however, is indicative in nature and does not obviate the need for a judgment to be made in each case. The guidance in circular 15/88 will be amended or augmented from time to time in the light of the decisions which have been made. However, such amendment has not been necessary so far.

## Compulsory Purchase Payments

**Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he will extend entitlement to farm loss payments to those displaced from only part of a holding; and whether he proposes to give effect to the proposals relating to farm loss payments in the Green Paper, "Land Compensation and Compulsory Purchase Legislation", dated March 1989;

(2) whether he will introduce an additional allowance payable when land is compulsorily purchased to compensate for the factor of compulsion, as proposed by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors;

(3) whether he will introduce legislation in the next parliamentary Session to simplify and strengthen the compensation code for compulsory acquisition.

**Mr. Moynihan:** We are at present considering the responses to the consultation paper on land compensation and compulsory purchase legislation dated 7 March 1987 with a view to introducing legislation as soon as the parliamentary timetable permits. In this context we are also considering the recommendations in the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' memorandum on compensation for compulsory acquisition, including its proposal for an additional allowance to compensate for the factor of compulsion.

## Clearance (Market Value)

**Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will give effect to the proposal in the Green Paper, "Home Improvement—A New Approach", dated May 1985, that the arrangements for compensating those affected by clearance should be simplified and in future that all owners will be entitled to market value as of right.

**Mr. Chope:** Part IV of schedule 8 to the Local Government and Housing Bill contains provisions repealing the existing measures relating to compensation for unfit housing which is compulsorily acquired. The effect of this is that compensation for housing in clearance areas will be assessed in the same way as for any other compulsory acquistion, and owners will qualify for market value compensation.

## Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of Statutory Instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Patten:** The following is the information requested by the hon. Member as to the number of statutory instruments issued by my Department:

| *Parliamentary session* | *Number issued* | *Negative* | *Affirmative* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1984-85<br>(6 November 1984 to 30 October 1985) | 186 | 85 | 5 |
| 1985-86<br>6 November 1985 to 7 November 1986) | 159 | 94 | 8 |
| 1986-87<br>(12 November 1986 to 15 May 1987) | 82 | 46 | 4 |
| 1987-88<br>(25 June 1987 to 15 November 1988) | 131 | 90 | 10 |
| 1988-89<br>(22 November 1988 to date) | 130 | 87 | 6 |

*Note:*
In each case the balance represents those instruments, chiefly orders changing parish boundaries, which are subject neither to the affirmative nor to the negative procedure.

## Pollution

**Mr. Roberts:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the appeals under section 10 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 currently under consideration by his Department; and if he will indicate the dates such appeals were first lodged and indicate when decisions will be reached.

**Mrs Virginia Bottomley:** Following is the list of appeals currently under consideration showing the dates they were first lodged. Decisions are issued as quickly as possible bearing in mind the detailed technical nature of the issues involved, the need for full information and to provide for exchange of representations between the parties.

| | *Date* |
|---|---|
| Empire Brickworks | 10 June 1982 |
| Seal Sands | 26 June 1984 |
| Soothill Brickworks | 11 January 1985 |
| Empire Brickworks (4) | 8 September 1986 |
| East Tilbury Marshes | 26 March 1987 |
| Bradleys Sand Pit | 28 May 1987 |
| Aveley Clay Pit | 10 July 1987 |
| Auckland Road | 21 July 1987 |
| Charleston Road | 10 August 1987 |
| Gilbey Road | 7 September 1987 |
| Cabbage Hill | 12 November 1987 |
| Warren Vale | 24 November 1987 |
| Old Railway Cutting | 7 December 1987 |
| Unit 3, Hartlepool | 7 December 1987 |
| Springwell Hill | 9 December 1987 |
| Norwood Industrial Estate | 3 February 1988 |
| Florence Not Mine | 2 June 1988 |
| Whinfield Farm | 23 June 1988 |
| Mummery's Copse | 27 June 1988 |
| Springwell Hill | 1 August 1988 |
| Disused Railway Cutting | 4 August 1988 |
| Calf Fallow Farm | 11 August 1988 |
| Unit 10, Edderbridge | 19 August 1988 |
| Redbournbury Plant | 24 November 1988 |
| Grazebrook Industrial Estate | 6 January 1989 |
| Leabrook Road | 10 January 1989 |
| Butterley Hole | 6 February 1989 |
| Bakers Hole | 8 March 1989 |
| Martin Earles Pit (2) | 8 March 1989 |
| 140 Moss Lane | 13 March 1989 |
| Grazebrook Industrial Estate | 4 May 1989 |

## Ministerial Cars (Washing)

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent instructions have been given about the washing of ministerial cars; how many and which have been washed since his appeal to car owners to desist from washing their cars; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** Washing of Ministers' cars ceased from midday on 24 July.

The ban will stay in force until the London water shortage eases, except in circumstances where the safety of the vehicle would be adversely affeced.

## Shooting Rights

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment why he has forbidden the Nature Conservancy Council from *(a)* acquiring shooting rights in the process of setting up nature reserves, and *(b)* giving grants to other bodies for purchasing lands which carry the shooting rights; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** In considering land purchase proposals whether from themselves or by grant aid to NGOs, the NCC and the Government are agreed that traditional rights over uses of the land should be interfered with only when that use is incompatible with the interests of conservation.

## African Elephants

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to offer compensation and assistance to those east African countries which approve the transfer of African elephants to appendix I of CITES; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** We do not propose to consider offering compensation to East African countries which support the transfer of the African elephant to appendix I of CITES. Elephants can be of greater financial value to these countries as living tourist attractions than when killed for their ivory. We remain ready to discuss with African Governments further ways of helping them to conserve their wildlife resources, including elephants.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations have been received from ivory dealers in Hong Kong relating to the timetable for transfer of African elephants to appendix I of CITES; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Government have received several letters from representatives of the Hong Kong ivory trade about the implications of the proposal to transfer the African elephant to Appendix I of CITES. These issues will be considered by the forthcoming conference of the parties to CITES.

**Sir George Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will announce the outcome of his consultations on his proposal to establish a London pensions fund.

**Mr. David Hunt:** My right hon. Friend has now considered all the representations made on his proposal to transfer the superannuation fund and associated functions, rights and liabilities which the London residuary body (LRB) inherited on the abolition of the former Greater London council to a new corporate body, the London pensions fund, on 1 April 1990.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has decided, in the light of these consultations, to lay before Paliament an order providing for the establishment of the new London pensions fund, a corporate body with a membership of between seven and 11 members appointed by him. As previously proposed it would have an independent chairman with the remaining board members being drawn equally from London local government and independent sources. The London local authorities via their associations are being invited to put forward recommendations for the initial board appointments from London local government and to establish a voluntary consultative committee which my right hon. Friend might consult over future appointments to the board. The proposal to retain existing ILEA contributors in the fund has also been preserved.

It is intended that the LPF should come into corporate existence on 31 October 1989, to allow time for it to prepare for its new responsibilities, and my right hon. Friend will shortly be consulting the London boroughs, including the City, and other interested parties on the text of the draft order.

## Audit Commission

**Mr. Wood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what changes are proposed to the structure of the Audit Commission and the procedures for appointing commissioners when the remit of the Commission is extended to the Health Service.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** The Government propose to increase the size of the Commission from 13 to 17 members to 15 to 20 members when its remit is extended to the Health Service. All members, including the chairman and deputy chairman, would be appointed jointly by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and me. It is also intended to amend the existing statutory requirement to provide that in future we should be required before making an appointment to consult such persons and bodies as we think fit. We would of course, continue to consult the local authority associations, the accountancy bodies, the CBI and the TUC, as now. The Government intend to seek the necessary statutory provision for these changes in the proposed legislation on the reform of the Health Service.

## Uniform Business Rate

**Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has completed his consideration of the representations received in response to the consultation paper issued on 15 February on the Government's proposed transitional arrangements for the new uniform business rate; whether he has any further information about the likely effects of the 1990 revaluation of business properties; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I received some 150 initial responses to the consultation paper and further representations from all the major business organisations. We have considered them carefully, and have decided to make a number of modifications to the proposed transitional arrangements.

We believe that our proposals achieve a satisfactory balance in the transitional period, with long overdue reductions in rates being realised as quickly as is consistent with the need to provide adequate protection for businesses which must bear increases. We intend therefore to proceed with our proposals to limit the year-on-year changes resulting from the introduction of the uniform business rate and the non-domestic revaluation. For businesses which in 1990-91 will have larger bills in real terms than in 1989-90, the ceiling will be 20 per cent. in real terms for larger businesses and 15 per cent. for smaller ones as we proposed. But, in the light of representations received, we have concluded that the threshold of rateable value below which this lower ceiling will apply should be doubled to £15,000 in London and £10,000 elsewhere. For businesses which in 1990-91 will have smaller bills in real terms than in 1989-90, we estimate that the annual limits on reductions will be about 15 per cent. for businesses with rateable values below the revised threshold and about 10 per cent. for those with rateable values above the revised threshold. The precise figures for reductions will be calculated, once we have fuller information about the revaluation being undertaken by the Inland Revenue valuation office, so as to allow the limits to be set as high as possible consistent with the requirement that reductions must balance the cost of protection for those facing increases, so that the total yield of rates from the private sector and the nationalised industries remains broadly the same in real terms. Over 75 per cent. of all businesses will benefit from the more generous rateable value threshold. At the same time, we propose to raise the de minimis threshold, below which transitional arrangements will not apply, from a new rateable value of £200 to £500 for all properties, except for advertising hereditaments which will not be subject to any limit.

As proposed, properties first occupied after 1 April 1990 will not benefit from the transitional arrangements. Furthermore, for consistency with these proposals generally, we have decided that transitional protection for those facing increases should apply only to those who occupy property as at 31 March 1990 and continue to do so after that date. If a property changes hands on or after 1 April 1990, the new occupier will pay any increase due in full.

Reduction in rate bills will continue to be subject to annual limits, however, whether or not there is a change of occupier.

We propose to give effect to the transitional arrangements by way of legislative amendments which will be introduced into the Local Government and Housing Bill after the recess.

I am also placing in the Library today a copy of the latest sample survey by the Inland Revenue of the combined effects of the 1990 revaluation and the introduction of a uniform business rate. This incorporates the results of a large number of actual revaluations. In general the survey confirms the results published with the consultation paper on 15 February. The new sample suggests that on average values after revaluation will be 7·7 times the current average rateable value for non-domestic properties in England, and 7·8 times in Wales; that the poundage, in 1989-90 prices, is expected to be in the range of 32 to 36p in England, compared with a locally set average poundage of some 258p in 1989-90, and in the range 34 to 38p in Wales compared with an average 1989-90 poundage of around 283p; and that the new arrangements, once the transition is complete, will reduce the rate burden or businesses in the north and midlands by about £1 billion.

### Limestone Mines

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the second report of the black country limestone advisory panel on "A Strategy for Limestone Mines"; and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moynihan:** I have considered the second report of the black country limestone advisory panel and have taken into account the views expressed by the local authorities in the black country and Shropshire and by private sector financial institutions. Earlier this year my hon. Friend the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier), met the chairman and members of the panel to discuss the issues raised by this report.

The Government welcome and endorse the strategy as proposed by the panel. They agree that overall priority should be given to action to protect public safety and that the protection of existing property and the potential for new development or re-development are important considerations. To that end, they will continue to give high priority to funding investigations of the limestone mines and to remedial action where it is appropriate and represents value for money. Over £20 million has already been spent under the derelict land grant provisions and a further £6 million will be spent in 1989-90.

I understand that the first two targets established by the panel, for completion of initial desk appraisals and of investigations to establish the physical condition of a mine, are well on the way to being met. Only at the completion of these stages can the implications of the limestone problems be understood in their entirety and only then can a definitive programme of action to resolve the problems be established. I am, therefore, asking the panel to keep me informed on a regular basis on progress with investigations and proposals for remedial action so that the programme can be kept under review.

It is important to recognise, however, that the amounts of money involved, while they cannot as yet be precisely defined, are substantial. The timetable proposed by the panel may therefore need to be extended in view of the many competing demands for the limited resources which are available. It must also be recognised that it will not be possible to treat every individual mine immediately the need for treatment is identified. Following the panel's strategy, however, would enable all concerned to know what action would be taken, how priorities would be assessed and when they could expect the problems to be resolved. This should assist in removing a great deal of the uncertainty which has existed to date.

Given these constraints, it would seem reasonable to suggest that it should be possible to resolve the bulk of the limestone problems in the west midlands by the middle to late 1990s.

However, resolution of the problems does not necessarily mean complete in-filling of every mine, as has been recognised by the panel in its report. There may well be cases where the most cost-effective solution will be to repair any damage caused by subsidence as and when it occurs. In such cases, the Government would look to both local authorities and the private sector to work together with central Government as outlined in the Secretary of State's response to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) of 6 April 1987. I believe that such a co-operative response, taken with the Government's endorsement of the panel's strategy, should go a long way in restoring confidence in the area and relieving the understandable concern that has arisen due to the presence of old limestone mine workings and the threat of subsidence that they pose.

### Maidenhead Sewage Plant (Discharges)

**Dr. Glyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he has taken to ensure that the relaxation of standards for discharged effluent, proposed by Thames water authority, for the Maidenhead sewage plant, is adequate in terms of public health standards; and how long he anticipates this temporary relaxation will continue before being replaced by permanent measures.

**Mr. Howard:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

### Mr. J. A. Reeves

**Mrs. Roe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will ensure that an urgent reply is given to the letter of 24 July from the hon. Member for Broxbourne concerning the future pension of Mr. J. A. Reeves, an employee of Thames water authority.

**Mr. Howard:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

### London Residuary Body (Properties)

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of the 65 applications by the London residuary body to his Department for consent to dispose of properties by means of voluntary sales to licensee occupiers at discounted prices.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Nature Reserve (Sheffield)

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the proposals by the Yorkshire water authority *(a)* to create a nature reserve at Blackburn meadows in Sheffield and *(b)* to do this through specified leasing arrangements; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard:** I will write to the hon. Member.

## Asset Sales

**Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what arrangements exist for the public to inspect details of asset sales by the residuary bodies.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Section 79 of the Local Government Act 1985 provides for local electors to inspect residuary bodies' accounts and documents relating to them. Details of individual sale transactions are, however, matters for the vendor and purchaser and therefore commercially confidential.

## Broadwater Lake, Harefield

**Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information his Department has concerning any undertakings given by those concerned when gravel was extracted from what is now known as Broadwater lake, Harefield, in the London borough of Hillingdon, concerning its refilling and re-instatement as agricultural land; what representations he has received to the effect that the lake should not now be refilled; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* A condition attached to the planning permission requires the site to be refilled. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has received representations from my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge about a change in the restoration proposals for the site. The enforcement or modification of conditions attached to a planning permission is, in the first instance, a matter for the local planning authority's consideration.

## Sports and Leisure Facilities

**Dr. Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* the individuals and organisations who have responded to the draft order on the Local Government Act 1988 (Competition in Sports and Leisure Facilities); and if he will place copies of responses in the Library;

(2) when he will lay before Parliament the Local Government Act 1988 (Competition in Sports and Leisure Facilities) Order; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chris Patten** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The Local Government (Competition in Sports and Leisure Facilities) Order will be laid later this year. The individuals and organisations which have responded to my Department on the draft order are listed as follows. I am sending the hon. Member a copy of their responses. Further copies are available from my Department's library.

*Local authority organisations*
Association of District Councils
London Boroughs Association
Association of Metropolitan Authorities

*Local Authorities*
Leicester City Council
Congleton Borough Council
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Oswestry Borough Council
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
London Borough of Barnet
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
Guildford Borough Council
Purbeck District Councl
City of Chester
Cambridge City Council
City of York
London Borough of Lewisham
Tynedale District Council
Epping Forest District Council
Kerrier District Council
Bassetlaw District Council
London Borough of Croydon
Reading Borough Council
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
London Borough of Lambeth
London Borough of Hackney
Burnley Borough Council
City of Sheffield
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
City of Carlisle
New Forest District Council
South Somerset District Council
Castle Morpeth Borough Council
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Eastbourne Borough Council
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
London Borough of Wandsworth
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Borough of Havant

*Sports national bodies*
The Sports Council
The Central Council of Physical Recreation

*Governing bodies of Sport*
Squash Rackets Association
Amateur Athletics Association
Amateur Swimming Association
National Small Bore Rifle Association

*Other sports organisations*
South East Council for Sport and Recreation
London Council for Sport and Recreation
Yorkshire and Humberside Council for Sport and Recreation
Northern Council for Sport and Recreation
Leeds City Sports Association
Bromley Sports Council
Cleethorpes and District Athletics Club
Cumbria County Hockey Association
Yorkshire Cricket Association
Lewisham Sports Council
Greenwich Sports Council
Sports Hall Athletic Association

*Professional bodies and Trade Unions*
National and Local Government Officers Association
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
Chief Leisure Officers Association
The Incorporated Society of Valuers and Auctioneers
Trade Union Congress
National Union of Public Employees
Society of County Secretaries
British Resorts Association
Institute of Baths and Recreation Management
Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management
Price Waterhouse

*Other organisations and individuals*
Fosse Day Centre
National Federation of Gateway Clubs
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
Association of Direct Labour Organisations
Commission for the New Towns

Public Sector Management
Business in Sport
Elgivia Management

### Tenants' Choice

**Mr. Cartwright:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many *(a)* private landlords, *(b)* housing associations and *(c)* tenants' organisations have applied for registration under the tenants' choice provisions of the Housing Act 1988 in the Greater London area; and how many in each category have been approved.

**Mr. Chope** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The Housing Corporation has the responsibility to consider applications for tenants' choice landlord approval. I have asked the corporation to reply to the hon. Member.

### Valuation and Community Charge Tribunals

**Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will change the title of the Manchester North and Manchester South valuation and community charge tribunals as suggested in resolutions from the inaugural meetings of those bodies.

**Mr. David Hunt** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* No.

### City Grants

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the value of city grants made to authorities in the Yorkshire and Humberside region and outline their applications; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moynihan** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* Eight city grants totalling just over £2 million have been approved for developers undertaking projects within the Yorkshire and Humberside region. The projects will make an important contribution to the economies of the local authorities in which they are located by providing jobs, houses, offices and retail and industrial units.

### Bitumen Emulsifiers

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest estimate of hydrocarbons that evaporate from bitumen emulsifiers.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to his question yesterday.

### Building Contracts

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has been consulted over the development of model fair deal contracts between customers and contractors for building work; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** This is a matter for the Director General of Fair Trading; I shall ask him to write to my hon. Friend.

### High Folds, Leigh (Land Reclamation)

**Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total contribution from European Economic Community sources to the High Folds, Leigh land reclamation scheme.

**Mr. Moynihan** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is not aware of any contributions having been made from the European regional development fund for the High Folds land reclamation scheme at Leigh.

### Cash Incentive Schemes

**Mr. Malins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to answer the letter from the London borough of Croydon dated 23 May on the subject of cash incentive schemes under the Housing Act 1988.

**Mr. Chope** *[holding answer 17 July 1989]:* I will write to my hon. Friend.

### Carbon Dioxide Emissions

**Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if there are any plans to introduce legislation to reduce $CO_2$ emissions from vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by the then Minister for Roads and Traffic in reply to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Mrs. Ruddock) on 29 June 1989 at col. *132*.

### Housing Action Trust, Southwark

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment who will be entitled to vote in any ballot on the creation of a housing action trust in Southwark.

**Mr. Chope** *[pursuant to the reply, 20 July 1989, c. 338]:* The Housing Act 1988 makes each secure tenant, including each joint tenant, eligible for a vote in a ballot or poll on a proposal to designate an area as a HAT area. Regulations have today been laid before Parliament prescribing certain additional categories of local authority tenants of houses or flats who would be entitled to vote. These additional categories are long leaseholders, business tenants, tenants of licensed premises and tenants in tied accommodation. Joint tenants would each be entitled to their own vote.

### Rate Support (Warwickshire)

**Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the amount of rate support paid by Warwickshire to assist other areas in each year since 1979; and if he will express this in a constituency form.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 6 July 1989]:* The table gives estimates of the amount by which grant for authorities in Warwickshire was affected by resource equalisation in each year from 1981-82 to 1989-90. The introduction of the community charge will end these grant transfers.

*Effect on block grant of equalisation for differences in resources measured by gross rateable values rather than population: 1981-82 to 1989-90*

*(£ million)*

| | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* | *1989-90* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Warwickshire County Council | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | −4 | −6 | −6 | −8 |
| North Warwickshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nuneaton and Bedworth | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Rugby | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Stratford on Avon | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Warwick | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | −1 | −1 | −1 | −1 | −1 |

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Potato Marketing Board

5. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to meet the chairman of the Potato Marketing Board to discuss the future of the board; and if he will make a statement.

*11. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a further statement on the reform of the Potato Marketing Board.

**Mr. Gummer:** As my right hon. Friend announced on 20 July, the Government have decided to retain the basic elements of the existing potato marketing scheme in view of the need to maintain stability. However consumers and other non-producer interests should be given greater influence in the Potato Marketing Board's market management decisions.

### Irradiation of Food

8. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the forthcoming Food Bill will include new powers to regulate the use of food irradiation.

**Mr. Gummer:** New food legislation to be introduced as soon as the parliamentary timetable permits will include powers to introduce a full licensing system, under central Government control, for the irradiation of foodstuffs.

46. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received from interested parties with regard to food irradiation.

**Mr. Maclean:** My Department has received representations from interested trade and consumer organisations on several aspects of food irradiation. A major concern is that consumers should be in a position to make an informed choice, and we intend to ensure this by instituting an effective system of controls which includes full and clear labelling.

35. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many representations he has received from producers or consumers of food in favour of food irradiation.

**Mr. Maclean:** Support has been publicly expressed by the Food and Drink Federation, the Spice Trade Association and the Institute of Cereals Manufacturers. In addition, a number of consumer groups have recognised that, with proper controls, this technology has potential benefits for consumers.

### Environmentally Sensitive Areas

9. **Mr. Day:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether other European Community countries are introducing environmentally sensitive areas.

**Mr. Maclean:** Other EC countries are following the United Kingdom's lead in introducing ESA schemes. Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark now have approved areas.

30. **Mr. Alexander:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to increase the number of environmentally sensitive areas.

**Mr. Maclean:** Having designated 19 ESAs in the United Kingdom there is now a need to examine their impact and value for money. The scheme is to be reviewed in 1991 and future policy will depend on the outcome of this review.

### Fishing Vessels

13. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, what recent representations he has received regarding the introduction of a decommissioning scheme for fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry:** As has been made clear in the past decommissioning is one of a range of options being considered for reducing the size of our fishing fleet.

**Mr. Michie:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) on Tuesday, 11 July, *Official Report*, column 453, he is able to estimate the number of vessels which will be taken from the United Kingdom fishing fleet in each of the years 1989, 1990 and 1991; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry:** No. The target reductions for multi-annual guidance programme purposes are expressed only in terms of tonnage and engine power. The number of vessels withdrawn will depend on action taken to reduce fleet capacity following our consultations with industry organisations.

### Eggs

14. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to increase checks conducted by his Department into imported eggs.

**Mr. Maclean:** We already inspect a significant proportion of eggs imported to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the egg marketing standards regulations of the European Community.

### Forestry Commission

19. **Mr. Franks:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, when he last met the chairman of the Forestry Commission; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Gummer:** I look forward to meeting the new chairman of the Forestry Commission, whose appointment begins on 1 September, when we both have had a chance to settle into our new posts.

### Small Farmers

20. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had in the Council of Ministers regarding EC schemes for direct income support for small farmers.

21. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the Government's position with regard to direct income support for small farmers.

**Mr. Gummer:** The Council agreed in January on the main lines of a Community scheme for direct income aid. A regulation came into effect on 1 April establishing a framework under which member states may draw up plans to pay transitional aid to farms affected by the reform of the CAP. Proposals for detailed implementing regulations are now under discussion and need to be agreed before member states may submit new schemes, as required, for approval by the Commission.

I have no plans at present to introduce an income aid scheme.

37. **Sir Richard Body:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, when he last met the chairman of the Small Farmers Association; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Gummer:** I have not met the chairman of the Small Farmers Association.

### Food Labelling

22. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received seeking the introduction of a scheme of food labelling designed to inform consumers of food organically produced or reared and slaughtered under humane conditions.

**Mr. Maclean:** Initiatives taken within my Department led to the establishment in 1987 of the United Kingdom Register of Organic Food Standards (UKROFS) which, on 2 May, launched detailed production and processing standards, a certification and inspection scheme and a UKROFS symbol and approved labelling to enable consumers to identify organic foods produced according to the standards. I hope that producers will take full advantage of this exciting development so that a much larger share of the rapidly growing consumer demand for such produce is met by home production.

### Nitrates

24. **Mr. Janman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether farming and environmental organisations received copies of his Department's consultation document on nitrate-sensitive areas.

**Mr. Curry:** Yes. My Department's consultation document on the nitrate-sensitive areas scheme was circulated to a wide range of interests including farming organisations, the Government's conservation agencies and other environmental bodies.

25. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many replies he has received in response to his Ministry's consultation document on nitrate-sensitive areas.

**Mr. Curry:** We have received over 100 responses to our consultation document on nitrate-sensitive areas.

### Women's Farmers Union

26. **Mrs. Ann Winterton:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Women's Farmers Union; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Gummer:** I last met the Chairman of the WFU at the recent Festival of Food and Farming and I look forward to meeting her again in the future.

### Cereals

27. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about the need for further incentives to take land out of cereal production.

**Mr. Curry:** I have been asked by the President of the National Farmers Union to reconsider the levels of payment for set-aside in the United Kingdom. I have decided to maintain the rates unchanged.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of the annual cost to the European Economic Community budget of growing a representative 500 acres of wheat in Norfolk in (i) 1988 and (ii) in the current financial year.

**Mr. Curry:** Information is not available in the form requested. However, an indication of the average cost of supporting 500 acres of cereals anywhere in the Community can be worked out by dividing the sums in the cereals chapter of the guarantee section of the European agricultural guidance and guarantee fund for 1988 and 1989 by the total cereals area of the Community in 1987-88 and 1988-89 respectively. This gives figures of some £16,800 and some £15,100 for 500 acres of cereals in 1988 and 1989 respectively.

**Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farmers claimed in the last cereals year under the small cereals producers aid scheme for a co-responsibility rebate.

**Mr. Curry:** The present deadline for claims under the small cereals producer aid scheme is 31 July. We do not as yet have a final figure for claims submitted but all the signs are that the figure will be disappointingly low. I am therefore extending the deadline for claims to 30 September so that producers have the maximum opportunity to apply under this scheme.

### Country Landowners Association

28. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Country Landowners' Association; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Gummer:** I have met the chairman of the CLA on many occasions in the past and look forward to meeting him again in the future.

### Council for the Protection of Rural England

29. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Council for the Protection of Rural England; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Maclean:** I have not yet had the opportunity to meet the chairman of the Council for the Protection of Rural England but look forward to doing so at sometime in the future.

### Meat Inspection

31. **Mr. Archer:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has recently discussed with representatives of other EEC countries the consequences for the single market arising from the continued refusal of the Community to recognise the qualification of environmental health inspectors in connection with the inspection of meat.

**Mr. Curry:** In any discussions on arrangements for meat inspection within the single market, I shall seek to ensure a continuing role for our environmental health officers.

### Food Research

32. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a further statement on his Department's support for research for the benefit of food-related industries.

**Mr. Curry:** My Department commissions research amounting to £16·8 million to support statutory obligations, policy development, the protection of consumers and work specifically directed to the improvement of competitiveness in the food industry. Support for work of direct commercial benefit to the industry will be phased out by the end of 1990-91 as a part of the Government's policy on near market research. This will not affect our commitment to food safety and other work on wider public benefit.

A recent joint MAFF/DTI initiative on food processing sciences was announced in September 1988 as part of the LINK Scheme. £7 million has been allocated by MAFF and by DTI over a five-year period provided that this sum is matched by industrial contributions. This programme will concentrate on projects which will strengthen the industry's technical base in bioscience and encourage strategic developments in new processes, biotechnology and processing modelling and control.

### Soft Drinks

33. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has received a copy of the recent London Food Commission report on the fruit juice content of some soft drinks; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maclean:** This report has recently been brought to the attention of the Department but I have not yet had an opportunity to study it. However, we have already circulated for public comment draft proposals for the revision of the Soft Drink Regulations 1964 which, inter alia would introduce a requirement for the declaration of fruit juice content on the labels of fruit juice based drinks.

### Tenant Farmers Association

34. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Tenant Farmers Association; and what matters were discussed.

**Mr. Gummer:** I hope to meet the chairman of the Tenant Farmers Association in the near future.

### Food Exports

36. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on recent trends in agriculture and food exports.

**Mr. Maclean:** Over the first five months of 1989, exports of food, feed and other agricultural products reached a record for the period of £1,978 million. This was 19·5 per cent. higher than the same periods of 1988 and 1987 respectively. It should be noted that exports of some basic agricultural products, such as grain, livestock and lightly processed foods, can vary considerably from year to year. But apart from this, exports of more processed food manufactured in the United Kingdom have been growing steadily for a number of years.

### Fisheries Ministers

38. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he will next attend a meeting of the European Community Council of Fisheries Ministers; and what he expects to discuss.

**Mr. Curry:** The next Fisheries Council is on 27 November 1989. The agenda has yet to be arranged.

### Net Sizes

39. **Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposals he has to give incentives to fishermen to use larger mesh sizes for better conservation.

**Mr. Curry:** I have no such plans but we are actively considering possible improvements in technical measures to achieve better conservation.

### Food Bill

40. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has received representations calling for the registration of food establishments as part of the forthcoming Food Bill.

**Mr. Maclean:** This is one of the issues on which the Government have been holding extensive consultations as part of our proposed reform of food legislation. We have received a number of representations.

### Food Supplies (Dock Strike)

42. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has to ensure that the public have adequate food supplies during the dockers' strike; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maclean:** My Department is monitoring the position closely and maintains regular contact with the food industry.

I am confident that food supplies will not be seriously affected.

### Common Agricultural Policy

41. **Mr. Butler** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he proposes to take any further steps to combat fraud in the common agricultural policy; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** We have taken the initiative in the Council of Ministers on many occasions to press for further action to deal with fraud in the common agricultural policy and valuable progress is being made. The Commission has recently presented to the Council proposals to require member states to carry out an annual physical check on intervention stocks and a minimum level of inspections of export refunds, and to tighten up the system of audit checks on firms making or receiving CAP payments. I will continue to press the Council to take speedy action on these proposals.

43. **Sir Hal Miller:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest estimate of the effect in the current year of the common agricultural policy reforms on intervention stores; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** The process of CAP reform has contributed to substantial reductions in intervention stock levels. The latest estimates of stocks held in public stores show that since the beginning of this year stocks of the major commodities have been reduced as follows:

| *Commodity* | *Reduction in stocks ('000 tonnes)* | | *Reduction as a percentage of stocks at 31 December 1988* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *EC* | *United Kingdom* | *EC* *Per cent.* | *United Kingdom* *Per cent.* |
| Beef | 59 | 7 | 15 | 28 |
| Olive oil | 105 | — | 30 | — |
| Total cereals | 1,647 | 582 | 18 | 48 |
| Butter | 57 | 12 | 56 | 50 |
| Skimmed milk powder | 0 | [1]— | 0 | [2]— |

[1] Less than 500 tonnes.

[2] United Kingdom SMP stocks at 31 December 1988 were negligible.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, further to his reply dated 25 May, *Official Report*, column *744*, concerning the common agricultural policy, he will explain the reasons for the increase in expenditure in 1988 of over 20 per cent.; and whether this was anticipated at the time of the Fontainebleau agreement.

**Mr. Curry:** As explained in my previous reply, the 1987 budget year carried only 10 months' expenditure. Because of the change to a system of delayed advances for funding from the guarantee section of the European agricultural guidance and guarantee fund, 4,534 mecu (£3,261 million) of expenditure in November and December 1987 were charged to the 1988 budget. Total CAP expenditure for the 1987 calendar year was therefore 28,497 mecu (£20,418 million)—2 per cent. less in real terms than the expenditure charged to the 1988 budget. It is not possible to compare expenditure in calendar year 1987 with that in calendar year 1988.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table on the same basis as that given in the answer of 4 December 1984, *Official Report*, columns *105-116*, showing for each of the commodities covered by the common agricultural policy *(a)* the amount currently in surplus, *(b)* the target/threshold/intervention price in the United Kingdom, *(c)* the corresponding price in West Germany, *(d)* the corresponding central price for the European Economic Community, *(e)* the levy in the United Kingdom at the latest available date, *(f)* the world price and *(g)* the amount sold to third markets with financal assistance from the European Economic Community;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the tonnage of each agricultural product exported to non-European Economic Community countries under the common agricultural policy and the cost to the European Economic Community in each case; and if he will revise as necessary the figures given in his written answer of 28 April, *Official Report*, columns *315-16*;

(3) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the estimated amount of each common agricultural policy product consumed in the United Kingdom in 1988, the height of the tariff or guaranteed threshold minimum price, the amount of the levy paid at the latest available date and the corresponding world price.

**Mr. Gummer:** Information on surplus production, as measured by self-sufficiency, is contained in the Commission's publication "The Agricultural Situation in the Community, 1988 Report", in particular, table 3.7.3. Details of institutional prices (in ecu and £ sterling) are contained in annex 1 of the note on the common agricultural policy price settlement 1989-90, deposited in the Library of the House on 17 May 1989. The prices applicable in Germany can be derived from the ecu prices using the green rates as follows: Cereals—2.37360, other crops and sheepmeat—2·36110; other animal products—2·35053.

The import levies and threshold prices applicable in the United Kingdom on 21 July 1989 and the corresponding "world" prices are shown in table 1. I remind the hon. Member that the world prices shown are generally the lowest offer prices at the Community frontier which underlie the Commission's calculation of the variable import levies. These prices are the lowest recorded and it is likely that, on average, higher prices would have to be paid if larger quantities were to be purchased on world markets or if supplies to world markets diminished. Information on the consumption of agricultural products in the United Kingdom, as measured by "total domestic uses", is contained in "Agriculture in the United Kingdom, 1988". I must caution strongly against drawing conclusions from this particular array of data requested.

Details of exports sold to third countries with financial assistance from the European Community are not available. Total exports from the Community in 1988 of selected commodities are shown in table 2; these will include some products exported without financial assistance. An analysis of expenditure on export refunds by product in 1988 is set out in annex 2 of the draft 18th financial report for EAGGF guarantee section.

Copies of the documents referred to are in the Library of the House.

*Table 1*

*Levy applicable in the United Kingdom, threshold price and notional "World" price on 21 July 1989 for main food items covered by the common agricultural policy*

| | *Threshold equivalent price*[1] | *Levy applicable in United Kingdom*[2] *(£ tonne)* | *Notional "World" price*[3] *(£ tonne)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Common Wheat | 166 | 72 | 99 |
| Barley | 151 | 72 | 83 |
| Maize | 165 | 94 | 76 |
| Sugar (White) | 456 | [4]165 | 300 |
| Butter (82 per cent. fat) | 2,428 | [5]1,448 | 1,021 |
| Cheese (Cheddar) | 2,514 | 1,691 | 880 |
| Skimmed Milk Powder | 1,406 | 476 | 959 |
| Beef and Veal | 2,781 | [6]1,701 | 1,209 |
| Pigmeat | 1,519 | 383 | 905 |
| Sheepmeat | 2,403 | [7] | [8] |
| Poultrymeat | 1,049 | 246 | 864 |
| Eggs | 855 | 156 | 472 |

*Notes:*

All figures have been rounded to nearest £.

[1] For commodities for which there is no threshold price the following have been used: beef and veal—guide price converted to deadweight (using a killing out percentage of 53·8 per cent.); pigmeat—basic price; poultrymeat and eggs—sluicegate prices plus basic levy; sheepmeat—seasonalised basic price adjusted for stabiliser. All conversions at green rate.

[2] Levy is net of monetary compensatory amounts. Rates of levy vary for different tariff headings. The rates quoted are: beef and veal and pigmeat—carcase; poultrymeat—70 per cent. chickens; eggs—in shell.

[3] Notional "World" prices have been calculated by subtracting the levy applicable from the "threshold" price. The beef price is also adjusted for duty. For pigmeat, poultrymeat and eggs the "World" price has been taken as the sluicegate price, less supplementary levy, where appropriate. The resulting estimate has been converted from ecu/t at the agricultural market rate of exchange: £0·762070 = 1 ecu on 21 July 1989.

[4] In practice the United Kingdom's imports from third countries are normally covered by the Lomé convention and enter the Community levy-free.

[5] A special lower rate of levy is applicable to imports of butter from New Zealand.

[6] Most imports of beef from third countries are subject to special arrangements allowing entry at reduced levy rate.

[7] Imports of lamb under voluntary restraint arrangements with principal suppliers and related agreements are subject to a reduced charge of 10 per cent. ad valorem. Any imports outside these arrangements are subject to levies which cannot exceed the 20 per cent. tariff bound in the GATT.

[8] No appropriate "World" price is available.

*Exports from the European Community*[1] *of selected CAP commodities to non-EC countries: 1988*

| | *'000s tonnes* |
|---|---|
| Wheat | 12,387 |
| Wheat flour | 2,562 |
| Barley | 6,434 |
| Malt | 1,031 |
| Rice | 332 |
| Sugar[2] | |
| of which: | 4,535 |
| Raw (white equivalent) | 24 |
| Refined | 4,511 |
| Olive oil | 144 |
| Oilseeds | 116 |
| Whole milk powder | 343 |
| Skimmed milk powder | 607 |
| Condensed milk | 383 |
| Butter and Buttermilk | 620 |
| Beef and veal | 615 |
| Sheepmeat | 6 |
| Pigmeat | 296 |
| Poultrymeat | 389 |
| Eggs | 82 |
| Wine[3] | 1,211 |

*Source:* EUROSTAT.

[1] Excludes figures for Greece from August 1988.

[2] Includes raw sugar converted to refined sugar equivalent: 1 tonne raw sugar = 0·92 tonne refined sugar.

[3] The figure previously shown for 1985 has been revised to 1,095 thousand tonnes.

## Oilseed Rape

44. **Mr. Derek Conway:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what income farmers have received from the 1988 oilseed rape crop; and if he will make a statement on the implications of the current prevailing price.

**Mr. Curry:** The value of oilseed rape output in the United Kingdom in 1988 is estimated at £242 million. Information on the income which farmers obtained from this crop is not available. The 1989 United Kingdom crop, like that in other member states, is expected to be smaller than the 1988 crop because of a smaller planted area. As a result, market prices are currently higher than at the same time last year.

## Meat Tenderising Injections

45. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will implement the recommendation of the Farm Animal Welfare Council that intrajugular meat tenderising injections be prohibited.

**Mr. Curry:** We do not believe that the procedure is inhumane and in our view a ban is not justified.

### Nephrops

47. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any proposals for nephrops to be designated a pressure stock; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry:** I have no such proposals. The various nephrops stocks around the United Kingdom are either not subject to quota or where they are the quotas have been generally under utilised. We will, however, continue to monitor these stocks closely.

### Anthrax

48. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to alter the current regulations with regard to anthrax.

**Mr. Gummer:** I propose shortly to make some minor amendments to the Anthrax Order 1938 to allow an inspector of the Minister (as well as an inspector of a local authority) to serve a form A, declaring an infected place.

There are no plans for any further changes.

### Intervention Board

49. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farmers are in receipt of both payments from the intervention board for growing cereals and payments for subsequently storing such food; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry:** The intervention board contracts storage space for intervention cereals with storekeepers who have suitable premises and the necessary expertise. Records are not maintained to show whether any of the companies offer into intervention grain which they have grown themselves but the intervention board's policy is not to accept offers of grain for storage in the stores in which it is held at the time of offer. Nor would a company's offer of grain be allocated for storage in one of its own stores.

50. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he proposes to announce a decision on the relocation of the intervention board.

**Mr. Gummer:** My right hon. Friend the Minister and my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are considering with colleagues the intervention board's proposals to locate part of its work away from the south-east of England. An announcement will be made as soon as possible.

### Cricket Bats

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent developments have taken place in tackling water mark disease and its effects on cricket bat production.

**Mr. Maclean:** A cricket bat willow research group was established on 3 May. This includes representatives of the growers, merchants and manufacturers, as well as representatives from the university of East Anglia, Essex county council and the Forestry Commission. The group has agreed that a voluntary levy should be raised on the sale of cricket bat clefts to fund research into methods of controlling watermark disease and to contribute to expenditure on inspection services.

### Research

**Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he next plans to meet the President of the National Farmers Union to discuss agricultural research.

**Mr. Gummer:** I have already spoken to the President of the National Farmers Union and have arranged to meet him when no doubt we will have a wide-ranging discussion.

### Whisky

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will show the export earnings value of the Scottish whisky industry in each year since 1975.

**Mr. Curry:** The value of United Kingdom exports of whisky from 1975 is shown in the table. The figures include some small amounts of whiskey bourbon.

| *Year* | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1975 | 366·6 |
| 1976 | 439·7 |
| 1977 | 512·6 |
| 1978 | 662·8 |
| 1979 | 709·7 |
| 1980 | 747·5 |
| 1981 | 787·2 |
| 1982 | 875·4 |
| 1983 | 863·9 |
| 1984 | 937·3 |
| 1985 | 1,001·0 |
| 1986 | 1,075·3 |
| 1987 | 1,142·4 |
| 1988 | 1,297·6 |

*Source:* Overseas Trade Statistics (Her Majesty's Stationery Office)

### Radioactivity

**Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the total quantity of radioactivity in the soil, food chains and water systems in the United Kingdom attributable to *(a)* fallout from Chernobyl *(b)* United Kingdom military nuclear bases and *(c)* the United Kingdom civil nuclear facilities, and what steps he is taking to clean up the United Kingdom environment from radioactive pollution arising from human activities.

**Mr. Maclean:** My Department has responsibilities for the food chain and the aquatic environment. The Department of the Environment has responsibilities for the soil and drinking water.

It is not possible easily to assess separately the contribution of background activity and that attributable to other sources. However, the general overall picture is as follows:

*(a)* The contribution from the 1986 Chernobyl accident was greatest in the north and west of the country where high rainfall coincided with the passage of the radioactive plume with a result that total radiocaesium levels in the soil from all sources were in the region of 30,000Bq/m$^2$ in parts of Cumbria.

*(b) (c)* UK military and civil nuclear facilities have made a negligible contribution to radio activity levels in the soil with the exception of the 1957 fire at Windscale which led to a significant increase in levels in Cumbria.

Details of radioactivity levels in the food chain and in surface and coastal waters around major nuclear installations can be found in my Department's terrestrial radioactivity monitoring programme and aquatic monitoring reports (copies in the Library of the House). The results of my Department's monitoring of foodstuffs following the Chernobyl accident have also been published regularly and copies placed in the library of the House.

With the exception of certain areas of the United Kingdom where sheep are still subject to post-Chernobyl movement and slaughter controls, radioactivity levels in the food chain throughout the United Kingdom do not require any remedial action. In the areas where sheep are under control my Department is actively investigating ways of reducing radiocaesium availability and uptake by grazing animals.

### Radioactive Waste

**Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what quantities of radioactive wastes will arise annually from the disposal of the radiation sources for food irradiation; what plans there are for their disposal; and if he expects any radioactive waste presently stored in the United Kingdom to be used as sources for food irradiation.

**Mr. Maclean:** No radioactive wastes will arise from the sources used to irradiate food. When the source has decayed beyond its useful life, it will be returned to the supplier for regeneration. I do not expect any radioactive waste to be used as a source for this process.

### Bread and Wheat Prices

**Mr. Ralph Howell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will express the figures on the price of bread and wheat given in his answer of 3 May, *Official Report*, columns *124-26*, with *(a)* 1979 = 100 and *(b)* 1984 = 100.

**Mr. Curry:** The figures requested are as follows:

| *Year* | *Average price of standard white wrapped and sliced loaf (800g)* | | | | | | *Weighted average price of United Kingdom wheat at point of sale*[1] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Actual price* | | | *1979 price*[2] | | | *Actual price* | | | *1979 price*[2] | | |
| | | *Indices* | | | *Indices* | | | *Indices* | | | *Indices* | |
| | *p/loaf* | *1979 = 100* | *1984 = 100* | *p/loaf* | *1979 = 100* | *1984 = 100* | *£/tonne* | *1979 = 100* | *1984 = 100* | *£/tonne* | *1979 = 100* | *1984 = 100* |
| 1979 | 29·3 | 100 | 76 | 29·3 | 100 | 120 | 95·92 | 100 | 84 | 95·92 | 100 | 132 |
| 1980 | 33·7 | 115 | 88 | 28·2 | 96 | 116 | 99·30 | 104 | 87 | 82·96 | 86 | 114 |
| 1981 | 36·3 | 124 | 94 | 27·2 | 93 | 111 | 108·92 | 114 | 95 | 81·65 | 85 | 113 |
| 1982 | 37·1 | 127 | 96 | 25·8 | 88 | 106 | 113·74 | 119 | 99 | 79·21 | 83 | 109 |
| 1983 | 37·6 | 128 | 98 | 24·9 | 85 | 102 | 124·80 | 130 | 109 | 82·70 | 86 | 114 |
| 1984 | 38·5 | 131 | 100 | 24·4 | 83 | 100 | 114·59 | 119 | 100 | 72·57 | 76 | 100 |
| 1985 | 40·2 | 137 | 104 | 24·1 | 82 | 99 | 112·25 | 117 | 98 | 67·26 | 70 | 93 |
| 1986 | 43·0 | 147 | 112 | 24·9 | 85 | 102 | 111·18 | 116 | 97 | 64·34 | 67 | 89 |
| 1987 | 43·7 | 149 | 114 | 24·1 | 82 | 99 | 111·00 | 116 | 97 | 61·33 | 64 | 85 |
| 1988 | 46·3 | 158 | 120 | 24·0 | 82 | 98 | [3]104·83 | 109 | 91 | 54·32 | 57 | 75 |
| 1989[4] | 49·1 | 168 | 128 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |

*Source:*

Bread prices: Employment Gazette.

Wheat prices: Annual Review of Agriculture; Agriculture in the United Kingdom 1988.

[1] The wheat prices quoted are net of co-responsibility levies.

[2] Using the GDP deflator (at market prices).

[3] Forecast.

[4] January to June inclusive.

### Pesticides

**Sir Richard Body:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many applications for the approval of a pesticide have been made in each of the last six years; and how many of these applications have been refused.

**Mr. Maclean:** The number of applications for pesticides approval received each year since the introduction of the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 is as follows:

| | *1987* | *1988* | *1989 (to date)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Received | 1,024 | 1,324 | 837 |
| of which: | | | |
| Rejected | 283 | 347 | 324 |
| Refused | N/A | N/A | 84 |

The figures distinguish between those applications which are initially rejected without evaluation due to insufficient supporting data and those refused approval following evaluation.

### Synthetic Chemicals

**Sir Richard Body:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consultations have taken place between his Department and the European Economic Community Commission about its draft proposals on the production and marketing of agricultural products and foodstuffs obtained without the use of synthetic chemicals; and what United Kingdom bodies he intends to consult when such proposals are submitted to the European Economic Community Council.

**Mr. Maclean:** Since 1987 my officials have attended five meetings in Brussels with representatives of the Commission of the European Community and other member states held to discuss a succession of draft proposals put forward by the Commission on the production and marketing of organic foods. On a further occasion in October 1988 my officials hosted a meeting in London, attended by a representative of the Commission and by the Chairman of the United Kingdom Register or Organic Food Standards (UKROFS), in order to explain to the Commission progress towards establishing

UKROFS standards. After the UKROFS standards were announced on 2 May 1989 copies were sent by my officials to the Commission.

Once the Commission's own proposals are submitted to the Council of Ministers it is my intention that, so far as is practical, there shall be detailed consultations with the UKROFS board and with a wide range of bodies representing the producers, processors, manufacturers, retailers and consumers of organic foods.

### Food Safety

16. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a further statement on food safety.

**Mr. Gummer:** I shall be making a full statement this afternoon.

### Liscombe Experimental Husbandry Farm

23. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the agricultural industry has shown itself willing to finance near-market research work at the Liscombe experimental husbandry farm.

**Mr. Gummer:** Yes. As explained in a reply on 10 July to my hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell), a local industry consortium has secured a significant level of commitments to fund a programme of near-market research and development at Liscombe experimental husbandry farm.

### Zoonoses Regulations

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the average cost per test of applying the zoonoses regulations to egg laying flocks and broiler chicken flocks.

**Mr. Curry:** The Testing of Poultry Flocks Order 1989 requires rearing, laying, and breeding flocks to be monitored for evidence of salmonella. Cloacal swabs are taken from laying birds and tested at intervals from point of lay to slaughter (22 to 70 weeks of age) and dead birds are examined between 26 and 30 weeks of age.

Many laboratories in both the public and private sectors carry out these tests and average cost figures are not available. The Government's veterinary investigations centres would expect to charge £109 per house for this range of tests on laying birds required under the order.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, for each of the last five parliamentary sessions, including the 1988-89 session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry:** Records of statutory instruments issued by the Ministry are held by calendar year. The details are as follows:

| | *Affirmative* | *Negative* | *Made and Operate* |
|---|---|---|---|
| [1]1989 | 7 | 31 | 11 |
| 1988 | 11 | 62 | 17 |
| 1987 | 14 | 73 | 25 |
| 1986 | 12 | 88 | 18 |
| 1985 | 8 | 59 | 22 |

[1] To date.

### Farm Woodland Scheme

**Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the farm woodland scheme has encouraged the planting of broadleaved trees.

**Mr. Gummer:** Yes. Planting proposals received to date show that an average 75 per cent. of the area to be planted under this scheme will be with broadleaved trees.

### Fish Landings

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list in the *Official Report* the weight and value of landings of fish in England and Wales in each of the past ten years; and what proportion they represent of the total United Kingdom figures for those years.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The information requested is as follows:

*Total weight and value of fish (including shellfish) landed into England and Wales, by British and foreign vessels, for the years 1979 to 1988*

| *Year* | *Quantity (tonnes)* | *Percentage of United Kingdom* | *Value (£000)* | *Percentage of United Kingdom* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 556,070 | 60 | 165,179 | 56 |
| 1980 | 471,596 | 55 | 139,617 | 54 |
| 1981 | 339,956 | 42 | 119,512 | 47 |
| 1982 | 305,601 | 36 | 129,754 | 45 |
| 1983 | 283,573 | 34 | 125,654 | 41 |
| 1984 | 208,237 | 26 | 117,750 | 36 |
| 1985 | 180,685 | 22 | 123,857 | 35 |
| 1986 | 172,317 | 22 | 137,561 | 35 |
| 1987 | 217,845 | 26 | 169,478 | 37 |
| 1988 | 188,378 | 24 | 157,939 | 37 |

*Source:* Sea Fisheries Statistical Tables.
Her Majesty's Stationery Office Annual Publications.

### Shell Fish

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under what control powers he ensures that the siting of shell fish farms causes minimal disturbance to ecologically important areas; whether he intends to seek to introduce new controls; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* My Department exercises no specific powers in relation to the siting of shell fish farms, though all such businesses must register with the appropriate fisheries department under the terms of the Registration of Fish Farming and Shellfish Farming Businesses Order 1985. However, shell fish farms are subject to a range of statutory controls including those relating to sites of special scientific interest notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Moreover, all such operations must first obtain the consent of the owner of the seabed, normally the Crown Estates Commissioners. There are no plans to change the present arrangements.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) to what extent he takes account of a possible breach of section 14(1)(a) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 when granting a licence for alien shell fish cultivation; and if he will make a statement;

(2) under what circumstances he licenses the cultivation of alien shell fish in British waters; and if he will make a statement;

(3) under what powers he can prevent the release of alien shell fish into the wider marine environment; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what monitoring and assessment he is making of the environmental impact of shell fish farming of alien species; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer** *[holding answers 25 and 26 July 1989]:* Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 makes it an offence to release or allow to escape into the wild any animal of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state; or which is included in part I of schedule 9. However, introductions into the wild may be authorised by a licence granted under section 16 of the Act and after consultation with the Nature Conservancy Council. Such licences may be general or specific and subject to appropriate conditions. Presently general licences permit releases of Pacific oysters (Crassostrea gigas) and Portuguese oysters (Crassostrea angulata). The release of any other species of alien shell fish would require a specific licence. Moreover, all deposits of molluscan shell fish whether native or non-native, are subject to licensing under the Molluscan Shellfish (Control of Deposit) Order 1974, as varied.

The suitability of alien shell fish for cultivation in our waters is thoroughly investigated by my fisheries scentists, who take account of the scope for natural recruitment and potential ecological impact. In addition, appropriate steps are taken to ensure that any imported broodstock are free from alien shell fish parasites or disease. There is no evidence of natural recruitment or ecological harm having arisen from the cultivation of Pacific or Portuguese oysters.

## Small Businesses

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the achievements of his Department and his policies in helping small businesses over the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months; and if he will publish the performance indicators by which his Department monitors those achievements and the statistical results of such monitoring.

**Mr. Gummer** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* The Government's general policy towards small businesses is to create a climate in which they can flourish and to provide measures that support and help stimulate their development.

My Department has contributed significantly to this process. We have consistently worked for a more market-orientated common agricultural policy. Our success in this area has been of benefit to both large and small businesses in the agricultural industry. Important reforms of the CAP were brought into effect in 1988-89. Agricultural spending has been brought under control and surpluses have been greatly reduced. These achievements have helped to create a much more secure framework within which farmers can make their business decisions. They have also fostered a competitive and efficient industry, well placed to benefit from the opportunities which the completion of the single internal market will bring.

We have sought to enable farmers to benefit from the economic climate that this Government have created. We have encouraged farmers—in particular those with smaller businesses which may not be viable on the basis of agriculture alone—to look carefully at their assets so as to identify all possible opportunities for generating income; and we have introduced a range of income-generating schemes, designed to encourage farmers to seek alternative sources of income without creating surpluses. Within the last 12 months we have introduced the farm woodland scheme, set-aside, the farm and conservation grant scheme, and feasibility and marketing grants under the farm diversification grant scheme. We have also expanded our efforts on existing schemes, such as environmentally sensitive areas. These measures not only help the individual participants, but bring environmental and other benefits, contributing significantly to the viability and vitality of the rural economy as a whole.

All the schemes operated by my Department are closely monitored. Reports on particular schemes are published from time to time.

## Pigs

**Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what decision he has reached concerning the authorisation of a system of cheque book licensing for swill pig feeders to facilitate easier transportation of pigs to the abattoir following representations made to him by a delegation of swill pig feeders from Harefield led by the hon. Member for Uxbridge.

**Mr. Curry:** I intend to review the legislation which governs the movement of pigs within Great Britain as soon as our current programme of more pressing legislative changes permits. My specific aim will be to relax the licensing requirement of the movement of swill-fed pigs to slaughterhouses—if the review indicates that this is desirable.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Friday 28 July 1989*

## SCOTLAND

### Redundancies (Manufacturing)

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of notified redundancies in manufacturing in Scotland in each of the past 23 years.

**Mr. Lang:** There are no comprehensive statistics on redundancies. A consistent series on redundancies involving 10 or more workers confirmed to the Employment Department: The Training Agency is available only back to 1977. The number of such redundancies in Scottish manufacturing industry in each year from 1977 to 1988 is set out in the table.

| *Year* | *Total redundancies Scottish manufacturing*[1] [2] |
|---|---|
| 1977 | 22,168 |
| 1978 | 14,645 |
| 1979 | 27,519 |
| 1980 | 44,804 |
| 1981 | 40,372 |
| 1982 | 32,054 |
| 1983 | 28,397 |
| 1984 | 18,601 |
| 1985 | 14,175 |
| 1986 | 17,868 |
| 1987 | 15,267 |
| 1988 | 8,220 |

[1] Figures for 1977-83 for manufacturing are for Orders III-XIX of the 1968 Standard Industrial Classification.

[2] Figures for 1984 onwards for manufacturing are Divisions 2-4 of the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

### Health Service Salaries

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each health board for 1988-89, the amount allocated for nurses' salaries and the amount subsequently spent.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Initial revenue allocations to health boards do not separately identify provision for salaries. Total expenditure on nurses' salaries are shown in the following table:

| *Health Board* | [1]*Expenditure £ million* |
|---|---|
| Argyll and Clyde | 54·966 |
| Ayrshire and Arran | 39·423 |
| Borders | 13·459 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 21·722 |
| Fife | 39·744 |
| Forth Valley | 39·433 |
| Grampian | 68·392 |
| Greater Glasgow | 174·308 |
| Highland | 30·622 |
| Lanarkshire | 61·555 |
| Lothian | 111·384 |
| Orkney | 2·555 |
| Shetland | 2·903 |
| Tayside | 67·829 |
| Western Isles | 3·992 |

[1] Provisional

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each health board for 1988-89, the amount allocated for salaries for doctors, dentists and nurses, and the amount subsequently spent on these groups.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Initial revenue allocations to health boards do not separately identify provision for salaries, Total expenditure on salaries for doctors, dentists and nurses are shown in the following table:

| *Health board* | [1]*Expenditure £ million* |
|---|---|
| Argyll and Clyde | 67·567 |
| Aryshire and Arran | 49·213 |
| Borders | 16·250 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 26·224 |
| Fife | 48·257 |
| Forth Valley | 46·885 |
| Grampian | 86·488 |
| Greater Glasgow | 230·355 |
| Highland | 38·146 |
| Lanarkshire | 77·323 |
| Lothian | 147·550 |
| Orkney | 2·936 |
| Shetland | 3·352 |
| Tayside | 86·233 |
| Western Isles | 4·821 |

[1] Provisional.

### Greater Glasgow Health Board

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) at what board meeting or meeting of a committee with powers the Greater Glasgow health board decided to advertise works contracts for medical records facilities and laboratory services in the official journal of the European Communities of 30 June;

(2) which committee of the Greater Glasgow health board is responsible to the board for *(a)* medical records and *(b)* laboratory services; what reports they have received on the privatisation of these services; and when they last discussed the matter in depth.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The finance and general purposes committee of Greater Glasgow health board discussed the potential for competitive tendering in a numberof services and agreed at the April 1989 meeting to the acceleration and expansion of the competitive tendering programme including clinical support services. The committee has received no specific report on privatisation. As regards the journal of 30 June, the advertisements merely invite expressions of interest in tendering.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated current year expenditure by the Greater Glasgow health board on *(a)* medical records facilities and *(b)* laboratory services; how many persons are employed in each; and what is the board's calculation of redundancy payments should the services be privatised.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** I have asked the Greater Glasgow health board to forward the hon. Member a copy of its annual accounts. The board is at the stage of gathering and considering expressions of interest from contractors.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when the Greater Glasgow health board's advertisements in the official journal of the European Communities of 30 June, references 89/S 123 14555/EN and 89/S 123 14556/EN, were first drafted; when the final draft was approved; and when it was submitted to the journal for publication.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The advertisements were drafted after the April meeting of the finance and general purposes committee and were submitted for publication on 20 June 1989.

## Hospitals

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list each hospital in Scotland and show against each the non-medical services which have been retained in-house and which have been privatised; and if he will show the date of privatisation where applicable.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## Health Boards

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his Department has taken steps to ensure that health boards seeking to privatise laboratory services have secured in the contract documents absolute legal liability of the contractor for delictual acts on his behalf; whether contractors are required to show proof of ability to meet awards in damages; whether that liability may lie in insurance cover; and whether the National Health Service has any residual liability for services that are privatised.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The National Health Service is liable to its patients for services provided for it by contractors. No specific instructions have, however, been issued by the Scottish Home and Health Department in relation to laboratory services. Such matters would be dealt with by boards under their ordinary procedures for placing contracts.

## Hospital Waiting Lists

**Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each health board in Scotland the number of patients on in-patient waiting lists on March 1988, the number of new cases added to the lists between then and March 1989 and the number of patients on the lists treated, between these dates.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## Waste Disposal

**Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has responded to the report on the survey of waste disposal in Scotland presented to him by the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland on 12 July; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The report is being considered by my officials. The Government have consulted extensively on proposals relating to waste disposal, on which we intend to legislate in the near future. The association's earlier response to our consultation paper on the role and functions of waste disposal authorities in Scotland will be taken into account in that context.

## Street Lighting

**Mr. Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to establish in Scotland street lighting projects, monitoring the connection between lighting and crime, along the lines of the four projects announced by the Home Office on 18 July.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** I am fully aware of the four new street lighting projects which are to be monitored by the Home Office in an attempt to assess their impact on levels of crime. We will be closely following developments on the four projects, and their relevance to Scotland will be considered in the light of the results which are expected to become available early next year. The outcome of the current research study in Wandsworth on the relationship between street lighting and crime will be of similar interest, in the context of the safer cities projects which have already been announced.

## Edinburgh Dental School

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated additional costs that will be incurred by the Lothian health board in the event that the Edinburgh dental school is closed, showing *(a)* the estimated additional cost of funding clinical posts currently available at the school and *(b)* the recurrent loan charges for the capital cost of providing a new building for the dental hospital.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The cost of funding clinical posts in any new dental hospital in Edinburgh is not yet known. In evidence to the McCallum working party, Lothian health board estimated that an additional £220,750 would be needed to meet total staff costs. Capital expenditure in the National Health Service is not funded on a recurrent loan basis.

## Drugs

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many police officers are principally deployed on drugs work in each police force; and what was the comparable number in 1979.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The information is as follows:

| *Force* | *1979* | *1989* |
|---|---|---|
| Central Scotland | 0 | 4 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 0 | 2 |
| Fife | 0 | 6 |
| Grampian | 2 | 12 |
| Lothian and Borders | 13 | 24 |
| Northern | 0 | 5 |
| Strathclyde | 14 | 34 |
| Tayside | 4 | 13 |
| Total | 33 | 100 |

In addition, since 1986, the strength of the Scottish crime squad has been increased by 31 officers to allow the formation of drugs wings based in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stonehaven.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the Library the latest figures on the prevalence of drug misuse and service provision.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** The extent of an illegal activity such as drug misuse cannot be precisely measured. Two main indicators are the number of addicts notified to the Home Office and the number of drugs offences recorded by the police. A comprehensive range of figures for 1988 is contained in "Statistics of Drug Addicts Notified to the Home Office, United Kingdom, 1988—Area Tables" and SHHD statistical bulletin No. 1/1989 "Recorded Crime in Scotland 1988", copies of which are in the Library. The number of new addicts notified to the Home Office from Scotland in 1988 was 400, an increase of 5 per cent. over 1987. The number of drugs offences recorded by the police in Scotland in 1988 was 5,213, an increase of about 10 per cent. over 1987.

From the current financial year, provision to health boards to maintain and develop drug misuse services is being increased from £1 million to £2 million per annum. The latest (fifth) edition of "Drug Problems—A Register of Helping Agencies", published in March 1989, lists the many services at present available in Scotland specifically for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug misusers. I am arranging for a copy to be placed in the Library.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total number of prosecutions for drug offences in 1979 and in each succeeding year.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The information requested is given below. For this purpose, the relevant offences are taken to be the illegal importation, production, manufacture, cultivation or supply of drugs, possession with intent to supply, and simply possession.

*Persons proceeded against: Scotland*

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 1,336 |
| 1980 | 1,402 |
| 1981 | 1,183 |
| 1982 | 1,663 |
| 1983 | 1,971 |
| 1984 | 2,584 |
| 1985 | 3,047 |
| 1986 | 3,065 |
| 1987 | 2,842 |

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total number of registered drug addicts in 1979 and in each succeeding year.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Information on the total number of addicts notified to the Home Office from Scotland in the years 1979 to 1988 is published in Tables A1 and A2 of "Statistics of Drug Addicts Notified to the Home Office, United Kingdom, 1988—Area Tables", a copy of which is in the Library.

### Infertility

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the infertility services provided by each health board.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** I regret that this information is not held centrally.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the prevalence of infertility in Scotland.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Information about the prevalence of infertility is not available since only a proportion of those affected will seek advice and treatment. Data on the numbers of those seeking advice and treatment are not held centrally.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether plans for the provision of infertility services are required to be included in the strategic plans of each health board.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** No. It is for individual health boards to determine, in the light of local circumstances and of the resources available to them, the extent to which they should make infertility services available in their areas and how such services should be organised.

### Mental Illness (Lothian)

**Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the joint funding arrangements for support for people with mental illness in Lothian, including the location of new facilities and financial arrangements for both capital and revenue expenditure.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** Lothian health board, together with Lothian regional council, the district councils, and the voluntary sector, has developed a comprehensive plan for the provision of services for the mentally ill. Jointly funded projects play an increasingly important part in that provision. I recently announced the latest proposals, developed jointly by the health board, the regional council, the Church of Scotland and other voluntary agencies, involving the transfer of 90 mentally ill people back into the community at a capital cost to the NHS of £4 million. I have asked Lothian health board to let the hon. Member have the detailed information which he requested.

### Paramilitary Activity

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many persons have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in Scotland in the first six months of 1989 as a result of paramilitary activity; and if he will break down the figures specifying whether the paramilitaries were (i) from western Europe, (ii) from Northern Ireland, (iii) from the Republic of Ireland, (iv) from other parts of the world and (v) of unknown origin.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** None.

### Prisoners (Transfer)

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many prisoners were transferred from *(a)* Scotland to Northern Ireland and *(b)* from Northern Ireland to Scotland in the first six months of 1989; and under which section of the Criminal Justice Act 1961 such transfers were carried out.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** One, from Scotland to Northern Ireland, under section (27) 1.

### Female Prisoners

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the average length of custodial sentence of female prisoners in Scotland in 1988 and in the first six months of 1989.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Statistics on court disposals during 1988 and the first six months of 1989 are not yet available. Provisional estimates based on prison reception statistics indicate that in 1988 the average length of sentence of females received into the penal system on direct sentence was 121 days. Prison reception statistics are not yet available for the period April-June 1989. Provisional estimates indicate that in the first three months of 1989 the average length of sentence of females received into the penal system on direct sentence was 107 days. Females sentenced to life imprisonment or indeterminate detention are not included in the above calculations.

## Forestry

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if the Forestry Commission consults the Nature Conservancy Council about all new woodland grant schemes outwith sites of special scientific interest with the exception of those in Caithness and Sutherland.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The Forestry Commission consults the Nature Conservancy Council on planting and felling proposals falling wholly or partly within national nature reserves or sites of special scientific interest and on planting schemes which require to be assessed under the terms of the Environmental Assessment (Afforestation) Regulations 1988. The NCC is also notified by the Forestry Commission of all planting and felling proposals in environmentally sensitive areas and given the opportunity to comment.

**Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland to what extent the Forestry Commission takes account of comments from local authorities on nature conservation aspects of forestry proposals; and if he will list the organisations the commission consults about the nature conservation aspects of forestry proposals.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** The Forestry Commission consults local authorities over grant and felling applications in accordance with mutually agreed arrangements with individual authorities. If a local authority consulted by the commission objects to an application on nature conservation or other grounds the commission will always seek a solution through discussions with the local authority and the applicant. If the matter cannot be resolved, the commission is required to consult Ministers before any decision is taken to allow the application.

The commission does not seek comments from voluntary conservation bodies, but it does encourage statutory authorities, including the Nature Conservancy Council, to consider the views of such bodies in formulating their expert advice on forestry proposals.

## Basking Sharks

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what financial resources were allocated to stock assessment of basking sharks in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** It is not possible to undertake a stock assessment for basking sharks and therefore resources are not allocated specifically to this task.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what records of incidental catches of basking sharks have been recorded by his district fisheries inspectors for each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** Incidental catches of basking sharks are not recorded separately, but the level of incidental catches in the past three years is thought to have been extremely low.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will publish the stock estimates for basking sharks for each year since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** Basking sharks have a worldwide distribution, and those occurring in British waters appear to be seasonal visitors. No stock estimates are therefore available although examination of Norwegian catch and effort data suggests there has been no long-term change in the population in the last decade.

## Job Interview Guarantee Scheme

**Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on what date the Scottish Office first became involved in the decision to apply the job interview guarantee scheme to the Whitfield area of Dundee and the Castlemilk area of Glasgow; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## New Life for Urban Scotland

**Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan will receive a reply to his letter of 13 June on the New Life for Urban Scotland programme.

**Mr. Lang:** I wrote to the hon. Member on 25 July 1989.

## Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance

**Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether, pursuant to his reply to the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale of Monday 3 July, *Official Report*, column *51*, he has any progress to report on negotiations on the European Commission's proposals to make changes to the payment of the hill livestock compensatory allowance.

**Mr. Rifkind:** Negotiations are still at an early stage.

## Residential Homes

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money was paid in the past four years to residents in residential care establishments and private nursing homes in Scotland for the following categories: *(a)* elderly, *(b)* physical handicap, *(c)* mental handicap and *(d)* mental illness by local authority.

**Mr. Lang:** I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## Community Care

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how he proposes to take account of any increase in the need for community care services;

(2) how the care element to be allocated to local authorities will be identified in the rate support grant settlement in the initial and subsequent years;

(3) if he will make it his policy to follow Sir Roy Griffiths' proposal to provide resources to match the needs identified in local plans;

(4) what capacity there will be to enable local authorities to expand community care; and where this capacity will come from;

(5) what form of consultation or negotiation he intends to establish with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on community care matters;

(6) what role he sees for local authorities in the longer term as a direct provider of community care services:

**Mr. Lang:** I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## Competitive Tendering

**Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will direct the general manager of the Greater Glasgow health board to reply to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Shettleston's letter of 24 May regarding competitive tendering.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth:** I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## Environmental Bodies (Grants)

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement concerning the amount of grant aid being made available under the Special Grants (Environmental) programme in 1989-90 to voluntary bodies in Scotland working in the environmental field.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** I am pleased to announce that grant aid totalling £208,000 has been offered to the following voluntary bodies in the financial year 1989-90, to assist them in carrying out environmental conservation, improvement or education work in Scotland:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland | 2,500 |
| Association of Community Technical Aid Centres | 12,500 |
| Buchan Countryside Group | 2,500 |
| Central Scotland Countryside Trust | 12,500 |
| Council for Scottish Archaeology | 9,000 |
| Environment Centre | 10,000 |
| John Muir Trust | 3,000 |
| Royal Society for the Protection of Birds | 12,500 |
| Royal Zoological Society | 5,750 |
| Scottish Community Woods Campaign | 7,750 |
| Scottish Conservation Projects Trust | 36,000 |
| Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations | 1,500 |
| Scottish Environmental Education Council | 15,000 |
| Scottish Field School of Archaeology | 1,500 |
| Scottish Field Studies Association | 10,000 |
| Scottish Historic Buildings Trust | 13,000 |
| Scottish Rights of Way Society | 2,500 |
| Scottish Wildlife and Countryside Link | 12,000 |
| Scottish Wildlife Trust | 30,000 |
| Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust | 3,500 |
| Woodland Trust | 5,000 |

The experience of the first three years of the scheme has been generally good.

I am satisfied that the grants have greatly assisted the voluntary organisations to increase their level of activity and do much useful work. We are of course still in the experimental period with this scheme and are monitoring it closely. We are asking certain organisations for further information prior to allocating their final tranche of grant for the current year. My Department will review this three-year experimental scheme to assess performance and recommend improvements. I hope that in future we shall be able to focus support on those bodies and activities which are carrying out the greatest amount of practical work to conserve and enhance Scotland's environment.

## Development Agency

**Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the companies in which the Scottish Development Agency has equity participation and the value of each investment.

**Mr. Lang** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Equity investments by the Scottish Development Agency are as detailed. The value of each investment is expressed at cost.

| *Investment name* | *Cost (£)* |
|---|---|
| Kelvin Technology Development Ltd. | 100,000 |
| Drug Development (Scotland) Ltd. | 20 |
| SEC Ltd. | 8,500,000 |
| Aurora Instruments Ltd. | 3,050 |
| Bioscot Ltd. | 173,572 |
| Scottish Textile and Technical Centre Ltd. | 13,333 |
| Assep Ltd. | 40 |
| National Hyperbaric Centre Ltd. | 147,108 |
| Stirling University Innovation Park Ltd. | 33 |
| Caledonian Transgenics | 106,000 |
| Glasgow Garden Festival 1988 Ltd. | 100 |
| Industrial Systems and Control Ltd. | 50,000 |
| Bathgate Investment Fund Ltd. | 50 |
| Biomac Ltd. | 20,000 |
| Biocure Group plc | 87,073 |
| Medical Laser Technologies Ltd. | 190,000 |
| Scottish Consultants International | 16,667 |
| Strath University Ltd. | 60,000 |
| The Fibre Corporation Ltd. | 50,000 |
| Thistle Foods Ltd. | 25,000 |
| James Findlay and Sons | 50,000 |
| J. Turnbull and Sons | 20,000 |
| Gilcomston Litho (Aberdeen) Ltd. | 15,000 |
| Albyn of Stonehaven Ltd. | 25,000 |
| Tarquin Photographic Ltd. | 12,189 |
| Carintech | 39,000 |
| Tayside Plastics Ltd. | 10,000 |
| Tachanalysis Ltd. | 30,000 |
| Swilken Golf Company Ltd. | 10,000 |
| Ask Systems Ltd. | 100,000 |
| Afton Dyers Ltd. | 15,000 |
| Hughes D. M. Ltd. | 2,500 |
| Scotforms Computer Stationery Ltd. | 30,000 |
| Drysdale and Gibb Ltd. | 20,000 |
| S. P. Technology Ltd. | 20,000 |
| ZOT Engineering Ltd. | 19,000 |
| Novatech Micro Systems. Ltd. | 10,000 |
| Haq Brothers (Scotland) Ltd. | 25,000 |
| Stenhouse Supplies Ltd. | 10,000 |
| Timber Terminal Ltd. | 30,000 |
| Studio Ink Precision Photographics Ltd. | 30,000 |
| Fleming Thermo Dynamics Ltd. | 70,000 |
| Design GRP Group Ltd. | 30,000 |
| Whitecross Nursing Home | 25,000 |
| Development Engineering (Aberdeen) Ltd. | 25,000 |
| Deeside Game Farm Ltd. | 15,000 |
| Scotwest Pneumatics Ltd. | 30,000 |
| MRM Engineering Ltd. | 20,000 |
| Armstrong Packaging Ltd. | 15,000 |
| MMEW Ltd. | 40,000 |
| Wright and Jobson Ltd. | 19,812 |
| Rhino Toughened Glass Ltd. | 75,000 |
| Kinshar Ltd. | 50,000 |

| *Investment name* | *Cost (£)* |
|---|---|
| Promat Engineering Services Ltd. | 75,000 |
| Magnum Signs Ltd. | 25,000 |
| Automatic Truck Loading Systems Ltd. | 50,000 |
| Biggar Quality Meats Ltd. | 50,000 |
| Kerse Engineering Ltd. | 25,000 |
| Schneider Industry UK Ltd. | 50,000 |
| Prep Foods Ltd. | 35,000 |
| Le Choc Motif Ltd. | 25,000 |
| Scott of Bellshill Ltd. | 40,000 |
| Scot Cree Ltd. | 20,000 |
| Digital Art Publications | 12,000 |
| Omega Diagnostics Ltd. | 20,000 |
| Shoebrokers Ltd. | 35,000 |
| Ferguson Fittings Ltd. | 25,000 |
| Mackintosh and Co. | 25,000 |
| Consortium Resources Management Ltd. | 35,075 |
| Alcohol Education Services Ltd. | 15,000 |
| Intec Interior Designs (Scotland) Ltd. | 35,000 |
| Grampian Distribution Services | 30,000 |
| Power Controllers | 20,000 |
| Burns Equip Ltd. | 30,000 |
| Barclay Ross (Aberdeen) | 30,000 |
| Deanmont Ltd. | 3,530 |
| Highland Bakeries | 50,000 |
| J. L. G. Industries Inc. | 250,000 |
| Carron Phoenix | 19,024 |
| International Microelectronic Products | 643,342 |
| Carron Plastics Ltd. | 60,000 |
| North Face (Scotland) Ltd. | 30,000 |
| Murray Electronics plc | 250,000 |
| Peoples Ltd. | 673,820 |
| Weathermac Ltd. | 35,000 |
| H. McMurray and Son | 10,000 |
| J. K. Peters and Co. (Trees) Ltd. | 250,000 |
| Dunclare Dispensers (UK) Ltd. | 130,688 |
| Eskfood Holdings Ltd. | 38,182 |
| Smith and Telford Ltd. | 250,629 |
| Berkeley Computer Services Ltd. | 35,125 |
| Kingston Spinners (Scotland) Ltd. | 219,500 |
| Kames Fish Farming Ltd. | 3,043 |
| Strathclyde Lifting Services | 25,000 |
| Penman Engineering Ltd. | 33,833 |
| Office Workstations Ltd. | 132,668 |
| Lasalle Ltd. | 245,840 |
| Blair Engineering Ltd. | 50,000 |
| G. and G. Kynoch plc | 250,000 |
| North Cape Ltd. | 39,999 |
| Patons Holdings Ltd. | 120,000 |
| Baby Deer Ltd. | 40,000 |
| Polytun Growers Ltd. | 50,000 |
| Damon Biotech Europe Ltd. | 772 |
| Damon Biotech | 361,282 |
| Intellemetrics Ltd. | 103;251 |
| Gleddoch Hotels Ltd. | 80,000 |
| W. H. Perkins Ltd. | 175,000 |
| Exacta Holdings Ltd. | 482,534 |
| Farmdata | 59,528 |
| Fife Silica Sands Ltd. | 266,000 |
| Optima Holdings Ltd. | 50,000 |
| Atlantic Fresh Water plc | 125,000 |
| Bauteil Engineering Ltd. | 314,155 |
| New Scotland Insurance Group plc | 1,000 |
| FSA Ltd. | 70,000 |
| Sonsub Ltd. | 150,000 |
| Yarmadillo Ltd. | 122,921 |
| Caledonian Arenas plc | 125,000 |
| Echo Hotel Ltd. | 1,000,000 |
| Crosslees Investments (Glasgow) Ltd. | 119,678 |
| Marenac Ltd. | 100,000 |
| The Court House Fashion Centre Ltd. | 220 |
| Campbell of Selkirk Ltd. | 60,000 |
| HCS (Scotland) Ltd. | 200,000 |
| Almond Engineering Ltd. | 125,000 |
| Healthcare Facilities (Edinburgh) Ltd. | 31,000 |
| Seametrix Ltd. | 44,357 |
| Alma Caledonia Ltd. | 260,399 |
| Stage-Coach (Holdings) Ltd. | 500,000 |
| Grant Brothers (Meat Canners) Ltd. | 200,000 |
| Ewart Micro Ltd. | 150,000 |
| Stewart Engineering Services Ltd. | 100,000 |
| Precision Power Train (UK) Ltd. | 125,000 |
| Crop Services (Scotland) Ltd. | 80,000 |
| Riverside Care Ltd. | 25,000 |
| Encap (UK) Ltd. | 145,000 |
| Book Services (Scotland) Ltd. | 180,000 |
| Duncans of Edinburgh Ltd. | 120,000 |
| Healthcare Group plc | 200,000 |
| British Bits Ltd. | 150,000 |
| Marshall Lauder Knitwear Ltd. | 70,000 |
| Strathclyde Process (Engineering) Ltd. | 375,000 |
| Highland Metals Ltd. | 94,999 |
| Graphic Information Systems Ltd. | 243,016 |
| Bluemink Ltd. | 95,000 |
| Stanley Mills (Scotland) Ltd. | 39,000 |
| Edinburgh Instruments Ltd. | 225,604 |
| Wm. McCrindle and Son | 140,000 |
| Cruachem Holdings Ltd. | 298,570 |
| Fenton Barns (Scotland) Ltd. | 60,000 |
| M and M Industries Ltd. | 188,500 |
| Scottish Development Finance Ltd. | 100 |
| J. H. Carruthers (Engineering) Ltd. | 35,600 |
| T. Spencer | 50,000 |
| Wrights of Trowmill | 30,000 |
| Henry Bannerman Garments Ltd. | 50,000 |
| RDS Group Ltd. | 287,188 |
| The Lodge on Loch Ltd. | 50,001 |
| Tarbet Fyne Foods Ltd. | 180,000 |
| Chemflake International Ltd. | 167,561 |
| Tayside Canners Ltd. | 100 |
| Scottdale Leisure Ltd. | 70,001 |
| Chessbourne International Ltd. | 250,000 |
| Eastern Photo | 50,000 |
| Caledonian Brewing Co. Ltd. | 104,275 |
| Swiftlogic Ltd. | 60,000 |
| Kineticon Ltd. | 366,000 |
| Stirling Diagnostics | 6,666 |
| Forth Valley Foods Ltd. | 195,000 |
| Shield Diagnostics | 250,000 |
| Pure Malt Products Ltd. | 150,000 |
| International Twist Drill (Holdings) Ltd. | 305,000 |
| In Europe Electronics Ltd. | 742,666 |
| Carrorhall Ltd. | 100,000 |
| Advanced Metal Technologies | 393,445 |
| Plimley Holding | 100,000 |
| Clyde Helicopters Ltd. | 65,000 |
| Kitchen Conversions (East Kilbride) Ltd. | 1,700 |
| Osprey Group Ltd. | 279,627 |
| Protofeed Ltd. | 75,000 |
| Polysystems Health Care Ltd. | 200,000 |
| Instruments and Microelectronic Systems Ltd. | 100,000 |
| Memex Information Holdings Ltd. | 250,000 |
| Domain Power Ltd. | 200,000 |
| McLaggan Smith Mugs Ltd. | 100,000 |
| Liebnitz Lann Ltd. | 40,000 |
| Webco Marine Systems Ltd. | 195,000 |
| Arran Haulage Services | 60,000 |
| Diagnostic Instruments Ltd. | 56,950 |
| Pharmaceutical Proteins Ltd. | 187,500 |
| Corpro Systems Ltd. | 115,000 |
| Unilith Ltd. | 220,000 |
| Digital Publications Ltd. | 150,000 |

## Gaelic Broadcasting

**Mrs Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proposals he has to ensure that the payments currently made by Scottish Television to S4C will in future be spent on Gaelic programming.

**Mr. Lang** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]*: The Government are currently considering the future of Gaelic broadcasting and will announce its conclusion in due course.

**Mrs Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations have been made to him concerning the possibility of concentrating Gaelic programming on one channel; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The Secretary of State has received a variety of representations about the future of Gaelic broadcasting. All argue for an increase in programming but many are not specific as to transmission arrangements. Of those who do express a view, rather more favour using a number of channels than argue for concentrating Gaelic programming on one channel. The Government are currently considering issues raised in these representations and will announce their conclusion in due course.

### South Pier, Oban

**Mrs. Ray Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his Department's policy towards the future of south pier in Oban; what representations he has received about the development of the pier; what provision h[illegible]en made for fishing interests; what expenditure of public funds has been made to date; what further expenditure is planned; what date has been set for the completion of the Oban bay development; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The Department has approved those aspects of the Scottish Development Agency's involvement in the Oban waterfront development which are outwith the agency's delegated authority.

My right hon. and learned Friend and I have received a number of representations about the development, some of which have referred to the south pier.

The redevelopment works on the south pier are expected to be completed by the end of this year and the pier will then be transferred to Caledonian MacBrayne, which will in turn lease it to the Oban Port Users Association. The pier will incorporate a new fish hall and offices.

It is estimated that the total value of the development will be around £10 million. Of this, around £3·9 million will be contributed by the public sector. Expenditure to date from public sector sources is around £2 million.

On present plans, the main elements of the development should be completed in time for the 1991 tourist season.

The waterfront project has been developed for the purpose of enhancing the attractiveness of Oban as a major tourism centre and as a gateway to the west Highlands and the Hebrides. The development proposes a multi-purpose leisure facility, specialist shopping facilities, a heritage centre and a hotel. In addition, facilities for the local fishing fleet and for management of ferry traffic will be improved.

It is anticipated that the development will bestow substantial benefits not only to visitors but to the local population through increased economic activity and improved facilities.

## ENERGY

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Wakeham:** In January, 213 letters were received from and 189 sent to hon. Members. In the whole Session up to 1 July 1,703 letters were received from hon. Members and 1,842 sent out.

### Energy Efficiency

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what new plans the Department of Energy has to promote and improve energy efficiency.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan (Mr. Wray) on 17 July, *Official Report*, column *53.*

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what specific arrangements he has made to ensure that the new premises of his Department and its Energy Efficiency Office incorporate and practise the latest techniques in energy control and management.

**Mr. Wakeham:** My Department's new premises at No. 1 Palace street incorporate an electronic building and energy management system using the latest proven technology, designed to run at optimum efficiency all the eletronic and mechanical services, including heating and ventilation, throughout the building. The Property Services Agency has let a contract for the operation and maintenance of the building services, including the building and energy management system. In addition, staff in the Property Services Agency have been trained in the use of the system, and a number of staff from the Department have rec[illegible]d training in how to monitor the system.

### Power Stations

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1970 and for the current year to date the cost of coal and heavy oil used in power stations in terms of coal equivalent together with *(a)* the quantity of each used in terms of coal equivalent, *(b)* the world price of coal in terms of sterling on a delivered to United Kingdom basis and *(c)* the index of the real exchange rate for sterling in terms of relative export prices on the basis of 1976 = 100.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I will write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my reply in the Library.

### Plutonium

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy in future publication of annual civil plutonium production and dispatch figures, that the positive or negative error to be applied to the data for each nuclear station be published with the data.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I shall consider carefully the point made by the hon. Member.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what amount of plutonium has been declared to the safeguards authorities, which is located in *(a)* high-level liquid radioactive waste tanks and *(b)* solid plutonium contaminated waste at Sellafield; and if he will give details for the periods May 1979 to December 1986, and January 1987 to the present.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** All safeguards data are confidential to the parties concerned.

### Radioactive Waste

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what volume of low and intermediate level radioactive waste will become the responsibility of United Kingdom Nirex Ltd., following the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel already contracted by British Nuclear Fuels plc.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** This will be a commercial matter between United Kingdom Nirex Ltd. and British Nuclear Fuels plc.

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how much low, intermediate and high-level radioactive waste will arise from the reprocessing of West German spent nuclear fuel at Sellafield, following the joint declaration on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy signed in Bonn on 25 July between the Federal Republic and the United Kingdom; how much of the low and intermediate-level waste will be sent back to Germany following reprocessing; and for how long the high-level waste will have to remain at Sellafield before being returned to the Federal Republic.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** British Nuclear Fuels plc and the German electricity utilities are in the process of negotiating contracts in the context of the recently signed joint declaration. I understand that the quantities of spent fuel to be reprocessed have yet to be agreed. In line with Government policy, the contracts, when concluded, will provide for the return of wastes to the Federal Republic of Germany.

### Offshore Installations

**Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many prosecutions have been instituted for failure to comply with directions issued by his Department under the Mineral Workings Offshore Installations Act 1971 and relating to the Offshore Installations (Life Saving Appliances) Regulations 1977 since 1979.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** None. Directions issued by the Secretary of State under the Mineral Workings (Offshore Installations) Act 1971 exempt installations from specific statutory requirements for limited periods subject to adequate alternative safety arrangements being in place. A direction ceases to have effect if any condition attached to it is not observed.

**Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will place in the Library a copy of all directions issued by his Department under the Mineral Workings (Offshore Installations) Act 1971 and relating to the Offshore Installations (Life Saving Appliances) Regulations 1977.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** There is a large number of directions and copies cannot easily be assembled. However, I will be arranging for copies of all directions relating to the Offshore Installations (Life-saving Appliances) Regulations 1977 issued in the last two years which remain in force to be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

**Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what directions have been issued by his Department in terms of the provisions of sections 7(4) and (5) of the Mineral Workings (Offshore Installations) Act 1971 in respect of the provisions of the Offshore Installations (Life Saving Appliances) Regulations 1977; to whom these directions were made; and to what offshore installations they relate.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** This information can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps his Department takes to monitor compliance with directions issued under the Mineral Workings (Offshore Installations) Act 1971 and relating to the Offshore Installations (Life Saving Appliances) Regulations 1977.

**Mr. Peter Morrison:** My inspectors monitor compliance with all directions issued under the Mineral Workings (Offshore Installations) Act 1971 as part of their inspection of offshore installations.

### Pneumoconiosis

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has to show the monthly breakdown for the last 36 months of the number of persons X-rayed for the first time for pneumoconiosis in an attempt to secure lump-sum compensation from British Coal and the breakdown of the subsequent results, distinguishing between those not suffering from the disease and those suffering, analysed by percentage disability groupings.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The British Coal Corporation is responsible for the periodic X-ray scheme which it introduced in 1958. I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

### Energy Production

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, in the light of new statistics on the cost of energy, he will publish the comparative costs of energy produced by *(a)* coal, *(b)* Magnox reactors, *(c)* advanced gas-cooled reactor reactors, *(d)* oil and *(e)* hydro-electric in the years 1979 to 1987.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The detailed historical information requested is a matter for the CEGB. I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

### Magnox Reactors

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what estimate he has of the total cost for the decommissioning, dismantling and guarding of Magnox reactors during the next 10 decades;

(2) what is the basis of his evaluation of the costs of decommissioning Magnox reactors, the reprocessing of Magnox spent fuel and the disposal of radioactive waste arising from Magnox plants.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I have received further information on these subjects from the CEGB over the past two months which is the subject of continuing consideration and discussion. I understand that some of the information reflects the present position in continuing negotiations between the CEGB and British Nuclear Fuels plc.

**Mr. Blair:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) further to his statement of 24 July, when he first asked for an assessment of the cost of reprocessing and waste treatment of spent Magnox fuel in connection with electricity privatisation; who undertook that assessment, and when the assessment was completed;

(2) when he was first informed that the rising costs of dealing with spent Magnox fuel might affect the structure of the electricity privatisation.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I refer the hon. Member to the statement that my predecessor made on 24 July, at column 744.

### Nuclear Energy

**Mr. Rost:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how much electricity was purchased by the public supply industry from *(a)* Chapelcross, *(b)* Calder Hall, *(c)* Dounreay and *(d)* Winfrith, in each financial year from 1983-84 to 1988-89, inclusive.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** This is an operational matter for the electricity industry. I have asked the chairmen of the CEGB and the North Western electricity board to reply direct to my hon. Friend concerning purchases from Calder Hall and Winfrith and some of the purchases from Chapelcross. Purchases of other supplies from Chapelcross and from Dounreay are a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland who is responsible for the SSEB.

### Nuclear Fuel (Reprocessing)

**Mr. Blair:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what is his current estimate of the costs of reprocessing and waste treatment of spent advanced gas-cooled reactor fuel;

(2) what is his Department's most recent estimate of the cost of decommissioning *(a)* advanced gas-cooled reactor and *(b)* pressurised water reactor nuclear power stations;

(3) what is the assessment now of the cost of reprocessing and disposing of spent Magnox fuel, and of the cost of decommissioning Magnox nuclear power stations.

**Mr. Wakeham:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I have given today to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn).

## HEALTH

### NHS (Equipment Losses)

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the value of losses of equipment, property or cash in the National Health Service in England owing to theft, fraud, arson, neglect of duty, gross carelessness or malicious damage in the latest available year.

**Mr. B[illegible]:** Following is information derived from the "Statement of Losses, etc." included in the 1987-8 summarised annual accounts of regional and district health authorities in England and those of special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals:

| | *£ (cash)* |
|---|---|
| Losses of cash due to theft, fraud etc. | 102,866 |
| Losses of equipment and property in stores and in use due to theft, fraud or arson (whether proved or suspected), neglect of duty or gross carelessness: Bedding and linen | 137,963 |
| Other equipment and property | 1,306,146 |

The separately summarised 1987-88 annual accounts of family practitioner committees in England record similar losses totalling £1,184.

Equivalent information for 1988-89 will be available in the autumn.

### Emigration, Australasia

**Mr. Michael J. Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to establish contact with persons, born in the United Kingdom, sent out as nine-to 12 year-olds to New Zealand and Australia, who have been unable to establish the identity of relations in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Mellor:** No.

### Health Care Demand

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his estimate of the annual increase in demand for health care due to the aging population.

**Mr. Freeman:** The estimate of growth in demand on the hospital and health services arising through changes in population is as shown:

| *Year* | *Per cent.* |
|---|---|
| 1985-86 | 1·3 |
| 1986-87 | 1·0 |
| 1987-88 | 1·2 |
| 1988-89 | 1·0 |

The figures represent the expected increase in demand for services arising through population changes overall and not just those for the elderly.

Details of the method used to arrive at the estimates are given in answer to question 2 of the Social Services Select Committee report, Session 1987-88, House of Commons No. 548.

### Listeria

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information was conveyed to his Department concerning listeria by successive telephone calls from Dr. Ribeiro of the Cardiff public health laboratory service on the 16 June and subsequent days.

**Mr. Freeman:** By Friday 16 June the preliminary results of the survey being carried out locally by PHLS Cardiff were available. On Tuesday 20 June it was agreed with the Department that PHLS Cardiff would provide a summary as soon as further results on a wider survey were available. This further information was conveyed to the Department on 3 July.

**Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps are now being taken to ensure that the greatest number of pregnant women know of the dangers of listeria to the foetus;

(2) what steps were taken to inform pregnant women of the dangers of listeria to the foetus at the first available opportunity.

**Mr. Mellor:** The chief medical officer issued general advice to the public about listeria on 10 February 1989. He also gave specific advice to pregnant women to avoid eating certain foods, such as soft cheeses and more recently pate. He subsequently wrote to all doctors in England on 16 February 1989 to provide them with detailed advice on listeriosis. This advice is extant.

In the case of listeria in pate, the results of a survey in Wales were not available until 30 June following which a national survey was set in hand to see whether or not there was a wider problem. However, in light of further evidence received from one of the importers on 11 July, we issued our warning to vulnerable groups on 12 July.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines his Department issues to pregnant women with regard to the dangers of listeriosis.

**Mr. Mellor:** The chief medical officer issued general advice to the public about listeria on 10 February 1989. He also gave specific advice to pregnant women to avoid eating certain foods, such as soft cheeses and more recently pate. He subsequently wrote to all doctors in England on 16 February 1989 to provide tem with detailed advice on listeriosis. This advice is extant.

## Eye and Dental Checks

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of people pay for *(a)* eye tests and *(b)* dental examinations: (i) currently and (ii) before the current charging policy began; and what is the average charge for each currently.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not have information on the percentage of people receiving sight tests or dental examinations since 1 April 1989 who have paid a charge. There was no charge for sight tests or dental examinations before that date. An ophthalmic optician who carries out a sight test under the general ophthalmic service receives a fee of £10·40 from the family practitioner committee, and an ophthalmic medical practitioner a fee of £8·69. Charges to patients for private sight tests are a matter for the ophthalmic profession. The current charge to a patient for a clinical examination under the general dental service is £3·15. For both types of examination, certain groups of the population are exempt from charges, and others are entitled to help with the costs of private sight tests.

## Community Care

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the new funding structure for community care will allow disabled people to receive payments to enable them to buy in personal care, in the same manner as many can now do through the independent living fund, or whether all of the proposed single budget to cover the costs of care, whether in a person's own home or in residential or nursing home, will be payable to local authorities.

**Mr. Mellor:** Local authorities will be responsible for managing the unified budget for social care which we propose to introduce in 1991, and from it will be expected to make available services for people whom they have assessed as being in need of social care. We have no plans to enable local authorities to pay new cash benefits. Whether, as Sir Roy Griffiths proposed, they should be authorised to experiment within their budget with schemes facilitating the purchase of services by individuals has yet to be decided.

## Hospitals (Self-governing Status)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what provision he will be making to fund the additional costs of installation and operation of the management and pricing system for self-governing hospital treatment;

(2) whether he will provide an estimate of the additional costs of running the management and pricing system for self-governing hospitals.

**Mr. Mellor:** It is not possible to give a firm estimate at this stage; this will depend on a number of factors including the number and types of self-governing units. We have made available an extra £82 million in this financial year for implementing the review generally. Over time, any extra cost should be offset by the improved efficiency which will stem from the changes.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health why the South West regional health authority breached the requirement stated in paragraphs 11 and 13 of the letter to regional general managers from Mr. Nichol, dated 14 March, that expressions of interest should be referred to regional health authorities so that they can add their comments on all expressions of interest before sending them on to the Department; why the authority members have not had submitted to them for their comment such expressions of interest; and whether he will return for such comment all submissions improperly forwarded.

**Mr. Mellor:** The chief executive's letter made it clear that expressions of interest could be made by any interested party. It was not open to the region to withhold any submissions, although we were keen to have regional comments on the expressions. How this matter was dealt with in the regional health authority is for the regional chairman to decide.

We would expect the regional health authority to play a full part in commenting on any applications for self governance in due course.

## Road Accidents

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of hospital beds are taken up annually by road accident victims; and what is the cost *(a)* including and *(b)* excluding out-patients.

**Mr. Freeman:** In 1985, the latest year for which figures are available centrally, road accident cases occupied 2 per cent. of non-psychiatric, non-maternity beds in NHS hospitals in England. In 1986, the latest year for which the calculations are available, the estimated total cost to the National Health Service of dealing with road accident victims in England was £132 million, of which an estimated £7 million relates to out-patient costs.

## Member's Letters

**Mr. Alan Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health why his office did not write to the right hon. Member for Swansea, West until 24 July to inform him that letters about the reform of the National Health Service sent to his Department on 8 June had been transferred to the Welsh Office.

**Mr. Freeman:** I am sorry that there has been such a long delay before we notified the right hon. Member of the transfer of his letter. Staff in the Department have been dealing with a very large number of letters on the reform of the National Health Service and did not identify straight away that a response from the Welsh Office was appropriate.

## Residential Homes

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will include proposals to require the registration of private care homes with fewer than four residents in his forthcoming White Paper on community care:

(2) what action he is taking to ensure that local authorities have sufficient powers to deal with private care home proprietors who are running as one establishment a number of small homes with fewer than four residents.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 27 July.

## Childhood Cancer

**Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the number of children suffering from any form of cancer in the Glanford and Scunthorpe constituency for each of the years 1986 to 1989.

**Mr. Freeman:** Cancer registration data are still being collated for the years 1986 onwards. We would not normally release data for childhood cancers for areas as small as parliamentary constituencies on grounds of confidentiality.

## Drug Misuse

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library the latest figures for the prevalence of drug misuse and service provision in each Health Service region on a comparable basis with those issued in June 1985.

**Mr. Freeman:** Detailed figures on the prevalence of drug misuse are, because of the clandestine and illegal nature of the activity, not available. The figures which were issued in June 1985 were obtained via a special exercise. This exercise has not been repeated and so I am unable to give the hon. Member updated figures.

The Department has produced the following statistical booklets which the hon. Member may find of interest:

Mental Illness Hospitals and Units in England: Drug Misuse Statistics 1981-1985;

Mental Illness Hospitals and Units in England: Drug Misuse Statistics 1982-1986;

Data from the Addicts Index, October to December: Quarter 1988 and January to December 1988.

These have been placed in the Library.

## Infertility

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the infertility services provided by each district health authority.

**Mr. Mellor:** We do not hold this information centrally.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the prevalence of infertility in England.

**Mr. Mellor:** Accurate statistics are not available, but it is estimated that about one in 10 couples is infertile.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether plans for the provision of infertility services are required to be included in the strategic plans of district health authorities.

**Mr. Mellor:** There is no such requirement. The provision of infertility services is a matter for individual health authorities to decide in the light of local needs and priorities.

## London Ambulance Service

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will state the number of ambulance vehicles available for service in the London ambulance service area each week since the beginning of the current year, the number that had no drivers and the number of occasions that were emergency only.

**Mr. Freeman:** The details of emergency ambulance availability for the period 8 January to 23 July 1989 are shown in the table. Figures for non-emergency ambulances are not shown because of the variety of vehicles used:

| *Week ending* | *Planned vehicles* | *Unmanned vehicles* | [1] *Single-manned vehicles* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 January 1989 | 2,864 | 146 | 63 |
| 15 January 1989 | 2,864 | 151 | 50 |
| 22 January 1989 | 2,864 | 112 | 49 |
| 29 January 1989 | 2,864 | 124 | 43 |
| 5 February 1989 | 2,864 | 153 | 56 |
| 12 February 1989 | 2,864 | 140 | 66 |
| 19 February 1989 | 2,864 | 158 | 52 |
| 26 February 1989 | 2,864 | 180 | 60 |
| 5 March 1989 | 2,905 | 181 | 52 |
| 12 March 1989 | 2,905 | 196 | 66 |
| 19 March 1989 | 2,905 | 191 | 66 |
| 26 March | 2,905 | 169 | 47 |
| 2 April 1989 | 2,905 | 217 | 69 |
| 9 April 1989 | 2,905 | 158 | 65 |
| 16 April 1989 | 2,905 | 120 | 57 |
| 23 April 1989 | 2,905 | 188 | 53 |
| 30 April 1989 | 2,905 | 183 | 45 |
| 7 May 1989 | 2,905 | 157 | 69 |
| 14 May 1989 | 2,905 | 181 | 45 |
| 21 May 1989 | 2,905 | 196 | 60 |
| 28 May 1989 | 2,905 | 158 | 57 |
| 4 June 1989 | 2,905 | 248 | 76 |
| 11 June 1989 | 2,905 | 211 | 49 |
| 18 June 1989 | 2,905 | 300 | 63 |
| 25 June 1989 | 2,905 | 273 | 88 |
| 2 July 1989 | [illegible]05 | 267 | 76 |
| 9 July 1989 | 2,905 | 228 | 66 |
| 16 July 1989 | 2,905 | 228 | 58 |
| 23 July 1989 | 2,905 | 221 | 70 |

[1] The single-manned vehicles can be used if a fully-manned vehicle is not available.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will state the number of occasions, and the dates concerned, when the London ambulance service was ouside the 14-minute Department of Health guideline for emergency responses since January 1989.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information is not available in the format requested. However, the table shows the performance by month from January 1989:

| *Month* | *Percentage responded to within 14 minutes* | *Number of minutes to respond to 95 per cent. of calls* |
|---|---|---|
| January | 80 | 20 |
| February | 77 | 20 |
| March | 77 | 20 |
| April | 77 | 21 |
| May | 80 | 19 |

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he has taken following the ACAS report on the London ambulance service staffing; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** The ACAS report on stress in the London ambulance service (LAS) was welcomed by LAS management. Working groups comprising LAS managers, staff representatives and representatives of ACAS have been considering how best to implement the recommendations and have been making excellent progress. The working groups are expected to complete their work in September 1989.

### Cochlear Implants

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research funding has been made available to University College hospital for research into cochlear implants; what plans he has to increase it; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** University College hospital has received some £300,000 for a five-year research programme on cochlear implants (due to end in April 1990) from the Sir Jules Thorn charitable trust and others. Further technical support has been provided by the Royal National Institute for the Deaf. The NHS meets the surgical costs and those of patients' stay in hospital.

### Birmingham Children's Hospital

**Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many babies annually are not receiving life-saving heart surgery under the Birmingham health authority policy of restricting open-heart operations to 28 per month.

**Mr. Freeman:** I understand that no urgent cases of life-saving heart surgery have been turned away from the Birmingham children's hospital.

Indeed the planned number of open heart operations in 1989-90, at 320, is more than twice the number performed in 1987-88.

**Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients other than with heart problems were turned away from the Birmingham children's hospital's intensive care unit during the period 1 January to 30 June; how many children patients with heart problems were turned away in the same period; and how many cardiac by-pass operations were carried out in the same period.

**Mr. Freeman:** I understand that all emergency cases requiring intensive care during the period 1 January—30 June were admitted to the intensive care unit. The total number of open heart operations in this period was 191.

**Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health over what periods of time the Birmingham children's hospital's records show that intensive care unit beds stood unused since surgeons have worked to the 28-monthly restriction to date.

**Mr. Freeman:** The hospital attempts to keep one intensive care bed free for emergencies, including casualties. Apart from that the intensive care beds which are for the use of the hospital as a whole have never stood unused.

**Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when all the eight intensive care unit beds at Birmingham children's hospital will be available; what steps the hospital management are taking to increase the number of staffed beds on the intensive care unit; and what steps are being taken to provide additional intensive care unit beds.

**Mr. Freeman:** I understand that the number of intensive care beds occupied in the last three months fluctuated between six and eight, depending on the availability of staff and the dependency of patients. Nurse recruitment continues to improve in the intensive care unit following successful training initiatives and the hospital hopes to have eight intensive care beds available with increasing frequency. A project team is currently looking at options for further increasing the number of intensive care beds.

### North West Hertfordshire DHA (Dr. Sage)

**Mr. Robert B. Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many meetings of the North West Hertfordshire district health authority have taken place since the appointment to it of Dr. Sage; on how many occasions Dr. Sage has attended meetings; and on how many occasions he has sent an apology for non-attendance.

**Mr. Freeman:** This information is not available centrally. My hon. Friend may however wish to contact the chairman of North West Hertfordshire district health authority for further details.

### Hearing Aids

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if his Department intends to review the training of audiology staff with a view to creating a specialism in hearing aid fitting;

(2) whether he will introduce a training course for general practitioners to increase their knowledge of hearing loss.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, West and Torridge (Miss Nicholson) on 27 July.

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to different local arrangements for the delivery of hearing aid services within the National Health Service.

**Mr. Freeman:** We are aware that some health authorities are already operating various schemes involving alternative methods of delivery of hearing aid services, including direct referral to audiology services. We propose to set in train a programme of action to increase the number of such direct referral schemes, together with appropriate methods of monitoring and evaluating them. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, West and Torridge (Miss Nicholson) on 27 July.

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to the usage of hearing aids after being dispensed.

**Mr. Freeman:** Precise information is not held centrally. A national study of hearing by the Medical Research Council indicates that about one fifth of those who have hearing aids do not use them.

## Mental Patients (Discharge)

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has about the lengths of time mentally ill people discharged from hospital are able to stay in residential homes run or supported by local authorities.

**Mr. Freeman:** Information is not readily available centrally on the lengths of time mentally ill people stay in residential homes. It is for the local authority, in consultation with whoever is caring for the resident, to determine the appropriate length of stay in each case.

## NHS Funding

**Mr. Terry Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the intended increase in National Health Service funding, in percentage terms, in the next three years.

**Mr. Freeman:** The planned level of funding for the National Health Service for the next three financial years is subject to review in the current public expenditure survey, the results of which will be announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Autumn Statement.

## Infant Mortality

**Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give *(a)* the infant mortality rate for the Glanford and Scunthorpe constituency for each of the years 1986 to 1989 and *(b)* the comparable national and regional rates.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information is shown in the table.

*Infant mortality[1] rates for 1986-88*

| *Area of usual residence* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988*[3] |
|---|---|---|---|
| England and Wales | 9·6 | 9·2 | 9·0 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside region | 10·5 | 9·9 | 9·3 |
| Glanford and Scunthorpe parliamentary constituency[2] | 12·5 | 11·7 | 9·4 |

[1] Deaths under one year of age per 1,000 livebirths.

[2] Comprising Scunthorpe county district together with the following wards of Glanford county district: North West, Winterton, Darton upon Stather, Gunness, Messingham, Bottesford West, Broughton, Bottesford Central, Bottesford East, and Trentside.

[3] Provisional.

## Health Care

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for health whether Her Majesty's Government have considered the reasons for the difference in the proportion of gross domestic product spent on health care in the United Kingdom and in other developed countries.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave him on 16 May at column *146*.

## Bills

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of Bills sponsored by his Department in each Session since 1979.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information is in the table. For sessions earlier than 1988-89 the Bills shown are those which relate to health matters and exclude social security.

| *Session* | *Health* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | Health Services Bill<br>National Health Services (Invalid Direction) Bill |
| 1980-81 | — |
| 1981-82 | — |
| 1982-83 | — |
| 1983-84 | Health and Social Security Bill |
| 1984-85 | Surrogacy Arrangements Bill |
| 1985-86 | National Health Service (Amendment) Bill |
| 1986-87 | — |
| 1987-88 | Health and Medicines Bill |
| 1988-89 | Human Organ Transplants Bill |
| 1988-89 | Children Bill |

## Eye Tests

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether he has any plans to instigate a further advertising campaign to encourage people to have eye tests following the introduction of eye test charges; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether he has any plans to instigate an advertising campaign on exemption from eye test charges.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have no current plans for instigating any new advertising campaign either to encourage people to visit their optician for a sight test or to further publicise the groups entitled to free sight tests under the NHS. Information on entitlement for NHS sight tests is clearly given in poster SB54 and leaflet G11, issued by this Department and updated on an annual basis.

## Mental Health

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what are his plans for continuing research into mental health problems seen by general practitioners following the closure of the general practice research unit;

(2) what funding is planned in the area of research into investigating psychiatric disorders over the next financial year following the closure of the general practice research unit;

(3) what steps he is taking to ensure multidisciplinary research into mental health problems in primary care following the closure of the general practice research unit.

**Mr. Freeman:** Following the retirement of the director of the general practice research unit (GPRU), Professor

Shepherd, we reviewed our arrangements for social and community mental health research. We decided that we could best meet our likely needs through more responsive arrangements that would be possible by continuing long-term support for the GPRU and we therefore did not renew its contract.

The Department is committed to maintaining its support for social and community mental health research up to the present level of available funding of £250,000 per annum. Indeed community care is one of the priority themes for our current research programme. The commissioning of appropriate projects will, of course, be driven by the requirement for research to assist the Government's policy objectives. When these requirements for 1990-91 and beyond have been worked into our research programme later this year, we shall be approaching researchers. We expect to discuss with the new MRC social and community psychiatry unit whether some of our research needs can be met by it. An undertaking has been given that those members of the core staff of GPRU who would have become employed in the new MRC unit had Department of Health commissions been added to its core programme and have not found further employment by the time their present contract ends, will be offered grant support at the Maudsley until 30 April 1990.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the total costs of general practice in the United Kingdom the proposed funding of investigations into psychiatric disorders would amount to after the closure of the general practice research unit.

**Mr. Freeman:** Our precise requirements for future research on mental health issues are still being developed.

**Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the amount spent by each region on services for the mentally ill *(a)* in cash terms at constant prices and *(b)* as a proportion of their total budgets, for each year from 1979 to the latest available date.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 18 April 1989]:* For costing purposes prior to 1987-88 all hospitals were classified into one or other of a series of standard types which reflected the principal use to which their beds were allocated and costing returns in respect of community health services showed expenditure relating to major areas of activity only.

The following table, derived from hospital costing returns for 1979-80 to 1986-87 gives figures of regional and national revenue expenditure (expressed at 1986-87 prices) on hospitals categorised as "mental illness" and those figures as percentages of total revenue expenditure on all hospital and community health services (HCHS).

However, the expenditure figures exclude the growing volume of activity in psychiatric units within acute and other hospitals and services provided within the community health services. Such expenditure is not separately identifiable centrally.

Information on the financial year 1987-88 is to be published shortly, but, because of the adoption of changes recommended in the reports of the steering group on NHS information (the Körner committee), it will not be in a directly comparable form.

*Revenue expenditure on hospitals categorised as "Mental Illness" at 1986-87 prices*

| | *1979-80* | | *1980-81* | | *1981-82* | | *1982-83* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Regions* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* |
| Northern | 52,186 | 9·25 | 57,267 | 9·31 | 57,317 | 9·26 | 57,854 | 9·27 |
| Yorkshire | 63,822 | 10·05 | 70,621 | 10·15 | 69,461 | 9·89 | 69,979 | 9·73 |
| Trent | 72,929 | 9·73 | 78,825 | 9·57 | 77,766 | 9·37 | 77,872 | 9·33 |
| East Anglian | 31,110 | 9·87 | 34,213 | 9·94 | 33,871 | 9·81 | 33,086 | 9·56 |
| North West Thames | 75,519 | 10·04 | 81,890 | 10·03 | 80,479 | 9·65 | 76,677 | 10·11 |
| North East Thames | 68,592 | 8·42 | 76,773 | 8·58 | 75,999 | 8·46 | 75,678 | 7·89 |
| South East Thames | 69,514 | 8·84 | 75,444 | 8·89 | 74,880 | 8·81 | 72,086 | 8·59 |
| South West Thames | 74,822 | 12·41 | 78,919 | 12·05 | 78,363 | 11·87 | 76,666 | 12·07 |
| Wessex | 51,691 | 11·42 | 55,383 | 11·26 | 55,350 | 11·09 | 54,870 | 10·95 |
| Oxford | 28,849 | 7·73 | 30,755 | 7·66 | 32,916 | 8·20 | 29,477 | 7·35 |
| South Western | 58,845 | 10·62 | 63,821 | 10·62 | 63,590 | 10·45 | 63,773 | 10·50 |
| West Midlands | 81,979 | 9·23 | 87,996 | 9·17 | 88,460 | 9·18 | 87,440 | 9·02 |
| Mersey | 50,575 | 10·54 | 53,966 | 10·39 | 52,817 | 10·11 | 51,472 | 9·85 |
| North Western | 31,424 | 4·06 | 33,407 | 3·93 | 33,323 | 3·82 | 35,091 | 4·01 |
| Total | 811,857 | 9·29 | 879,280 | 9·24 | 874,592 | 9·10 | 860,021 | 8·99 |

| | *1983-84* | | *1984-85* | | *1985-86* | | *1986-87* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Regions* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* |
| Northern | 57,160 | 9·01 | 57,946 | 9·05 | 57,200 | 8·92 | 57,780 | 8·69 |
| Yorkshire | 65,674 | 9·26 | 65,606 | 9·15 | 64,421 | 8·91 | 63,883 | 8·54 |
| Trent | 76,924 | 9·05 | 74,744 | 8·62 | 76,767 | 8·81 | 78,973 | 8·64 |
| East Anglian | 33,777 | 9·44 | 34,329 | 9·39 | 35,425 | 9·57 | 36,333 | 9·33 |
| North West Thames | 76,827 | 10·09 | 74,693 | 9·77 | 76,453 | 10·15 | 74,047 | 9·52 |
| North East Thames | 76,021 | 7·89 | 76,202 | 7·93 | 73,617 | 7·79 | 75,608 | 7·75 |
| South East Thames | 71,767 | 8·48 | 81,255 | 9·65 | 67,409 | 8·08 | 76,136 | 8·88 |
| South West Thames | 76,633 | 11·98 | 76,283 | 11·93 | 75,114 | 11·95 | 74,067 | 11·39 |

| Regions | 1983-84 | | 1984-85 | | 1985-86 | | 1986-87 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* | *Revenue expenditure (£ thousand)* | *Percentage of total revenue expenditure* |
| Wessex | 54,031 | 10·51 | 54,490 | 10·35 | 52,850 | 10·09 | 55,041 | 10·02 |
| Oxford | 28,716 | 7·11 | 29,067 | 6·98 | 28,479 | 6·85 | 29,431 | 6·78 |
| South Western | 62,038 | 10·03 | 61,071 | 9·80 | 59,422 | 9·53 | 57,891 | 8·91 |
| West Midlands | 90,151 | 9·14 | 89,998 | 8·97 | 88,760 | 8·82 | 89,801 | 8·55 |
| Mersey | 51,664 | 9·89 | 50,392 | 9·56 | 48,556 | 9·25 | 47,681 | 8·78 |
| North Western | 34,872 | 3·96 | 33,936 | 3·82 | 34,360 | 3·86 | 35,215 | 3·82 |
| Total | 856,255 | 8·84 | 860,012 | 8·79 | 838,833 | 8·60 | 851,887 | 8·41 |

*Notes:*

1. The figures have been expressed at 1986-87 prices by the use of the Gross Domestic Product deflator.
2. Figures include expenditure on in-patients, out-patients, day patients etc.
3. "HCHS" includes hospital, community, patient transport (ie ambulance), blood transfusion and other services.

## Environmental Health Officers

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many training places are or were available to those wishing to qualify as environmental health officers in each of the last five years; and how many there will be for each of the next three years.

**Mr. Mellor:** Decisions on the training of environmental health officers are matters for local authorities, and we do not normally collect information centrally on the number of training places available. The table shows the number of student EHOs entering training in each of the last four years, according to information supplied by the Institution of Environmental Health Officers.

| *Total intakes* | *1985* | *1986* | *[illegible]7* | *1988* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 year diploma course | 65 | 63 | 71 | 74 |
| 4 year degree course | 142 | 152 | 184 | 185 |

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his estimate of the current shortage of environmental health officers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) on 27 February at columns *64-65*.

## Management and Administration Costs

**Sir David Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his most up-to-date estimate of the proportion of hospital and community health services' expenditure spent on management and administration, including internal hospital management costs as well as management costs of regional and district health authorities; and what he expects the proportion to be when the proposals in the White Paper "Working for Patients" have been implemented.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 18 April 1989]:* Information relating to hospital and community health services (HCHS) and derived from the 1987-88 summarised accounts of health authorities in England is shown in the table. Equivalent information for the financial year 1988-89 will be available in the autumn.

It is not possible to forecast the proportion of total expenditure which health authorities will incur on management and administration after the proposals in the White Paper "Working for Patients" have been implemented. However, since those proposals are designed to increase efficiency and to provide greater incentives to health authorities by encouraging both competition and cost consciousness we do not expect the proportion to increase significantly and moreover any increase in cash or in proportional terms should result in a more effective use of total resources for the benefit of patients.

*Expenditure on hospital and community health services (HCHS)*
*1987-88*

| | *Cash (£ thousand)* | *As a proportion of total current expenditure (per cent.)* | *As a proportion of total expenditure (current and capital) (per cent.)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Expenditure on headquarters administration | 492,776 | 4·37 | 4·01 |
| Expenditure on general management and administrative offices etc. at operational levels | 443,226 | 3·93 | 3·61 |

*Source:* 1987-88 annual accounts of regional and district health authorities in England and those of the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals.

*Notes:*

1. "HCHS" includes hospital, community health, patient transport (ie ambulance), blood transfusion and other services.
2. Expenditure on headquarters administration includes all current expenditure on the pay and pay related costs of staff of all disciplines (including general managers) employed at regional and district headquarters levels and their office costs and overheads.
3. Expenditure on general management and administrative offices etc. at operational levels includes all current expenditure on the pay and pay related costs of staff engaged on providing administrative services at hospital sites and units together with expenditure on printing, stationery and office sundries which cannot be specifically identified to other departments.
4. The cost of medical records departments (£135 million in 1987-88) is excluded.

## Agency Nursing

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give for each district health authority and for each regional health authority the spending in 1988-89 or the latest available year on agency nursing in absolute terms and also as a percentage of total spending on nursing.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 10 July 1989]:* The information derivable from 1987-88 annual accounts submitted to the Department have been placed in the Library. Equivalent information for 1988-89 will be available in the autumn.

## NHS (Meals)

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the average cost of production, by region of *(a)* staff and *(b)* patient meals in the National Health Service; and what are the comparable figures for 1979, 1983 and 1988.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* The information is not available in the form requested. Information for England is however available as follows:

*Table A*

*Analysis of catering costs nationally for both patients and staff meals for each of the years 1983-84 to 1986-87. Figures for 1979 are not readily available.*

| | *Total expenditure* £ | *Cost per person fed per day* £ | *Total expenditure* £ | *Cost per person fed per day* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1983-84 | | 1984-85 | |
| *Patient meals* | | | | |
| Cost of food | 131,230,768 | 1·26 | 133,482,131 | 1·32 |
| Cost of staff | 129,751,878 | 1·24 | 129,582,427 | 1·28 |
| Total service cost (net of receipts) | 269,781,664 | 2·59 | 272,266,181 | 2·70 |
| *Staff meals* | | | | |
| Cost of food | 37,542,627 | — | 38,770,039 | — |
| Cost of staff | 84,745,231 | — | 82,074,742 | — |
| Total service cost (net of receipts) | 76,399,525 | — | 73,371,327 | — |
| | *1985-86* | | *1986-87* | |
| *Patient meals* | | | | |
| Cost of food | 133,560,652 | 1·36 | 134,721,529 | 1·41 |
| Cost of staff | 127,816,200 | 1·30 | 130,509,430 | 1·37 |
| Total service cost (net of receipts) | 272,355,217 | 2·78 | 280,365,094 | 2·94 |
| *Staff meals* | | | | |
| Cost of food | 39,336,250 | — | 41,394,976 | — |
| Cost of staff | 80,464,975 | — | 78,821,583 | — |
| Total service cost (net of receipts) | 71,650,488 | — | 71,077,574 | — |

*Note:* Cost per member of staff fed per day is not applicable.
*Source:* Costing returns submitted to the Department by health authorities.

*Table B*

*Regional information for the net daily cost per patient fed for 1979-80 and each of the years 1983-84 to 1986-87*[1]

| *Region* | *1979-80* £ | *1983-84* £ | *1984-85* £ | *1985-86* £ | *1986-87* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern | 1·84 | 2·55 | 2·66 | 2·74 | 2·84 |
| Yorkshire | 1·89 | 2·60 | 2·69 | 2·77 | 2·96 |
| Trent | 2·05 | 2·71 | 2·78 | 2·81 | 2·98 |
| East Anglia | 2·56 | 2·78 | 2·89 | 2·94 | 3·07 |
| North West Thames | 1·96 | 2·58 | 2·69 | 2·83 | 3·02 |
| North East Thames | 1·85 | 2·54 | 2·60 | 2·70 | 2·89 |
| South East Thames | 2·06 | 2·55 | 2·68 | 2·91 | 3·11 |
| South West Thames | 1·91 | 2·39 | 2·55 | 2·66 | 2·90 |
| Wessex | 2·00 | 2·60 | 2·81 | 2·90 | 3·02 |
| Oxford | 1·95 | 2·63 | 2·70 | 2·76 | 3·04 |
| South Western | 1·94 | 2·58 | 2·72 | 2·74 | 2·86 |
| West Midlands | 1·97 | 2·61 | 2·70 | 2·75 | 2·86 |
| Mersey | 1·81 | 2·38 | 2·49 | 2·56 | 2·63 |
| North Western | 1·96 | 2·64 | 2·76 | 2·79 | 2·94 |
| Board of Governors/SHAs | 2·81 | 3·56 | 3·72 | 3·93 | 4·33 |
| ENGLAND | 1·97 | 2·59 | 2·70 | 2·78 | 2·94 |

*Source:* Costing returns submitted to the Department by health authorities.

[1] Figures for 1987-88 are not yet available.

Similar information for staff is not available centrally.

## Abortions

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many abortions at 25 weeks, 26 weeks and 27 weeks were performed during 1988 because of a substantial risk that if the child were born it would be seriously handicapped.

**Mr. Freeman:** The data for 1988, which are provisional, are shown in the table.

*Number of abortions performed under ground 4[1] of the 1967 Abortion Act by week of gestation, England and Wales 1988*

| Gestation week | Number |
|---|---|
| 25 | 5 |
| 26 | 7 |
| 27 | 6 |

---

[1] There is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the number of legal abortions under nine weeks, nine to 12 weeks, 13 to 16 weeks and over 16 weeks since last menstrual period, performed on women resident in each regional health authority and in each district health authority in England and Wales in 1988.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information has been placed in the Library.

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the number of National Health Service abortions under nine weeks and nine to 12 weeks since last menstrual period, and the respective numbers of these abortions involving admission and discharge on the same day, performed on women resident in each regional health authority and in each district health authority in England and Wales in 1988.

**Mr. Freeman:** The information requested cannot be released at district health authority level on the grounds of confidentiality. Data for usual residents of regional health authorities are shown in the table.

*National health service abortions on usual residents of regional health authorities (RHAs). (a) total number and (b) day cases. Selected gestation periods, 1988*

| Area of usual residence | Gestation under 9 weeks (a) | (b) | Gestation 9 to 12 weeks (a) | (b) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| England and Wales | 15,064 | 9,663 | 45,974 | 25,103 |
| England | 14,476 | 9,495 | 42,958 | 24,704 |
| Wales | 588 | 168 | 3,016 | 399 |
| Northern RHA | 1,459 | 939 | 3,884 | 2,239 |
| Yorkshire RHA | 660 | 246 | 2,178 | 872 |
| Trent RHA | 1,109 | 579 | 4,172 | 2,086 |
| East Anglian RHA | 735 | 421 | 2,572 | 1,216 |
| North West Thames RHA | 1,505 | 1,014 | 3,324 | 2,052 |
| North East Thames RHA | 2,297 | 1,915 | 6,408 | 5,030 |
| South East Thames RHA | 1,357 | 1,029 | 3,559 | 2,225 |
| South West Thames RHA | 990 | 774 | 2,147 | 1,419 |
| Wessex RHA | 474 | 241 | 2,018 | 907 |
| Oxford RHA | 1,012 | 873 | 2,001 | 1,412 |
| South Western RHA | 784 | 479 | 3,683 | 2,228 |
| West Midlands RHA | 537 | 267 | 1,740 | 625 |
| Mersey RHA | 507 | 355 | 2,226 | 1,627 |
| North Western RHA | 1,050 | 363 | 3,046 | 816 |

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many abortions were performed in 1987 and 1988 on residents aged 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 years at each of the following gestational ages: less than nine weeks, nine to 12 weeks, 13 to 16 weeks, 17 to 20 weeks, 21 to 24 weeks and 24 weeks and over on each of the seven grounds.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]*: The exact information requested cannot be released on grounds of confidentiality; the tables show such data as can be released.

*Number of abortions performed on residents aged 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 years by gestation weeks in 1988, by statutory grounds[1]*

| Age of mother | Gestation weeks | Statutory grounds | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | All grounds (mentions) | 2 | All others |
| 10 | Under 9 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| | 9-12 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| | 13-16 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | 17-20 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | 21-24 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | Under 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 13-16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 17-20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 21-24 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | Under 9 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| | 9-12 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| | 13-16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 17-20 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | 21-24 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 | Under 9 | 18 | 18 | 0 |
| | 9-12 | 44 | 43 | 1 |
| | 13-16 | 15 | 15 | 0 |
| | 17-20 | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| | 21-24 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| *Age of mother* | *Gestation weeks* | *Statutory grounds* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *All grounds (mentions)* | *2* | *All others* |
| 14 | Under 9 | 185 | 182 | 3 |
| | 9-12 | 355 | 354 | 1 |
| | 13-16 | 129 | 125 | 4 |
| | 17-20 | 66 | 65 | 1 |
| | 21-24 | 37 | 37 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15 | Under 9 | 611 | 605 | 6 |
| | 9-12 | 1,465 | 1446 | 19 |
| | 13-16 | 382 | 375 | 7 |
| | 17-20 | 217 | 214 | 3 |
| | 21-24 | 58 | 57 | 1 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 16 | Under 9 | 1,536 | 1,522 | 14 |
| | 9-12 | 3,724 | 3,657 | 67 |
| | 13-16 | 787 | 779 | 8 |
| | 17-20 | 414 | 407 | 7 |
| | 21-24 | 136 | 132 | 4 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 1 | 1 | 0 |

*Number of abortions performed on residents aged 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 years by gestation weeks in 1987, by statutory grounds*[1]

| *Age of mother* | *Gestation weeks* | *Statutory grounds* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *All grounds (mentions)* | *2* | *All others* |
| 10 | Under 9 | 8 | 7 | 1 |
| | 9-12 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| | 13-16 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | 17-20 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| | 21-24 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | Under 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 9-12 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | 13-16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 17-20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 21-24 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | Under 9 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| | 9-12 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| | 13-16 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| | 17-20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 21-24 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 | Under 9 | 26 | 25 | 1 |
| | 9-12 | 55 | 55 | 0 |
| | 13-16 | 16 | 15 | 1 |
| | 17-20 | 12 | 11 | 1 |
| | 21-24 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | Under 9 | 171 | 167 | 4 |
| | 9-12 | 398 | 393 | 5 |
| | 13-16 | 126 | 126 | 0 |
| | 17-20 | 61 | 58 | 3 |
| | 21-24 | 34 | 34 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15 | Under 9 | 639 | 630 | 9 |
| | 9-12 | 1,560 | 1,534 | 26 |
| | 13-16 | 398 | 391 | 7 |
| | 17-20 | 225 | 221 | 4 |
| | 21-24 | 66 | 66 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16 | Under 9 | 1,506 | 1,487 | 19 |
| | 9-12 | 3,553 | 3,489 | 64 |
| | 13-16 | 780 | 767 | 13 |
| | 17-20 | 394 | 381 | 13 |
| | 21-24 | 107 | 103 | 4 |
| | 24+ | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Not stated | 2 | 2 | 0 |

*Number of abortions performed on residents aged 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 years by gestation weeks*

| *Age of mother* | *Gestation weeks* | *All grounds (mentions)* | *Statutory grounds*[1] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* |
| *1987* | | | | | | | | |
| 10 to 16 | Under 9 | 2,353 | 10 | 2,319 | 23 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | 9 to 12 | 5.576 | 21 | 5,480 | 69 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| | 13 to 16 | 1,324 | 1 | 1,303 | 16 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| | 17 to 20 | 694 | 2 | 672 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| | 21 to 24 | 213 | 0 | 209 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *1988* | | | | | | | | |
| 10 to 16 | Under 9 | 2,356 | 4 | 2,332 | 16 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| | 9 to 12 | 5,594 | 14 | 5,506 | 71 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | 13 to 16 | 1,314 | 0 | 1,295 | 15 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| | 17 to 20 | 707 | 1 | 696 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| | 21 to 24 | 237 | 0 | 232 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | 24+ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Not stated | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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[1] Conditions of the statutory grounds are:

1. The continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.
2. The continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman greater that if the pregnancy were terminated.
3. The continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk or injury to the physical or mental health of any existing child(ren) in the family of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.
4. There is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be handicapped.
5. To save the life of the pregnant woman.
6. To prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish in the *Official Report* a breakdown of the reasons for abortions performed under grounds *(a)* one, *(b)* three, *(c)* four, *(d)* five, *(e)* six and *(f)* seven of the Abortion Act 1967 for 1987 and 1988.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The information requested is shown in the tables.

*Abortions performed under ground 1[1] (with any other) of the 1967 Abortion Act: numbers by principal medical condition, England and Wales, 1987-1988.*

| ICD[2] | Condition | Number 1987 | 1988 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | All legal abortions | 480 | 486 |
| 641 | Antepartum haemorrhage, abruptio placentae and placenta praevia | 2 | 3 |
| 642 | Hypertension complicating pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium | 73 | 145 |
| 643 | Excessive vomiting in pregnancy | 10 | 2 |
| 646-648 | Other complications of pregnancy | 227 | 250 |
| 654 | Abnormality of organs and soft tissue of pelvis | 8 | 5 |
| 655 | Known or suspected foetal abnormality affecting management of mother | 30 | 24 |
| 656-659·9 | Other foetal complications | — | 1 |
| | Without mention of specific medical condition | 98 | 27 |

[1] The continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant women greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.

[2] International Classification of Diseases (ICD) code, 9th revision.

*Abortions performed under ground 3[1] (with or without 2) of the Abortion Act: numbers by principal medical condition, England and Wales, 1987-1988.*

| ICD[2] Condition | Number 1987 | 1988 |
|---|---|---|
| All legal abortions | 17,247 | 17,902 |
| 642 Hypertension complicating pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium | 15 | 14 |
| 643 Excessive vomiting in pregnancy | 4 | 3 |
| 646-648 Other complications of pregnancy | 13,573 | 14,787 |
| 654 Abnormality of organs and soft tissue of pelvis | 8 | 12 |
| 655 Known or suspected foetal abnormality affecting management of mother | 32 | 8 |
| 656-659.9 Other foetal complications | 3 | 2 |
| Without mention of specific medical condition | 3,597 | 3,060 |

[1] The continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk or injury to the physical or mental health of any existing child(ren) in the family of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.

[2] International Classification of Diseases (ICD) code, 9th revision.

*Abortions performed under ground 4[1] (alone) of the 1967 Abortion Act; numbers by principal medical condition—England and Wales, 1987-88*

| ICD[2] | Condition | Number 1987 | 1988 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | All legal abortions | 1,233 | 1,215 |
| 646-648 | Other complications of pregnancy | 20 | 6 |
| 655 | Known or suspected foetal abnormality affecting management of mother | 1,192 | 1,197 |
| 656-659·9 | Other foetal complications | 20 | 10 |
| | Without mention of specific medical condition | 1 | 2 |

[1] There is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

[2] International Classification of Diseases (ICD) code, 9th revision.

*Abortions performed under ground 4[1] (with any other except 1 and excluding 4 alone) of the 1967 Abortion Act; numbers by principal medical condition—England and Wales, 1987-88*

| ICD[2] | Condition | Number 1987 | 1988 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | All legal abortions | 682 | 560 |
| 640 | Haemorrhage in early pregnancy | 1 | — |
| 646-648 | Other complications of pregnancy | 49 | 24 |
| 654 | Abnormality of organs and soft tissue of pelvis | 1 | 1 |
| 655 | Known or suspected foetal abnormality affecting management of mother | 611 | 519 |
| 656-659·9 | Other foetal complications | 10 | 10 |
| | Without mention of specific medical condition | 9 | 5 |

[1] There is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

[2] International Classification of Diseases (ICD) code, 9th revision.

*Abortions performed under grounds 5 or 6[1] of the 1967 Abortion Act: numbers by principal medical condition, England and Wales, 1987-1988.*

| ICD[2] Condition | 1987-88 Total |
|---|---|
| All legal abortions | 18 |
| Maternal complications | 13 |
| Foetal complications | 1 |
| Other | 4 |

[1] (5) to save the life of the pregnant woman, or (6) to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman.

[2] International Classification of Diseases (ICD) code, 9th revision.

## Child Immunisation

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library copies of the data available to him of rates for child immunisation and cervical screening by district health authority.

**Mr. Mellor** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* Copies of the Department's "Summary of Vaccination and Immunisation 1977 to 1987-88" (which gives district health authority uptake rates for diphtheria, tetanus, polio, whooping cough and measles) were placed in the Library when it was published. I have sent the hon. Member a copy. Immunisation uptake rates for 1988-89 are not yet available. Information on cervical screening is not yet available because statistics to date have concentrated on numbers of smear tests performed rather than the number of women screened. We expect information for 1988-89 to become available later this year when health authority returns on Körner form KC53 ("Adult Screening Programme—Cervical Cytology") are received and analysed by the Department.

## Food Poisoning

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library data listing the number of cases of notified food poisoning in each of the last 10 years, by each environmental health authority, on the same basis as the data on Southwark provided in his reply to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) of 29 June, *Official Report*, column 545.

**Mr. Freeman** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The information requested for the years 1979-86 can be found in the OPCS publication "Communicable Diseases

Statistics", Seri[illegible] MB2, table 5, which can be found in the Library. A proof copy of table 5 for 1987, and provisional data for 1988 have been placed in the Library.

### District Health Authorities (Assets)

**Mr. Robin Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give details of assets disposed of by each district health authority during 1987-88; and what was the total value of those assets.

**Mr. Freeman** *[pursuant to his reply, 24 April 1989, c. 380]:* Details of the assets disposed of by each district health authority are not routinely collected centrally.

However, all health authorities are encouraged to dispose of surplus assets and in many regions it is usual for the relevant regional health authority (RHA) to be involved in the major transactions and to account for the resultant income.

Information derivable from the 1987-88 annual accounts of regional and district health authorities in England and the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals have been placed in the Library.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Pensioners (Home Owners)

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any plans to help house-owning pensioners to gain access to the money they have tied up in their homes.

**Mr. Chope:** I have been asked to reply.

Home-owning pensioners are already able to raise capital on the equity of their homes by means of schemes often known as home income plans, which are offered by a number of financial institutions.

Under a home income plan, an older home owner offers his or her home as security for a mortgage loan which is used to purchase an annuity. The loan is usually repaid when the person sells the house or dies. The Government welcome the availability of such schemes, but I would strongly recommend elderly people to take independent financial advice before committing themselves.

### Unemployment Benefit

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many unemployed adult male and females of working age have exhausted their entitlement to unemployment benefit; what is his estimate of the gross cost of removing the time limit in the case of *(a)* males and *(b)* females; and what would be the saving in each case in (i) other benefits and (ii) increased tax.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** In February 1989 there were approximately 542,000 men and 107,000 women claiming benefit who had exhausted their entitlement to unemployment benefit. The table sets out the estimated costs and benefit savings of removing the time limits.

*Benefit costs and savings of removing unemployment benefit duration limit*

| | *Cost to UB (£ million)* | *Savings on other benefits (£ million)* |
|---|---:|---:|
| Men | 1,100 | 800 |
| Women | 200 | 100 |

*Notes:*

1. This table assumes current levels of unemployment; costs and savings are calculated at 1989-90 benefit levels.
2. It is not possible to make a reliable estimate of the effect on tax receipts of such a change.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table on the same basis as that given in the written answer dated 20 March 1987 showing the total benefits paid out to the unemployed in 1987-88, 1988-89 and his forecast for 1989-90, together with payments from the redundancy fund, the percentage both represent of gross domestic product and the revenue from North sea oil.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Family Credit

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many family credit recipients there are in the Bolton area; and how many family income support recipients there were.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** At 7 July 1989 the number of families receiving family credit who, at the time their awards were made, were living in the area covered by the Bolton local social security office was 2,274. Information about family income supplement is not available on a local basis.

### Pensions

**Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his estimate of the number of pensioners who are now receiving the enhanced pensioner premium introduced by his Department on 9 October.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** We estimate that some 2·6 million pensioners will benefit from the changes to be introduced in October, of whom some 1·1 million will qualify for the new enhanced pensioner premium in income support and housing benefit for people aged 75-79.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report*, his best estimate of the number and proportion of *(a)* manual and *(b)* other workers covered by occupational pension schemes in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy together with a table showing (i) the benefits available under state earnings-related pension and under the state schemes in the other three countries, and (ii) the amount distributed in state pensions annually, the current number of pensioners expressed as a percentage of the working population and the forecast for the years 2000 and beyond.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Information relating to the membership of occupational pension schemes in the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Germany is not held on a manual/non-manual basis.

For information relating to the benefits available under state earnings-related pensions and under the state schemes in France, Germany and Italy. I refer the hon. Member to the "Tables of Social Benefit in EC Member States", a copy of which is held in the Library. The tables are produced annually: the latest addition gives the position at 1 January 1988.

There is no common definition of a state pension scheme which holds good for all four countries and therefore comparisons of total spending are not meaningful.

The population aged 65 and over expressed as a percentage of the population aged 15-64 in each of the four countries for 1980 with projections for 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2020 is as follows:

| | *1980* | *1990* | *2000* | *2010* | *2020* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| France | 22 | 21 | 23 | 25 | 31 |
| Germany | 23 | 22 | 25 | 31 | 34 |
| Italy | 21 | 20 | 23 | 26 | 29 |
| United Kingdom | 23 | 23 | 22 | 22 | 26 |

*Source:* OECD 1988

It is not possible to compute the number of pensioners in the above countries as only the United Kingdom has a unified state pension scheme.

### Pensioner Households

**Mr. Andrew Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list the cash and percentage changes in real equivalised incomes of each decile group of pensioner households for each year since 1979.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

### Skye and Raasay

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many callers were dealt with at his Department's Portree office in each year from 1985 to 1988.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The information is as follows:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| 1985 | 771 |
| 1986 | 1,216 |
| 1987 | 1,724 |
| 1988 | 2,029 |

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many claimants have been in receipt of supplementary benefit on Skye and Raasay in each of the past five years;

(2) how many claimants were in receipt of income support on Skye and Raasay in each of the past five years.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Skye and Raasay are administered by the local office in Fort William and no separate figures are held in respect of claimants resident on these islands. The information for the Fort William area as a whole is set out as follows:

*Number of claimants in receipt of supplementary benefit at Fort William office 1984 to 1987*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 12 December 1984 | 2,596 |
| 11 December 1985 | 2,633 |
| 10 December 1986 | 2,707 |
| 18 November 1987 | 2,619 |

*Number of claimants in receipt of income support at Fort William office in 1988*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 30 November 1988 | 2,448 |

*Source:* 100 per cent. count of cases in action, this will include cases where benefit is no longer in payment but other action is continuing.

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many effective home visits to claimants' homes were made by staff of his Department's Fort William office on Skye and Raasay between 1 January and 30 June.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The information is as follows:

*Number of effective home visits made between 1 January and 30 June*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Skye | 167 |
| Raasay | Nil |

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many effective home visits were made to claimants' homes by staff of his Department's Portree office in each year from 1985 to 1988.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Information is available only from April 1988. From April 1988 to December 1988, 434 effective visits were made.

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people were registered as self-employed on Skye and Raasay at a convenient date in each of the past 10 years.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I regret that this information is not available.

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many telephone call units were charged on his Department's Portree office in each year from 1985 to 1988.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The information is as follows:

| *Year* | *Call units* |
|---|---|
| 1985 | 12,357 |
| 1986 | 32,504 |
| 1987 | 23,471 |
| 1988 | 27,020 |

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how much was paid to staff on his Department's Fort William office for travelling and subsistence in connection with work on Skye and Raasay between 1 January and 30 June.

(2) how much was paid to staff of his Department's Portree office for travelling and subsistence between 1 January and 30 June 1988.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Travel and subsistence expenditure for specific areas administered by the local office in Fort William is not collated separately. The information for the Fort William area as a whole is set out as follows:

*Travel and subsistence expenditure for Fort William local office*

| | *£* |
|---|---|
| 1st January—30 June 1988 | 6,692 |
| 1st January—30 June 1989 | 12,383 |

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what representations he has received regarding the revised arrangements for providing a social security service on Skye and Raasay.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** A number of representations have been received, the most recent in May 1989. The evidence to date shows that the revised arrangements are working extremely well.

### Housing Benefit

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to introduce the over-18 rate of housing benefit for under-18s; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I refer the hon. Member to my hon. Friend the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State's reply to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) on 4 July at column *141*.

### Income Support

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many NPL forms on income support regarding applications for persons aged 75 years or over or 60 years or over and disabled have been distributed; what organisations have received forms directly; when the forms were first made available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Approximately 5·7 million leaflets have been printed. All these leaflets have now been put out to the various outlets.

The following organisations were sent copies direct:

Citizens Advice Bureaux
Womens Royal Voluntary Service
Age Concern

The first copies were sent out on 7 July. Complete distribution took about two weeks.

In addition, the Department is collaborating with Talking Newspaper on the production of an audio cassette, and with the Royal National Institute for the Blind on a Braille version.

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what *(a)* guidance and *(b)* training is given to staff asking 16 to 17-year-olds claiming income support questions on the nature of their estrangement from their parents.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The chief adjudication officer has issued guidance to staff on the issues, including estrangement, that need to be considered when deciding the entitlement of 16 and 17-year-olds to income support. Instructions on how this information should be obtained are contained in a circular to the income support manual.

A video-based training package on the specific problems of interviewing young people has been given to all staff responsible for undertaking such work. This emphasises the need for tact and sensitivity when questioning a person from a vulnerable sector of the community.

### Postal Voting

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will include a postal vote application from in pension or allowance books issued to elderly or disabled persons.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** No, as this would entail considerable operational difficulties and additional costs.

### Mrs. C. Peake

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when Mrs. C. Peake of 30 Union street, Birkenhead, will receive her payment, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) of 17 April, *Official Report*, column *57*, concerning women affected by the Social Security Commissioner's decision of 28 February.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** An order book at the revised higher rate was issued to Mrs. Peake on 20 July 1989, and a girocheque payment in respect of all arrears of widowed mothers' allowance was issued to her on 27 July 1989.

### Pensioners (London Allowance)

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what representations he has received concerning the case for a London allowance for pensioners; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Since 1 January 1989 we have received approximately five such representations.

### Actively Seeking Work Test

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if, in the light of the new test on actively seeking work, he has any plans to assess entitlement to unemployment benefit on a weekly rather than a daily basis.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Regulations provide for the new actively seeking work provision to operate with unemployment benefit assessed on a daily basis. We have no immediate plans to change to assessment on a weekly basis.

### One-parent Families

**Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will publish an update of table 1.1 in the Green Paper, "Reform of Social Security", background papers volume 3, Cmnd. 9519 on the proportion of two and one-parent families separately, by working arrangements, in each quintile of income;

(2) if he will publish the latest figures of the number of one-parent families who are dependent on income support and part-time earnings;

(3) if he will publish the latest figures showing the number of one-parent families who are dependent on maintenance, by the type of one-parent family;

(4) if he will publish the latest figures showing the number of one-parent families claiming *(a)* family credit, *(b)* housing benefit and *(c)* both;

(5) if he will publish the latest figures showing the total amount collected in maintenance payments for one-parent families who are claiming benefits, broken down into the amount collected by his Department and by claimants themselves.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Single Payments

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether the decision in the Carleton case in Northern Ireland has ever been used as a precedent to refuse a single payment in Great Britain.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I understand from the office of the chief adjudication officer that adjudication officers who are considering residual single payment claims for furniture and household equipment have been advised to take into account the decision of the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal in the Carleton case, to the extent that it was adopted by a tribunal of social security commissioners in a decision dated 26 June 1989.

### Camberwell Social Security Office

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many callers have come to the Camberwell area social security office in each month over the last three years;

(2) how many live cases were recorded at the Camberwell area social security office each quarter over the last three years.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** The information requested is as follows:

| *Period ending* | *Callers (4-weekly)* | *Live cases (quarterly)* |
|---|---|---|
| 6 May 1986 | 3,474 | 12,175 |
| 3 June 1986 | 3,761 | — |
| 1 July 1986 | 3,477 | — |
| 29 July 1986 | 3,802 | — |
| 26 August 1986 | 3,500 | 12,546 |
| 23 September 1986 | 3,630 | — |
| 21 October 1986 | 3,449 | — |
| 18 November 1986 | 3,630 | — |
| 16 December 1986 | 3,630 | 11,879 |
| 13 January 1987 | 3,520 | — |
| 10 February 1987 | 2,678 | 12,067 |
| 10 March 1987 | 2,717 | — |
| 7 April 1987 | 2,974 | — |
| 5 May 1987 | 3,262 | 11,746 |
| 2 June 1987 | 2,830 | — |
| 30 June 1987 | 2,977 | — |
| 28 July 1987 | 3,716 | 11,903 |
| 25 August 1987 | 3,904 | — |
| 22 September 1987 | 3,783 | — |
| 20 October 1987 | 3,994 | — |
| 17 November 1987 | 3,568 | 11,749 |
| 15 December 1987 | 3,194 | — |
| 12 January 1988 | 2,801 | — |
| 9 February 1988 | 3,795 | (No count made) |
| 8 March 1988 | 3,652 | — |
| 10 April 1988 | 3,520 | — |
| 30 April 1988 | 2,614 | — |
| 31 May 1988 | 3,130 | 10,856 |
| 30 June 1988 | 3,435 | — |
| 31 July 1988 | 3,091 | — |
| 31 August 1988 | 3,171 | 10,394 |
| 30 September 1988 | 3,712 | — |
| 31 October 1988 | 3,109 | — |
| 30 November 1988 | 1,509 | 10,095 |
| 31 December 1988 | 1,352 | — |
| 31 January 1989 | 1,768 | — |
| 28 February 1989 | 1,726 | 9,821 |
| 31 March 1989 | 1,871 | — |
| 30 April 1989 | 1,857 | — |
| 31 May 1989 | 1,718 | 9,968 |

*Source:*

Internal management information statistics and 100 per cent. count of cases in action. Data from April 1988 onwards is provisional and subject to change and the numbers of live cases include a small number of cases not actually in receipt of benefit.

### Social Security Office (Southwark)

**Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether the conversion of the Odeon site into a social security office in Southwark is on target for completion in February 1991.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Present indications are that the completion on conversion work at the Odeon site will extend beyond March 1991. In the meantime preparations are being made for the implementation of the operational strategy and other service improvements, arising from the relocation of backroom work, in the existing Camberwell office. Similar improvements are planned for the Peckham office on completion of the move to the Odeon site.

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many children aged *(a)* under 16 years and *(b)* under 19 years lived in families where the head of the household is long-term unemployed at the latest date available.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

### Personal Pensions

**Mrs. Beckett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps are being taken to ensure that members of personal pension schemes will be informed when they reach an age at which it would pay them to terminate their contributions to those schemes.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** It is for an individual wishing to take out a personal pension to seek advice appropriate to his or her needs. In the case of personal pension schemes which are investments as defined in the Financial Services Act, persons regulated by bodies under that Act have a duty to provide best advice on such products. It is for the individual to make arrangements for obtaining any further advice which may be necessary in the light of changing circumstances.

**Mrs. Beckett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security for each of the examples in tables P1 to P4 of the technical annex to the White Paper "Reform of Social Security", for how many years it would pay the person concerned to contribute to a personal pension or other money purchase scheme.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* I regret that the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, I will be able to provide some information and I will write to the hon. Member when it is available.

### Spending Power

**Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish tables on spending power using the assumption in the answer to the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) on 22 June 1988, *Official Report*, columns *571-575*, but using expenditure and benefit figures appropriate for families in Langbaurgh, together with a column showing the extent of the differences resulting from the April changes.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[pursuant to the holding answer 13 April 1989]:* The information requested is set out in the tables. They compare the post-reform position in April 1988 not with an actual pre-reform cash situation but with a hypothetical position which might have occurred, had the previous structure continued and been uprated on the assumptions in "Impact of the Reformed Structure of Income Related Benefits" (October 1987).

In addition, it should be noted that although the comparisons are based on average local authority housing charges in Langbaurgh, they do not necessarily reflect either the wide variety of rents and domestic rates that people in the borough actually pay or real families' circumstances and their housing arrangements. Finally, the comparisons take no account of the housing benefit transitional cash protection announced on 27 April.

*Old benefit system at hypothetical rates April 1988*
*Langbaurgh L.A.*
*Married couple with 2 children aged 4 and 6*
*£ per week*

| Earnings Head | Tax | NI | FIS | Child benefit | Rent | Rent rebate | Rates | Rate rebate | Fares to work | Free school meals | Free welfare milk | Net inc. after housing costs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 28·70 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 17·23 | 9·92 | 7·68 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 94·02 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 23·70 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 15·88 | 9·92 | 7·28 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 95·47 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 18·70 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 14·73 | 9·92 | 6·88 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 96·90 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 13·70 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 13·48 | 9·92 | 6·48 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 96·85 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 8·70 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 12·23 | 9·92 | 6·08 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 96·80 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 3·70 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 10·71 | 9·92 | 5·52 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 94·12 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 8·64 | 9·92 | 4·70 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 92·10 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 5·34 | 9·92 | 3·40 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 93·90 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 2·04 | 9·92 | 2·10 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 95·70 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·80 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 96·21 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 101·81 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 108·21 |

*New benefit system from April 1988*
*Langbaurgh L.A.*
*Married couple with two children aged 4 and 6*

*£ per week*

| Earnings head | Tax | NI | Family credit | Child benefit | Rent | Rent rebate | Rates | Rate rebate | Fares to work | Net income after housing costs | Difference between systems |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 40·32 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 4·94 | 9·92 | 3·39 | 5·85 | 84·68 | −9·34 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 34·65 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 3·36 | 9·92 | 2·91 | 5·85 | 85·05 | −10·42 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 28·99 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 1·76 | 9·92 | 2·42 | 5·85 | 85·40 | −11·50 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 24·37 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 2·03 | 5·85 | 85·21 | —11·64 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 19·75 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 1·63 | 5·85 | 86·79 | −10·01 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 16·67 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 1·37 | 5·85 | 87·85 | —6·27 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 12·19 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·98 | 5·85 | 89·38 | —2·72 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 7·71 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·60 | 5·85 | 90·92 | −2·98 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 3·23 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 92·24 | −3·46 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 95·41 | −0·80 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 101·81 | 0·00 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 108·21 | 0·00 |

*Old Benefit System at Hypothetical Rates April 1988*
*Langbaurgh*
*Married couple with three children aged 3, 8 and 11*

*£ per week*

| Earnings head | Tax | NI | FIS | Child benefit | Rent | Rent rebate | Rates | Rate rebate | Fares to work | Free school meals | Free welfare milk | Net income after housing costs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 32·90 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 18·27 | 9·92 | 8·02 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 109·40 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 30·50 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 16·37 | 9·92 | 7·41 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 112·59 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 25·50 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 15·12 | 9·92 | 7·01 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 114·02 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 20·50 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 13·87 | 9·92 | 6·61 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 113·97 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 15·50 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 12·62 | 9·92 | 6·21 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 113·92 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 10·50 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 11·23 | 9·92 | 5·72 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 111·44 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 5·50 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 9·58 | 9·92 | 5·07 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 110·54 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 0·50 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 7·93 | 9·92 | 4·42 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 109·64 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 0·00 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 4·79 | 9·92 | 3·18 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 0·00 | 109·33 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 0·00 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 1·49 | 9·92 | 1·88 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 0·00 | 111·13 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 0·00 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·58 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 112·19 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 0·00 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 115·46 |

*New Benefit System from April 1988*
*Langbaurgh*
*Married couple with three children aged 3, 8 and 11.*

*£ per week*

| *Earnings head* | *Tax* | *NI* | *Family credit* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rate rebate* | *Fares to work* | *Net income after housing costs* | *Difference between systems* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 51·72 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 3·28 | 9·92 | 2·88 | 5·85 | 101·16 | −8·24 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 46·05 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 1·70 | 9·92 | 2·40 | 5·85 | 101·53 | −11·06 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 40·39 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 1·91 | 5·85 | 101·76 | −12·26 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 35·77 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 1·52 | 5·85 | 103·35 | −10·62 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 31·15 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 1·12 | 5·85 | 104·93 | −8·99 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 28·07 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·86 | 5·85 | 105·99 | −5·45 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 23·59 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 107·05 | −3·49 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 19·11 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 108·97 | −0·67 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 14·63 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 110·89 | +1·56 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 10·15 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 112·81 | +1·68 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 5·67 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 114·73 | +2·54 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 1·19 | 21·75 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 116·65 | +1·19 |

*Old benefit system at hypothetical rates April 1988*
*Langbaurgh*
*Single person with 2 children aged 4 and 6*

*£ per week*

| *Earnings head* | *Tax* | *NI* | *FIS* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rate rebate* | *Fares to work* | *Free school meals* | *Free welfare milk* | *Net income after housing costs* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 28·70 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 16·01 | 9·92 | 7·29 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 97·31 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·93 | 23·70 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 14·76 | 9·92 | 6·89 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 98·76 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 18·70 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 13·51 | 9·92 | 6·49 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 100·19 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 13·70 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 12·26 | 9·92 | 6·09 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 100·14 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 8·70 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 10·75 | 9·92 | 5·53 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 99·67 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 3·70 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 9·10 | 9·92 | 4·88 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 96·77 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 7·02 | 9·92 | 4·06 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 94·74 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 3·72 | 9·92 | 2·76 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 96·54 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 1·46 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 97·92 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 102·86 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 106·71 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 113·11 |

*New benefit system from April 1988*
*Langbaurgh*
*Single person with 2 children aged 4 and 6*

*£ per week*

| *Earnings head* | *Tax* | *NI* | *Family credit* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rate rebate* | *Fares to work* | *Net income after housing costs* | *Difference between systems* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 40·32 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 1·52 | 5·85 | 82·77 | −14·54 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 34·65 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 1·04 | 5·85 | 84·72 | −14·04 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 28·99 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·55 | 5·85 | 86·65 | −13·54 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 24·37 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 88·08 | −12·06 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 19·75 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 90·06 | −9·61 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 16·67 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 91·38 | −5·39 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 12·19 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 93·30 | −1·44 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 7·71 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 95·22 | −1·32 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 3·23 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 97·14 | −0·78 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 100·31 | −2·55 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 106·71 | 0·00 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·70 | 0·00 | 9·92 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 113·11 | 0·00 |

*Old tax and benefit system—assuming average local authority rent and rates for Langbaurgh and a simple rescaling of April 1987 benefits to April 1988*
*Lone mother with two children aged 4 and 6*

*£pw*

| | *(a)* *Not working after one year on benefit* | *(b)* *Working part-time earning £20* | *(c)* *Working part-time earning £40* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Supplementary benefit | 45·93 | 30·89 | 14·35 |
| Earnings | — | 20·00 | 40·00 |
| Tax | — | 0·00 | 0·00 |
| National insurance | — | 0·00 | 2·00 |
| Fares to work | — | 2·92 | 2·92 |
| Rent | 19·70 | 19·70 | 19·70 |
| Rates | 9·92 | 9·92 | 9·92 |
| Housing benefit | 28·06 | 28·06 | 28·06 |
| CHB | 19·40 | 19·40 | 19·40 |
| FSM | 2·55 | 2·55 | 2·55 |
| FWM | 1·83 | 1·83 | 1·83 |
| Net weekly spending power | 68·15 | 70·19 | 71·65 |

*Benefit system from April 1988*
*Assumptions as in "Impact of reformed structure of income related benefits" October 1987*
*Average local authority rent and rates for Langbaurgh*
*Lone Mother with two children aged 4 and 6*

*£ per week*

| | *(a)* *Not working after one year on benefit* | *(b)* *Working part time earning £20* | *(c)* *Working part time earning £40* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Income support | 45·35 | 40·35 | 20·35 |
| Earnings | | 20·00 | 40·00 |
| Tax | | 0·00 | 0·00 |
| NI | | 0·00 | 0·00 |
| Fares to work | | 2·92 | 2·92 |
| Rent | 19·70 | 19·70 | 19·70 |
| Rates | 9·92 | 9·92 | 9·92 |
| Housing benefit | 26·39 | 26·39 | 26·39 |
| CHB | 19·40 | 19·40 | 19·40 |
| FSM | 2·55 | 2·55 | 2·55 |
| FWM | 1·83 | 1·83 | 1·83 |
| Net weekly spending power | 65·90 | 77·98 | 77·98 |
| Difference between systems | −2·25 | +7·79 | +6·33 |

## Benefit Statistics (Stockton)

**Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish tables using the assumptions in his answer to the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) on 22 June 1988, *Official Report*, columns 575-80, but using expenditure and benefit figures appropriate for families in Stockton, together with a column showing the extent of the differences resulting from the April changes.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Pursuant to the holding answer of 17 May 1989, the information requested is set out in the tables. They compare the post-reform position in April 1988 not with an actual pre-reform cash situation but with a hypothetical position which might have occurred had the previous structure continued and been uprated on the assumptions in "Impact of the Reformed Structure of Income Related Benefits" (October 1987).

In addition, it should be noted that although the comparisons are based on average local authority housing charges in Stockton they do not necessarily reflect either the wide variety of rents and domestic rates that people in the borough actually pay or real families' circumstances and their housing arrangements. Finally, the comparisons take no account of the housing benefit transitional cash protection announced on 27 April.

*Old benefit system at hypothetical rates April 1988*
*Stockton L.A.*
*Married couple with two children aged 4 and 6*

*£ per week*

| *Earnings head* | *Tax* | *NI* | *FIS* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rate rebate* | *Fares to work* | *Free school meals* | *Free welfare milk* | *Net income after housing costs* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 28·70 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 17·12 | 9·81 | 7·62 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 94·14 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 23·70 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 15·87 | 9·81 | 7·22 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 95·59 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 18·70 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 14·62 | 9·81 | 6·82 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 97·02 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 13·70 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 13·37 | 9·81 | 6·42 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 96·97 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 8·70 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 12·12 | 9·81 | 6·02 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 96·92 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 3·70 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 10·61 | 9·81 | 5·45 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 94·24 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 8·53 | 9·81 | 4·63 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 92·21 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 5·23 | 9·81 | 3·33 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 94·01 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 1·93 | 9·81 | 2·03 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 95·81 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·73 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 96·43 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 102·10 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 108·50 |

*New benefit system from April 1988 Stockton L.A.*
*Married couple with two children aged 4 and 6*

*£ per week*

| *Earnings head* | *Tax* | *NI* | *Family credit* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rate rebate* | *Fares to work* | *Net income after housing costs* | *Difference between systems* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 40·32 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 4·76 | 9·81 | 3·31 | 5·85 | 84·71 | −9·43 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 34·65 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 3·18 | 9·80 | 2·82 | 5·85 | 85·07 | −10·52 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 28·99 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 1·60 | 9·81 | 2·33 | 5·85 | 85·42 | −11·60 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 24·37 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 1·94 | 5·85 | 85·41 | −11·56 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 19·75 | 14·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 1·54 | 5·85 | 86·99 | −9·93 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 16·67 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 1·28 | 5·85 | 88·05 | −6·19 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 12·19 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·89 | 5·85 | 89·58 | −2·63 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 7·71 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·51 | 5·85 | 91·12 | −2·89 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 3·23 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 92·53 | −3·28 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 95·70 | −0·73 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 102·10 | 0·00 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 0·00 | 14·50 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 108·50 | 0·00 |

*Old benefit system at hypothetical rates April 1988*
*Stockton L.A.*
*Married couple with three children aged 3, 8 and 11*

*£ per week*

| *Earnings head* | *Tax* | *NI* | *FIS* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rate rebate* | *Fares to work* | *Free school meals* | *Free welfare milk* | *Net income after housing costs* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 32·90 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 18·16 | 9·81 | 7·95 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 109·51 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 30·50 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 16·26 | 9·81 | 7·34 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 112·70 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 25·50 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 15·01 | 9·81 | 6·94 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 114·13 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 20·50 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 13·76 | 9·81 | 5·54 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 114·08 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 15·50 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 12·51 | 9·81 | 6·14 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 114·03 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 10·50 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 11·12 | 9·81 | 5·65 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 111·55 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 5·50 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 9·47 | 9·81 | 5·00 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 110·65 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 0·50 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 7·82 | 9·81 | 4·35 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 1·83 | 109·75 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 0·00 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 4·68 | 9·81 | 3·12 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 0·00 | 109·45 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 0·00 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 1·38 | 9·81 | 1·82 | 5·85 | 5·10 | 0·00 | 111·25 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 0·00 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·52 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 112·42 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 0·00 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 115·75 |

*New benefit system from April 1988*
*Stockton L.A.*
*Married couple with three children aged 3, 8 and 11*

*£ per week*

| *Earnings head* | *Tax* | *NI* | *Family credit* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rate rebate* | *Fares to work* | *Net income after housing costs* | *Difference between systems* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 51·72 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 3·10 | 9·81 | 2·80 | 5·85 | 101·19 | −8·32 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 46·05 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 1·52 | 9·81 | 2·31 | 5·85 | 101·55 | −11·15 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 40·39 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 1·82 | 5·85 | 101·96 | −12·17 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 35·77 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 1·43 | 5·85 | 103·55 | −10·53 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 31·15 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 1·03 | 5·85 | 105·13 | −8·90 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 28·07 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·77 | 5·85 | 106·19 | −5·36 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 23·59 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 107·34 | −3·31 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 19·11 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 109·28 | −0·49 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 14·63 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 111·18 | +1·73 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 10·15 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 113·10 | +1·85 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 5·67 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 115·02 | +2·60 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 1·19 | 21·75 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 116·94 | +1·19 |

*Old benefit system at hypothetical rates April 1988*
*Stockton L.A.*
*Single person with two children aged 4 and 6*

*£ per week*

| *Earnings head* | *Tax* | *NI* | *FIS* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rate rebate* | *Fares to work* | *Free school meals* | *Free welfare milk* | *Net income after housing costs* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 28·70 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 15·90 | 9·81 | 7·23 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 97·43 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 23·70 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 14·65 | 9·81 | 6·83 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 98·88 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 18·70 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 13·40 | 9·81 | 6·43 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 100·31 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 13·70 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 12·15 | 9·81 | 6·03 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 100·26 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 8·70 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 10·64 | 9·81 | 5·46 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 99·78 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 3·70 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 8·99 | 9·81 | 4·81 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 1·83 | 96·88 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 6·91 | 9·81 | 3·99 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 94·85 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 3·61 | 9·81 | 2·69 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 96·65 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 1·39 | 5·85 | 2·55 | 0·00 | 98·14 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 100·60 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 107·00 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 0·00 | 0·00 | 113·40 |

*New benefit system from April 1988*
*Stockton L.A.*
*Single person with two children aged 4 and 6*

*£ per week*

| *Earnings head* | *Tax* | *NI* | *Family credit* | *Child benefit* | *Rent* | *Rent rebate* | *Rates* | *Rate rebate* | *Fares to work* | *Net income after housing costs* | *Difference between systems* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60·00 | 0·00 | 3·00 | 40·32 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 1·44 | 5·85 | 82·98 | −14·45 |
| 70·00 | 0·00 | 4·90 | 34·65 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·95 | 5·85 | 84·92 | −13·96 |
| 80·00 | 1·22 | 5·60 | 28·99 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 86·39 | −13·92 |
| 90·00 | 3·92 | 6·30 | 24·37 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 88·37 | −11·89 |
| 100·00 | 6·62 | 7·00 | 19·75 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 90·35 | −9·43 |
| 110·00 | 9·32 | 9·90 | 16·67 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 91·67 | −5·21 |
| 120·00 | 12·02 | 10·80 | 12·19 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 93·59 | −1·26 |
| 130·00 | 14·72 | 11·70 | 7·71 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 95·51 | −1·14 |
| 140·00 | 17·42 | 12·60 | 3·23 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 97·43 | −0·71 |
| 150·00 | 20·12 | 13·50 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 100·60 | 0·00 |
| 160·00 | 22·82 | 14·40 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 107·00 | 0·00 |
| 170·00 | 25·52 | 15·30 | 0·00 | 19·40 | 19·52 | 0·00 | 9·81 | 0·00 | 5·85 | 113·40 | 0·00 |

*Old tax and benefit system—assuming average local authority rent and rates for Stockton and a simple rescaling of April 1987 benefits to April 1988. Lone mother with two children aged 4 and 6*

*£ per week*

| | *(a) Not working after one year on benefit* | *(b) Working part-time earning £20* | *(c) Working part-time earning £40* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Supplementary benefit | 45·93 | 30·89 | 14·35 |
| Earnings | — | 20·00 | 40·00 |
| Tax | — | 0·00 | 0·00 |
| National insurance | — | 0·00 | 2·00 |
| Fares to work | — | 2·92 | 2·92 |
| Rent | 19·52 | 19·52 | 19·52 |
| Rates | 9·81 | 9·81 | 9·81 |
| Housing benefit | 27·77 | 27·77 | 27·77 |
| CHB | 19·40 | 19·40 | 19·40 |
| FSM | 2·55 | 2·55 | 2·55 |
| FWM | 1·83 | 1·83 | 1·83 |
| Net weekly spending power | 68·15 | 70·19 | 71·65 |

*Benefit system from April 1988*
*Assumptions as in "Impact of reform structure of income related benefits" October 1987*
*Average local authority rent and rates for Stockton*
*Lone Mother with two children aged 4 and 6*

*£ per week*

| | *(a) Not working after one year on benefit* |
|---|---|
| Income support | 45·35 |
| Rent | 19·52 |
| Rates | 9·81 |
| Housing benefit | 26·12 |
| CHB | 19·40 |
| FSM | 2·55 |
| FWM | 1·83 |
| Net weekly spending power | 65·92 |
| Difference between systems | −2·23 |

*£ per week*

| | *(b) Working part-time earning £20* | *(c) Working part-time earning £40* |
|---|---|---|
| Income support | 40·35 | 20·35 |
| Earnings | 20·00 | 40·00 |
| Tax | 0·00 | 0·00 |
| NI | 0·00 | 0·00 |

| | *(b)* *Working part-time earning £20* | *(c)* *Working part-time earning £40* |
|---|---|---|
| Fares to work | 2·92 | 2·92 |
| Rent | 19·52 | 19·52 |
| Rates | 9·81 | 9·81 |
| Housing benefit | 26·12 | 26·12 |
| CHB | 19·40 | 19·40 |
| FSM | 2·55 | 2·55 |
| FWM | 1·83 | 1·83 |
| Net weekly spending power | 78·00 | 78·00 |
| Difference between systems | +7·81 | +6·35 |

## Benefits

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, further to his reply to the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham, 17 July, *Official Report*, columns *39-40*, if he will publish estimates of expenditure on child additions paid with national insurance benefit in 1978-79 and 1988-89.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The value of the child additions paid with national insurance benefits in 1988 was approximately £130 million. A similar estimate for 1978 is not available.

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his latest esimate of the total numbers of *(a)* families and *(b)* persons dependent on income support, housing benefit or family credit; and how the figures are likely to be affected by the community charge benefit.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Pursuant to the holding answer of 24 July 1989, on the basis of the readily available information for 1988, approximately 1⅔ million families with children (including lone parent families) got at least some of their income from income support, family credit and/or housing benefit. The total number of men, women and children (including young persons aged under 19) getting some income from these sources was approximately 12 million. I will write to my right hon. Friend concerning the remaining part of his inquiry.

## Vaccine Damage Payments

**Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) pursuant to the answer to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South, *Official Report*, 6 July, column *245*, when the details of the 1980 vaccine damage payments were destroyed; who gave the authorisation for their destruction; what are the normal arrangements for dealing with such information; and if a summary was made of the information before it was destroyed;

(2) pursuant to the answer to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South, *Official Report*, 6 July, column *245*, if he will explain how some of the records for the 1981 and 1982 vaccine damage payments were lost; and what further steps he is taking to find them.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* I am writing to the right hon. Member about the arrangements under which the 1980 records were destroyed and about those for 1981 and 1982 which are missing. I am pleased to say, however, that we have been able to elicit from other sources all the information he requested. Details have been placed in the Library.

## Income Statistics

**Sir Ian Gilmour:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish figures for 1979-80 and 1989-90 showing *(a)* net incomes and *(b)* disposable incomes for a single-wage married couple with two children under five years and a lone mother with two children under five years, at half, two thirds, average and twice average earnings; using the same assumptions for housing costs as in the DSS tax-benefit model tables.

**Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** Pursuant to the holding answer of 24 July 1989, the information requested is as follows:

*Single-wage married couple with two children under 5*
*Average earnings*[1,2,4]
*£ per week*

| | ½ | ⅔ | *1* | *2* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Total net income* | | | | |
| 1979-80 | 65·67 | 67·60 | 88·60 | 163·44 |
| 1989-90 | 134·60 | 156·57 | 217·10 | 408·73 |
| *Disposable income* | | | | |
| 1979-80 | 56·37 | 58·30 | 79·30 | 154·14 |
| 1989-90 | 104·10 | 126·07 | 186·60 | 378·23 |

*Lone mother with two children under 5*
*Average earnings*[1,3,4]
*£ per week*

| | ½ | ⅔ | *1* | *2* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Total net income* | | | | |
| 1979-80 | 67·10 | 68·58 | 68·15 | 110·62 |
| 1989-90 | 131·31 | 136·83 | 162·04 | 287·18 |
| *Disposable income* | | | | |
| 1979-80 | 57·80 | 59·28 | 58·85 | 101·32 |
| 1989-90 | 100·82 | 106·33 | 131·54 | 256·68 |

[1] 1989-90 average earnings use the Government's Actuary's assumption of 7½ per cent. earnings growth over 1988-89.

[2] Average male earnings 1979-80 £109·30, 1989-90 £275·10 a week.

[3] Average female earnings 1979-80 £70·00, 1989-90 £183·80 a week.

[4] All figures are the cash values of the year in question.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

## Judiciary (Appointments)

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Attorney-General what proposals the Government have to increase the number of solicitors appointed to the judiciary.

**The Solicitor-General:** The Lord Chancellor has made clear on a number of occasions his wish to see more solicitors appointed to judicial office. "Legal Services: A Framework for the Future" (Cm. 740) published on 19 July sets out the Government's proposals for extending eligibility for higher judicial office to solicitors. In addition, pilot schemes have been set up in certain parts of the country with the specific aim of identifying solicitors suitable for appointment, and, as part of the regular programme of reviews of candidates for judicial appointment, a special initiative has been taken to consult the judiciary about solicitor candidates on the south eastern circuit. It is hoped to extend this initiative to the other circuits shortly.

### Legal Aid

**Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Attorney-General when he last met the chair of the Legal Aid Board; and whether he discussed the franchising or contracting of legal services.

**The Solicitor-General:** My right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor has ministerial responsibility for legal aid. At his request, the legal aid board is currently considering the future arrangements for providing advice and assistance under the green form scheme. As part of that review, the board recently issued a consultation document which contains proposals for the future provision of advice through franchises involving solicitors' firms, law centres and, possibly, advice agencies. The board will be bringing forward recommendations to the Lord Chancellor once the review has been completed.

### Law Centres

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Attorney-General how many and which law centres *(a)* he, *(b)* the Lord Chancellor and *(c)* the Solicitor-General have visited since 1987.

**The Solicitor-General:** *(a)* none; (b) one (to the North Kensington law centre); *(c)* none.

### Malicious Communications

**Mr. Janner:** To ask the Attorney-General where information regarding prosecutions made under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 in the London metropolitan areas is held; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** I have been asked to reply.

I shall write to the hon. and learned Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library.

### County Courts

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Attorney-General what has been the increase in the county court caseload over the last three years; and what increases there have been over a similar period in numbers of county court *(a)* judges, *(b)* registrars and *(c)* administrative staff.

**The Solicitor-General:** There is no single measure of caseload in the county courts; the work initially comes from the commencement of proceedings, but further work results from all stages of the procedures including enforcement. The increase in the number of proceedings commenced between 1985 and 1988 was 5 per cent. The number of proceedings initiated is continuing to increase. Over the same period the number of circuit judges (who also deal with Crown Court work) and county court registrars in office on 1 April of each year increased by 7 per cent. and 19 per cent. respectively. Similarly the number of staff (including bailiffs and ushers) in post in county courts on 1 April increased by 8 per cent. between 1985 and 1988. These figures include a number of staff employed in combined court centres on county court work.

### Westminster City Council

**Mr Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Attorney-General whether he will ask the Director of Public Prosecutions to consider allegations of a criminal conspiracy by Westminster city council to defraud the ratepayers of the City of Westminster.

**The Solicitor-General:** Preliminary police inquiries have been made into the sale of cemeteries by the Westminster city council. The director has requested further inquiries and will consider the matter when they have been completed. Other than that inquiry, the director has not had referred to him any allegations of fraudulent conduct by councillors or officials of the Westminster city council.

One former official is presently the subject of proceedings for corruption arising out of an entirely unrelated matter.

### West Midlands Police

**Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Attorney General how many West Midlands police officers are or have been the subject of reports referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions within the last 12 months.

**The Solicitor-General:** The information requested is not readily available. However, a total of 150 reports relating to allegations concerning one or more West Midlands police officers were received by the Director of Public Prosecutions office in the period 1 July 1988 to 26 July 1989.

### Crown Prosecution Service

**Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Attorney-General if he has yet received the Director of Public Prosecutions' report on the Crown Prosecution service for the year 1988-89; and when the report will be laid before Parliament.

**The Solicitor-General:** I have received the proof of this report and a copy of the proof has been placed in the Journal Office today. The report will be published later this summer and copies will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

### Immigration

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will publish a table of the number of appeals to the immigration appeal tribunal allowed and dismissed in 1988 and the first quarter of 1989.

**The Solicitor-General:** The information requested is as follows:

| | *Allowed* | *Remitted for re-hearing before an Immigration Adjudicator* | *Dismissed* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Appeals heard in 1988 | 266 | 308 | 378 |
| Appeals heard January-March 1989 | 55 | 27 | 67 |

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will publish a table showing the number of appeals to immigration adjudicators allowed and dismissed in 1988 and the first quarter of 1989; broken down according to the nationality of the appellant and the type of decision appealed against.

**The Attorney-General:** The information requested is set out in the tables.

*1 January to 31 March 1989*

| | *India* | | *Pakistan* | | *Bangladesh* | | *EEC* | | *All other countries* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Appeal categories* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* |
| 1. Exclusion—Appeal at port | 1 | 1 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 21 |
| 2. Exclusion—External appeals | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 24 | 183 |
| 3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| 4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for temporary purposes (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees) | 110 | 154 | 75 | 154 | 10 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 57 | 126 |
| 5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for employment, business or independent means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. Refusal of Entry Clerance requested by wives and children, other dependent relatives and returning residents | 5 | 14 | 51 | 32 | 185 | 134 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 34 |
| 7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands | 20 | 27 | 17 | 37 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3 |
| 9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances | 29 | 35 | 51 | 55 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| 10. Variation of Landing Conditions | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 13 |
| 11. Refusal to vary leave to enter | 4 | 54 | 1 | 45 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 30 | 294 |
| 12. Decision to make deportation order | 5 | 12 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 91 |
| 13. Refusal to revoke deportation order | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| 14. Giving of removal directions | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| 15. Destination only appeal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 177 | 307 | 200 | 346 | 213 | 213 | 1 | 6 | 153 | 795 |

*1 January to 31 December 1988*

| | *India* | | *Pakistan* | | *Bangladesh* | | *EEC* | | *All other countries* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Appeal categories* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* | *Allowed* | *Dismissed* |
| 1. Exclusion—Appeal at port | 0 | 14 | 1 | 19 | 82 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 111 |
| 2. Exclusion—External appeals | 1 | 13 | 4 | 15 | 1 | 17 | 0 | 7 | 35 | 547 |
| 3. Refusal of Certificate Entitlement | 4 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 21 | 16 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 22 |
| 4. Refusal of Entry Clearance for temporary purposes (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees) | 97 | 206 | 132 | 292 | 50 | 164 | 0 | 0 | 264 | 664 |
| 5. Refusal of Entry Clearance for employment, business or independent means (not husbands, wives, fiances or fiancees) | 6 | 32 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 28 |
| 6. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by wives and children, other dependent relatives and returning residents | 14 | 65 | 128 | 178 | 690 | 639 | 0 | 0 | 48 | 139 |
| 7. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by female fiancees | 6 | 9 | 0 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 9 |
| 8. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by husbands | 48 | 78 | 56 | 74 | 10 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 13 |
| 9. Refusal of Entry Clearance requested by male fiances | 65 | 118 | 125 | 150 | 12 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 9 |
| 10. Variation of Landing Conditions | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 55 |
| 11. Refusal to vary leave to enter | 33 | 169 | 18 | 120 | 20 | 59 | 0 | 5 | 132 | 1,118 |
| 12. Decision to make deportation order | 4 | 41 | 2 | 36 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 51 | 297 |
| 13. Refusal to revoke deportation order | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 12 |
| 14. Giving of removal directions | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28 |
| 15. Destination only appeal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 279 | 757 | 467 | 903 | 893 | 1,003 | 1 | 16 | 585 | 3,054 |

## Israeli-occupied Territories

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Attorney-General whether he has considered taking proceedings under section 1 of the Geneva Conventions Act 1957 in relation to breaches of the conventions in the Israeli-occupied territories which have been drawn to the attention of the Government of Israel by Her Majesty's Government.

**The Solicitor-General:** No.

### Plastic Bullets (Northern Ireland)

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Attorney-General how many cases in 1988 and in the first half of 1989 involving persons injured by plastic bullets in Northern Ireland have been considered by the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland; and what action was taken in each case.

**The Solicitor-General:** Figures for cases considered during 1988 and the first half of 1989 by the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland involving persons injured by the alleged use of baton rounds are as follows:

| | *1988* | *1 January 1989 to 30 June 1989* |
|---|---|---|
| Cases | 15 | 7 |
| Persons injured | 15 | 9 |
| Persons killed | 0 | 0 |
| Prosecution directed | 1 | 0 |
| No prosecution directed | 14 | 5 |
| Direction pending the receipt of further information | 0 | 2 |

### Personal Injury

**Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Attorney-General how many complaints he has received about the delay in payments being made in personal injury cases by the county court in Liverpool; what representations he has received on this matter; what his reponse has been; and what plans he has to increase staff resources.

**The Solicitor-General:** A number of complaints have been received about delays in paying out suitors' money from Liverpool county court. Information is not readily available which would show how many of these cases are personal injury actions. Where money has been paid into court in satisfaction of a claim and the court is responsible for an unreasonable delay in paying out, the Lord Chancellor will consider the payment of interest of the capital sum for the period of the delay. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the written answer to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields) dated 6 June 1989 at column *1*, in relation to the steps being taken to remedy certain problems at Liverpool county court.

## DEFENCE

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The information is not readily available in the form requested. In January this year the Ministry of Defence received some 357 letters from right hon. and hon. Members, and some 2,223 from the beginning of the Session until 1 July. The number of letters sent to right hon. and hon. Members during these periods will have been higher, but a precise figure could be established only at disproportionate cost.

### Rhu Narrows (Dredging)

**Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Trident-related contract for the dredging of the Rhu narrows to be placed and the date when the contract will commence.

**Mr. Chope:** I have been asked to reply.

I will write to the hon. Member.

### Armed Forces (Recruits)

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the number of new recruits to the armed forces nationally in each of the last three years; and what number of these recruits originated from Bolton.

**Mr. Neubert:** The total number of recruits to the regular forces in each of the last three financial years was as follows:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| 1986-87 | 34,049 |
| 1987-88 | 33,826 |
| 1988-89 | 33,863 |

It is not possible to give precise figures on the number of recruits who originated from Bolton without checking each recruit's personal file. However, the following figures show the number of recruits enlisted at the Army's career information office at Bolton, although it is possible some did not actually live in Bolton at the time:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| 1986-87 | 153 |
| 1987-88 | 170 |
| 1988-89 | 148 |

It is not possible to give comparable figures for officer applicants, as they are handled centrally, or for Royal Navy and Royal Air Force recruits, as these services do not have offices in Bolton.

### Defence Estimates

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will provide an explanation of the fluctuations in the levels of expenditure in the category "Other Army Combat Forces: Other Areas since 1985-86", as set in table 2.3 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989", volume two.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** This category consists of the costs of the Belize garrison and personnel and freight transport costs around the world. The latter varies annually with activity levels and fuel costs.

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what categories of equipment are included in the budget item, "Expenditure on equipment: Other" in table 2.2 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989", volume two; and if he will make a statement on trends in this item since 1987-88.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** This sub-heading includes miscellaneous expenditure on such items as plant, machinery and works services at the R & D establishments and other outstations; technology demonstrator programmes; research equipment for the Meteorological Office;

extra-mural research contracts with universities and industry; royalties; payments to the Civil Aviation Authority; and computers. It is difficult to infer general trends from figures which are derived from so many such disparate items.

### RAF War Stocks

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the level of expenditure on RAF war stocks in each year since 1983-84, expressed in constant 1989-90 prices, applying the basis of attribution of war stocks used prior to 1986-87.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what were the reasons for the changes in the basis of calculation of RAF war stocks in 1986-87 and 1987-88 noted on page 10 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989", volume two.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The RAF war stocks figures reflect judgments about the attribution of the missiles or bombs to be purchased in a year between war stocks and peace-time consumption. The figures for 1986-87 were calculated on the basis of a new and narrower definition of war and contingency stocks (for example, they included gun ammunition but not missiles). In retrospect, however, these assumptions were not felt to have been as realistic as those previously used and subsequent figures have been calculated on a wider basis.

### United States Government

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next plans to meet representatives of the United States Government; and what matters he expects to discuss.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** My right hon. Friend next expects to meet representatives of the United States Government at the nuclear planning group in the autumn when a range of matters of mutual interest will be discussed.

### TA Marksmen

**Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the number of territorial soldiers who have qualified as marksmen over the last 15 years; and if he will tabulate the average number of rounds shot by Territorial Army soldiers in rifle practice by district and for sponsored and independent units for the last five years.

**Mr. Neubert:** The figures requested are not held centrally and it would not be possible to provide them without disproportionate cost.

### NATO Nuclear Planning Group

**Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the NATO nuclear planning group last met; and what items were on the agenda.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Provan (Mr. Wray) on 9 May at column *718*.

### TA (Recruitment)

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cost to date of the current recruitment drive for the Territorial Army.

**Mr. Neubert:** The volunteer reserve forces campaign, which emanated from a recommendation by the national employers liaison committee and which was launched in September of last year, will cost £2 million per annum over a period of five years. It should be stressed that the prime objective of this campaign is to improve retention with the reserve forces of all services. We would, however, hope to see some spin-off on recruitment.

### Free-fall Nuclear Bomb

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he has had with the West German Government about the possible replacement of the WE177 free-fall nuclear bomb.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** None.

### West German Defence Minister

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he is next meeting his West German counterpart; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** My right hon. Friend hopes to meet Dr. Stoltenberg at some time in the autumn to review the close defence relationship which we enjoy with the Federal Republic of Germany and to discuss matters of current bilateral interest.

### Troop Numbers

**Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effect on the British Army of the proposals tabled in Vienna for ceilings on troop numbers.

**Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effect on the British Army of the proposals tabled in Vienna for ceilings on troop numbers.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** NATO has made no specific manpower proposals at the CFE talks in Vienna affecting the British Army.

### Warsaw Pact

**Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department now has any evidence that the Warsaw pact is changing its military doctrine.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Hague) on 11 April 1989 at column *732*.

### Skyguard Radar

**Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the height-monitoring radar system Skyguard to begin operating in the Borders; and whether he will report on the results of the monitoring.

**Mr. Neubert:** I will write to the right hon. Member.

## Pilots

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many pilots are trained by the armed services each year; how many qualified pilots remain in the services for *(a)* five years and *(b)* 10 years after qualifying; how many are recruited by civil airlines; and if any of the cost of training is recouped from the civil airlines.

**Mr. Neubert:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

## Low Flying

**Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many complaints he has received this year about low-flying military aircraft.

**Mr. Neubert:** Between 1 January and 30 June 1989 the Ministry of Defence received 3,569 inquiries and complaints about military low-flying training in the United Kingdom.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if his Department has obtained a copy of the United States air forces in Europe document, "USAF Tactical Fighter Low-Level Flying Training in the Federal Republic of Germany Data Book", December 1988; and what plans he has to prepare a document setting out the rationales and requirements for Royal Air Force low flying over West Germany.

**Mr. Neubert** *[holding answer 10 July 1989]:* My Department has a copy of this document. There are no plans to prepare a similar document covering Royal Air Force low flying over the Federal Republic of Germany.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) on what date the Chepstow transit area was abolished; what was the specific reason for its abolition; and if he will list the parliamentary constituencies over which low flying is newly permitted, or within which the area available for low flying is extended, as a result of this measure;

(2) on what date that part of the London/Thames Valley avoidance area between Aylesbury and Chippenham and between Reading and Banbury was abolished; what was the specific reason for its abolition; and if he will list the parliamentary constituencies over which low flying is newly permitted, or within which the area available for low flying is extended, as a result of this measure.

**Mr. Neubert** *[holding answers 10 July and 20 July 1989]:* It is not our practice to publish detailed information on the United Kingdom low-flying system. As part of the continuous monitoring of the United Kingdom low-flying system, however, a programme of reviews of avoidance areas is carried out and changes made when necessary, reflecting changes on the ground, and aimed at spreading low flying more evenly and enhancing flight safety, while at the same time reducing, where possible, the disturbance to those on the ground.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of low-level training flights are flown at night; what changes in this proportion have occurred since 1979; and what definition of night is used in compiling this figure.

**Mr. Neubert** *[holding answer 10 July 1989]:* It is estimated that night low-flying training continues to account for some 5 per cent. of military low flying training activity in the United Kingdom. I have nothing further to add to my predecessor's answer of 10 November 1987 to the hon. Member at column *38*.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many low-level sorties were flown over the United Kingdom in each year since 1985 by United States Air Force aircraft from units not based in this country;

(2) how many Skyguard radar systems are to be employed on low-flying monitoring duties; and on what date they are due to enter service in this role;

(3) how many sorties were flown in the United Kingdom low-flying system by F16 aircraft in each year since 1985;

(4) how many sorties were flown in the United Kingdom low-flying system by *(a)* F-104, *(b)* Hunter, *(c)* Canberra, *(d)* Lynx, *(e)* Gazelle, *(f)* Sea King, *(g)* Puma, *(h)* Wessex, *(i)* Chinook, *(j)* Hercules, *(k)* Dominie, *(l)* Jet Provost, *(m)* Hawk, *(n)* Jaguar, *(o)* Buccaneer, *(p)* Harrier, *(q)* Phantom, *(r)* Tornado and *(s)* A-10, aircraft in each year since 1985;

(5) if a quota system, specifying a maximum number of aircraft permitted to operate in a specific low-flying area, is in operation in the United Kingdom low-flying system; and if he will make a statement;

(6) if he will list the categories of information required to be provided by military aircrew to Royal Air Force West Drayton when booking in to the United Kingdom low-flying system;

(7) if the low-flying regulations permit military pilots to fly their aircraft at speeds greater than 450 knots in order to catch up with other aircraft when changing or re-establishing formations at low-level;

(8) on how many occasions in 1988 Royal Air Force police covert monitoring of low-flying in the United Kingdom detected breaches of low-flying regulations;

(9) what agreements have been reached with the West German authorities since 30 January on reductions in the number of Royal Air Force low-level flights over West Germany;

(10) what information he can provide on the number of sorties flown at low level by United States Air Force aircraft, broken down by aircraft type;

(11) what is the minimum distance from the coast of Britain at which low flying over the sea at 100 ft minimum separation distance is authorised;

(12) what low-level air training activity was carried out at weekends over the Wash between 6 May and 25 June; and how many and what types of aircraft took part;

(13) what means are used by aircrew of military aircraft operating in the United Kingdom low flying system to advise Royal Air Force West Drayton when remaining within a low flying area beyond the booked period;

(14) what proportion of fixed-wing low flying at less than 250 ft over the United Kingdom in 1988 consisted of aircrew continuation training;

(15) what was the total number of complaints received about low-flying military aircraft in each month from January 1989 onwards; and how many of these came from addresses in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Northern Ireland;

(16) what was the total number of low-flying sorties over the United Kingdom in each month from January 1989 onwards;

(17) what, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy of 10 July, *Official Report*, column *386*, are the normal and long-standing arrangements applicable to public records in the Ministry of Defence referred to;

(18) why it is not Her Majesty's Government's practice to release detailed information about the United Kingdom low flying system;

(19) how many air misses involving British military aircraft were reported over the Federal Republic of Germany in each year since 1985;

(20) how many air misses involving military aircraft operating in the night low-flying system were reported for the period 1 June 1988 to 9 October 1988, inclusive.

**Mr. Neubert:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

### Goose Bay, Canada

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list all past, current and planned deployments of Royal Air Force Jaguar aircraft to Goose bay, Canada, in 1989, giving the title and purpose of each deployment and the number of aircraft involved;

(2) if he will list all past, current and planned deployments of Royal Air Force Hercules aircraft to Goose bay, Canada, in 1989, giving the title and purpose of each deployment and the number of aircraft involved.

**Mr. Neubert:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

### RAF Germany (Hours Flown)

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the average annual utilisation rate of Royal Air Force Germany fast jet aircraft, in terms of number of hours flown per aircraft.

**Mr. Neubert:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

### Tail Fins (Painting)

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the purpose of painting the tail fins of Royal Air Force aircraft in bright colours; what proportion of the front-line fast jet fleet has had these colours applied; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Neubert:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

### Bilateral Military Links

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the proposals made and agreements reached since 30 January in the Anglo-German study group on bilateral military links.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** In addition to the measures announced on 30 January, the British-German study group has continued to look for opportunities to increase bilateral co-operation. In February it was announced that consideration would be given to the formation of a joint air defence unit in the Federal Republic, and the feasibility of this is being examined. The study group will report to Ministers on its further work in the autumn.

### "British Defence Policy"

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department last published a copy of the pamphlet "British Defence Policy"; which external design consultants were contracted; how many copies were printed; how many were distributed; through which outlets; and what was the total cost of design, printing and publication.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) on 11 May 1989 at column *523*. "British Defence Policy 1989-90" was published on 4 May 1989. The contract for the design and printing of the booklet was let, by competitive tender, to Mason Clark McKenna Ltd. About 2,500 copies remain with the Ministry of Defence public relations staff for distribution. The total final cost of design, printing and publication, including staff costs, was £115,599.

### Uranium

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many tonnes of depleted uranium is currently held by his Department in the form of *(a)* uranium hexafluoride tails or *(b)* uranium metal; at what locations these materials are stored; and under what conditions these materials are being stored;

(2) if he will make a statement on the proposed depleted uranium machining facility to be built at AWE Aldermaston;

(3) what plans his Department has for using depleted uranium;

(4) what proportions of the depleted uranium metal acquired by his Department came from sources *(a)* in the United Kingdom, *(b)* in the United States and *(c)* in other countries.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

### Greenham Common

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has yet decided on the future use of *(a)* RAF Greenham Common and *(b)* RAF Molesworth following the removal of missiles and associated equipment under the intermediate nuclear forces treaty.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The future of RAF Molesworth is still under consideration, although we envisage continuing to make it available to the United States authorities for military purposes. No decision has been taken about the future of RAF Greenham Common but we expect that it will continue to be designated as a standby operating base.

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the timetable for removal of missiles from RAF Greenham Common under the intermediate range nuclear forces treaty; and when the first of these missiles is to be removed.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Under the terms of the Washington treaty, all of the 96 operational ground-launched cruise missiles currently based at RAF Greenham Common will have been removed and eliminated by 31 May 1991. For operational reasons, it is our policy not to reveal in advance precise dates concerning the removal programme.

## AWE Aldermaston

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the proposed tritium research and development facility to be built at AWE Aldermaston.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

## RAF Upper Heyford

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make sure that there are no obstructions along the route of the public highway known as the Portway at RAF Upper Heyford;

(2) if, in the light of the recent cases regarding the highway known as the Portway at RAF Upper Heyford and the challenges over his Department's use of land at RAF Greenham Common, he will review his Department's policies regarding acquisition and use of military lands;

(3) in which year the land, over which the highway known as the Portway at RAF Upper Heyford runs, was acquired by his Department; and in which year this land was closed off by fencing;

(4) what steps he will take to ensure public right of access to the highway known as the Portway at RAF Upper Heyford.

**Mr. Neubert:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

## El Salvador

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether training facilities are offered to representatives of the armed forces of El Salvador; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** No training assistance is provided to the armed forces of El Salvador at present.

## Ulster Defence Regiment (Resignations)

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of the number of persons who have been asked to resign from the Ulster Defence Regiment, and its Reserve since 1985 as a result of having been charged with crimes, giving separately details of persons who resigned as a result of being charged with scheduled offences.

**Mr. Neubert:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

## Army (Northern Ireland)

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the manpower strength of the British Army in Northern Ireland; and if he will give details of the number of operatives for the categories *(a)* UDR, Regular British Army, and *(b)* British Territorial Army on 31 December 1988 and 30 June 1989.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The figures for 31 December 1988 and for 31 March 1989 (the latest available) are as follows:

| | *31 December 1988* | *31 March 1989* |
|---|---|---|
| Ulster Defence Regiment | 6,312 | 6,342 |
| Regular Army | 9,695 | 9,658 |
| Territorial Army | 3,755 | 3,812 |

The figures for the Ulster Defence Regiment include both full time and part-time soldiers. Soldiers of the Territorial Army are not used in support of the RUC in counter-terrorist operations.

## Retired Officer Posts

**Mr. Thorne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the basis of comparability between those employed in his Department's retired officer posts and the administrative class of the Civil Service will be re-established.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I shall write to my hon. Friend.

## Military Facilities

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which military facilities Soviet Defence Minister Yazov inspected on his recent visit to the United Kingdom; which of these facilities is open for visits by United Kingdom citizens; and if he will make a statement on the benefit to the United Kingdom-Soviet Union relations of the visit.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** General Yazov visited RAF Leuchars, HMS Invincible, the Parachute Regiment depot and the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. All of these are open to the general public from time to time. General Yazov's successful visit is an important milestone in bilateral relations and has contributed significantly to improved mutual understanding in the defence and security field.

## Gruinard Island

**Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if agricultural production is now permitted on Gruinard Island;

(2) when restrictions on visits to the Gruinard Island were *(a)* first put in place and *(b)* ended or removed.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

## Animals (Experiments)

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of the different animals used by his Department in experiments.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

## Defence Expenditure

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by how much spending on defence has increased in real terms over the past 10 years.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Defence expenditure in 1988-89 was some 16 per cent. higher in real terms than in 1978-79, excluding the effect of general inflation measured by the GDP deflator.

## Nuclear Forces (Deployment)

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the thresholds of aggression at which nuclear forces will be deployed by NATO; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The possible use of nuclear weapons in response to an attack is central to NATO's policy of flexible response. However, it would undermine deterrence to spell out in advance the precise circumstances in which nuclear weapons would or might be used.

### Armed Forces (Personnel)

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether, following the findings of the MARILYN report regarding the difficulty and cost of maintaining current personnel levels in the armed forces, he proposes to conduct a defence review; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The "Statement on the defence Estimates" explained (volume I, paragraphs 513-518) the changing factors affecting the recruitment and retention of service personnel, and some of the measures we are taking to deal with the problems. There is no question of a defence review.

### Hunting

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the dates and locations of all occasions when Ministry of Defence land has been used for hunting with hounds in the last 12 months;

(2) what are the costs of transporting riders and horses from the Household Cavalry to *(a)* meets of the New Forest buckhounds and *(b)* meets of the Vale of the White Horse hunt, Gloucestershire;

(3) what information he has on the number of Army personnel who have been involved in hunting and in other duties associated with hunting in the past 12 months; whether paid leave of absence is granted for these duties; and how many duty hours were involved;

(4) whether, when Ministry of Defence land is used for hunting, adjoining landowners are contacted in the case of the hounds or riders entering on to their land.

**Mr. Neubert:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

### Government Property (Hire)

**Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Ministry of Defence personnel are permitted to hire Government property for personal use.

**Mr. Neubert:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

### Environmental Pollution

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has assessed the United States Department of Energy's report on radioactive and toxic contamination at its military production facilities, released in January, in order to ascertain whether the details have relevance for the United Kingdom's environmental management practice at his Department's nuclear facilities.

**Mr. Alan Clark** *[holding answer 13 July 1989]:* I shall write to the hon. Member.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Wages Councils

**Mr. Bright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received on the future of wages councils; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that my right hon. Friend the former Minister of State gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) on 21 March, *Official Report*, columns *555-56*. Reconsideration of the responses has shown that the second sentence in the narrative paragraph following the table in that reply should have read: "Replies by employer bodies represented on the six largest councils, which embrace 94 per cent. of the workers covered by the system, show that a majority of respondents want the councils abolished". Of the 138 seats held by employer bodies on these councils 83 are held by bodies wanting abolition, 30 by those wanting retention and 25 by non-respondents.

### Earnings

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States of America the income of employees and the self-employed respectively as a percentage of national income in 1959, 1969, 1979 and the latest year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Ryder:** I have been asked to reply.

I shall answer when resources permit.

### YTS

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many YTS starts and how many leavers were recorded by each payment type, by male and female, and by one or two-year training entitlement by standard Training Agency region for Great Britain as a whole, and for each of the last three months.

**Mr. Nicholls:** As the information is contained in several tables I shall write to the hon. Member with the information requested and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

**Mr. Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of YTS trainees leave before the completion of their two-year programme.

**Mr. Eggar:** The latest information from the YTS leavers survey shows that, excluding re-entrants, 72 per cent. of trainees left YTS four weeks or more before completing their two-year entitlement to training, in the period between March 1987 and February 1989.

The proportion of early leavers in this period is not typical of YTS as a whole, since a two-year entitlement could not be completed before April 1989. The percentage of early leavers is falling as more months with a representative mixture of completers and early leavers are included in the estimate.

**Mr. Trotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the numbers or proportions of trainees who leave YTS within 13, 26, 39 and 52 weeks, respectively, by Training Agency region.

**Mr. Nicholls** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The information requested is given in the table.

*Table to show the percentage of all leavers who leave YTS in the time bands shown by region*

| | 13 per cent. | 26 per cent. | 39 per cent. | 52 per cent. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 21 | 14 | 11 | 19 |
| London | 25 | 15 | 11 | 20 |
| South West | 21 | 13 | 11 | 19 |
| West Midlands | 25 | 15 | 12 | 16 |
| East Midlands & Eastern | 23 | 14 | 11 | 17 |
| Yorks and Humberside | 25 | 14 | 11 | 17 |
| North West | 27 | 14 | 11 | 14 |
| Northern | 23 | 13 | 11 | 15 |
| Wales | 24 | 14 | 11 | 18 |
| Scotland | 28 | 15 | 11 | 17 |

## Tourism

**Mr. Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will set out his present responsibilities in relation to tourism.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Secretary of State for Employment is responsible for tourism policy in England and for overall tourism in Great Britain. The Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales are responsible for tourism policy in their countries.

## Travel-to-interview Scheme

**Mr. Ted Garrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will increase the basic eligibility wage level to applicants for the travel-to-interview scheme.

**Mr. Eggar:** Following a recent review of the eligibility criteria for the travel-to-interview scheme, it has been decided to increase the upper salary limit to £16,500 with effect from 11 September 1989.

## Dock Labour

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he now has for the maintenance of current standards of enforcement of health and safety arrangements in scheme ports in the United Kingdom in the event of the termination of the current scheme for employment of dock labour.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Primary responsibility for health and safety at work lies with employers and others in the workplace. Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive have enforcement powers to ensure that employers comply with their duties under health and safety legislation, which applied in scheme and non-scheme ports alike. The abolition of the dock labour scheme has not affected these arrangements.

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he now intends to take to ensure that current arrangements for determining remuneration and conditions of service in non-scheme ports shall be continued in the event of the termination of the present dock labour scheme.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The dock labour scheme was abolished by the Dock Work Act 1989 which came into effect on 3 July. Arrangements for settling the terms and conditions of employment in all British ports are a matter for the employers directly concerned and their employees.

## Labour Statistics

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the numbers employed in manufacturing in the United Kingdom, United States of America, West Germany, France, Italy and Japan in 1959, 1968, 1979 and at the latest available date.

**Mr. Eggar:** The earliest year for which information is available for all the countries except Italy, is 1963. The information is shown in the table.

*Manufacturing employment*

*(thousands)*

| | 1963 | 1968 | 1979 | 1987 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 8,423 | 8,353 | 7,935 | 5,415 |
| Germany | 9,912 | 9,639 | 8,793 | 8,122 |
| France | 5,341 | 5,294 | 5,556 | 4,629 |
| Italy | — | — | 5,371 | 4,639 |
| Japan | 11,080 | 13,050 | 13,330 | 14,250 |
| United States | 18,025 | 20,856 | 22,458 | 20,935 |

*Source:* ED for United Kingdom and OECD for other countries.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the increase in civil employment in *(a)* 1959 to 1973, *(b)* 1973 to 1979, and *(c)* 1979 to date in (i) the United Kingdom, (ii) West Germany, (iii) France, (iv) Italy, (v) Japan, and (vi) the United States of America.

**Mr. Eggar:** The figures are shown in the table.

*Change in civilian employment*

| | 1959 to 1973 | | 1973 to 1979 | | 1979 to 1988 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Thousands | Per cent. | Thousands | Per cent. | Thousands | Per cent. |
| United Kingdom | 936 | 3·9 | 364 | 1·5 | 817 | 3·3 |
| Germany | 842 | 3·3 | −896 | −3·4 | 1,248 | 4·9 |
| France | 2,192 | 11·7 | 442 | 2·1 | −161 | −0·8 |
| Italy | −981 | −4·9 | 1,051 | 5·5 | 775 | 3·9 |
| Japan | 9,240 | 21·3 | 2,200 | 4·2 | 5,320 | 9·7 |
| United States | 20,434 | 31·6 | 13,760 | 16·2 | 16,144 | 16·3 |

*Sources:* ED for UK and OECD for other countries.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* *(a)* the number of unemployed who have not worked for at least a year and *(b)* the number who last worked in manufacturing industry by full-time, part-time, sex and adult status.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Data for each of the groups requested, on a comparable basis, is available only from the labour force survey (LFS). A preliminary estimate from the spring 1988 LFS of the number of unemployed (ILO/OECD definition) aged 16 or over in Great Britain, who left their last job 12 months or more prior to interview, is 1,191,000.

Other preliminary estimates, as requested, are shown in the following table:

*Unemployed[1] whose last job was in the manufacturing industries[2]—Great Britain*

*Spring 1988, Thousands*

| Age | All persons | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) 16 or over | 351 | 218 | 133 |
| full-time[3] | 309 | 207 | 102 |
| part-time[3] | 42 | 11 | 31 |
| (ii) 18 or over | 335 | 207 | 128 |
| full-time[3] | 294 | 197 | 97 |
| part-time[3] | 41 | 10 | 31 |

[1] ILO/OECD definition.

[2] SIC 1980, Industry Divisions 2-4. Persons who left their last job three or more years prior to interview are not asked about their previous industry.

[3] Based on respondent's own assessment, not on the number of hours usually worked.

*Source*: 1988 LFS, preliminary estimates.

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide full details of the number of people who are receiving unemployment benefit for part of a week who are also working part-time *(a)* at the latest available date, *(b)* over the last 12 months and *(c)* in the preceding two years.

**Mr. Eggar:** This information is not available.

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of people employed in *(a)* the textile industry and *(b)* the clothing industry for each year since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The available information is as follows:

*Employees in Employment (unadjusted for seasonal variation) Great Britain*

| June each year[1] | [2]Textile industry (class 43) | [2]Footwear and clothing industry (class 45) |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 371,000 | 395,000 |
| 1980 | 325,000 | 361,000 |
| 1981 | 273,000 | 314,000 |
| 1982 | 256,000 | 295,000 |
| 1983 | 239,000 | 286,000 |
| 1984 | 234,000 | 292,000 |
| 1985 | 233,000 | 295,000 |
| 1986 | 234,000 | 296,000 |
| 1987 | 223,000 | 293,000 |
| 1988 | 223,000 | 295,000 |
| 1989 (May) | 204,000 | 280,000 |

[1] Except 1989 where May figures have been given as June figures are not yet available.

[2]Standard Industrial Classification 1980.

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of people employed in the machine tool manufacturing industry for each year since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The available information is as follows:

*Employees in employment*
*(unadjusted for seasonal variation)*
*Great Britain*
*Metal-working machine tools and engineers tools (Group 322)[2]*

| June each year[1] | Numbers |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 111,000 |
| 1980 | 110,000 |
| 1981 | 96,000 |
| 1982 | 90,000 |
| 1983 | 75,000 |
| 1984 | 75,000 |
| 1985 | 78,000 |
| 1986 | 78,000 |
| 1987 | 75,000 |
| 1988 | 77,000 |
| May 1989 | 78,000 |

[1] Except 1989 where May figures have been given as June figures are not yet available.

[2] Standard Industrial Classification 1980.

## Health and Safety

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many companies have been subjected to legal proceedings by the Health and Safety Executive due to their breach of regulation 7 of the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazard Regulations 1984.

**Mr. Nicholls:** None.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many health and safety prosecutions by the Health and Safety Executive were carried out in *(a)* magistrates courts and *(b)* Crown courts, in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Available information is set out in the table:

| Year | [1]All courts | | [2]Crown courts |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Information Laid | Counts on which convicted | Counts on which convicted |
| 1983[3] | 2,238 | 1,941 | — |
| 1984 | 2,209 | 1,944 | — |
| 1985 | 2,321 | 1,915 | — |
| 1986-87 | 2,199 | 1,771 | 35 |
| 1987-88 | 2,337 | 2,053 | 14 |
| 1988-89 | n/a[4] | n/a[4] | 38 |

n/a = Not yet available.

[1] Data relate to prosecutions brought in all Magistrates, Crown and Sheriff's Courts by factory and agricultural inspectorates, mines and quarries inspectorate, nuclear installations inspectorate, railway inspectorate and petroleum engineering division (Department of Energy). The vast majority of prosecutions are brought by HM factory and agricultural inspectorates.

[2] Data relates to prosecutions in England and Wales brought by factory inspectorate, and is derived from a special HSE survey. Information prior to April 1986 is not available.

[3] 1983-85 calendar years: 1986-87 onwards year commencing 1 April. Data for January—March 1986 have to be omitted.

[4] Data currently being processed.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the average financial penalty imposed in successful health and safety prosecutions brought by the Health and Safety Executive in each of the last five years for which figures are available *(a)* in magistrates courts and *(b)* in Crown courts.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Available information is set out in the table:

*Average penalty per count on which convicted*[1]

| | *All courts*[2]<br>£ | *Crown courts*[3]<br>£ |
|---|---|---|
| 1983[4][3] | 252 | — |
| 1984 | 313 | — |
| 1985 | 436 | n/a |
| 1986-87 | 410 | 2,086 |
| 1987-88 | 792 | 2,696 |
| 1988-89 | [5]n/a | 3,017 |

[1] Defendants may be convicted on several counts.

[2] Data relates to prosecutions brought in all magistrates, Crown and sheriff's courts by factory and agricultural inspectorates, mines and quarries inspectorate, nuclear installations inspectorate, railway inspectorate, and petroleum engineering division (Department of Energy).

[3] Data relates to prosecutions brought by factory inspectorate in England and Wales and is derived from a special survey by the HSE. Information prior to April 1986 is not available.

[4] 1983-85 calendar years: 1986-87 onwards year commencing 1 April. Data for January to March 1986 have been omitted.

[5] Data currently being processed.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the policy of the chief inspector of factories as to whether health and safety at work cases should be prosecuted in magistrates courts or Crown courts.

**Mr. Nicholls:** It is a decision for magistrates courts whether a case should be committed on indictment to the Crown court. Health and Safety Executive inspectors can make representations asking for committal, and will normally do so where they consider a particularly serious offence has been committed, or where the case seems of national significance.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total number of factories and other places of work for which the Health and Safety Executive is responsible for enforcing the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; how many of these have been basically inspected by the factory inspectorate in each of the last four years; and how many have received no inspection in the last *(a)* five, *(b)* seven, *(c)* nine and *(d)* 11 or more years.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the names of those companies which are currently in breach of the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards (CIMAH) Regulations 1984 by not having submitted a full safety case under regulation 7 to the Health and Safety Executive by 30 June.

**Mr. Nicholls:** No. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not make publicly available the names of companies which may not have complied with health and safety and other related legislation unless enforcement notices have been served which have implications for the safety of the public. Details of these are available on the publicly accessible registers kept at HSE's local area offices.

## Factory Inspections

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any figures which indicate, on a comparable basis, the frequency of factory inspections in each of the European Community countries.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Direct comparisons of this kind are very difficult because of differences in enforcement arrangements and statistical systems.

Evidence on these issues was given by the Health and Safety Commission to the Employment Select Committee and this is recorded in the minutes of evidence for 28 January 1987, "The Work of the Health and Safety Commission and the Health and Safety Executive", House of Commons paper 164, part 1, which is available in the House Library.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) if he has any indication of when a common standard and frequency of factory inspection will be established throughout the European Community countries;

(2) what representations he has received seeking the establishment of a common standard and frequency of factory inspection throughout the European Community countries.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I am aware of concern about consistency of enforcement standards in the European Community, from various contacts with both sides of United Kingdom industry. I share the view of the Health and Safety Commission, in its latest plan of work, on the need to ensure that Community legislation is implemented and enforced in an even-handed way in all member states. There is no quick or easy solution; the United Kingdom will take every opportunity—in relevant contacts with the Community institutions and with other member states—to promote greater attention to the issue.

## Health and Safety Executive

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) in which newspapers, periodicals and so on, and at what cost, the post of deputy director general of the Health and Safety Executive was advertised;

(2) who were the members of the interview panel which interviewed candidates for the post of deputy director general of the Health and Safety Executive.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Health and Safety Commission did not advertise this appointment and there is no statutory or other obligation on it to do so.

The appointment was made by the commission with the approval of the Secretary of State for Employment, after consultation with the director general of the Health and Safety Executive, and on terms approved by the Minister for the Civil Service, as is the case with any appointment of a member of the executive. The commission is well acquainted with Mr. Eves' qualifications and talents.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of Health and Safety Executive area directors currently hold formal professional management qualifications.

**Mr. Nicholls:** A formal professional management qualification is not a prerequisite for appointment to the post of area director. They are all given appropriate training to ensure that they have the management skills necessary to perform their duties. There are currently 20 area directors employed by the Health and Safety Executive; 20 per cent. hold formal professional management qualifications.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of Health and Safety Executive area directors are currently aged under 50 years.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Thirty per cent. of area directors employed by the Health and Safety Executive are under the age of 50.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of the field force of *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses, employed by the medical division of the Health and Safety Executive are aged 50 years and over.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Fifty-nine per cent. of the doctors employed in the field force of the Health and Safety Executive medical division, are aged 50 or over. For nurses, the proportion is 48 per cent.

**Mr. Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the contents of "Health and Safety—an alternative report on the work of the Health and Safety Executive in 1988" produced by the Institution of Professional Civil Servants.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I have not received a copy of this report.

## Unemployment Benefit

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list for each year since 1979, the numbers of people disqualified from unemployment benefit by *(a)* occupation, *(b)* age and *(c)* length of disqualification both in total and as a percentage of those receiving such benefit.

**Mr. Eggar:** The information requested is not collected and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

## Employment Training

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list those local authorities which are presently participating in the ET scheme.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Local authorities currently participating in employment training as training managers or training agents are listed at tables 1 and 2.

*Table 1*

LOCAL AUTHORITIES PARTICIPATING IN EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AS TRAINING MANAGERS

*County Councils in England*
Avon
Bedfordshire
Berkshire
Cambridgeshire
Cheshire
Cleveland
Cornwall
Cumbria
Devon
Dorset
Durham
East Sussex
Essex
Gloucestershire
Hampshire
Isle of Wight
Kent
Lancashire
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Northamptonshire
Northumberland
North Yorkshire
Shropshire
Somerset
Straffordshire
Suffolk
Warwickshire
West Sussex
Wiltshire

*London Boroughs*
Brent
Enfield
Hammersmith and Fulham
Hounslow
Kingston upon Thames (Royal)
Redbridge

*Metropolitan District Councils in England*
Barnsley
Birmingham City
Bradford City
Coventry City
Doncaster
Dudley
Gateshead
Halton
Kirklees
Leeds City
Newcastle upon Tyne
Oldham
Rotherham
Salford City
Sefton
Solihull
South Tyneside
Stockport
Sunderland
Tameside
Trafford
Wigan
Wolverhampton

*District Councils in England*
Allerdale
Alnwick
Ashfield
Bath City
Beverley
Boothferry
Brentwood
Burnley
Cannock Chase
Castle Morpeth
Charnwood
Chester le Street
Chorley
Corby
Derby City
Easington
East Hertfordshire
East Lindsey
East Yorkshire
Epsom and Ewell
Glanford
Great Grimsby
Guildford
Harrogate
Hartlepool
Hastings
Hereford
High Peak
Ipswich
Kettering
Kingston upon Hull
Lancaster City
Leicester City
Lichfield
Macclesfield
Mansfield

Newark and Sherwood
Plymouth City
Portsmouth City
Preston
Scarborough
Scunthorpe
Sedgefield
South Lakeland
Southampton
Vale of White Horse
Wear Valley
West Lancashire
West Lindsey
West Oxfordshire
Weymouth and Portland

*County Councils in Wales*
Clwyd
Dyfed
Gwent
Gwynedd
Mid Glamorgan
Powys
West Glamorgan

*District Councils in Wales*
Blaenau Gwent
Cardiff City
Carmarthen
Ceredigion
Cynon Valley
Dinefwr
Islwyn
Llanelli
Lliw Valley
Monmouth
Neath
Newport
Port Talbot
Preseli
Rhondda
South Pembrokeshire
Swansea City
Taff-Ely
Torfaen
Vale of Glamorgan
Wrexham Maelor
Ynys Mon

*Scotland Regions*
Borders
Dumfries and Galloway
Fife
Grampian
Highland
Lothian

*Islands*
Orkney

*Districts*
Angus
Argyll and Bute
Caithness
Clydesdale
Cumberland and Kilsyth
Cumnock and Doon Valley
Dunfermline
East Kilbride
Hamilton
Kirkcaldy
Lochaber
Midlothian
Moray
North East Fife
Ross and Cromarty
Wigtown

*Table 2*
LOCAL AUTHORITIES PARTICIPATING IN EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AS TRAINING AGENTS

*County Councils in England*
Avon
Bedfordshire
Cheshire
Cornwall
Devon
Dorset
Gloucester
Hertfordshire
Isle of Wight
Kent
Northumberland
North Yorkshire
Shropshire
Somerset
Surrey
West Sussex
Wiltshire

*London Boroughs*
Enfield
Harrow
Hillingdon
Hounslow
Kingston upon Thames (Royal)

*Metropolitan District Councils in England*
Birmingham City
Bradford
Calderdale
Gateshead
Kirklees
Leeds City
Newcastle
Solihull
South Tyneside
Sunderland
Trafford

*District Councils in England*
Cambridge
Peterborough
Portsmouth
Southampton

*County Councils in Wales*
Clwyd
Dyfed
Gwent
Gwynedd
Mid Glamorgan
Powys
South Glamorgan
West Glamorgan

*Scotland Regions*
Borders
Dumfries and Galloway
Fife
Grampian

*Islands*
Orkney

*Districts*
Wigtown
Caithness

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has about local authorities which do not intend to renew their participation in ET schemes.

**Mr. Nicholls:** My right hon. Friend is aware of the following local authorities which will not be renewing their participation in employment training:

Wolverhampton metropolitan borough council
Cleveland county council
Leicester city council
Similar action is expected by Mansfield district council.

### European Social Fund

**Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what is the increase in the level of central Government funding from the European social fund in 1989 over 1988; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the split in Britain's European social fund allocation between central Government and the voluntary sector; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** For 1988 the European Commission allocated over £215 million to programmes run by central Government. For 1989 the allocation was £236 million while around £26 million was allocated to the voluntary sector. We view the continued support of the European Commission through the European social fund as of great importance in our efforts to improve training opportunities and combat unemployment.

### Social Charter

**Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he supports health and safety in the workplace provisions contained within the social charter.

**Mr. Eggar:** The Council of Ministers has recently adopted a European Community directive, setting out a framework for health and safety in the workplace, which we supported. This broadly mirrors our own Health and Safety at Work etc. Act. We are continuing discussions on a number of directives dealing with specific areas.

The Government have made it clear that they see no point in the Commission's proposal for a Communitywide social charter.

### Prices and Wages

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the percentage by which *(a)* the retail prices index and *(b)* the average wage level has increased in each EEC country, the United States of America, Japan, Sweden, the EEC and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as a whole since the start of 1988.

**Mr. Eggar:** The dates for which information has been compiled vary a great deal between countries so it is impossible to make a comparison which is both comprehensive and up-to-date. All the available information is given in tables 5.9 and 6.8 of the *Employment Gazette*, which is available in the Library.

### Random Omnibus Survey

**Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list *(a)* all the questions relating to employment that were asked in the survey carried out by NOP Market Research Limited in the NOP random omnibus survey in the two weeks from 22 February and *(b)* the detailed answers that were given to these questions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls** *[holding answer 17 April 1989]*: The main findings of the survey were set out in the Green Paper "Removing Barriers to Employment" (Cm 655) published on 20 March 1989. I regret that I was unable to provide the hon. Member with a full reply on 17 April. Detailed analyis of the data is still taking place and a full analysis will be published in an article in the *Employment Gazette* later in the year.

**Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he intends to give a substantive reply to the question from the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East concerning the NOP random survey, tabled for priority written answer on 17 April; what are the reasons for the delay in answering; and what is the longest interval between the asking of a priority written question and its answer by his Department in this Parliament.

**Mr. Nicholls** *[holding answer 26 June 1989]*: I regret I was unable to give the hon. Member a full reply on 17 April or 26 June.

I have answered the hon. Member's question of 17 April today.

### Benefit Claimants

**Mr. Terry Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many persons in the west midlands region were disqualified from receiving unemployment benefit during the period 1 January to 31 March because they were considered to have left their employment voluntarily without just cause and were disqualified for the maximum period of 26 weeks.

**Mr. Eggar** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]*: For the period 1 January to 31 March 1989, the number of persons in the west midlands region who were disqualified for receiving unemployment benefit because they were considered to have left their employment voluntarily without just cause was 4,471.

Information requested on the number of claimants disqualified for the maximum period of 26 weeks is not collected. However, the Department of Social Security has undertaken a survey to establish the proportion of claims which are disqualified for the maximum period, including those disqualified for leaving employment without just cause. An initial analysis of a sample of cases indicates that the full 26-week period is imposed in less than two thirds of the cases. The information obtained from the survey is still being analysed and will be published in full shortly.

### Agriculture Inspectors

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many farms on average each agricultural inspector has within his responsibility; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls:** The Health and Safety Executive's agricultural inspectorate has approximately 272,000 farm premises on its records.

The inspectorate targets its visits according to hazard and the programme of inspections is concentrated on those premises where the hazard is greatest. In 1988-89 the inspectorate made a total of 3[illegible],303 farm inspections.

### Disabled People (Transport and Holiday Accommodation)

**Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans his Department has to improve transport and holiday accommodation for the disabled; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholls** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* My Department, through the English tourist board, contributes funding (£35,000 in 1989-90) to the holiday care service. In conjunction with the English tourist board, the holiday care service has published a series of booklets giving advice to hotel and guesthouse proprietors on providing for disabled visitors.

The "Tourism for All" working party, set up by the English tourist board in 1988, is due to issue its report in September this year, which will make recommendations on improvements in holiday provision for disabled and disadvantaged people. The report will include sections on transport and accommodation.

### Product Design and Development

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is his estimate of the number of direct and indirect jobs in product design and development lost since 1979 and the number of jobs now threatened as a result of the increase in (i) import penetration, (ii) the import content of exported goods and (iii) the number of branch plants of overseas companies; and what is his estimate of the reduction in the number of such jobs since 1970 and 1979, respectively.

**Mr. Forth** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* I have been asked to reply.

No information is available on the number of jobs in product design and development. The economy gains from the exchange of goods and services and from the two-way flow of investment. It cannot be assumed that increased imports and inward investment result in a loss of jobs.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Fire Service (Pay and Conditions)

**Dr. Hampson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what response he has received from the national joint council for local authorities' fire brigades in answer to his request that a joint national joint council and Home Office working party should be set up to examine pay and conditions of service within the fire service; and if he will make a statement on the pay and conditions of service of the fire service.

**Mr. John Patten:** The chairman of the national joint council has recently written to my right hon. and noble Friend, enclosing a letter from the joint secretaries of the council which indicates its willingness to accept an ad hoc working party jointly constituted by the Home Office and the national joint council.

We wish to see the national joint council examine, fairly and with an open mind, the conditions of service-related issues raised by the Audit Commission's paper on value for money in the fire service, including rigid employment conditions. We also wish to see the council consider whether the current fire service pay formula represents the best way forward for the future.

### Durham Prison

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are *(a)* involved in day-time education classes and *(b)* attending evening classes in Durham H wing.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** In Durham H wing in the week ending 21 July there were eight prisoners attending morning day-time classes and a further eight prisoners attending afternoon day-time classes. Two evening classes, each with a maximum attendance of six, are held each night during the week. The weekly total of 10 classes offers 60 student places; all places are taken up, with some prisoners attending more than one evening class.

### Allowance Books (Theft)

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instances of the theft of Department of Health and Social Security allowance books have occurred during each of the last three years in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the Bolton area; and how many prosecutions have been made as a result.

**Mr. John Patten:** This information is not available centrally.

### Immigration

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he proposes to deal with over-age applicants from the Indian sub-continent *(a)* whose applications have already been refused on the grounds that they do not qualify under the immigration rules, *(b)* whose appeals have been dismissed on the above grounds and *(c)* whose appeals have been deferred pending his announcement on the use of DNA evidence in such cases.

**Mr. Renton:** Where an application for entry clearance has been refused, and any appeal dismissed, that application cannot be reopened. The case can be reconsidered only in the context of a fresh application for entry clearance.

Where a person previously refused entry clearance as a child on relationship grounds is able to establish relationship by means of DNA evidence, but is now over 18 and does not qualify for admission under paragraphs 55 or 56 of the immigration rules, the reapplication will be considered in accordance with the policy which my right hon. Friend announced on 14 June at column *463*.

When an application for entry clearance or an appeal against refusal had not been finally determined by 14 June, the case will be reviewed in accordance with the terms of my right hon. Friend's statement (if applicable) without the need for a fresh application. In some such cases, it may be necessary to arrange a further interview by the entry clearance officer to establish the applicant's present circumstances before a decision can be reached.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* husbands, *(b)* wives and *(c)* dependent children have been refused (i) extension of stay and (ii) settlement in the United Kingdom on the grounds that the Secretary of State is not satisfied that they can be maintained and accommodated without recourse to public funds.

**Mr. Renton:** The available information relating to after-entry cases is given in the following table. Information on dependent children is not readily available.

*Decisions on husbands and wives applications in 1988 under HC 503 "Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules"*

| | *Number* Husbands | Wives |
|---|---|---|
| *Refusals to grant initial extension of leave to remain* | | |
| on grounds of | | |
| (i) Accommodation | 7 | 2 |
| (ii) Maintenance | 8 | 4 |
| (iii) Maintenance and accommodation | 11 | 5 |
| *Refusals of settlement after the initial 12 months extension* | | |
| General considerations, including recourse to public funds (para 98 HC 503) | 18 | — |

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applications for *(a)* single entry and *(b)* multiple entry visit visas were (1) received, (2) granted and (3) refused at each post in the Indian sub-continent, Ghana, Nigeria and Jamaica in each quarter of 1988 and the first quarter of 1989; and what was the delay between application and interview for those whose applications were felt to need a second or long interview at each of the above posts in (i) June 1988, (ii) January 1989 and (iii) June 1989 or the nearest available date;

(2) how many applications for entry clearance in order to seek asylum in the United Kingdom were *(a)* received and *(b)* granted by country during 1988 and the first quarter of 1989.

**Mr. Renton:** I shall write to the hon. Member and deposit a copy of the reply in the Library.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications from over-age reapplicants from the Indian sub-continent seeking to join a sponsor settled in the United Kingdom have been *(a)* made, *(b)* deferred, *(c)* refused and *(d)* granted since 1986; and how many such reapplicants in each category had undergone successful DNA tests.

**Mr. Renton:** The information requested is not available centrally.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many nationals of *(a)* Jamaica, *(b)* Turkey, *(c)* Morocco, *(d)* the United States of America, *(e)* Australia, *(f)* Malaysia, *(g)* Hong Kong, *(h)* Guyana, *(i)* Trinidad, *(j)* Colombia and *(k)* Algeria were (i) granted and (ii) refused permission to enter the United Kingdom at ports of entry in each quarter since January 1987 to the nearest available date.

**Mr. Renton:** The information is given in the following table:

*Total passenger admissions and those refused leave to enter and removed by selected nationalities*

*Numbers*

| | *First quarter* | | *Second quarter* | | *Third quarter* | | *Fourth quarter* | | *Total* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Admissions* | *Refused and removed* | *Admissions* | *Refused and removed* | *Admissions* | *Refused and removed* | *Admissions* | *Refused and removed* | *Admissions* | *Refused and removed* |
| *1987* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jamaica | 5,910 | 54 | 6,880 | 45 | 12,300 | 61 | 6,430 | 109 | 31,600 | 269 |
| Turkey | 12,100 | 227 | 14,300 | 265 | 20,400 | 302 | 16,100 | 623 | 62,900 | 1,417 |
| Morocco | 3,070 | 96 | 3,430 | 105 | 8,510 | 324 | 4,720 | 275 | 19,700 | 800 |
| United States of America | 399,000 | 267 | 772,000 | 242 | 945,000 | 298 | 503,000 | 243 | 2,620,000 | 1,050 |
| Australia | 58,600 | 30 | 104,000 | 35 | 124,000 | 54 | 73,000 | 33 | 359,000 | 152 |
| Malaysia | 10,600 | 107 | 16,100 | 91 | 23,200 | 131 | 15,000 | 113 | 64,900 | 442 |
| Hong Kong (BDTCs) | 12,100 | 98 | 12,700 | 96 | 24,900 | 59 | 11,600 | 57 | 61,300 | 310 |
| Guyana | 890 | 12 | 1,240 | 3 | 2,500 | 8 | 1,060 | 4 | 5,680 | 27 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 2,980 | 6 | 4,280 | 8 | 7,870 | 8 | 3,400 | 9 | 18,500 | 31 |
| Colombia | 2,980 | 67 | 5,070 | 110 | 6,710 | 80 | 3,510 | 85 | 18,300 | 342 |
| Algeria | 4,120 | 185 | 4,150 | 167 | 8,250 | 487 | 4,560 | 361 | 21,100 | 1,200 |
| *1988* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jamaica | 5,760 | 82 | 6,900 | 95 | 11,700 | 116 | 6,300 | 131 | 30,600 | 424 |
| Turkey | 15,300 | 393 | 15,200 | 380 | 22,500 | 653 | 16,100 | 786 | 69,100 | 2,212 |
| Morocco | 3,070 | 166 | 3,630 | 294 | 8,020 | 649 | 4,620 | 353 | 19,400 | 1,462 |
| United States of America | 413,000 | 267 | 680,000 | 261 | 843,000 | 273 | 547,000 | 281 | 2,480,000 | 1,082 |
| Australia | 56,700 | 22 | 101,000 | 38 | 126,000 | 47 | 83,100 | 42 | 367,000 | 149 |
| Malaysia | 11,100 | 93 | 15,100 | 156 | 22,600 | 124 | 15,200 | 128 | 64,000 | 501 |
| Hong Kong (BDTCs) | 12,900 | 76 | 12,500 | 126 | 24,200 | 61 | 10,700 | 33 | 60,300 | 296 |
| Guyana | 870 | 7 | 1,190 | 5 | 2,340 | 8 | 1,230 | 7 | 5,640 | 27 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 3,260 | 12 | 3,670 | 4 | 7,130 | 7 | 3,290 | 19 | 17,300 | 42 |
| Colombia | 3,070 | 89 | 4,830 | 193 | 5,940 | 126 | 3,510 | 111 | 17,300 | 519 |
| Algeria | 3,990 | 324 | 3,970 | 339 | 7,460 | 1,005 | 3,830 | 677 | 19,300 | 2,345 |

*1989 first quarter*

| | *Admissions* | *Refused and removed* |
|---|---|---|
| Jamaica | 6,230 | 236 |
| Turkey | 17,000 | 618 |
| Morocco | 3,520 | 253 |
| USA | 442,000 | 261 |
| Australia | 72,400 | 35 |
| Malaysia | 12,400 | 93 |
| Hong Kong (BDTCs) | 14,500 | 33 |
| Guyana | 1,080 | 11 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 3,260 | 18 |
| Colombia | 3,320 | 116 |
| Algeria | 4,120 | 391 |

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many notices have been issued to each airline under the Immigration (Carriers' Liability)

Act 1987 in each quarter since March 1988; how much money has accrued as a result; and how many such notices have been contested by each airline.

**Mr. Renton:** Information on the record of individual airlines under the Act is a matter of confidentiality. The total number of notices issued to carriers (ie airlines and sea operators) in each quarter since March 1988 was as follows:

| *Quarter ending* | *Number of notices* |
|---|---|
| 30 June 1988 | 758 |
| 30 September 1988 | 1,415 |
| 31 December 1988 | 1,064 |
| 31 March 1989 | 1,345 |
| 30 June 1989 | 1,616 |
| Total | 6,198 |

A total of £1·822 million has been received in respect of these notices, and representations have been made by carriers in 1,317 cases.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many outstanding immigration applications there are at Lunar house; what time savings in dealing with applications from *(a)* students, *(b)* family members in the United Kingdom applying for variation of stay, *(c)* settlement entry clearance applications referred from overseas posts and *(d)* asylum-seekers have been achieved by recent changes in procedures and practice; and what are the average times applicants in each category might expect to wait before a decision.

**Mr. Renton:** I shall write to the hon. Member and deposit a copy of the reply in the Library.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were received into prison establishments under Immigration Act powers during *(a)* 1987 and *(b)* 1988, by individual prison establishment; what was the average daily population of persons so detained in each of those years; what was the average length of time spent in detention by persons so detained in each of those years; and whether he will give a breakdown by nationality of persons so detained for each of those years.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Information about detainees received into prison service establishments in England and Wales under the Immigration Act 1971 in 1987 is given by establishment and nationality in the tables. Similar information for 1988 is not yet available.

The average population and the average length of detention of such detainees in prison service establishments in 1987 were published in tables 1.1 and 6.6 of "Prison Statistics England and Wales" (Cm. 547), a copy of which is in the Library. The average population in 1988 was 146. The average period of detention in 1988 is provisionally estimated as about seven weeks.

*Receptions of persons detained under the Immigration Act 1971 into Prison Service establishments in England and Wales in 1987: by establishment*

| *Establishment* | *Number*[1] |
|---|---|
| *Remand centres* | |
| Ashford | 2 |
| Brockhill | 3 |
| Cardiff | 1 |
| Glen Parva | 3 |
| Hull | 1 |
| Latchmere House | 827 |
| Low Newton | 2 |
| Manchester | 1 |
| Risley | 11 |
| Winchester | 2 |
| *Prisons* | |
| Bedford | 7 |
| Birmingham | 51 |
| Bristol | 16 |
| Brixton | 7 |
| Camp Hill | 1 |
| Canterbury | 34 |
| Cardiff | 11 |
| Chelmsford | 1 |
| Dorchester | 3 |
| Durham | 6 |
| Foston Hall | 92 |
| Gloucester | 2 |
| Highpoint | 1 |
| Holloway | 15 |
| Hull | 17 |
| Leeds | 16 |
| Leicester | 34 |
| Lincoln | 3 |
| Oxford | 1 |
| Pentonville | 34 |
| Reading | 3 |
| Shrewsbury | 1 |
| Swansea | 1 |
| Winchester | 10 |
| Wormwood Scrubs | 1 |
| *Others* | |
| Erlestoke | 90 |
| All Prison Service establishements | 1,311 |

*Receptions of persons detained under the Immigration Act 1971 into Prison Service establishments in England and Wales in 1987: by nationality*

| *Nationality* | *Number*[1] |
|---|---|
| Nigeria | 213 |
| Ghana | 212 |
| Sri Lanka | 146 |
| India | 114 |
| Bangladesh | 82 |
| Turkey | 73 |
| Iran | 61 |
| Pakistan | 53 |
| Algeria | 40 |
| Morocco | 26 |
| Cyprus | 20 |
| United States of America | 17 |
| West Indies[2] | 17 |
| Afghanistan | 16 |
| Hong Kong | 14 |
| Colombia | 11 |
| Libya | 8 |
| Ethiopia | 7 |
| France | 7 |
| Italy | 6 |
| South Africa | 6 |
| Zimbabwe | 6 |
| Egypt | 5 |
| Lebanon | 5 |
| Sierra Leone | 5 |
| Sudan | 5 |

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[1] The figures are those recorded centrally and are approximate, detailed checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost.

| *Nationality* | *Number*[1] |
|---|---|
| Other countries[3] | 105 |
| Not recorded | 31 |
| ALL NATIONALITIES | 1,311 |

[1] The figures are those recorded centrally and are approximate: detailed checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost.

[2] Includes other Commonwealth countries in the Americas.

[3] Where fewer than five were recorded.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations (i) he and (ii) immigration officers received from Members of Parliament during *(a)* the first quarter of 1988 and *(b)* the first quarter of 1989 to delay the removal of passengers refused entry at British ports of entry; and, for both periods, how many representations resulted in (i) the delay of the passenger's removal for up to a week, (ii) the delay of the passenger's removal for more than a week and (iii) reversal of the immigration officer's decision.

**Mr. Renton:** In the first quarters of 1988 and 1989 representations received by Ministers resulted in deferment of removal in 382 and 54 cases respectively. I regret that the rest of the information requested is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many wives and dependent children applying for entry clearance in the Indian sub-continent in each quarter since January 1988 were refused *(a)* on first application and *(b)* on second or subsequent application.

**Mr. Renton:** Quarterly information up to the end of 1988 on the total numbers of wives and children in the Indian sub-continent refused entry clearance to the United Kingdom is published in table 7 of Cm 726, "Control of Immigration: Statistics, United Kingdom, 1988" a copy of which is in the Library. In the first quarter of 1989, 130 wives and 270 children were initially refused entry clearance. Separate information on first-time applicants and re-applicants is not available centrally.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many (1) British nationals and (2) holders of certificates of identity from Hong Kong have been admitted to the United Kingdom in each quarter since January 1988 as *(a)* persons of independent means, *(b)* self-employed persons, *(c)* business people, *(d)* visitors, *(e)* students, *(f)* husbands and fiancés, *(g)* wives and fiancées and *(h)* other dependent relatives.

**Mr. Renton:** The available information is given in the following table for BDTCs from Hong Kong. Reliable figures of admissions of stateless persons from Hong Kong are not available.

*Admissions to the United Kingdom of British dependent territories citizens (BDTCs) from Hong Kong*

*Number of persons*

| *Admission category* | *1988* | | | | *Year* | *1989* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Q1* | *Q2* | *Q3* | *Q4* | | *Q1* |
| Visitors | 4,950 | 6,350 | 11,700 | 5,200 | 28,200 | 6,260 |
| Business visitors | 1,340 | 1,370 | 1,390 | 1,140 | 5,230 | 1,400 |
| Students | 350 | 280 | 4,720 | 1,010 | 6,360 | 360 |
| Passengers returning | 4,920 | 3,350 | 4,560 | 2,300 | 15,100 | 5,060 |
| Work permit holders and dependants | 50 | 70 | 180 | 60 | 350 | 70 |
| Husbands and fiances | [1] | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 | 10 |
| Wives and fiancees | [1] | 10 | 30 | 20 | 70 | 30 |
| In transit, Diplomats and officials and their dependants | 1,140 | 910 | 1,460 | 900 | 4,410 | 1,210 |
| Settlement on arrival | 60 | 60 | 120 | 70 | 300 | 40 |
| Others | 60 | 60 | 120 | 70 | 300 | 40 |
| Total | 12,900 | 12,500 | 24,200 | 10,700 | 60,300 | 14,500 |

[1] Fewer than 10.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his current policy on enforcing deportation decisions against genuine students who have been found to be working in breach of their conditions of entry; what criteria he uses to define a genuine student for these purposes; and whether he will list the colleges which he does not recognise as providing courses of study for overseas students acceptable under the immigration rules.

**Mr. Renton:** Any overseas student who wishes to work during his free time of vacations may do so by obtaining the requisite permission from the Department of Employment. Each case in which a student is found working without such permission is considered on its individual merits: as required by the immigration rules, the case for deportation is considered in the light of all known relevant factors, of which the genuineness of the studies will be of particular significance. As a general rule, however, it is not our practice to remove genuine students under the deportation powers unless their offences are serious or persistent. A genuine student in this sense is one who at the time meets the requirements of the immigration rules for the grant of leave to enter or remain as a student. The immigration and nationality department does not maintain a list of colleges which are or which are not acceptable for immigration purposes. However, in dealing with individual applications and so on from students, account is taken of any material which is available to the Department about the circumstances of, and courses offered by, the colleges concerned. Case workers are made aware of such material by means of internal notices which form part of the staff instructions for dealing with cases: such instructions are not published.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average time taken by his Department to investigate cases referred from overseas posts in order to assess whether the maintenance and accommodation requirements of the immigration rules have been met.

**Mr. Renton:** Inquiries into whether the maintenance and accommodation requirements of the immigration rules are met may be conducted either by correspondence or by interviewing the sponsor (usually when other matters also need to be investigated). Information on the average time taken to complete these inquiries is not available. Where an interview is required, the objective remains, as stated in my reply to a question from the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) on 23 March 1989 at column *809*, to carry out interviews within three months of receipt of papers in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for British citizenship under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981 have been *(a)* made, *(b)* granted and *(c)* refused; and how many of those granted have been on the grounds of service in the armed forces.

**Mr. Renton:** The information covering the period January 1983 to 21 July 1989 is as follows:

| | *Servicemen* | *Others* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Received | 53 | 499 | 552 |
| Granted | 52 | 9 | 61 |
| Refused | — | 487 | 487 |
| Withdrawn | 1 | — | 1 |
| Still under consideration | — | 3 | 3 |

*Note:* The numbers in the first column are former servicemen in Hong Kong as described in the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) on 23 April 1986 at columns *147-48*.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for entry clearance as *(a)* wives, *(b)* husbands, *(c)* fiancés, and *(d)* fiancées in each British post in all countries apart from those in the Indian sub-continent were (i) granted and (ii) refused in each quarter since January 1988; how many such applications in each category, at each post and in each quarter were refused (1) wholly and (2) partly because of the primary purpose rule; what was the refusal rate at each post; and what percentage of those refusals were *(x)* wholly and *(y)* partly on primary purpose grounds.

**Mr. Renton:** The only information requested which is available centrally is that on applications granted and refused in Hong Kong. Information for the fourth quarter of 1988 onwards is given in the table; for information for the first three quarters of 1988, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 20 December 1988 at columns *179-80*.

*Applications in Hong Kong for entry clearance to the United Kingdom*

*Number of persons*

| | *Applications* | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Granted*[1] | *Refused initially* |
| Wives | | |
| 1988 4th quarter | 40 | — |
| 1989 1st quarter | 40 | — |
| Husbands, fiancés[2] | | |
| 1988 4th quarter | 10 | — |
| 1989 1st quarter | 20 | — |
| Fiancées | | |
| 1988 4th quarter | 10 | — |
| 1989 1st quarter | 10 | — |

[1] Granted initially or on appeal.

[2] Data for husbands and fiancés separately are not available.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applications for entry clearance from *(a)* wives, *(b)* husbands, *(c)* fiancés, and *(d)* fiancées made at British posts in (1) New Delhi, (2) Bombay, (3) Calcutta, (4) Madras, (5) Dhaka, (6) Islamabad, (7) Karachi, and (8) Colombo for each quarter since January 1988 to the nearest available date were *(a)* received, *(b)* granted and *(c)* refused; how many refusals at each post were (i) wholly and (ii) partly because the visa officer was not satisfied that the primary purpose of the marriage was not immigration; how many refusals at each post were (i) wholly and (ii) partly because the visa officer was not satisfied that the couple could support and accommodate themselves without recourse to public funds; what was the refusal rate at each post and what percentage of those refusals was *(x)* wholly and *(y)* partly on primary purpose grounds;

(2) how many applications for settlement by wives and children in (i) Dhaka and (ii) Islamabad were *(a)* received, *(b)* granted, *(c)* refused, *(d)* deferred at first interview, *(e)* lapsed and *(f)* outstanding and awaiting first interview for each quarter since the beginning of 1988.

**Mr. Renton:** I shall write to the hon. Member and deposit a copy of the reply in the Library.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the *(a)* passengers in total and *(b)* persons treated as illegal entrants who were granted temporary admission in 1988, subsequently absconded.

**Mr. Renton:** In 1988 a total of 401 passengers absconded, either from detention or by failing to respond to the terms of temporary admission. The corresponding figure for illegal entrants is 124. The distinction between those absconding from detention and those failing to respond to the terms of temporary admission/temporary release is not centrally recorded and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many passengers seeking political asylum in *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988 and *(d)* 1989 up the nearest available date were granted temporary admission;

(2) whether he will provide a breakdown by nationality of the number of passengers seeking political asylum who were detained under Immigration Act powers in 1988 in *(a)* prison department establishments and *(b)* immigration detention accommodation.

**Mr. Renton:** The information requested is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people were detained *(a)* overnight and *(b)* for a period of more than one month in (1) Harmondsworth detention centre, (2) the Queen's building, Heathrow, (3) the Beehive Gatwick, and (4) Latchmere house during 1988;

(2) what was the total number of passengers detained overnight under Immigration Act powers during 1988, by nationality.

**Mr. Renton:** The readily available information relates to the number of passengers whose detention spanned at least one night pending further examination on their admission to, or their removal from, the United Kingdom and is given in the tables. The remaining information is not available in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

*Table 1: Passengers[1] detained overnight in certain locations, 1988*

| *Location* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Harmondsworth | [2]3,688 |
| Queen's Building | 1,475 |
| Gatwick South (virtually all at the Beehive) | 2,458 |

[1] Excluding illegal entrants and deportees.

[2] Some passengers who were detained elsewhere prior to being detained at Harmondsworth are excluded.

*Table 2*
*Passengers[1] detained overnight, by nationality and geographical region: 1988*

| *Nationality/Geographical region* | *Number[2]* |
|---|---|
| *European Community* | |
| Belgium | 2 |
| Denmark | 2 |
| France | 32 |
| German Federal Republic | 10 |
| Greece | 3 |
| Italy | 9 |
| Luxembourg | — |
| Netherlands | 7 |
| Portugal | 275 |
| Spain | 126 |
| European Community | 466 |
| *Western Europe* | |
| Austria | 13 |
| Cyprus | 99 |
| Finland | 3 |
| Malta | 8 |
| Norway | 15 |
| Sweden | 14 |
| Switzerland | 16 |
| Turkey | 1,626 |
| Yogoslavia | 214 |
| Western Europe | 2,008 |
| *Eastern Europe* | |
| Bulgaria | 3 |
| Czechoslovakia | 4 |
| German Democratic Republic | 5 |
| Hungary | 17 |
| Poland | 41 |
| Romania | — |
| USSR | 3 |
| Eastern Europe | 73 |
| *Americas* | |
| Argentina | 9 |
| Barbados | 20 |
| Brazil | 196 |
| Canada | 29 |
| Chile | 30 |
| Colombia | 187 |
| Cuba | — |
| Guyana | 11 |
| Jamaica | 193 |
| Mexico | 45 |
| Peru | 30 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 21 |
| USA | 273 |
| Uruguay | 1 |
| Venezuela | 11 |
| Americas | 1,056 |
| *Africa* | |
| Algeria | 1,144 |
| Egypt | 61 |
| Ethiopia | 19 |
| Ghana | 420 |
| Kenya | 87 |
| Libya | 25 |
| Mauritius | 61 |
| Morocco | 423 |
| Nigeria | 792 |
| Sierra Leone | 83 |
| Somalia | 94 |
| South Africa | 43 |
| Sudan | 45 |
| Tanzania | 40 |
| Tunisia | 110 |
| Uganda | 427 |
| Zambia | 23 |
| Zimbabwe | 31 |
| Africa | 3,928 |
| *Indian sub-continent* | |
| Bangladesh | 371 |
| India | 517 |
| Pakistan | 586 |
| Indian sub-continent | 1,474 |
| *Middle East* | |
| Iran | 211 |
| Iraq | 91 |
| Israel | 64 |
| Jordan | 13 |
| Kuwait | 2 |
| Lebanon | 110 |
| Saudi Arabia | 12 |
| Syria | 9 |
| Middle East | 512 |
| *Remainder of Asia* | |
| China | 9 |
| Indonesia | 5 |
| Japan | 91 |
| Malaysia | 188 |
| Philippines | 37 |
| Singapore | 43 |
| Sri Lanka | 274 |
| Thailand | 35 |
| BDTC Hong Kong | 97 |
| Remainder of Asia | 779 |
| *Australasia* | |
| Australia | 28 |
| New Zealand | 17 |
| Australasia | 45 |
| British Overseas citizens | 31 |
| Other countries not elsewhere specified | 422 |
| Stateless | 276 |
| All Nationalities | 11,070 |

[1] Excluding illegal entrants and deportees.

[2] The figures include a small amount of double counting when a passenger is detained at more than one location.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons detained under Immigration Act powers applied to the Home Office to be allowed to depart voluntarily under the supervised departure provisions of the immigration rules in each quarter since January 1988.

**Mr. Renton:** The readily available information on the numbers of persons removed under the supervised departure procedures is published in table 14 of the statistical bulletin issue 23/89 "Control of Immigration Statistics—First Quarter 1989", a copy of which is in the

Library. Most of these persons would have been detained prior to departure. A number would have been subject to restrictions as an alternative to detention but such cases could be separately identified only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were recommended for deportation with no custodial sentence during 1988; and in how many such cases the courts directed release *(a)* subject to conditions and *(b)* without conditions.

**Mr. Renton:** During 1988, a total of 152 persons were recommended for deportation by the courts with no custodial sentence. The courts directed release subject to restrictions in 44 cases and without restrictions in 66 cases.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his best estimate as to how many applications for *(a)* adult registration with entitlement, *(b)* naturalisation and *(c)* registration of minors his Department (i) will receive and (ii) expects to grant in 1989-90.

**Mr. Renton:** Information is not available in the form requested. We estimate that in the financial year 1989-90 we will receive the following applications:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| Registration of adults | 3,000 |
| Registration of minors | 12,000 |
| Naturalisation | 32,000 |

In the same period we expect to grant about 103,000 registrations of all kinds and about 28,000 naturalisations.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average length of time taken to process applications for *(a)* registration and *(b)* naturalisation; and how long those applying in both of those categories in December 1988 can expect to wait.

**Mr. Renton:** The average time taken to complete applications for citizenship granted in June 1989 was 18 months for registrations and 23 months for naturalisations.

It is not possible to estimate how long, on average, it will be before decisions will be reached on applications received during December 1988. But I expect decisions to be reached on the last of the transitional registrations no later than January 1990, and from then onwards the use of the resources of the Liverpool nationality office to process naturalisations should result in a steady improvement in the time taken to complete those cases.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* children, were waiting in each queue at each post in the Indian sub-continent on 31 March 1989.

**Mr. Renton:** Information on the estimated total numbers in each queue is given in the following table; separate information on men, women and children is not available centrally.

*Estimated numbers of applicants in the Indian sub-continent on 31 March 1989 awaiting their first interview for entry to the United Kingdom*

*Number of persons*

| Post | | | *Category*[1] | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Queue 1* | *Queue 2* | *Queue 3* | *Queue 4* | *Queue 5* |
| Dhaka | 150 | 1,100 | 170 | 1,800 | — |
| New Delhi[2] | — | 250 | 270 | 80 | 260 |
| Bombay | 40 | 490 | 460 | 80 | 30 |
| Calcutta | — | — | — | — | — |
| Madras | [3]— | 20 | 10 | — | 10 |
| Islamabad | 1,100 | 1,700 | 1,900 | 860 | n/a |
| Karachi | 10 | 120 | 40 | [3]— | 40 |
| Total Indian sub-continent | 1,300 | 3,600 | 2,800 | 2,800 | n/a |

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[1] Queue 1: Persons with a claim to the right of abode, dependent relatives over 70 years old, and special compassionate cases (first-time applicants for settlement.
Queue 2: Spouses, and children under 18 years old (first-time applicants for settlement).
Queue 3: Fiance(e)s, and other applicants (first-time applicants for settlement).
Queue 4: Re-applicants for settlement.
Queue 5: Other applicants (not for settlement).

[2] Date exclude Afghans seeking political asylum in the United Kingdom.

[3] = five or fewer.

n/a = Not available.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for entry clearance as working holiday makers have been *(a)* received, *(b)* granted and *(c)* refused in (i) India, (ii) Bangladesh, (iii) Australia and (iv) Canada during 1988 and 1989.

**Mr. Renton:** The information requested is not available centrally.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were waiting for special quota vouchers in (i) India and (ii) East Africa in *(a)* May 1988 and *(b)* December 1988; when those issued with vouchers on those dates had applied; how many vouchers were issued in (i) India and (ii) East Africa in *(a)* 1988 and *(b)* the first quarter of 1989; when those applying can now expect to receive vouchers; and how many applicants there were for vouchers in (i) India and (ii) East Africa in *(a)* 1988 and *(b)* the first half of 1989.

**Mr. Renton:** I shall write to the hon. Member and deposit a copy of the reply in the Library.

## Crime (Screening)

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to what proportion of crimes *(a)* in London and *(b)* in Leyton are screened out after the initial investigation.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I understand from the commissioner that a recent survey of eight representative police stations indicated that following initial investigation, an average of 30 per cent. of all crimes are allocated for further investigation, but there are variations between areas and according to the seriousness of offences.

More detailed figures for London as a whole and individual areas are not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

## Wakefield Prison

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list each occasion since April 1988 on which staffing levels at Her Majesty's prison Wakefield have been at or below the minimum staffing levels agreed at the commencement of fresh start.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The governor always aims to operate at least at minimum staffing levels.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if prisoners at Her Majesty's prison Wakefield are being searched with the frequency required by his Department's security manual for Her Majesty's prison service.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Searches are in most cases carried out at the discretion of local management and take account of internal instructions and guidelines.

## Drugs

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers are principally deployed on drugs work in each police force and regional crime squad, and what was the comparable number in 1979.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The information for police forces, as at 31 December 1988, and for regional crime squads, as at 31 January 1989 is set out in the table. Information on deployment in 1979 is not held centrally.

*Police officers deployed in police force drugs squads and regional crime squads drugs wings*

*Police force drugs squads as at 31 December 1988*

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| Avon and Somerset | 27 |
| Bedfordshire | 11 |
| Cambridgeshire | 11 |
| Cheshire | 17 |
| Cleveland | 11 |
| Cumbria | 9 |
| Derbyshire | 13 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 24 |
| Dorset | 20 |
| Durham | 8 |
| Dyfed-Powys | 14 |
| Essex | 13 |
| Gloucestershire | 13 |
| Greater Manchester | 34 |
| Gwent | 7 |
| Hampshire | 26 |
| Hertfordshire | 11 |
| Humberside | 22 |
| Kent | 27 |
| Lancashire | 38 |
| Leicestershire | 17 |
| Lincolnshire | 9 |
| Merseyside | 40 |
| Norfolk | 15 |
| Northamptonshire | 11 |
| Northumbria | 16 |
| North Wales | 10 |
| North Yorkshire | 10 |
| Nottinghamshire | 13 |
| South Wales | 24 |
| South Yorkshire | 26 |
| Staffodshire | 11 |
| Suffolk | 16 |
| Surrey | 11 |
| Sussex | 22 |
| Thames Valley | 24 |
| Warwickshire | 27 |
| West Mercia | 34 |
| West Midlands | 52 |
| West Yorkshire | 42 |
| Wiltshire | 7 |
| City of London[1] | 0 |
| Metropolitan | 220 |

[1] City of London do not have a drugs squad. Drugs investigations are undertaken by CID officers.

*Regional crime squads drugs ings as at 31 January 1989*

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| No. 1 squad | 42 |
| No. 2 squad | 27 |
| No. 3 squad | 27 |
| No. 4 squad | 40 |
| No. 5 squad | 27 |
| No. 6 squad | 27 |
| No. 7 squad | 27 |
| No. 8 squad | 14 |

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his Department's estimate of the current number of drug users and the equivalent figure for each preceding year for which such estimates have been made.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, in its report "Aids and Drug Misuse Part 1" (page 13) pointed to the difficulties—inherent in the clandestine nature of drug misuse—in obtaining a reliable estimate of the number of drug misusers. Its best guess was that in 1986 there might have been between 75,000 and 150,000 misusers of notifiable drugs (essentially the most powerful narcotics and cocaine), plus perhaps as many again (excluding cannabis users) who were using non-notifiable drugs (such as amphetamine). Those figures remain the current broad estimate of the prevalence of drug misuse in England, Scotland and Wales.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total number of prosecutions for drug offences in 1979 and each succeeding year.

**Mr. John Patten:** Information held centrally for 1979 to 1987 is given in the table. Data for 1988 are not yet available.

*Number of prosecutions for Drug Offences 1979 to 1987 England and Wales*

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 12,627 |
| 1980 | 16,030 |
| 1981 | 16,235 |
| 1982 | 18,187 |
| 1983 | 20,305 |
| 1984 | 20,399 |
| 1985 | 21,448 |
| 1986 | 18,276 |
| 1987 | 18,757 |

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total number of registered drug addicts in 1979 and each succeeding year.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Information on the total number of addicts notified to the Home Office in the years 1979 to 1988 is published in table 1 of Home Office statistical bulletin issue 13/89, "Statistics of Drug Addicts Notified to the Home Office, United Kingdom, 1988", a copy of which is in the Library.

### War Crimes

**Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give details of the court experience of the members of the war crimes inquiry.

**Mr. John Patten:** The authors of the report have each had extensive legal experience. They were asked to undertake this inquiry in view in particular of Sir Thomas Hetherington's service as Director of Public Prosecutions from 1977 to 1987, and Mr. Chalmers' service as Crown Agent for Scotland from 1974 to 1984.

**Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, pursuant to his statement about the report of the war crimes inquiry on 24 July, *Official Report*, columns 731-32, he will make a statement regarding the facilities available to the three persons named in the second unpublished report as recommended for prosecution to visit Soviet Russia with a view to preparing their defence.

**Mr. John Patten:** Any person charged with war crimes in this country—if Parliament does decide on a change in the law that would enable such prosecutions to be brought—would be able to apply for legal aid in the normal way.

**Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what amendments to the existing criminal law and the existing law of evidence would be required if the recommendations of the report of the war crimes inquiry were adopted.

**Mr. John Patten:** The inquiry recommended legislation to give British courts jurisdiction over acts of murder and manslaughter committed as war crimes in Germany or German occupied territory during the second world war, by persons who are now British citizens or resident in the United Kingdom.

In addition, it recommended certain procedural changes, of which the main elements would be provisions:

to allow for the admissibility of evidence on video;

to enable war crimes proceedings in England and Wales to be transferred to the Crown court without prior committal proceedings (as is already possible in serious fraud cases);

to implement, and extend to other parts of the United Kingdom, the provisions in the Criminal Justice Act 1988 for evidence to be given by live television links from witnesses abroad; and

to enable evidence to be taken on commission for use in proceedings in Scotland;

to enable recorded statements of persons now dead to be admissible in evidence in Scotland (the Criminal Justice Act 1988 makes provision in regard to such statements in England and Wales).

**Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he proposes to take to ensure that the three persons named in the unpublished part of the report of the war crimes inquiry are not identified by the media.

**Mr. John Patten:** The Government have not published material about individual cases; nor will we engage in speculation about individuals.

### Holloway Prison (Health Care Manager)

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what period of time the post of health care manager at Her Majesty's prison, Holloway, has been vacant; what is the complement of staff for the medical units; how many times agency nurses have been used in the past year; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The post of health care manager was filled on 1 May 1989. The approved complement of staff in the medical units is as follows:

1 Principal Medical Officer
1 Senior Medical Officer
3 Medical Officers
84 Nurses

Agency staff have been used for some years as a consequence of recruitment difficulties in London. In the 12 months ended 30 June 1989 the number of agency nurses employed during the day varied between 10 and 18. A drive to recruit additional nurses is well advanced, and Holloway is one of the priority establishments for the deployment of newly recruited hospital officers with suitable nursing qualifications.

### Sportsman Club (Parking)

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to what action is being taken by the Metropolitan police to prevent illegal parking outside the Sportsman club, Tottenham Court road, WC1.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I am satisfied that the Metropolitan police are aware of, and take proper action to prevent, the problems caused by illegal parking in this area.

### Guildford Four

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to move the Guildford Four to prisons nearer to London; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** There are no plans at present.

### Disasters

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many disasters and where they occurred, in each of the last five years, have required reference to the Home Office unit dealing with those disasters.

**Mr. John Patten:** The Home Office acted as lead Department during the storms of October 1987 and during the re-entry of the nuclear-powered satellite Cosmos 1900 in the autumn of 1988.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what resources are allocated to civil disaster planning in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. John Patten:** The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Terrorism

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons in England and Wales were charged with terrorist-type offences relating to Northern Ireland in 1989; how many of those charged were released on bail; and what was the average period between remand and trial for prisoners refused bail relating to such charges in Britain in the current year.

**Mr. Hurd:** The available information relates to those charged having been detained under the prevention of terrorism legislation in connection with Northern Irish terrorism and is published quarterly for Great Britain in Home Office statistical bulletins which are placed in the Library. The latest, issue 26/89, gives in table 1 information up to the second quarter of 1989. Of the seven persons so charged in England and Wales in the first half of 1989, six were dealt with at court on the same or next day. One person charged on 13 February was remanded in custody and is currently awaiting trial.

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average number of days spent on remand by those remanded in custody for terrorist-type offences in the first half of 1989, with regard to cases now completed in England and Wales and the number of bail applications refused, respectively.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The only information which is readily available relates to prisoners who are now in prison custody in category A and does not cover prisoners who have been released or downgraded.

During this period one such prisoner was received into custody (on 14 February). He remains in custody awaiting trial. Our records show that he has made no application for bail.

### Strip Searches

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will give details of the number of body searches, cell searches and cell changes and strip searches carried out on each of the female category A prisoners being held at Her Majesty's prison, Winchester, in September and October 1988, indicating the number of times each person was searched, if any prison contraband, smuggled item or illegal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while the search was being conducted; and what were the reasons for the search;

(2) if he will give details of the number of body searches, cell searches and cell changes and strip searches carried out on each of the female category A prisoners being held at Her Majesty's prison, Durham, monthly, since February 1969, indicating the number of times each person was searched, if any prison contraband, smuggled item or illegal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while the search was being conducted; and what were the reasons for the search.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Records are not kept of the occasions when rub down searching or "frisking" is carried out in prisons and it is not the practice to disclose detailed information about security arrangements such as that requested about the frequency of cell searches and cell changes.

Establishments are not required to record all strip searches. However, since August 1986 comprehensive records of strip searches are available in respect of category A women prisoners only, of whom there was one at Winchester prison between 27 September and 31 October. During that time the prisoner was strip searched on 30 occasions. On no occasion did the prisoner refuse to be strip searched. No unauthorised article was found.

There were four category A prisoners held at Durham between August 1986 and March 1987; three from April 1987 to September 1988 and four from October 1988 to date. They were strip searched on the following number of occasions:

| | *Prisoner* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *A* | *B* | *C* | *D* | *E* |
| *1986* | | | | | |
| August | 4 | 1 | 3 | — | 3 |
| September | 3 | 6 | 3 | — | 1 |
| October | 2 | 5 | 3 | — | 4 |
| November | 7 | 2 | 5 | — | 5 |
| December | 4 | 4 | 2 | — | 1 |
| *1987* | | | | | |
| January | 6 | 2 | 5 | — | 2 |
| February | 2 | 7 | 3 | — | 2 |
| March | 5 | 2 | 4 | — | 3 |
| April | 3 | 2 | 4 | — | — |
| May | 7 | 5 | 3 | — | — |
| June | 2 | 5 | 3 | — | — |
| July | 2 | 3 | 1 | — | — |
| August | 3 | 3 | 2 | — | — |
| September | 3 | 4 | 4 | — | — |
| October | 2 | 4 | 3 | — | — |
| November | 3 | 3 | 2 | — | — |
| December | 5 | 7 | 5 | — | — |
| *1988* | | | | | |
| January | 3 | 3 | 3 | — | — |
| February | 1 | 1 | 2 | — | — |
| March | 3 | 4 | 3 | — | — |
| April | 5 | 5 | 2 | — | — |
| May | 3 | 1 | 3 | — | — |
| June | 4 | 2 | 4 | — | — |
| July | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| August | 5 | 2 | 5 | — | — |
| September | 2 | 7 | 4 | — | — |
| October | 3 | 6 | 2 | 1 | — |
| November | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | — |
| December | 4 | 6 | 3 | 4 | — |
| *1989* | | | | | |
| January | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | — |
| February | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | — |
| March | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | — |
| April | 1 | 5 | 4 | 4 | — |
| May | 3 | 7 | 1 | 1 | — |
| June | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | — |

No unauthorised article was found. On no occasion did the prisoners refuse to be strip searched.

Strip searching is a routine security measure to which all inmates—male and female—are subject, both for its deterrent effort and as a means of discovering unauthorised articles.

### Deaths and Injuries (Northern Ireland)

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of deaths and injuries which have occurred in Great Britain and mainland western Europe in 1988 and the first six months of 1989 connected with present civil unrest in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Hurd:** The information is given in the table.

*Deaths and Injuries in Great Britain and Western Europe Attributable to Northern Irish Terrorism, 1 January 1988—30 June 1989*

| *Date of Incident* | *Place of Incident* | *Deaths* | *Injuries* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 March 1988 | Gibraltar | 3 | — |
| 1 May 1988 | Roermond, Holland | 1 | 2 |
| 1 May 1988 | Nieuwbergen, Holland | 2 | 1 |
| 13 July 1988 | Glamorgan Barracks, Duisburg, West Germany | — | 9 |
| 1 August 1988 | Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, London | 1 | 9 |
| 12 August 1988 | Ostend, Belgium | 1 | — |
| 20 December 1988 | Battersea, London | — | 1 |
| 20 February 1989 | Clive Barracks, Tern Hill Shropshire | — | 1 |
| 19 June 1989 | Quebec Barracks, Osnabruck West Germany | — | 1 |

### Female Prisoners

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average length of custodial sentence of female prisoners in England and Wales in 1988 and in the first six months of 1989.

**Mr. John Patten:** Information for 1988 and 1989 is not yet available. Information prior to 1988 can be found in tables 7.19 and 7.20 of the Command Paper "Criminal Statistics England and Wales 1987", a copy of which can be found in the Library.

### Phoenix House Trust

**Mr. Michael J. Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Home Department what public funds have been given to the Phoenix House trust in each of the years from 1985 to 1989 by his Department.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** The Home Office provides funding to the Phoenix House trust under the voluntary after-care accommodation grant scheme. Under this scheme grants are made to voluntary organisations in England and Wales providing accommodation for offenders. The grants are a contribution towards meeting revenue deficits. The information requested is set out in the table:

| *Hostel* | *1984-85* £ | *1985-86* £ | *1986-87* £ | *1987-88* £ | *1988-89* £ | *1989-90* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Featherstone Lodge, London | 28,500 | 29,498 | 31,000 | 32,550 | 33,852 | [1]— |
| Battle Cottage, London | 13,512 | 13,370 | 11,000 | 10,210 | 14,469 | [1]— |
| Waldram Park Road, London | Not open | 4,072 | 8,055 | 9,000 | 9,360 | [1]— |
| Priory Road, South Yorkshire | 7,042 | 13,548 | 14,000 | 14,700 | 20,919 | [1]— |
| Phoenix House (North), Northumbria | Not open | Not open | Not open | Not open | 7,200 | [1]— |
| | 49,054 | 60,488 | 64,055 | 66,460 | 85,800 | 94,553 |

[1] With effect from 1 April 1989 grants are made to the organisations running hostels and not to the individual hostels.

Phoenix House trust has also received small amounts for capital purposes during the period.

### Drivers (Northern Ireland)

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for reports from the chief constables in England and Wales as to the practice of their forces in detaining overnight drivers from Northern Ireland in connection with minor road traffic offences; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** No. The responsibility for the enforcement of road traffic law rests with chief officers of police, but if the hon. Member has a particular case in mind I should be glad to look into it.

### Free Television Licences

**Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is now considering introducing free television licences for pensioners.

**Mr. Renton:** We are not.

### Animal (Experiments)

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many experiments were recorded by his Department of contractors working on behalf of the Ministry of Defence in each year since 1985; and which animals were involved.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** No information in this form is available in the Home Office.

### Crimes (Screening)

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many reported crimes were screened out by the Metropolitan police in the most recently completed 12-month period;

(2) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to what percentage of reported crimes were screened out by the Metropolitan police in each of the past five years.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** A formal system of crime screening was introduced throughout the Metropolitan police only in April 1988. A recent survey of eight representative police stations indicated that following initial investigation, an average of 30 per cent. of all crimes are allocated for further investigation. This figure varies between areas and according to the seriousness of offences.

### Crowd Control Equipment

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what new crowd control equipment is currently the subject of investigation by his Department.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** As my hon. Friend the Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg) said in reply to a question from the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) on 13 April at columns *707-8* we are considering possible replacements for the authorised plastic baton round equipment. No other equipment for dealing with public disorder is being evaluated.

### Badgers

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to amend the Badgers Act 1973 by protecting badger setts from unlicensed damage or destruction and providing courts with power to disqualify convicted badger diggers from the custody of dogs.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the answer in the Library.

### Prisoners (Northern Ireland)

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prisoners in British gaols, who give as their domicile Northern Ireland, have been returned to Northern Ireland to serve the whole or part of their sentences in the first six months of 1989; and how many of these prisoners were serving sentences for terrorist-type offences;

(2) how many prisoners were transferred from *(a)* England and Wales to Northern Ireland and *(b)* from Northern Ireland to England and Wales in the first six months of 1989; and under which section of the Criminal Justice Act 1961 such transfers were carried out.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** Six inmates were transferred from England and Wales to Northern Ireland under section 26 of the Criminal Justice Act 1961, one of whom was convicted of terrorist-type offences, and one under section 27. All were either domiciled in Northern Ireland or had close family links with the Province. One inmate was transferred from Northern Ireland to England and Wales under section 28 of the Act.

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners giving as their domicile either *(a)* the Republic of Ireland and *(b)* Northern Ireland have been permitted to return home to the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland on parole for humanitarian reasons in the first six months of the current year.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd:** This information is not available.

### Refugees

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he now has the figure for 1988 of the number of people applying for refugee status; and if he will provide a breakdown of the country of origin.

**Mr. Renton** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The available information, by nationality, is published in table 8 of Home Office statistical bulletin (issue 25/89) "Refugee Statistics, United Kingdom, 1988", a copy of which is in the Library.

### Hong Kong

**Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give his best quantitative assessment as to the impact of recent events in China on the flow of Hong Kong Chinese to and from the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Renton** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* Figures for admissions of pasengers from Hong Kong during the period since the recent events in China are not yet available. The latest available information relating to admission of Hong Kong British dependent territory citizens is given in answer today to the question from the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) which asks how many British nationals from Hong Kong have been admitted to the United Kingdom since January 1988. Corresponding figures for embarkations are not available.

### Prisoners (Heroin Addicts)

**Mr. Bermingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of prisoners currently remanded or sentenced in gaols in England and Wales who are known to be addicted to heroin; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Lloyd** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The number of heroin addicts in prison service establishments at any one time is not known. During 1988, counting addicts at their most recent notification, 1,022 heroin (alone or with other drugs) addicts were notified to the chief medical officer at the Home Office by prison medical officers in England and Wales.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Food Contamination

**Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the measures he intends to take to prevent adulteration and contamination of food.

**Mr. Forth:** I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

**Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many cases of product interference or adulteration there have been in the past 12 months.

**Mr. Forth** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The information is not available in respect of products generally in the form requested and could not be provided without disproportionate cost.

**Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what has been the average delay between retailers or manufacturers discovering the problem of food contamination or adulteration and their alerting consumers to the danger.

**Mr. Forth** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The responsibilty for the contamination of food rests with my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, advised by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health.

## Manufactures Statistics

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what is his estimate of the number of British jobs represented by the present deficit in manufactured trade with the EEC;

(2) what was the United Kingdom share of the market for imported manufactures in the latest year for which figures are available in *(a)* South Africa, *(b)* Canada, *(c)* Australia, *(d)* New Zealand and *(e)* Nigeria; and if he will provide corresponding figures for 1977, 1968 and 1959;

(3) what was the United Kingdom share of the market for imported manufactures in 1988 in the case of the Irish Republic, Denmark, Portugal and each of the European Free Trade Association countries; and if he will provide corresponding figures for 1977, 1970 and 1959;

(4) why the indices of output in the production industries were dropped from the CSO annual abstract of statistics in the current year; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* the information given in table 8.2 of the 1988 edition;

(5) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for Italy and the United Kingdom respectively the increase in gross domestic product and in imports and exports of manufactures since 1979;

(6) whether he will bring up to date the export price and volume indices given in his answer to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) on 22 March 1985, *Official Report*, column *638*, including figures for the change in the terms of trade for finished manufactures;

(7) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* for the years 1970 to date a table showing for the European Economic Community and for the rest of the world *(a)* the trade balance in manufactures less precious stones on a balance of payments basis, *(b)* the balance of trade less oil and precious stones on the same basis and *(c)* the ratio of exports to imports in each case.

**Mr. Redwood:** I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of the value of United Kingdom exports in 1988 of *(a)* finished and *(b)* semi-finished manufactures, including and excluding erratics, consists of re-exports; and what were the figures in 1979, 1970 and 1959.

**Mr. Redwood** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* Information on which to base the required percentage is not available.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the balance of trade in manufactures between the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Holland and Belgium, respectively, and the rest of the European Economic Community in 1978 and in 1988, together with the change in relative export prices for such goods.

**Mr. Redwood** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The information is in the following tables:

*Balance of trade in manufactures[1][3] with other members[2] of the Community*

*US $ billion*

| | *1978* | *1988* |
|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | −2·2 | −24·2 |
| Germany | +15·5 | +54·6 |
| France | −4·3 | −22·0 |
| Italy | +6·5 | +5·4 |
| Netherlands | −5·9 | −4·6 |
| Belgium/Luxembourg | +0·7 | +6·5 |

[1] Standard International Trade Classification sections 5-8.

[2] Current EC membership throughout.

[3] The balance of payments statistics overall reveal the need for a balancing item of £14 billion for 1988. The Pickford report has looked at the limitations of the figures in the light of this item.

*Source:* 1978—OECD series C.
1988—Statistical Office of the European Community.

*Export of manufactures*
*Changes in relative export prices between 1978 and 1988*

| | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| United Kingdom | +20·4 |
| Germany | −4·5 |
| France | −5·8 |
| Italy | +8·2 |
| Netherlands | −5·2 |
| Belgium/Luxembourg | −6·8 |

*Source:* Department of Trade and Industry.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, further to his reply of 30 November *Official Report*, column *251*, showing the balance of trade in manufactures in terms of 1988 prices, he will provide the outturn figure for 1988 and that for the first five months of 1989 together with the figures for each year in current prices; and if he will provide the corresponding figures for trade in manufactures with the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Redwood** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The figures for manufactures excluding erratics for 1988 and 1989 to date at 1988 prices are:

*Manufactures less erratics (BOP basis) at 1988 prices (£ billion)*

| | *Exports* | *Imports* | *Balance* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1988 | 59·3 | 74·8 | −15·6 |
| [1]1989 | 62·5 | 82·7 | −20·2 |

[1] The figures for 1989 are for January-May 1989 at an annualised rate.

Figures for earlier years at current prices are shown in the table.

*Table 2*
*Manufactures less erratics (BOP basis) at current prices (£ billion)*

| | *Exports* | *Imports* | *Balance* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1970 | 6·3 | 3·7 | +2·6 |
| 1971 | 7·1 | 4·0 | +3·2 |
| 1972 | 7·2 | 4·9 | +2·3 |
| 1973 | 9·0 | 7·2 | +1·7 |
| 1974 | 12·2 | 10·0 | +2·2 |
| 1975 | 14·6 | 10·2 | +4·4 |
| 1976 | 18·8 | 13·7 | +5·1 |
| 1977 | 23·3 | 17·0 | +6·4 |

| | *Exports* | *Imports* | *Balance* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1978 | 25·5 | 20·4 | +5·1 |
| 1979 | 28·1 | 25·4 | +2·8 |
| 1980 | 31·0 | 25·1 | +5·9 |
| 1981 | 31·8 | 27·6 | +4·2 |
| 1982 | 33·9 | 32·6 | +1·3 |
| 1983 | 35·7 | 39·2 | −3·5 |
| 1984 | 41·9 | 47·0 | −5·1 |
| 1985 | 48·0 | 51·9 | −3·9 |
| 1986 | 49·1 | 56·5 | −7·4 |
| 1987 | 54·7 | 64·3 | −9·6 |

Estimates for trade in manufactures with the European Community are available only at current prices, and including the erratic items:

*Table 3*
*United Kingdom Trade with the EC*
*Manufactures including erratic (BOP basis) at current prices (£ billion)*

| | *Exports* | *Imports* | *Balance* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1970 | 2·2 | 1·5 | +0·6 |
| 1971 | 2·3 | 1·8 | +0·4 |
| 1972 | 2·5 | 2·5 | — |
| 1973 | 3·3 | 3·7 | −0·4 |
| 1974 | 4·7 | 5·2 | −0·5 |
| 1975 | 5·1 | 5·7 | −0·6 |
| 1976 | 7·2 | 7·7 | −0·5 |
| 1977 | 9·3 | 9·8 | −0·5 |
| 1978 | 10·2 | 12·0 | −1·7 |
| 1979 | 12·6 | 15·2 | −2·6 |
| 1980 | 14·0 | 15·2 | −1·2 |
| 1981 | 13·2 | 15·9 | −2·6 |
| 1982 | 14·6 | 18·9 | −4·3 |
| 1983 | 15·9 | 23·1 | −7·2 |
| 1984 | 18·8 | 27·0 | −8·1 |
| 1985 | 21·8 | 30·5 | −8·7 |
| 1986 | 23·9 | 34·0 | −10·1 |
| 1987 | 28·0 | 38·4 | −10·4 |
| 1988 | 31·5 | 44·0 | −12·6 |

## Export Markets

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list for each of the past 20 years the 10 top markets for United Kingdom exports; and if he will show for each year the percentage the United Kingdom gained of each market.

**Mr. Redwood:** I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

## General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

**Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will make it his policy not to return textile, knitting and clothing products to normal general agreement on tariffs and trade rules until such time as all of the major supplying and participating countries to the Uruguay round of general agreement on tariffs and trade negotiations have removed the tariff peaks and bans against United Kingdom exports;

(2) if he will make it his policy not to return textiles and clothing to normal general agreement on tariffs and trade rules, until those rules related to safeguards, subsidies, dumping and intellectual property rights have been effectively strengthened.

**Mr. Redwood:** In its latest communication to the negotiating group on textiles and clothing the Community has emphasised that full compliance with all the elements of the Punta del Este declaration—and in particular the parallelism between the gradual integration of textiles into GATT and the application of strengthened rules and disciplines within GATT—remains a vital condition for the success of the negotiations. The communication makes it clear that the strengthening of rules and disciplines must include action on tariff and non-tariff measures to ensure effective market access, as well as in relation to safeguards, subsidies, dumping and intellectual property rights.

## Recycled Materials

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, pursuant to his answer of 6 February to the hon. Member for Islington, North, *Official Report*, column 457, he will make a statement on his policy on the use of recycled materials.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** My Department's new business and the environment unit will continue to promote the use of recycled materials whenever this is technically and economically possible and will seek the full co-operation of local communities, voluntary organisations, user and producer industries, retailers and local authorities in pursuing this aim.

Conferences and workshops will be held on best practice in the production techniques of materials, the encouragement of waste minimisation and the design of products for recylability. Technical advice on recycling will continue to be available through the Warren Spring laboratory.

Where appropriate further initiatives will be introduced.

## Post Office

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has on the total number of post offices managed directly by Post Office Counters.

**Mr. Forth:** I understand that there are, at present, 1,443 crown post offices.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has as to the practice of the Post Office on the recruitment and employment of registered disabled people.

**Mr. Forth:** This is an operational question for the Post Office board. I understand that the Post Office has made the following joint statement with the Post Office Unions Council about the employment of disabled people:

> "It is Post Office policy, which its Unions fully support, to endorse the MSC Code of Good Practice and to develop and to maintain positive measures to encourage the recruitment and employment of persons who are disabled, provided that they are qualified and suitable for the job and can be expected to maintain a satisfactory level of performance in their allocated job."

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices have wheelchair access to *(a)* the staff entrance, *(b)* welfare and sanitary facilities and *(c)* working areas.

**Mr. Forth:** This is an operational question for the Post Office board, and I am asking the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

### Royal Mail

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will place in the Library the standard contract showing the range of duties expected of a post person employed by the *(a)* Royal Mail (letters) and *(b)* Royal Mail (parcels).

**Mr. Forth:** This is an operational question for the Post Office board. However, I will place in the Library copies of the Post Office's staff contract manual.

### Correspondence and Civil Service Dispersal

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July;

(2) what progress is being made in his Department's review, in line with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for the further relocation of Civil service posts outside London and the south-east; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mr. Forth:** I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

### Unichem (Shares)

**Dr. Woodcock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will take action to amend the Unichem Ltd. (Allotment of Shares) Order 1989 to prevent Unichem from continuing with the change of trading terms introduced on 1 July and to ensure that shares issued to new members recruited after the date of the order do not rank for participation in the planned flotation of Unichem;

(2) what action he will take to prevent Unichem using its privileged position as an industrial and provident society to continue anti-competitive practices in a similar form to those identified in the recent Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation.

**Mr. Redwood:** I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

### Trade Deficit

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total deficit in visible trade with *(a)* the EEC and *(b)* the rest of the world, over the most recent 12-month period for which figures are available.

**Mr. Redwood:** I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will list those standard industrial classification manufacturing activities where there is a trade deficit *(a)* with the rest of the world and *(b)* with the EEC, listing the percentage import penetration as at the most recent practicable date; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the current balance of trade deficit with *(a)* the EEC and *(b)* the rest of the world; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Redwood:** I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

### Textiles

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement outlining Her Majesty's Government's position on the recently published European Commission proposals liberating world trade in textiles and clothing in the context of the current general agreement on tariffs and trade negotiations.

**Mr. Redwood:** The communication submitted by the European Community this week to the GATT negotiating group on textiles and clothing sets out objectives agreed by all EC member states. It stresses in particular the need for parallelism between the gradual integration of textiles and clothing into GATT and the application of strengthened GATT rules and disciplines and examines the general framework within which these two elements need to be organised.

### Audio Cassettes

**Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the Government's plans, in the light of the European Commission's Green Paper on copyright and the challenge of new technology, to ensure that consumers *(a)* can contine to purchase blank audio cassettes without a levy and *(b)* are not denied access to new recording technology.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Commission's Green Paper does not propose a Communitywide levy on blank audio cassettes and the Government have no intention of introducing such a levy in the United Kingdom. Developments in recording technology need to take account of the interests of copyright owners, but the Government do not believe this should be done by inhibiting consumer choice when acquiring new technology.

### Electrical Installations

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what action the Government will be taking to ensure that only properly qualified electrical installation engineers are able to establish business in order to provide electrical installation services to the public.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]*: None.

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans the Government has to introduce a national register of qualified electrical installation engineers in order to protect the consumer.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]*: None. There is insufficient evidence that the benefits to be obtained from a registration scheme would warrant the cost and management effort that it would involve. However, the Government will continue to encourage the self-regulatory schemes operated by the Electrical Contractors' Association, the Electrical Contractors' Association for Scotland and the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors.

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps the Government will be taking to ensure that electrical installations comply with the generally accepted standards laid down in the IEEE regulations with the introduction of the free movement of labour within the European Economic Community in 1992.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* The treaty of Rome provides for free movement of labour, and overseas firms and individuals are already free to provide electrical installation services in the United Kingdom. However, the Government are considering whether electrical installations should be brought within the scope of the Building Regulations 1985.

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what training measures the Government will be taking to ensure that electrical installations are installed in a manner which makes them safe with the introduction of the free movement of labour within the European Economic Community in 1992.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* No additional training measures are necessary as the United Kingdom market is already open. Nevertheless the Government will continue to give encouragement to the high level of training already provided by employers in the electrical contracting industry and by the Electrical Electronic Telecommunications and Plumbing Union.

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of fires is attributed to faulty electrical installations.

**Mr. John Patten** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* I have been asked to reply. In 1987, 17 per cent. of accidental fires in occupied buildings, in the United Kingdom, attended by local authority fire brigades were attributed to faulty electrical appliances and installations. More detailed information is published in table 49a of the Home Office annual report "Fire Statistics United Kingdom 1987" a copy of which is in the Library.

## China

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what official backing his Department provides to the 48 Group of British traders with China;

(2) what support his Department is proposing to give the trade mission to China in the near future.

**Mr. Redwood** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The Department is in consultation with the 48 group about its plans for this mission. About £70,000 had already been provided to the group prior to June of this year, that amount being based on normal DTI mission support terms. It was provided early in order to assist with the launching of this exceptionally large mission.

## Waterstone and Co. Ltd

**Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will refer to the Director General of Fair Trading the proposed takeover of Waterstone and Co. Ltd. by W. H. Smith.

**Mr. Redwood** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* This proposal is currently being considered by the Director General of Fair Trading to ascertain whether it qualifies for reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission under the Fair Trading Act 1973. If so, the director general will advise my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on whether the merger should be referred to the MMC: and the Secretary of State will then decide whether to make a reference.

The main consideration in deciding whether to refer a merger to the MMC is the potential effect on competition in the United Kingdom.

## Official Hospitality

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1988-89.

**Mr. Forth** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The amount spent by my Department in 1988-89 on official hospitality cannot readily be separately identified.

## African Elephant Products

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give details of all African elephant products, other than ivory, imported each year into the United Kingdom by type, quantity and value since 1985.

**Mr. Redwood** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* African elephants' products are not identified in the overseas trade statistics. However, some information by type and quantity for 1985 and 1986 is available from the EC annual reports on the convention of international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES): chapter 2, copies of which are in the Library.

## Car Exports (United States)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many cars were exported to the United States in 1988 and in 1989; and what information he has on the reason for the change;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of United Kingdom cars exported to the United States by category in 1987, 1988 and this year to date and the United States share by value of United Kingdom exports of cars.

**Mr. Redwood:** Pursuant to the holding answer of 2 July 1989, the United Kingdom exported 31,703 passenger motor vehicles to the United States in 1988. In the four months January to April 1989 the United Kingdom exported 11,187 vehicles to the United States compared with 13,090 vehicles for the same period in 1988.

Short-term fluctuations in the level of exports may not be fully representative of the market. However, one factor that may have affected the level is that there has been a weakening of the United States luxury car market in which the United Kingdom has a strong presence.

The following table shows a breakdown by category of United Kingdom exports of motor vehicles to the United States for the requested periods and the United States share by value of United Kingdom exports.

*United Kingdom exports of motor cars to the United States—numbers of vehicles*

| | *1987* | *1988* | *January-April 1989* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *New Vehicles—Assembled* | | | |
| Station wagons and estate cars not exceeding 1,500 cm$^3$ | 1 | — | 11 |
| exceeding 1,500 cm$^3$ but not exceeding 3,000 cm$^3$ | 141 | 28 | 9 |
| exceeding 3,000 cm$^3$ | 3,042 | 3,478 | 1,686 |
| Other | | | |
| not exceeding 1,500 cm$^3$ | 56 | 50 | 11 |
| exceeding 1,500 cm$^3$ but not exceeding 3,000 cm$^3$ | 21,978 | 5,855 | 2,266 |
| exceeding 3,000 cm$^3$ | 25,172 | 21,975 | 7,056 |
| *New Vehicles—Unassembled* | | | |
| not exceeding 1,500 cm$^3$ | — | 45 | 18 |
| exceeding 1,500 cm$^3$ but not exceeding 3,000 cm$^3$ | 1 | 10 | 14 |
| exceeding 3,000 cm$^3$ | — | 6 | — |
| *Used Vehicles* | 546 | 210 | 110 |
| *Vehicles with engines other than spark-ignition or compression-ignition combustion engines* | n/a | 16 | 5 |
| *Motor Caravans* | n/a | n/a | 1 |
| *United States share by value of United Kingdom exports of cars—percentage* | 40 | 28 | 24 |

*Source:* Overseas Trade Statistics.

Notes: Motor vehicles defined as SITC R2 Sub-Group 781 for 1987 and SITC R3 Item 781·2 for 1988 and 1989.

1988 and 1989 figures provisional.

## NESL

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date his Department was first made aware of a renewed interest in the purchase of North East Shipbuilders Ltd. by the Egon Oldendorff line of West Germany.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* British Shipbuilders informed my Department on 13 April that an approach it had received from a further interest in North East Shipbuilders Ltd. would be confirmed in writing that day.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on which date the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) met Sir Leon Brittan to discuss the sale of North East Shipbuilders Ltd.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* My right hon. Friend met Sir Leon Brittan to discuss this matter on 27 June 1989.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the reply by the right hon. Member for Braintree to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) *Official Report,* 13 July, column 1151, whether it was his Department or British Shipbuilders who informed the bidders for NESL of the anticipated difficulties with the European Commission; and whether this advice was provided in writing.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* Advice was given orally by my officials.

**Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether any meetings took place or written correspondence was exchanged between his Department and the European Commission relating to the sale of North East Shipbuilders Ltd. between 17 April and the date of the meeting between the right hon. Member for Braintree and Sir Leon Brittan.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* A full account of exchanges between my Department and the European Commission is contained in the note my right hon. Friend has recently placed in the Library.

### Export Promotion

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the direct and indirect cost to the Exchequer of export promotion; how much is recovered in fees; and what is his estimate of the effect in terms of *(a)* increased exports and *(b)* the real exchange rate.

**Mr. Redwood:** The cost, net of receipts, of export promotion services operated by my Department and by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office overseas was £102·4 million in 1988-89. Receipts totalled £16·4 million. These services make a valuable contribution to non-oil exports which reached a record level in 1988. There are many different influences on the real exchange rate and the effect of export promotion cannot be separately identified.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Prison Escapes

**Mr. McCusker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many escapes there have been from prisons in Northern Ireland involving loyalist prisoners in the past year.

**Mr. Cope:** There have been no escapes from Northern Ireland prisons in the past year.

### Prisoners (Home Leave)

**Mr. McCusker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners during the past year in *(a)* Her Majesty's prison Maghaberry and *(b)* Her Majesty's prison Maze have received (i) 30 days' home leave as part of the pre-release home leave scheme and (ii) five days' home leave; and what determines whether a prisoner should receive 30 or five days' home leave.

**Mr. Cope:** Statistics are not available in the form requested. The number of days pre-release home leave for which a prisoner may apply depends upon his classification and the length of his sentence. The maximum for fixed sentence prisoners is 23 days, for which prisoners in the "star" classification (generally those serving a first period in custody) with a sentence of four years or more are eligible.

### Criminal Injury Compensation

**Mr. McCusker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Upper Bann on 17 July, *Official Report,* column *1,* he will indicate whether there are written guidelines on criteria for the exercise of discretion in such cases of persons being denied criminal injury compensation.

**Mr. Cope:** There are no written guidelines. Each request for the exercise of discretion is considered on its own facts and merits.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Cope:** The information is as follows:

| | *In* | *Out* |
|---|---|---|
| January | 249 | 233 |
| Session up to 1 July 1989 | 1,817 | 1,932 |

### Corporals Derek Wood and David Howes

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons *(a)* have been charged, *(b)* have been convicted, *(c)* are still awaiting trial and *(d)* have been acquitted in respect of the incident in which Corporal Derek Wood and Corporal David Howes were murdered.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

### Belfast Urban Area Plan

**Mr. Clifford Forsythe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make it his policy that, until the findings of the Belfast urban area plan are issued, no planning permission will be considered for developments falling within the scope of the plan.

**Mr. Needham:** I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

### Broadleaved Woodland Grants

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions the Forestry Commission awarded grants under the broadleaved woodland grant scheme in Northern Ireland, between its inception in 1985 and closure in 1988; an on how many occasions was the grant of £100 for obtaining professional advice, in the preparation of a plan of operations under the scheme, awarded.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Bail

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications for bail, by those held on remand for *(a)* scheduled, *(b)* non-scheduled offences, and *(c)* both together, were refused bail in the first six months of the current year.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### RUC (Attacks)

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many attacks on Royal Ulster Constabulary personnel took place in 1988 and in the first six months of the current year; and if he will indicate in each case whether the attack was on *(a)* a foot patrol and *(b)* a mobile patrol; what was the total attacked while on duty each month together with details of the type of attack, namely (i) physical assault, (ii) stone throwing, (iii) petrol bomb, (iv) explosion and (v) shooting; and what was the number of persons made amenable.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Plastic Baton Rounds

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many formal complaints have been made about incidents of police use of plastic baton rounds in 1988 and in the first six months of the current year; in how many cases the complaint has been upheld; and in how many cases disciplinary action has been taken against the officers involved.

**Mr. Cope:** During 1988, seven formal complaints were made about the use of plastic baton rounds by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Three were later withdrawn. Police reports on the other four were sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions who directed no prosecution on each. The question of disciplinary action is now being considered by the deputy Chief Constable and in due course papers will be referred to the independent Commission for Police Complaints.

During the first six months of 1989, four formal complaints were received all of which are currently under investigation.

### Security Forces (Custodial Sentences)

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of the security forces convicted of offences in Northern Ireland and sentenced to custodial sentences have been allowed to return to Great Britain to serve their sentence for humanitarian reasons in 1988 and the first six months of the current year; and how many members of the security forces secured early release from their sentences in the same period.

**Mr. Cope:** There have been no transfers of sentenced members of the security forces to Great Britain in 1988 or in the first six months of the current year, nor has any such person been released in Northern Ireland except under normal release procedures.

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will give details for 1986 of the number of members of the Ulster Defence Regiment, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, their respective Reserves, and the British Army, who have been charged with offences and who have been convicted of offences, giving details of custodial sentences and suspended sentences imposed and separately for charges and convictions concerning: murder, attempted murder, membership of illegal organisations, conspiracy to cause explosions, withholding information concerning terrorist activity, possession of explosives, possession of explosives with intent to cause bodily harm, possession of firearms, possession of firearms with intent to cause bodily harm and other offences classified as scheduled offences in 1988 and the first half of 1989;

(2) if he will list for *(a)* the Royal Ulster Constabulary/Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve, *(b)* the

Ulster Defence Regiment and *(c)* the Army, the number of members and ex-members of these forces charged with and the number convicted of, scheduled offences committed, or allegedly committed, by members of the security forces while using firearms in 1988.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Non-scheduled Offences

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons were charged with non-scheduled offences; how many were charged with scheduled offences; and how many persons were found not guilty of all or some of the offences with which they were charged in the first half of the current year.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Detentions

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many persons were detained in connection with terrorist-type offences under Acts other than the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Acts and the Emergency Provisions (Northern Ireland) Acts in 1988 and in the first six months of the current year:

(2) how many persons were detained under the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts 1973-78 in the first six months of the current year; and how many of these persons were subsequently charged with *(a)* scheduled offences and *(b)* non-scheduled offences.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Remands in Custody

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many persons were remanded in custody before trial for *(a)* scheduled, *(b)* non-scheduled offences, and *(c)* both together in the first half of the current year;

(2) how many persons were remanded in custody before trial for *(a)* scheduled, *(b)* non-scheduled offences and *(c)* both together in the first half of the current year;

(3) how many prisoners charged with scheduled offences in the first half of the current year were remanded in custody prior to trial for periods between *(a)* nil to three months, *(b)* three to six months, *(c)* six to nine months, *(d)* nine to 12 months, *(e)* 12 to 18 months, and *(f)* over 18 months for (i) scheduled, and (ii) non-scheduled offences;

(4) how many prisoners were remanded in custody prior to trial for *(a)* scheduled, and *(b)* non-scheduled offences in the first six months of the current year;

(5) if he will give the average period between remand and trial for prisoners refused bail and charged with scheduled offences in Northern Ireland in the second half of 1988 and in the first half of the current year;

(6) what percentage of prisoners on custodial remand for *(a)* scheduled, and *(b)* non-scheduled offences were (i) given a non-custodial sentence, (ii) given a custodial sentence, and (iii) found not guilty or not proceeded against in the first six months of the current year;

(7) what was the average number of days spent on remand for both scheduled and non-scheduled offences together, in the first half of *(a)* the current year and *(b)* the total number of persons remanded in custody before trial for both scheduled and non-scheduled offences together, in the first half of the current year, and the number of bail applications refused for (i) scheduled, (ii) non-scheduled and (iii) both together in the first half of the current year;

(8) what was the average number of days spent on remand for both scheduled and non-scheduled offences together, in the first half of the current year; what was the total number of persons remanded in custody before trial for both scheduled and non-scheduled offences together, in the first half of the current year; and what was the number of bail applications refused for *(a)* scheduled offences *(b)* non-scheduled offences, and *(c)* both together, in the first half of the current year;

(9) what was the average number of days that prisoners spent on custodial remand for *(a)* scheduled, *(b)* non-scheduled offences and *(c)* both together, in the first half of the current year.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Plastic Bullets

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many plastic bullets have been fired in Northern Ireland in 1988 and in the first half of the current year; in what circumstances and in what location the bullets were fired, and how many; and if any persons were injured as a result of the use of plastic bullets.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Strip Searches

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many strip searches were made on female prisoners in Her Majesty's Prison, Maghaberry, monthly since January, giving the number of persons involved and the number of times each person was searched; if any prison contraband, smuggled item or illegal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while the search was being conducted; and what were the reasons for the search.

**Mr. Cope:** Details of the numbers of, and reasons for strip searches made of female prisoners in HM prison Maghaberry from October 1988 to February 1989 have already been provided on 21 April 1989 at column *326*. Details from March 1989 to June are as follows:

| | *March 1989* | *April 1989* | *May 1989* | *June 1989* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Number of searches* | | | | |
| Total number of searches carried out | 15 | 34 | 10 | 21 |
| Total number of inmates searched | 13 | 25 | 9 | 15 |
| Number of prisoners searched once | 11 | 16 | 8 | 9 |
| Number of prisoners searched twice | 2 | 9 | 1 | 6 |
| Number of prisoners searched more than twice | — | — | — | — |
| *Reasons for search* | | | | |
| First admission on remand/awaiting trial | 3 | 13 | 4 | 6 |
| First admission on sentence/final discharge | 11 | 16 | 4 | 11 |
| Attending remand court | — | — | — | — |
| Attending trial | — | — | — | — |
| Inter-prison visits | — | — | — | — |

| | March 1989 | April 1989 | May 1989 | June 1989 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-release home leave | — | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Visits to outside hospital | — | — | — | — |
| Returning from bail application | — | — | — | — |
| Attendance court for bail | 1 | 2 | — | — |
| Fines paid | — | 1 | — | — |

No prohibited article was found during these searches and no prisoner refused to be searched.

### Arms Finds

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will detail the number of arms found in the first six months of the current year under the headings of (i) machine guns, (ii) rifles, (iii) shotguns, (iv) pistols/revolvers and (v) others.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Kincora Boys Home

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will place a copy in the Library of the report of Sir George Terry on the Royal Ulster Constabulary's investigation into the Kincora boys home;

(2) on what date Mr. Roy Garland informed the Royal Ulster Constabulary that there was reason to believe that crimes were being committed in the Kincora boys home.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Firearms Thefts

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table showing how many legally held firearms were stolen in Northern Ireland during the first half of the current year from *(a)* the Royal Ulster Constabulary/Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve and Special Constabulary, *(b)* the Ulster Defence Regiment, *(c)* the British Army, and *(d)* civilians; and if he will give a breakdown of weapons stolen as (i) bullet firing, (ii) shotguns, and (iii) air weapons and miscellaneous, including blank-firing weapons, muzzle-loading weapons and antique weapons.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Custodial Sentences

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the average length of custodial sentence of female prisoners in Northern Ireland in 1988 and in the first six months of the current year.

**Mr. Cope:** The information is 7·5 months and 7·36 months, respectively, (excluding those female prisoners committed in default of payment of a fine).

### Scheduled Offences

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what was the number of persons proceeded against for scheduled offences in Northern Ireland in the first six months of the current year; how many persons pleaded guilty to the principal offence; and how many persons in such contested cases were found not guilty of the principal offence;

(2) whether the security statistics for the first half of the current year are now available together with details of persons charged with terrorist-type offences and convictions for scheduled offences up to the latest convenient date.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Ulster University

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cars have been stolen from car parks at the Ulster university, Jordanstown in each of the last three years.

**Mr. Cope:** The information requested is not available from existing records and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many students have been prosecuted for wilful vandalism at the Ulster university, Jordanstown.

**Mr. Cope:** This information cannot be obtained from existing records.

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he is satisfied with the present level of security on the Ulster university, Jordanstown, campus.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what expenditure has been incurred in each of the last three years for repairing malicious damage at the Ulster university, Jordanstown.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

### RUC Patrols (Antrim Coast)

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with what frequency Ulster Defence Regiment and Army patrols deploy in the glens of the Antrim coast; and if he will immediately increase the presence of security forces to back up the Royal Ulster Constabulary along the Antrim coast so as to help prevent incidents such as recent attempted murders of policemen at Cushendall.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

### Contractors

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will give the number of contractors placed or chosen for the select list of contractors to tender for a Government construction contract at each of the following values of contract: up to £50,000, up to £100,000, up to £500,000, up to £1,000,000, up to £5,000,000, and over £5,000,000, or such other values as are used by the Government if convenient;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table to show *(a)* all approved contracts for public Government construction contracts in Northern Ireland, *(b)* the value of contracts for which each such contractor will be considered, and *(c)* those contractors on the list and in each category who have not been successful tenderers in each of the last three years.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show for each of the last five years *(a)* the number of people by sex and category used by the Department of Health and Social Security unemployed in Northern Ireland, *(b)* the number employed, *(c)* the number of vacancies, *(d)* the number of persons engaged in ACE schemes, *(e)* the number engaged in YTS and *(f)* the number receiving income support or supplementary benefit, indicating how many of these were in employment, and the number of pensioners.

**Mr. Tom King:** I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

### Social Security Payments

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show the number of payments and the annual or financial year sums paid each year in *(a)* Department of Health and Social Services sample payments, *(b)* community care grants and *(c)* social fund loans for each of the last three years (i) in Northern Ireland, (ii) the Coleraine, (iii) the Magharafelt and (iv) Limavady Department of Health and Social Services.

**Mr. Tom King:** I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

### Income Support (Guide)

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the adjudicating officers' guide for income support is available to *(a)* members of the public, *(b)* persons representing claimants or *(c)* hon. Members.

**Mr. Tom King:** I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

### Statutory Instruments

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, for each of the last five parliamentary Sessions including the 1988-89 Session, if he will list the number of statutory instruments that were issued by his Department; how many were negative and how many affirmative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Cope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Cabinet Ministers (Pay)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the percentage increase in the pay of Cabinet Ministers since 1978-79, before and after tax, assuming allowances are restricted to the married person's allowance.

**The Prime Minister:** The information requested is contained in the following table.

*Percentage increase in pay of a Cabinet Minister in 1988-89 compared with 1978-79*

| | *1978-79* | *1988-89* |
|---|---|---|
| *Cabinet Minister (Commons)* | | |
| Gross Salary | £14,300 | £34,479 |
| Percentage increase | — | 141 |
| Net Salary | £9,386 | £25,220 |
| Percentage increase | — | 169 |
| *Cabinet Minister (Lords)* | | |
| Gross Salary | £14,300 | £41,997 |
| Percentage increase | — | 194 |
| Net Salary | £9,386 | £29,731 |
| Percentage increase | — | 217 |

*Note:* In 1983 Lords Ministers received a pay lead over their Commons counterparts.

Commons Ministers receive in addition a reduced parliamentary salary. In 1978-79 it was £3,529, in 1988-89 it was £18,148.

### Underground Services

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her reply to the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) on 8 June, *Official Report*, column 366, she will list those proposals received from London Underground Limited for the improvement of their services which Her Majesty's Government intend to approve; whether those improvements will be confined to peak hour travel; and if Her Majesty's Government will make any real increase in peak-hour travel fares conditional on their implementation.

**The Prime Minister:** Proposals recently approved include the modernisation of the Central line; the provision of 16 additional Underground trains; and improvements to Liverpool street and Angel underground stations. Other proposals will be considered as they come forward. In addition, London Underground Limited intends to invest £266 million over the years 1989-92 to implement the recommendations contained in the report by Mr. Desmond Fennell QC and to enhance safety. Improvements to the Underground system may benefit all passengers, not just those who travel at peak hours, although clearly, some works to enlarge capacity are needed only to cope with peak demand. The level and structure of fares are matters for London Regional Transport to decide.

### Environment (Parliamentary Questions)

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her oral reply to the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan), *Official Report*, 17 July, columns 34-35, she will now make it her policy that Ministers answer parliamentary questions based on the factual environmental record of previous Administrations.

**The Prime Minister:** It is a well-established practice that the Government of the day do not answer for the actions of previous Administrations. The factual environmental record of this Government is excellent.

### Women's Issues

**Mr. Andrew Bowden:** To ask the Prime Minister what steps she takes to co-ordinate Government policy on women's issues.

**The Prime Minister:** The ministerial group on women's issues was established to provide a co-ordinated examination of policies of special concern to women, including the practical effect of legislation. Its membership crosses departmental divisions. It is chaired by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Office and has now met eight times, most recently on 20 July, when it agreed new initiatives on domestic violence.

### House of Fraser

**Mr. D. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Prime Minister whether her discussions on matters of state with representatives of overseas states have included matters relating to the takeover of House of Fraser by the El Fayeds.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave him on 25 July at column *849*.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### Indonesia

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made by Her Majesty's Government to the World Bank concerning the conditions on which loans are made to the Government of Indonesia, or any other body in that country, for schemes that directly or indirectly involve land resettlement; and if he will make a statement concerning Her Majesty's Government's policy on this matter.

**Mrs. Chalker:** My officials are in touch with the World Bank about a multi-purpose dam and irrigation project in central Java where difficulties have arisen over the resettlement of people displaced by the reservoir. Our understanding is that the bank is working closely with the Government of Indonesia on the formulation of a comprehensive resettlement plan. We shall continue to monitor the situation. The bank has recently produced guidelines for planning resettlement which we consider should be the standard against which to assess future bank projects.

## TRANSPORT

### British Rail (Accidents)

**Mrs. Wise:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents have occurred on British Rail *(a)* during the past five years and *(b)* during the five years before that; and how many fatalities occurred during the same periods.

**Mr. Portillo:** The information is not available in the form requested. The railway inspectorate maintains accident records for the preparation of the annual report on railway safety. These records show the number of casualties but not the precise number of accidents. The numbers of accidents to trains (collisions, derailments, fires and so on) are given in the following table, together with the numbers of fatalities, since 1979 (table B). These cover all railways: the numbers for BR cannot generally be isolated without a lot of research, although it has been possible to do so for the years since the records were computerised (table C).

Table A is a summary of accidents of all types for all railways during the 10 years ended 1988. Movement accidents are those which are caused to people by moving railway vehicles which are not train accidents, for example, an accident involving a carriage door of a moving train. Non-movement accidents are those which do not involve railway vehicles. The King's Cross fire is in this category.

*Table A*
*Fatalities in all railway accidents 1979-88*

| *Year* | *Train accidents* | *Movement accidents* | *Non-movement accidents* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 20 | 74 | 13 | 107 |
| 1980 | 7 | 52 | 10 | 69 |
| 1981 | 7 | 58 | 11 | 76 |
| 1982 | 11 | 40 | 6 | 57 |
| 1983 | 10 | 53 | 6 | 69 |
| 1984 | 30 | 41 | 5 | 76 |
| 1985 | 6 | 55 | 13 | 74 |
| 1986 | 27 | 41 | 4 | 72 |
| 1987 | 10 | 57 | 37 | 104 |
| [1]1988 | 40 | 53 | 5 | 98 |

[1] Provisional figures.

*Table B*
*Train accidents and fatal injuries—all railways*

| *Year* | *Accidents* | *Fatalities* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 1,035 | 20 |
| 1980 | 930 | 7 |
| 1981 | 1,014 | 7 |
| 1982 | 998 | 11 |
| 1983 | 1,225 | 10 |
| 1984 | 1,359 | 30 |
| 1985 | 1,240 | 6 |
| 1986 | 1,171 | 27 |
| 1987 | 1,164 | 10 |
| [1]1988 | 1,359 | 40 |

[1] Provisional figures.

*Table C*
*Train accidents and fatal injuries—British Railways only*

| *Year* | *Accidents* | *Fatalities* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | [2]— | [2]— |
| 1980 | [2]— | [2]— |
| 1981 | [2]— | [2]— |
| 1982 | [2]— | [2]— |
| 1983 | [2]— | [2]— |
| 1984 | 1,329 | 28 |
| 1985 | 1,213 | 6 |
| 1986 | 1,117 | 27 |
| 1987 | 1,121 | 10 |
| [1]1988 | 1,287 | 40 |

[1] Provisional figures.
[2] Figures not available.

### Road Safety, Silver Hill

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department was consulted about the construction of a tarmac access road and erection of a 15 ft by 10 ft sign just south of the bend at the top of Silver Hill on the A21 south of Hurst Green (Ordnance Survey 1/25,000, sheet TQ72 MR 737258) advertising a theme park; and if his Department is satisfied that turning traffic would not constitute a hazard to traffic proceeding to Hastings.

**Mr. Atkins:** The Department has been consulted in the normal way by the local planning authority and is prepared to agree the access subject to the conditions. The recently installed access does not meet those conditions and does not comply with the Department's current design standards.

## Departmental Staff (Dismissal)

**Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of his Department's employees have been sacked for incompetence since 1986.

**Mr. Atkins:** Since 1 January 1986, 26 employees of the Department have had their employment terminated on the ground of inefficiency, and 25 on the ground of limited efficiency. Seventy staff did not have their employment confirmed at the end of their probationary period.

## Railways

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the information he has for the railways in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* Germany, *(c)* France and *(d)* Italy on (i) the amount of profit/loss, (ii) the number of passengers, (iii) passenger-kilometres and (iv) tonne-kilometres carried in (1) 1959, (2) 1969, (3) 1979 and (4) in the latest available year, together with the number of employees and the total amount in terms of local currency of the total state contribution and of total investment.

**Mr. Portillo:** I do not have information for the years 1959 and 1969. The information readily available is as follows:

| | *GB(BR)* | *West Germany* | *France* | *Italy* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1979 | | | | |
| Number of Passengers (million)[1] | 736 | 1,027 | 676 | 386 |
| Passenger kms (billion)[1] | 32 | 39 | 53 | 40 |
| Average Number Employees (000) | 244 | 337 | 259 | 220 |
| 1986 | | | | |
| Number of Passengers (million)[1] | 689 | 1,023 | 767 | 397 |
| Passenger kms (billion)[1] | 31 | 41 | 60 | 40 |
| Average Number Employees (000)[1] | 171 | 272 | 233 | 214 |
| 1980 | | | | |
| Tonne kms (billion)[2] | 18 | 51 | 58 | 19 |
| 1986 | | | | |
| Tonne kms (billion)[2] | 15 | 48 | 54 | 19 |

*Sources:*

[1] 1979, 1986 International Railway Statistics (UIC).

[2] International Comparisons of Transport Statistics; Statistics Bulletin (88) 38 (DTp).

Information on profit/loss and subsidy is available for 1985 and 1981. Comparisons between countries are misleading as accounting policies vary across Europe. For example, since nationalisation the Government have written off approximately £1·5 billion (cash) of BR debt. If interest still had to be paid on this amount, the grant would have to be much higher to achieve the same effect. Other railways have been treated differently: in particular I understand that the West German railway has a large debt burden.

| *Million units local currency (cash)* | *GB(BR)* £ | *West Germany* DM | *France* FF | [1]*Italy* L |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Subsidy* | | | | |
| 1981 | 831 | 9,062 | 15,408 | 3,573 |
| 1985 | 920 | 9,317 | 23,342 | 6,798 |
| *Loss* | | | | |
| 1981 | 37 | 3,830 | 2,863 | 1,705 |
| 1985 | 20 | 2,909 | 4,486 | 2,119 |

*Source:*

EEC Transposed Accounts.

[1] Italian figures in billion lire.

The most recent investment comparisons my Department has are for 1989-90.

| *£* | *Great Britain (BR)* | *West Germany* | *France* | *Italy* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Investment (million) | 685 | 1,662 | 1,062 | n/a |
| Investment per route mile (thousand) | 66 | 97 | 49 | n/a |

*Source:* January 1989 International Railway Journal.

International comparisons of financial statistics must take account of the differences between the networks' geographical and operating conditions. A comparison of subsidy per route mile shows that the level of subsidy paid to British Rail, in relation to the size of the network, is marginally higher than for the French railways. This is despite British Rail's smaller network being more heavily used than those in France and West Germany. The current budget for British Rail investment is also higher than that planned by French railways when the size of the network is taken into account.

## Hunts (Trespass)

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will direct British Rail to prosecute in all cases where evidence is available of hunts trespassing on railway property, particularly where running rails are situated and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** Decisions on prosecutions are matters for the police and prosecuting authorities.

## Greenhouse Effect

**Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy at the next Council of European Transport Ministers to take steps to initiate a research programme to combat the effects on greenhouse global warming from the transport sector in the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Atkins:** Following the June Council of Environment Ministers, the European Commission is already committed to looking into methods of controlling carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles. There is also a wider intergovernmental panel on climatic change which is examining the greenhouse effect in a more global context.

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to evaluate the recommendation made in the sixth report of the Energy Select Committee that a full study be made of the implications for the greenhouse effect of the present transport modes, and of increased road use by the year 2000.

**Mr. Atkins:** The Government will give a full response to the Select Committee's recommendations in due course.

## London Assessment Studies

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many visits he has made to areas affected by the London assessment studies; whom he met; and on what dates the visits occurred.

**Mr. Atkins:** I have not yet had the opportunity to make any such visits.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the total number of representations he has now received concerning the London assessment studies; what proportion of these are opposed to all road building; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins:** The Department has received many representations about all aspects of the studies. To identify the proportion opposed to all road building would involve disproportionate cost.

**Sir Barney Hayhoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will authorise his consultants for the west London assessment study to consider road pricing for London as a whole; and if he will make it his policy to ensure that account is taken of both generated and diverted traffic effects arising from other road schemes including the M25 and Westway in assessing new road options.

**Mr. Atkins:** I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply he was given on 28 June at column *474*. The traffic models already take into account diverted traffic and an allowance will be made for generated traffic.

**Sir Barney Hayhoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether information concerning rail freight over Barnes bridge is available to his consultants for the west London assessment study.

**Mr. Atkins:** The consultants for the west London assessment study have held numerous meetings with British Rail and have obtained information concerning use of the railway over Barnes bridge.

**Sir Barney Hayhoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have signed the petitions presented to him opposing options contained in the west London assessment study.

**Mr. Atkins:** I have received several petitions about the west London assessment study. It is not possible without disproportionate cost to identify how many individuals have signed one or more of them.

**Sir Barney Hayhoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements are being made to take account of current transport studies including the central London rail study, the Heathrow and south west quadrant study and the Heathrow surface access study in the preparation of the west London assessment study.

**Mr. Atkins:** Co-ordination of the various studies is arranged by the Department's officials.

**Sir Barney Hayhoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what general arrangements are being made for public participation on stage 2B of the west London assessment study; what period is planned for this consultation; which local organisations will be consulted; how the public will be involved; and under what terms the stage 2B report will be made available.

**Mr. Atkins:** An announcement on the arrangements for public participation on stage 2B of the study will be made in due course.

## Road Accidents (Cyclists)

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the total number of road accidents involving cyclists in the past year; what are the comparable figures for the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Atkins:** The figures requested are as follows:

*All accidents involving pedal cyclists: 1983-1987*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1983 | 31,236 |
| 1984 | 31,586 |
| 1985 | 27,482 |
| 1986 | 26,641 |
| 1987 | 26,616 |

Final figures are not yet available for 1988; provisional estimates show 25,800 pedal cycle casualties for the year. This compares with a figure of 30,600 for 1983, a decrease of 16 per cent.

While this fall is welcomed by the Department, we remain concerned at the high level of pedal cyclist casualties and are committed to reducing it further.

### Driving Licences

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in how many instances, in each of the last five years, he has exercised his powers to investigate the health of applicants for and holders of driving licences who are over the age of 70 years.

**Mr. Atkins:** This information is not available.

Drivers aged 70 or over are required to renew their licences at least every three years. Like all drivers, they are required by law to notify the DVLC of any relevant health condition when they apply for a driving licence, or if a condition develops or worsens during the currency of a licence.

### Rail Transport (East London)

**Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for improving rail transport in east London.

**Mr. Portillo:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) on 26 July, *Official Report*, column *729*.

### Manchester Airport (Accident)

**Mr. Day:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he has received any recent report from the chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority on progress being made to implement the air accident investigation branch recommendations following the Manchester airport tragedy that *(a)* mandatory provision for smoke hoods in all passenger aircraft, *(b)* the development and introduction of water spray/mist systems, *(c)* the improved rules to facilitate evacuation rates and *(d)* the development of toxicity tests in cabin material specifications.;

(2) if he will ask the chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority to review methods by which passenger jets are approved for air worthiness certification in light of the conclusions drawn by an expert from the Federal Aviation Administration on the subject of aging jets at a conference on aviation safety held in London in June.

**Mr. McLoughlin:** The safety regulation of civil aviation is wholly the statutory responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority.

I understand that the expert referred to was explaining matters which have been for over a year the subject of discussion and action by, among others, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Federal Aviation Administration.

The most recent CAA report on the AAIB investigation is the "Follow-up Action on Accident Reports No. F. 5/89" issued on 13 March. This document covers all of the matters raised by my hon. Friend and I shall arrange for a copy to be sent to him.

### Traffic Speed (London)

**Sir Barney Hayhoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his best estimate of the likely average traffic speed in 10, 20 and 30 years' time on the basis of the information and assumptions included in "Transport in London".

**Mr. Atkins:** I would not expect average traffic speeds in London as a whole to change substantially.

### Fishing Vessels

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow on 26 July, he will set out the requirements of the 1988 Act which each of the 150 formerly registered vessels failed to satisfy; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. McLoughlin:** The 150 vessels did not meet any or all of the requirements of schedule 14 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 relating to the ownership, management and control of the vessel. Thirty-one of these vessels also could not have been registered because they did not have valid safety certificates.

### M2 and A2

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his estimate of the cost of widening the carriageway to three lanes of *(a)* the A2 between London and the commencement of the M2, *(b)* the M2, and *(c)* the A2 between the end of the M2 and Canterbury.

**Mr. Atkins:** The A2 already has dual three-lane carriageways from the London boundary to the start of the M2.

A scheme for widening the M2 to dual three-lanes between junctions 1 and 3 is programmed, at an estimated works cost of £28 million at November 1985 prices. Subject to detailed investigation, this scheme might also provide for the third southbound lane to continue some way beyond junction 3 as a crawler lane.

There are no present plans for widening the remainder of the M2, or the A2 between the motorway and Canterbury. Estimated costs are not, therefore available.

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the improvement and maintenance programmes for the A2 and M2 roads were last reviewed at ministerial level; and when he will next carry out such a review.

**Mr. Atkins:** The recent White Paper "Roads for Prosperity" (Cm. 693) announced the addition to the programme of the A2/A282 Dartford improvements scheme, and also the intention to carry out a study into possible future need for improvement along the section of A2 between Bean and the M2. The needs of the national trunk road network as a whole are kept under constant review by Ministers, and new schemes added when justified. We shall continue to watch the position on the A2/M2 route in the light of traffic developments.

Ministers review the national road maintenance programme annually, usually early in the calendar year. This covers all motorway and all-purpose trunk roads.

**Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what financial and other criteria were used in determining whether or not to carry out maintenance work on the M2 and A2 roads north of Canterbury in each year from 1985 to 1989; and if he will publish the criteria.

**Mr. Atkins:** Maintenance priorities on all trunk roads are determined using engineering judgment, based upon the results of road condition assessment surveys and the need for timely intervention to minimise costs. Much of the A2/M2 has exceeded its design life and its condition gave it a high maintenance priority.

The Department's methods for monitoring road condition and for assessing the needs for maintenance are already published. There can be no set criteria for the application of expert engineering judgment to survey results.

### British Rail (Privatisation)

**Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effects of privatising British Rail *(a)* as one national private railway company and *(b)* as individual regional private railway companies.

**Mr. Portillo:** These are among the privatisation options being considered.

**Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consideration he has given to the proposal to privatise Network SouthEast, with its operational responsibilities to include the development and operation of a Channel tunnel rail link, as a separate railway company; and what representations he has received from private sector parties interested in such a proposal.

**Mr. Portillo:** A range of privatisation options for British Rail is being considered, including privatisation by business sectors, of which Network SouthEast is one. Privatisation options will need to take account of the Channel tunnel rail link proposals, but I have received no representations from the private sector concerning privatisation of Network SouthEast and the rail link together.

**Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to be able to announce his decision on the privatisation of British Rail.

**Mr. Portillo:** Not for some time.

**Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations British Rail has made to him with regard to the progress of discussions with parties from the private sector interested in investing in a Channel tunnel rail link scheme; and when he expects to be able to announce the outcome of those discussions.

**Mr. Portillo:** The British Railways board keeps me informed of its progress in securing private sector involvement in the rail link scheme. An announcement will be made in due course.

**Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from potential bidders from the private sector interested in the private financing and future operations of a Channel tunnel rail link scheme.

**Mr. Portillo:** My right hon. Friend and I have received some representations on this subject. British Rail is currently discussing its proposals for the high-speed rail link with several private sector interests.

### Thames Link Station (Camberwell)

**Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what applications for funding for a projected new Thames link station in Camberwell he has received from British Rail and Southwark borough council; when applications were made; for what sum was the bid for a Government grant; and when he expects to be able to announce his decision on any such application.

**Mr. Portillo:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

### Public Transport Grants

**Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what Government grants are available for public transport investment where there are non-user benefits; and if any such grants have been applied for, or awarded.

**Mr. Portillo:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

### Provincial Railway Services

**Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the British Railways board has responded to the report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the board's provincial services; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Portillo:** The British Railways board has made an initial response to the report and I have today placed copies of that response in the Library of the House. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission has generally endorsed the achievements and strategy of the provincial sector and the board has accepted nearly all the commission's recommendations. I am grateful for the commission's work and I welcome the board's positive response. The commission endorses the board's considerable progress in reducing the costs of provincial services and raising revenue through better marketing. I attach great importance to that. But these services still require considerable public subsidy and they must be cost effective. I shall monitor the board's progress in following up the commission's recommendations and a further statement will be made to the House about that, probably early next year.

The commission's report makes recommendations about quality of service targets. Having considered the advice of the commission together with that of the central transport consultative committee and of the board itself, we have now asked the board to aim for the revised quality targets for provincial services which are set out in the table. We are expecting the targets to be met by each of the express/longer rural and urban shorter rural categories of service as a whole. However, we have asked the board to advise on the cost implications of meeting the targets on each route.

The new targets are more in line with the provincial sector's customer-oriented approach. They are consistent with the existing quality targets set for InterCity and Network SouthEast services. They establish reasonable levels of service for the board to provide for customers using provincial services without imposing exessive costs or fares. I very much welcome the recent appointment by the board of a provincial quality manager.

I commend the new targets to the passenger transport executives for the services they support. But they may of course choose different targets if they judge that the extra benefits justify a higher level of local support.

The board's response records that discussions are also taking place with my Department about recommendations that involve wider policy issues. Further announcements on these matters will be made in due course.

*British Rail provincial sector:*
*New quality of service targets*

| | Target |
|---|---|
| *Punctuality* | |
| Express<br>Longer rural | 90 per cent. (0 to 10 minutes of right time) |
| Urban<br>Shorter rural | 90 per cent. (0 to 5 minutes) |
| *Trains run* | |
| Express<br>Longer rural | 99·5 per cent. minimum |
| Urban<br>Shorter rural | 99 per cent. minimum |
| *Loadings* | |
| Express<br>Longer rural | No published targets |
| Urban<br>Shorter rural | 135 per cent./110 per cent. for sliding/slam door stock; maximum 20 minutes standing |
| *Cleaning* | |
| Internal | 100 per cent. daily |
| External | 100 per cent. every two days |
| *Telephone Enquiry Bureaux* | 95 per cent. of calls to be answered within 30 seconds |
| *Ticket Office queues* | Maximum times of 5 minutes/3 minutes, in peak/off-peak |

## Drink-Driving

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of crashes involving more than one vehicle resulting in death or serious injury to individuals without alcohol in their blood are caused by drivers with illegal blood alcohol levels in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Scotland.

**Mr. Atkins** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* That information is not available in the form requested. Approximately 8 per cent. of fatalities in road accidents are of non-drivers in accidents where at least one of the drivers involved had a blood alcohol level above the legal limit, but many of these would themselves have had alcohol in their blood. The corresponding figure for serious injuries is 3 per cent.

## Lead-free Petrol

**Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consultations he has undertaken with the Petrol Retailers Association with a view to outlawing the practice of selling lead-free petrol through dual-purpose petrol pump nozzles.

**Mr. Atkins** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* Petrol retailers have been given a temporary derogation by the weights and measures authorities to use dual-purpose nozzles. It expires on 1 April next year. The subject was discussed at the recent meeting of the unleaded petrol group, chaired by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment. The Petrol Retailers Association was represented at the meeting.

## British Rail (Safety)

**Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list *(a)* the number of reports he has received from the railways inspectorate, *(b)* the number recommending prosecutions, *(c)* the number of prosecutions taken up and the outcome for each of the past 10 years.

(2) if he will list *(a)* the number of deaths on British Rail premises each year in the last 10 years and *(b)* the number of prosecutions for such deaths and the outcome of the prosecutions.

**Mr. Portillo** *[pursuant to his reply, 29 June c. 522–23]:* The figures given in table A were for accidental deaths on all railways. The numbers for BR cannot generally be isolated without a lot of research, although it has been possible to do so for the years since the records were computerised.

*Table 1*
*Train accidents and fatal injuries—British Railways only*

| | *Accidents* | *Fatalities* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | [2]— | [2]— |
| 1980 | [2]— | [2]— |
| 1981 | [2]— | [2]— |
| 1982 | [2]— | [2]— |
| 1983 | [2]— | [2]— |
| 1984 | 1,329 | 28 |
| 1985 | 1,213 | 6 |
| 1986 | 1,117 | 27 |
| 1987 | 1,121 | 10 |
| [1]1988 | 1,287 | 40 |

[1] Provisional figures.
[2] Figures not available.

# EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

## Teachers (Turnover)

**Mr. Straw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information as to the turnover of teachers he has available to him.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** Figures for teacher turnover for the three most recent available years are:

| | *Leaving post* | *of which, moving to another post* |
|---|---|---|
| | *Per cent.* | *Per cent.* |
| 1985 | 14·7 | 7·2 |
| 1986 | 16·1 | 8·5 |
| 1987 | 14·6 | 7·4 |

## Teachers (London)

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to improve the teacher supply in London.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Members for Tottenham (Mr. Grant) and Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 4 July at column *119.*

## Examinations

**Mr. John Carlisle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will propose amendments to the existing system of the collection of examination fees from pupils to ensure that such fees are paid to the local education authority before those pupils enter the examination.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** It is for the independent examination boards to recover fees for examination entries. Under the existing arrangements, local education authorities meet the cost of pupil entries from maintained schools and, in the case of prescribed public examinations, may not levy a charge in respect of that cost where the pupil has been prepared for the examination in a maintained school.

### Deaf-blind Children

**Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to give financial support to local education authorities setting up new educational services for deaf-blind children as recommended in his Department's policy document "Educational Provision for Deaf-Blind Children".

**Mr. Alan Howarth:** The Department's policy statement encourages local education authorities to consider how to use more effectively existing special schools and units and support services to develop educational services for deaf-blind children.

**Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to encourage the development of training for teachers of deaf-blind children.

**Mr. Alan Howarth:** The Department will shortly be laying before Parliament new Education (Teachers) Regulations to come into effect on 1 September 1989. These will extend the mandatory qualification requirement to cover teachers of pupils who are both visually and hearing impaired. Training leading to an approved qualification for teaching these children will have national priority status under the local education authorities training grants scheme 1990-91.

**Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to ensure that local education authorities respond to the recommendations in his Department's policy document on educational provision for deaf-blind children, published in March.

**Mr. Alan Howarth:** During the coming year, the Department will be following up through regional conferences for special education what action local education authorities are taking on the policy statement.

### Physical Education

**Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many physical education teachers there were in 1987, 1988 and on the latest available date.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The latest available data of the number of teachers in maintained schools in England with a post A-level qualification in physical education are as follows:

| | *Full-time* | *Part-time* |
|---|---|---|
| Primary schools (including nursery) | 12,800 | 2,100 |
| Secondary schools | 31,600 | 3,900 |

The figures refer to March 1987, for primary schools and March 1988 for secondary schools. Information for secondary schools in 1987 is not available.

**Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give the numbers entering training to become physical education teachers in 1986, 1987 and 1988.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The numbers of entrants to secondary initial training courses in physical education in 1986, 1987 and 1988, for England and Wales are as follows:

| | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* |
|---|---|---|---|
| PGCE | 249 | 293 | 262 |
| BEd | 537 | 604 | 643 |
| Total | 786 | 897 | 905 |

*Source:* DES annual ITT recruitment survey.

**Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to carry out a survey of facilities available for school sports; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend has no plans to do so.

### Religious Education (Ealing)

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will take steps to have the proposed new religious education syllabus in Ealing scrutinised by Her Majesty's inspectorate of education.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The Department is currently considering representations made about this syllabus. I will let my hon. Friend know the outcome.

### ILEA (Redundancy Arrangements)

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received concerning the redundancy arrangements for female staff of the Inner London education authority; if they have been scrutinised by the Equal Opportunities Commission; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State received two letters from the Trades Union Congress, dated 17 and 24 May, concerning the redundancy arrangements for female staff of the Inner London education authority. The second of these two letters enclosed a copy of a letter of 17 May from the Equal Opportunities Commission. The matter was also raised by the staff associations of the Inner London education authority.

The Department replied to the Trades Union Congress on 7 July, attaching a copy of the regulations on the redundancy compensation arrangements for staff of the Inner London education authority, which had been laid before Parliament that day. The Department made clear in that letter its view that the regulations did not discriminate against female employees. The entitlement to a redundancy payment in the regulations derives from the statutory framework set out in the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978. This provides that certain categories of part-time employee, regardless of their sex, are not eligible to receive redundancy compensation.

## Student Loans

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many representations he has had about the withdrawal of social security benefits under the proposed student top-up loan scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jackson:** We have received a substantial number of representations about the Government's proposals on the introduction of top-up loans. Within that total of some 3,000 letters, no separate figure for representations about social security benefits is available.

## A and AS-level

**Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the number of A and AS-level entrants by subject for 1987, 1988 and 1989.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The number of school leavers attempting A-level by subject for 1987 and 1988 are shown in the table. Figures for 1989 are not yet available. The first AS examinations were taken in 1989 and figures are not yet available. I will write to the hon. Member about the numbers of students in further education colleges attempting A-levels.

*Numbers of school leavers attempting A-levels by subject*

*England* *Thousands*

| | *Numbers of school leavers attempting A-level* 1987 | 1988 |
|---|---|---|
| *Science* | | |
| Mathematics | 52·8 | 53·9 |
| Physics | 34·1 | 33·4 |
| Chemistry | 32·0 | 32·2 |
| Biology, botany or zoology | 28·2 | 27·4 |
| Other science[1] | 8·4 | 7·1 |
| *Social science* | | |
| Geography | 27·0 | 26·4 |
| Economics[2] | 32·6 | 34·5 |
| General studies | 40·5 | 41·5 |
| Vocational subjects[3] | 7·8 | 8·9 |
| Other social science | 8·4 | 8·7 |
| *Arts* | | |
| English | 40·3 | 40·4 |
| History | 28·7 | 27·2 |
| French | 16·4 | 15·5 |
| Other modern languages | 9·0 | 8·7 |
| Classics | 3·9 | 5·3 |
| Religious knowledge | 4·1 | 4·4 |
| Music, drama, visual arts | 17·7 | 17·6 |
| Other arts | 0·7 | 0·9 |
| Number of leavers attempting any subject | 134·6 | 133·6 |

[1] Including building construction, geology, metalwork, technical drawing and woodwork.

[2] Including English economic history and British constitution.

[3] Including domestic and commercial subjects.

## Teachers

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate the number of qualified teachers available against the anticipated demand in each of the next three years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** As at January 1989, there were 397,400 teachers employed by LEAs in England. Gross demand for teachers in maintained schools, in line with projected pupil numbers, will be approximately the same in 1992 as in 1989. There will be sufficient qualified teachers overall, including newly qualified teachers and out of service teachers, to meet this demand. My Department's action programme aims to help schools and LEAs in those regions where there are shortages to recruit the teachers they need.

## Dyslexia

**Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement regarding the central monitoring of individual local education authorities' performance in fulfilling their statutory duty to identify pupils with dyslexia.

**Mr. Alan Howarth:** It is for individual local education authorities, in the exercise of their statutory duties under the 1981 Education Act, to make provision for the identification of children with special educational needs. My right hon. Friend has no plans for central monitoring of LEAs' performance concerning dyslexia.

## Youth Arts Organisations

**Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the grants given by his Department in 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90, in 1989 prices to *(a)* the National Youth Orchestra, *(b)* the National Youth Theatre, *(c)* the National Youth Choir, *(d)* the National Youth Dance Trust and *(e)* any other national youth arts organisations; and what plans there are for the continued funding of these organisations.

**Mr. Alan Howarth:** The table shows the maximum level of funding, at 1989 prices, made available by the Department of Education and Science to seven national youth arts organisations 1984-88 to 1989-80.

| *Organisation* | [1] *1984-85* £ | [1] *1985-86* £ | [1] *1986-87* £ | [1] *1987-88* £ | [1] *1988-89* £ | *1989-90* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| British Federation of Youth Choirs | — | — | — | — | — | 5,000 |
| National Association of Youth Theatres | — | — | — | — | — | 15,000 |
| National Youth Choir of Great Britain | — | 1,230 | 1,191 | 1,155 | 2,152 | 5,000 |
| National Youth Dance Trust | — | — | — | — | — | 5,000 |
| National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain | 5,383 | 5,226 | 5,421 | 5,162 | 4,937 | 5,000 |
| National Youth Theatre | 44,686 | 44,141 | 48,071 | 45,710 | 45,133 | 45,000 |
| United Kingdom Federation of Jazz Bands | 5,383 | 5,164 | 6,672 | 7,132 | 7,469 | 10,000 |

[1] at 1989 prices

These organisations are eligible to apply for grant for the 1990-91 financial year under the terms of the Department's current grant memorandum for grants to national voluntary youth organisations issued in April this year. I have placed a copy of this Memorandum in the Libraries of both Houses. The level of any grant to these bodies will depend on the Department's assessment of their programmes of work proposed for DES funding in 1990-91 within the overall funding available for the purpose.

### Examinations (Fees)

**Mr. John Carlisle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when pupils who sit for general certificate of secondary education examinations fail to complete the necessary entry requirements, what remedies are available to the local education authority to recover the fees from the parent or guardian.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** If a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements, including course work, for any public examination for which the LEA or school has paid the entry fee, it is open to the LEA to recover the fee from the parent or guardian.

## WALES

### Cambrian Coast Railway

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he proposes to have discussions with the chairman of British Rail concerning the future of the Cambrian coast railway line; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** My right hon. Friend expects to meet the chairman of British Rail soon to discuss a range of issues affecting the rail network in Wales.

### Broadleaved Woodland Grants

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on how many occasions the Forestry Commission awarded grants under the broadleaved woodland grant scheme in Wales, between its inception in 1985 and closure in 1988; and on how many occasions was the grant of £100 for obtaining professional advice, in the preparation of a plan of operations under the scheme, awarded.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** To date, the Forestry Commission has approved 677 applications for grant under the broadleaved woodland grant scheme in Wales. The grant of £100 has been paid on 183 of those applications.

### Welsh Water

**Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how he proposes to encourage the ownership of shares in Welsh Water by the people of Wales.

**Mr. Grist:** Decisions have yet to be taken as to the best way of ensuring that customers apply for shares in their own water service companies. We are examining the precedents set in earlier privatisations.

**Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will make it his policy that shares in Welsh Water are marketed separately from any basket of shares in water companies in England.

**Mr. Grist:** The Government have already announced that individuals will be able to apply for shares in their own water service company and in any other water service company.

### 999 Calls

**Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy to ensure that emergency services in mid-Wales and north Wales do not experience the problems of those in south Wales in relation to the introduction of new exchange arrangements for 999 calls.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** As my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs made clear in the House, there is already a high quality of 999 service across the country and the Government are concerned to see that standard of service maintained in the future. I know that the Director General of Telecommunications, whose office has the general duty of monitoring and enforcing the conditions of licences issued to public telecommunications operators, will be keeping the provision of 999 call services under review.

**Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has investigated the recent problems with 999 services in Wales as a whole and the consequent effect on emergency services; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** I have been kept fully informed of the recent problems with 999 services in Wales.

### Hospital Staff

**Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will make it his policy to protect the hours and wage rates for the lowest paid hospital staff.

**Mr. Grist:** It is the responsibility of employing authorities to determine hours of work in the light of local circumstances. A general Whitley council agreement provides for the short-term protection of earnings for staff who suffer a reduction in basic hours worked within the standard working week.

### Sewage Discharges

**Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will make it his policy to obtain and publish details of the schemes of work with starting and finishing dates, in respect of each derogation for sewage discharges in Wales.

**Mr. Grist:** The investment programme covering this work is still under discussion between the Department and Welsh Water Authority. Applications for time-limited consents are currently being advertised by the authority; consents which are granted will make clear the period for which they will apply and this information will be entered upon the public register maintained by the authority.

### Welsh Development Agency

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the activities of the Welsh Development Agency excluding property which have been privatised and the amounts of money estimated to have been raised from the privatisation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** No area of the Welsh Development Agency's work has been privatised, although, as I told the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams) on 17 July, at columns 4-5, a number have been contracted out.

### Housing Allocations

**Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consideration he is giving to housing allocation policies, particularly in respect of high-rise accommodation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Grist:** Each local authority is responsible for making effective allocation arrangements for the high-rise or other accommodation it owns.

Practical guidance notes for the allocation of council houses, prepared by the Housing Management Advisory Panel for Wales, were issued in February 1988.

### Infertility

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list the infertility services provided by each district health authority;

(2) what is the prevalence of infertility in Wales.

**Mr. Grist:** This information is not available centrally.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether plans for the provision of infertility services are required to be included in the strategic plans of each district health authority.

**Mr. Grist:** There is no such requirement, though in drawing up strategic plans district health authorities are expected to assess likely developments in, and the need for services of this kind, and to make provision for them as appropriate.

### Mr. Tony Johnson

**Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the in-patient and out-patient treatment given to Mr. Tony Johnson in Cardiff and of information given by the health authority to the housing authority, in respect of Mr. Johnson's rehousing.

**Mr. Grist:** I cannot comment upon the details of the treatment given to any patient; these are a confidential matter solely for the patient and those concerned with that treatment. A plan for the care of an individual psychiatric patient after discharge is for the agencies concerned. My hon. Friend should write to the general manager of South Glamorgan health authority if he wishes to seek further information.

### Drugs

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will place in the Library the latest figures on the prevalence of drug misuse and service provision.

**Mr. Grist:** Drug misuse is generally an illegal and clandestine activity and it is not therefore possible to provide accurate information on prevalence. However, one of the aims of the Welsh Committee on Drug Misuse is to keep the incidence, character and variety of drug misuse under regular review. As part of that aim, the committee is currently considering the options for data collection from treatment and other agencies in an attempt to develop a database which, with other information might provide the basis on which to make a more realistic assessment of the extent of the problem.

As to service provision, in addition to the general services already provided by the statutory authorities, on 4 April this year I announced the availability of additional resources to combat drug misuse. A copy of the announcement is available in the Library of the House.

### Salmonella

**Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will indicate the number of victims in the north Wales salmonella poisoning outbreak; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on the outbreak of salmonella poisoning in north Wales;

(3) what consultations he has had with the Clwyd area health authority concerning the outbreak in Clwyd of salmonella poisoning; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the cause and extent of the food poisoning outbreak in north Wales, and north Cheshire-Wirral area.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** On the latest available information, there have been 43 cases of food poisoning in north Wales caused by salmonella typhimurium. Thirteen patients have been admitted to hospital in Clywd and one has died. I understand, again on the latest available information, that 52 cases of food poisoning in England caused by salmonella typhimurium, relating to this outbreak, have been reported to the Department of Health. Ten patients have been admitted to hospital and one has died.

Infection was identified on 26 July in cold cooked meat produced by Joss Williams and Sons of Flint. Its production of cooked meat ceased on 26 July and previous supplies were withdrawn from sale.

On 26 and 27 July my chief medical officer issued details of the retail outlets in north Wales and the north-west of England, which reportedly were supplied with cold cooked meats from Joss Williams and Sons. The public have been advised not to eat any cold cooked meals purchased from sources supplied by this firm, and wholesalers and retailers have been advised to remove such products from sale.

Information is being conveyed to environmental health departments in England and Wales as it becomes available to enable them to take appropriate action.

The Department has been in close touch with the Clwyd health authority since being informed of the situation on 24 July.

### Food Poisoning

**Mr. Alan Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many cases of botulism, salmonella enteriditis, salmonella typhimurium, listeriosis and other types of food poisoning have been detected and reported in Wales since 1983 for each month of each year.

**Mr. Peter Walker** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]*: The information is not readily available in the detail requested. Annual figures for 1983 to 1988 are given in the tables. There are no separate figures on food-borne campylobacter infections.

*Number of cases of principal types of food poisoning detected or reported*

| | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* | *1988* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clostridium botulinium | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Salmonella enteriditis | 106 | 77 | 149 | 303 | 479 | 801 |
| Salmonella typhimurium | 297 | 322 | 277 | 383 | 352 | 262 |
| Other salmonella | 232 | 225 | 280 | 268 | 283 | 193 |
| Listeriosis | 8 | 4 | 11 | 6 | 11 | [1]10 |

*Number of incidents, outbreaks or isolated cases of other types of food poisoning reported*

| | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987*[1] | *1988* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clostridium perfringens | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | n/a |
| Staphylococcus aureas | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | n/a |
| Bacillus sp. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a |

*Laboratory reports of all campylobacter infections*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1983 | 588 |
| 1984 | 853 |
| 1985 | 1,340 |
| 1986 | 1,207 |
| 1987 | 1,400 |
| 1988[1] | 1,273 |

[1] Indicates provisional data.

*Source:* Public Health Laboratory Service.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Food (Country of Origin)

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will ensure that the country of origin is indicated on all food products sold in the outlets of the Refreshment Department.

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** Such a proposal is not considered practicable.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### Workplace Nurseries

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what is the total number of places available in workplace nurseries for civil servants; and what is the comparable figures for each of the last five years.

**Mr. Luce:** None, but there are firm plans to open nurseries by early 1990 in Home Office (Croydon), Ministry of Defence (London) and in my own Department at the Civil Service college (Sunningdale). Discussions are under way in other Departments concerning other possible locations.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Trade Statistics

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing the trading surplus or deficit in *(a)* manufacturing and *(b)* services in each year since 1960.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The available information is set out in the table:

*£ million*

| *Year* | *Balance of trade (exports less imports) for* *Manufactured goods* *(a)* | *(b)* | *Services* *(c)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1960 | 1,671 | — | −1 |
| 1961 | 1,809 | — | 9 |
| 1962 | 1,886 | — | 6 |
| 1963 | 1,976 | — | −42 |
| 1964 | 1,751 | — | −75 |
| 1965 | 1,969 | — | −98 |
| 1966 | 2,042 | — | 15 |
| 1967 | 1,619 | — | 133 |
| 1968 | 1,741 | — | 312 |
| 1969 | 2,311 | — | 366 |
| 1970 | 2,370 | 2,545 | 416 |
| 1971 | — | 3,008 | 544 |
| 1972 | — | 2,147 | 618 |
| 1973 | — | 1,484 | 683 |
| 1974 | — | 1,965 | 948 |
| 1975 | — | 3,738 | 1,337 |
| 1976 | — | 4,912 | 2,244 |
| 1977 | — | 5,874 | 3,037 |
| 1978 | — | 5,054 | 3,542 |
| 1979 | — | 2,690 | 3,907 |
| 1980 | — | 5,450 | 3,949 |
| 1981 | — | 4,576 | 3,923 |
| 1982 | — | 2,279 | 2,762 |
| 1983 | — | −2,448 | 3,721 |
| 1984 | — | −4,054 | 3,941 |
| 1985 | — | −3,151 | 5,962 |
| 1986 | — | −5,719 | 5,631 |
| 1987 | — | −7,508 | 5,333 |
| 1988 | — | 14,439 | 3,428 |

*(a)* Based on Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) [Balance of Payments Pink Book 1971]. There is a discontinuity with later estimates as indicated for 1970.

*(b)* Based on SITC (3rd Revision). Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics, Annual Supplement 1988, Table A9 (for 1970 to 1985) and July 1989, Table A9 (for 1986 to 1988).

*(c)* Economic Trends, Annual Supplement 1989, Table 29 (for 1960 to 1985), and June 1989, Table A1 (for 1986 to 1988).

### TSB Scotland

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he proposes to have with the TSB Group to ensure that the assurances given to him about TSB Scotland's continued autonomy are kept.

**Mr. Ryder:** None.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Lawson:** Treasury Ministers received 1,277 letters from hon. Members in January and 9,159 letters in the whole of this Session up to 1 July. All have been acknowledged and in the vast majority of cases substantive replies have been sent. A small number are still outstanding.

## Outward Investment

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will calculate and show outward investment from the United Kingdom in each year since 1975; and if he will indicate the recipient countries.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Estimates of outward investment (direct, portfolio and other, mainly short-term, investments) are published in United Kingdom balance of payments 1988 edition (Transactions in United Kingdom external assets, 1975 to 1987, in table 1.1) and in *Economic Trends*, June 1989 (latest data to 1988 in table A1).

Comprehensive estimates of the main recipient countries and areas are available only for direct investment (investment in overseas branches and subsidiary and associated companies), which are published in the Business Monitor series, M4, Overseas Transactions. Copies of these publications are in the Library.

## North Sea Oil

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will show the value to the Treasury of revenue from North sea oilfields in each year since 1978; and if he will show what that represented in each year as a proportion of gross national product.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The value of North sea oil revenues is published by the Department of Energy in the annual Brown Book. Gross national product statistics are available in the Blue Book published by the Central Statistical Office.

## Rateable Values, City of London

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the gross and net aggregate rateable value of those offices in the City of London referred to in his answer of 14 November 1988, *Official Report*, columns *525-26*, the current poundage, and his Department's estimate of the current rental and capital value per square foot.

**Mr. Lilley:** The table below provides, with one exception, the details requested. An estimate of the current capital value per square foot could not be produced without a disproportionate expenditure of time and resources.

| *Building* | *Rateable value* | | *Rate in £* | *Estimated rental value per square foot* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Gross £* | *Net £* | | *£* |
| National Westminster Tower | 4,909,000 | 4,090,805 | 1·64 | 65 |
| Britanic House West | 3,050,000 | 2,541,638 | 1·64 | 45 |
| Bank of England, New Change | 1,537,651 | 1,281,291 | 1·64 | 45 |
| Bank of England, Bank | 3,150,000 | 2,624,972 | 1·64 | 65 |
| Britanic House | 3,050,000 | 2,541,638 | 1·64 | 45 |
| 81 Newgate Street | 2,750,000 | 2,291,638 | 1·64 | 60 |
| 15 Newgate Street | 2,594,885 | 2,162,376 | 1·64 | 45 |
| 17-29 Woolgate House | 2,667,616 | 2,222,985 | 1·64 | 65 |
| Unilever House | 1,765,000 | 1,470,805 | 1·64 | 40 |
| Midland Montague House | 1,800,000 | 1,499,972 | 1·64 | 50 |
| | 27,274,152 | 22,728,120 | | |

These figures reflect the rateable values of the buildings as shown in the valuation list as at 24 July 1989.

## Taxation

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each financial year since 1978-79 the amount of tax raised by (i) personal income taxes, (ii) national insurance contributions, (iii) capital taxes, (iv) corporate taxes, (v) indirect taxes and (vi) rates; and if he will give a forecast for the current financial year on a full-year basis.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The latest available data, using national income and expenditure account definitions, are:

| *£ billion* | *Income Tax*[2] | *Corporation Tax*[3], *PRT and oil royalties*[4] | *Central Government Expenditure Taxes* | *Capital taxes on persons* | *Local authority rates*[5] | *National Insurance Contributions*[6] | *Total taxes and NICs* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 19·1 | 4·5 | 18·2 | 0·7 | 5·8 | 10·2 | 58·6 |
| 1979-80 | 21·1 | 6·8 | 25·2 | 0·9 | 6·8 | 12·0 | 72·7 |
| 1980-81 | 24·9 | 8·1 | 28·8 | 1·0 | 8·7 | 14·4 | 86·0 |
| 1981-82 | 29·2 | 11·2 | 33·6 | 1·0 | 10·7 | 16·5 | 102·2 |
| 1982-83 | 30·5 | 13·1 | 35·0 | 1·2 | 12·1 | 18·7 | 110·6 |
| 1983-84 | 31·7 | 14·2 | 38·0 | 1·3 | 12·3 | 21·3 | 118·8 |
| 1984-85 | 33·3 | 17·9 | 40·6 | 1·5 | 13·0 | 22·7 | 129·1 |
| 1985-86 | 35·8 | 19·2 | 44·0 | 1·8 | 13·9 | 24·7 | 139·4 |
| 1986-87 | 38·4 | 15·7 | 48·5 | 2·1 | 15·7 | 26·6 | 147·0 |
| 1987-88 | 41·6 | 19·2 | 52·5 | 2·5 | 17·0 | 29·1 | 161·8 |
| 1988-89 | 43·8 | 20·7 | 57·1 | 3·4 | 18·9 | 32·5 | 176·3 |
| 1989-90[1] | 47·1 | 24·6 | 61·4 | 3·2 | 20·6 | 34·0 | 190·9 |

[1] FSBR Forecast.

[2] Includes a small amount of income tax paid by companies.

[3] Includes corporation tax on gains which is classified as a tax on capital in the national accounts.

[4] Includes IBA levy.

[5] Includes business rates.

[6] Includes employers and employees NICs.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, further to his reply dated 10 April, *Official Report*, column *348*, concerning the number of tax units and tax liability by range of total income, he will publish the underlying assumption concerning the increase in incomes together with his present estimate of the increase in average and median earnings in 1989-90 compared to 1988-89 and 1987-88 for manual and non-manual workers respectively.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The information given in reply to the hon. Member on 10 April 1989 was based on a projection to 1989-90 levels of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes. The assumptions used in the projection are consistent with those underlying the economic forecast given in chapter 3 of the 1989-90 Financial Statement and Budget Report. It is not the practice to publish forecasts of personal incomes and average earnings.

**Mr. Austin Michell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the change in the number of higher-rate taxpayers in the current financial year; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing his estimate of the distribution by range of total income and tax category together with the total tax liability.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The number of married couples and single people liable to the higher rate of income tax is estimated to be 1,330,000 in 1988-89, and 1,440,000 in 1989-90. The tables show the distribution of those liable to higher rate tax in 1989-90 and their income tax liability by income and tax category.

Estimates are based on a projection of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes and are provisional.

*Higher Rate Tax Units[1] 1989-90*

*(Thousands)*

| *Range of income £ per year* | *Single* | *Married couple (wife not working)* | *Married couple (both working)* | *All[2]* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Under 20,000 | — | — | — | — |
| 20,000—25,000 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 25,000—30,000 | 60 | 80 | 70 | 210 |
| 30,000—50,000 | 110 | 250 | 500 | 860 |
| Over 50,000 | 40 | 120 | 200 | 360 |
| Total[2] | 220 | 450 | 770 | 1,440 |

[1] Counting a married couple as one and combining the partners' incomes.

[2] Figures may not sum exactly due to rounding.

*Total tax liability of Higher Rate Tax Units[1] 1989-90*

*(£ million)*

| *Range of income £ per year* | *Single* | *Married couple (wife not working)* | *Married couple (both working)* | *All[2]* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Under 20,000 | — | — | — | — |
| 20,000—25,000 | 30 | — | — | 30 |
| 25,000—30,000 | 380 | 470 | 410 | 1,260 |
| 30,000—50,000 | 970 | 2,300 | 3,910 | 7,180 |
| Over 50,000 | 1,240 | 3,110 | 4,330 | 8,680 |
| Total[2] | 2,610 | 5,880 | 8,650 | 17,150 |

[1] Counting a married couple as one and combining the partners' incomes.

[2] Figures may not sum exactly due to rounding.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for women above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units paying income tax in 1989-90 directly or indirectly and the estimated amount of tax payable in a full year at the marginal rate, dividing the figures to show the amounts by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples; and if he will include tables showing his estimate of the amount of tax which would be payable by such tax units in 1989-90 on the basis of separate taxation for husbands and wives as proposed for 1990.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* Estimates for single women are given in the tables. They are based on a projection of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes and are provisional.

Under the present tax system a married women's income is treated as her husband's and taxed as though it belonged to him. The estimates requested for the tax liability on the income of married women under the present tax system and under independent taxation could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

*Number of single females paying income tax and tax liability by range of total income, 1989-90*

| *Total income (lower limit)* | Aged 65 and over | | | Aged under 65 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Number* | *Tax liability total* | *Tax liability of higher rate taxpayers* | *Number* | *Tax liability total* | *Tax liability of higher rate taxpayers* |
| *£ per annum* | *('000)* | *(£ million)* | *£ million* | *('000)* | *(£ million)* | *(£ million)* |
| 2,000 | — | — | — | 70 | [2] | — |
| 3,000 | 90 | 10 | — | 370 | 70 | — |
| 4,000 | 170 | 40 | — | 380 | 150 | — |
| 5,000 | 160 | 80 | — | 440 | 270 | — |
| 6,000 | 120 | 90 | — | 510 | 430 | — |
| 7,000 | 70 | 60 | — | 470 | 450 | — |
| 8,000 | 60 | 70 | — | 370 | 430 | — |
| 9,000 | 30 | 50 | — | 210 | 280 | — |
| 10,000 | 50 | 90 | — | 340 | 610 | — |
| 12,000 | 50 | 130 | — | 360 | 830 | — |
| 15,000 | 50 | 170 | — | 260 | 760 | — |
| 20,000 | 30 | 150 | 110 | 110 | 490 | 80 |
| 30,000 | 10 | 140 | 140 | 20 | 220 | 220 |
| 50,000 | 10 | 210 | 210 | [1]— | 110 | 110 |
| Total | 900 | 1,290 | 460 | 3,910 | 5,100 | 410 |

[1] Less than 5,000.

[2] Less than £5 million.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for wives with earned income on Inland Revenue records the estimated distribution of the number of such wives in 1989-90 by wife's total income and the couples' joint total income together with the estimated revenue loss from wife's earnings elections and the estimated further loss on the 1990-91 basis of separate taxation of husbands and wives;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units paying income tax and their income tax liability as a proportion of their total income in a full year at 1989-90 rates, by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples, and if he will add figures showing what effect his proposals for the separate taxation of husbands and wives will have on the numbers of tax units and the proportion paid in tax by *(a)* one-earner and *(b)* two-earner married couples.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]*: I shall answer when resources permit.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those above and for those below pensionable age the estimated number of tax units in receipt of more than £200 gross in composite rate interest in 1987-88 and the average amount received, together with his estimates for 1989-90; and if he will divide the figures to show the amounts for those above and those below pensionable age by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples.

**Mr. Lilley:** Estimates for the years requested are not available.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those above and for those below pensionable age the estimated number of tax units in receipt of more than £200 gross in lettings and other incomes from property and the average amount received, together with his estimates for 1989-90; and if he will divide the figures to show the amounts for those above and those below pensionable age by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples.

**Mr. Lilley:** For information in respect of 1985-86 I refer the hon. Member to the answers provided to him in October last year—*Official Report*, 19 October 1988, columns *935-38*. Estimates for 1988-89 are not yet available.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for one-earner and two-earner married couples under 65 years and married couples over 65 years the number of tax units paying less and the number paying more tax in each income band up to a lower limit of £100,000 at 1989-90 rates of tax in the event of the proposed allowances for separate taxation of husbands and wives being replaced by a transferable allowance of £3,000 for each spouse; and if he will include figures of the consequential changes in tax yield.

**Mr. Lilley:** The estimates requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units in receipt of more than £200 gross in National Savings accounts and bonds and the average amount received, together with his estimates for 1989-90; and if he will divide the figures to show the amounts for those above and those below pensionable age by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for direct tax allowances and reliefs listed in table 6.5 of Cm. 288-I, "The Government's Expenditure Plans", his estimate of the cost in a full year at current rates of incomes and tax for items which will cost the Exchequer £10 million or more.

**Mr. Lilley:** The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of an increase of £100 in each of the allowances and reliefs for income tax at 1989-90 income and tax levels; and if he will provide corresponding figures on the basis of the 1990-91 regime for the independent taxation of husbands and wives.

**Mr. Lilley:** I refer the hon. Member to table 4.5 of the Autumn Statement 1988.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000, for those above and those below pensionable age and distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples, the estimated saving to the Exchequer of abolishing all allowances and reliefs other than the basic single and married allowances; and if he will provide similar tables on the 1990 basis of separate taxation of husbands and wives;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the estimated number and direct revenue cost of wife's earnings elections in a full year by range of incomes at 1989-90 income and tax levels, together with tables for (i) husbands and (ii) wives showing *(a)* the numbers separately assessed by range of total income of the relevant spouse and *(b)* the aggregate total income of each spouse and the aggregate investment income of each spouse; and if he will add a table showing the additional direct revenue cost on the basis of the 1990-91 proposals for the separate taxation of husbands and wives;

(3) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for those above and those below age 65 years the estimated number of tax units and their tax liability in the current financial year in each range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000 divided into single persons and one-earner and two-earner married couples together; and if he will include the number of females within each category and their tax liability;

(4) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing by range of income and tax status an estimate of the saving to the Exchequer in a full year from abolishing, respectively, the upper earnings limit for national insurance contributions and higher rate relief on mortgage interest;

(5) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the yield from an increase of one penny in the standard rate of tax and in the employees' and employers' national insurance contribution, respectively, in 1989-90; and if he will divide the tax figure to show the yield from earned and unearned income.

**Mr. Lilley:** I shall answer when resources permit.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for *(a)* two-earner families with a wife's earnings election and *(b)* other higher-rate taxpayers by tax category, his estimate of the number and distribution of incomes, together with the average unearned income and average amount of mortgage interest relief in each income band in each category in the current financial year; and if he will add a table showing the gains and losses to the Exchequer from the application of separate taxation of husbands and wives as proposed for 1990.

**Mr. Lilley:** Provisional estimates for 1989-90 based on a projection of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes are given in the table. Estimates of the effects of the introduction of independent taxation in 1990-91 were given in the Inland Revenue press release on independent taxation issued on 15 March 1988.

*Higher rate taxpayers*[1] *with wife's earnings election 1989-90*

| *Total Income (lower limit)* | *Number* | *With investment income* | | *With mortgage interest relief* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Number* | *Average Amount* | *Number* | *Average Amount* |
| *£ p.a.* | *000s* | *000s* | *£ p.a.* | *000s* | *£ p.a.* |
| 20,000 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 25,000 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 30,000 | 6 | 6 | 2,400 | 1 | 400 |
| 35,000 | 35 | 31 | 5,200 | 14 | 1,900 |
| 40,000 | 76 | 74 | 3,500 | 54 | 2,700 |
| 50,000 | 119 | 113 | 12,400 | 80 | 3,200 |
| All | 235 | 224 | 8,200 | 149 | 2,900 |

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[1] Married couples and single people.

*Higher rate taxpayers—Single people 1989-90*

| *Total Income (lower limit)* | *Number* | *With investment income* | | *With mortgage interest relief* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Number* | *Average Amount* | *Number* | *Average Amount* |
| *£ p.a.* | *000s* | *000s* | *£ p.a.* | *000s* | *£ p.a.* |
| 20,000 | 5 | 5 | 13,800 | — | 900 |
| 25,000 | 62 | 52 | 10,100 | 32 | 2,400 |
| 30,000 | 56 | 51 | 7,900 | 39 | 3,300 |
| 35,000 | 23 | 20 | 11,200 | 15 | 3,400 |
| 40,000 | 29 | 25 | 12,000 | 22 | 3,600 |
| 50,000 | 44 | 42 | 37,000 | 22 | 3,600 |
| All | 219 | 194 | 15,700 | 130 | 3,200 |

*Higher rate taxpayers—Married couples with wife's earnings and no earnings election 1989-90*

| *Total Income (lower limit)* | *Number* | *With investment income* | | *With mortgage interest relief* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Number* | *Average Amount* | *Number* | *Average Amount* |
| *£ p.a.* | *000s* | *000s* | *£ p.a.* | *000s* | *£ p.a.* |
| 20,000 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 25,000 | 73 | 69 | 4,800 | 8 | 1,000 |
| 30,000 | 203 | 188 | 3,100 | 130 | 2,700 |
| 35,000 | 100 | 96 | 3,500 | 74 | 3,100 |
| 40,000 | 78 | 76 | 7,600 | 50 | 2,900 |
| 50,000 | 76 | 74 | 13,300 | 57 | 3,200 |
| All | 531 | 503 | 5,600 | 319 | 2,900 |

*Higher rate taxpayers—Married couples without wife's earnings 1989-90*

| *Total Income (lower limit)* | *Number* | *With investment income* | | *With mortgage interest relief* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Number* | *Average Amount* | *Number* | *Average Amount* |
| *£ p.a.* | *000s* | *000s* | *£ p.a.* | *000s* | *£ p.a.* |
| 20,000 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 25,000 | 80 | 71 | 4,400 | 25 | 1,700 |
| 30,000 | 101 | 93 | 3,700 | 65 | 3,000 |
| 35,000 | 70 | 66 | 3,800 | [illegible] | 3,200 |
| 40,000 | 85 | 79 | 6,300 | 57 | 3,100 |
| 50,000 | 116 | 111 | 17,100 | 75 | 3,100 |
| All | 452 | 420 | 7,900 | 271 | 3,000 |

### Treasury Revenues

**Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the total income to the Treasury since May 1979 from *(a)* North sea oil revenues and *(b)* privatisation of publicly owned assets.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The figures requested are given in the table below:

*£ billion*

| | *North Sea Oil Revenues* | *Privatisation proceeds* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 2·3 | 0·4 |
| 1980-81 | 3·7 | 0·4 |
| 1981-82 | 6·5 | 0·5 |
| 1982-83 | 7·8 | 0·5 |
| 1983-84 | 8·8 | 1·1 |
| 1984-85 | 12·0 | 2·2 |
| 1985-86 | 11·3 | 2·7 |
| 1986-87 | 4·8 | 4·4 |
| 1987-88 | 4·7 | 5·1 |
| 1988-89 | 3·2 | 7·0 |

### CBI

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met the chairman of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss management of the economy.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** My right hon Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer meets representatives of the CBI from time to time, and a wide range of subjects is discussed.

### Manufacturing Investment

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of gross investment, including leasing, in plant and machinery in manufacturing industry in 1988 less capital consumption in terms of 1985 prices; and if he will provide comparable figures for 1964, 1969 and 1974 and 1979 in terms of 1985 prices.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Estimates of investment net of capital consumption by manufacturing industry in plant and machinery are not of publishable quality.

### Manufactures

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what part of the decline between 1977 and 1988 in the United Kingdom balance of trade in manufactures less erratics was due to overheating of the economy and what part to the increase in relative export prices for manufactures and in the terms of trade for finished manufactures between 1976 and 1987; what was the percentage increase in each case; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing, on the basis of information in the Treasury model of the economy, the reduction in the rate of economic growth and alternatively in the trade-weighted nominal exchange rate in 1990 and 1991 required to enable the deficit to be eliminated by the end of 1991, all other assumptions remaining unchanged.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what part of the improvement in the balance of trade in finished manufactures between the United Kingdom and the United States of America between 1980 and 1987 and the deterioration between 1977 and 1980 and since 1987 is due to overheating in one economy or the other and what part to the movement in relative prices of importable and exportable goods; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1970 the United Kingdom balance of trade with the United States of America (i) total trade less oil, (ii) manufactures less erratics and (iii) finished manufactures less erratics together with the ratio of the relative export prices for manufactures based on 1980 = 100.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The information requested, with the exception of the data on trade with the United States of America, could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. I shall answer when resources permit.

### Industrial Economies

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which countries have overtaken the United Kingdom in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's list of the leading industrial economies in the last three years.

**Mr. Ryder:** From June 1989, Italy has been placed before the United Kingdom in OECD publications where the leading industrial economies are given in order of size. The OECD ordering is based on GDP in an earlier year converted at market exchange rates. On the basis of GDP comparisons using OECD estimates of purchasing power parities, the United Kingdom comes before Italy in both 1987 and 1988.

### Oil Prices

**Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out in detail the assumptions he made about the oil price in preparing the 1989 Budget.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The forecast published in the Financial Statement and Budget Report 1989-90 was prepared on the assumption that the North sea oil price would remain close to recent levels prevailing at that time.

**Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether movements in oil prices since the 1989 Budget have caused any revision of the Budget forecasts and assumptions.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** As usual, the oil price assumptions will be reconsidered when my right hon. Friend prepares his next forecast to be published as part of the Autumn Statement.

### Common Agricultural Policy

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the estimate published in "The Challenge to Agriculture," published in February 1988, of the cost of the common agricultural policy to the average family; how the original figure was arrived at; what changes have occurred since; and for what reason.

**Mr. Ryder:** The estimate in "The Challenge to Agriculture" of February 1988 was quoted from "The Political Economy of International Agricultural Reform," Department of Primary Industry, Australia, 1986. It was intended as an example of one particular attempt to quantify the cost of agriculture support policies to European families. The estimate referred to the cost to each non-farm family in Europe of transfers by consumers and taxpayers to EC farmers, and included domestic agriculture programmes of member states as well as the CAP. A new estimate, based on changes that have occurred since, would involve taking account of agricultural policies in each member state and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Financial Statistics

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing *(a)* the increase in cash terms in sterling M0 and sterling M3 (i) from May 1979 to the latest available date and (ii) between January 1974 and May 1979, *(b)* the annual rate of inflation on these three dates, *(c)* the increase in the amount lent by the banks to, respectively, the public sector and the private sector, *(d)* the increase in outstanding mortgages on residential property, *(e)* the increase in producer and retail prices and *(f)* the average annual rate of increase in each of the foregoing cases.

**Mr. Ryder:** Data for M0, M3 and bank lending are published in *Financial Statistics;* the *Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin;* and are available from the Bank of England on request.

Data on mortgages on residential property are published in *Financial Statistics.*

Data on prices are published in *Economic Trends.*

### Income Tax

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what is the reduction in the United Kingdom contribution to the EEC budget and what was the forecast.

**Mr. Ryder:** I refer the hon. Member to chapter 3 of "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1989-90 to 1991-92" (Cm 603).

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing his estimate of the number and amount of incomes subject to tax in the current financial year above a total of £100,000 by steps of £100,000 to the nearest 100 persons in each case and for 1978-79, the amount of tax collected in each case in 1978-79 and his estimate of the amount of tax payable in respect of the current financial year.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The available data do not permit the provision of information in the amount of detail requested. To the nearest thousand incomes (those of husband and wife being counted as one income), there were 1,000 incomes of £100,000 and above in 1978-79, upon which the liability to income tax was about £120 million. In 1986-87, the latest year for which information is available, there were 23,000 incomes of £100,000 but under £200,000, with tax liability of £1,400 million, and 5,000 incomes of £200,000 and above with tax liability of £850 million.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is his estimate of the earned and unearned income of the top 1 per cent. of tax payers in the current financial year and of the amount they are expected to pay in national insurance contributions;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of tax units and amount of earned income in each tax band by range of total income and tax status for those *(a)* above and *(b)* below pensionable age;

(3) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of tax units in each tax band by range of total income and tax status for those below pensionable age, his estimate of the cost to the Revenue of the substitution of a single allowance of £3,000 and a married

allowance of £6,000 for the present personal income tax allowances, the married woman's earnings allowance and the wife's earnings election together with an increase in the rate of income tax for from 25 per cent. to 35 per cent. on total incomes between £5,500 and £13,000 for single persons and £11,000 and £18,500 for married persons;

(4) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for *(a)* one-earner and *(b)* two-earner married couples the number of tax units in each tax band by range of total income and tax status for those (i) above and (ii) below pensionable age and his estimate of the yield to the revenue in the current financial year from abolishing wife's earnings election and raising the higher rate of tax to 40 per cent. on incomes of married couples with total incomes between £18,500 and £27,000, 45 per cent. between £27,000 and £37,000, 50 per cent. between £37,000 and £50,000, 55 per cent. between £50,000 and £250,000 and 60 per cent. above £250,000;

(5) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of tax units in each tax band by range of total income and tax status for those *(a)* above and *(b)* below pensionable age and his estimate of the yield from making investment income chargeable to national insurance contributions on the same basis as earned income; and if he will include the number of tax units and total investment income in each case;

(6) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for single persons the number of tax units in each tax band by the range of total income and tax status for those above and below pensionable age, his estimate of the yield to the Revenue in the current financial year from an increase in higher rate tax for single persons to 40 per cent. on total incomes between £13,000 and £19,000, 45 per cent. between £19,000 and £26,000, 50 per cent. between £26,000 and £34,000, 55 per cent. between £34,000 and £125,000 and 60 per cent. above £125,000.

**Mr. Lilley:** I shall answer when resources permit.

## Personal Taxation

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his reply of 14 November 1988, *Official Report*, column *517*, concerning annex C of "Inland Revenue Statistics", whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1959 the tax plus national insurance contribution threshold and break-even points for a married man on (i) average manual earnings and (ii) average earnings of all occupations; and if he will include *(a)* an estimate for 1989-90 based on the comparable earnings figures for April 1989 and *(b)* figures for the lowest decile of manual earnings in 1978-79 and 1988-89.

**Mr. Lilley:** Available information is given in the tables. The "tax and national insurance contribution threshold" is the level of earnings above which the married man first pays income tax or class 1 national insurance contributions.

The "break-even point" is the value of earnings at which the amount of income tax and national insurance contributions paid is equal to the money received through child benefit or family allowance. It therefore gives the level of earnings above which the family pays more income tax plus national insurance contributions than it obtains in benefits for children.

Estimates in table 1 for 1989-90 are based on the projected figures for average manual earnings and average earnings of all occupations, assuming 7·5 per cent. growth on 1988-89.

Corresponding figures for the "tax and national insurance contribution threshold" and the "break-even point" as a percentage of the lowest decile of male manual earnings in April 1978 and April 1988 are given in table 2.

*Tax and/or NIC[1] thresholds for married man with 2 children under 11*

| Tax year | Threshold at current prices | Threshold at 1988-89 prices | Threshold as percentage of average manual earnings[2] | Threshold as percentage of average earnings[3] for all occupations | Break-even point at current prices | Break-even point at 1988-89 prices | Break-even point as percentage of average manual earnings[2] | Break-even point as percentage of average earnings[3] for all occupations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | Index 1988-89 = 100 | Per cent. | Per cent. | £ | Index 1988-89 = 100 | Per cent. | Per cent. |
| 1958-59[5 7] | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1968-69[6 7] | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1978-79 | 910 | 91·0 | 20·3 | 18·9 | 2,225 | 86·9 | 49·8 | 46·1 |
| 1979-80 | 1,014 | 87·5 | 19·3 | 17·8 | 2,734 | 92·1 | 52·0 | 48·1 |
| 1980-81 | 1,196 | 88·7 | 19·7 | 17·5 | 2,959 | 85·7 | 48·8 | 43·3 |
| 1981-82 | 1,404 | 93·4 | 21·0 | 18·5 | 3,063 | 79·6 | 45·8 | 40·4 |
| 1982-83 | 1,534 | 95·3 | 21·4 | 18·7 | 3,361 | 81·6 | 46·8 | 41·1 |
| 1983-84 | 1,690 | 100·4 | 21·9 | 19·0 | 3,774 | 87·5 | 48·8 | 42·4 |
| 1984-85 | 1,768 | 99·9 | 21·3 | 18·4 | 4,195 | 92·6 | 50·5 | 43·6 |
| 1985-86 | 1,846 | 98·5 | 20·8 | 17·9 | 4,679 | 97·5 | 52·8 | 45·3 |
| 1986-87 | 1,976 | 102·2 | 21·0 | 17·8 | 4,939 | 99·7 | 52·4 | 44·4 |
| 1987-88 | 2,028 | 100·9 | 20·0 | 16·7 | 5,199 | 101·0 | 51·3 | 42·8 |
| 1988-89 | 2,132 | 100·0 | 19·4 | 16·0 | 5,459 | 100·0 | [8]49·6 | 41·0 |
| 1989-90[4] | 2,236 | 99·0 | 18·9 | 15·6 | [9]5,836 | [9]100·9 | [8]49·3 | [9]40·8 |

[1] Class 1 employees' national insurance contributions.

[2] Full time males aged over 21 working a full week.

[3] Full time males paid at adult rates working a full week.

[4] Provisional.

[5] In 1958-59 employees paid a flat rate on all their weekly earnings.

[6] In 1968-69 employees paid a flat rate on all their weekly earnings and a graduated element on earnings above £9 per week.

[7] The break-even point is zero because National Insurance Contributions were charged at a flat-rate, regardless of weekly earnings, which was in excess of the family allowance for two children.

[8] Provisional.

[9] Using average NIC rates for 1989-90 derived from pre-and post-October 1989 regimes.

*Lowest decile of male manual earnings in 1978-79 and 1988-89*

| *April New Earnings Survey* | *Lowest decile of male manual earnings £ per week* | *Threshold as percentage of lowest decile of male manual earnings* | *Break-even point as percentage of lowest decile of male manual earnings* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1978 | 52·8 | 33·1 | 81·0 |
| 1988 | 127·7 | 32·1 | 82·2 |

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the estimated direct revenue cost in income tax at the standard and higher rates in the full year at current rates of *(a)* mortgage interest relief, *(b)* life assurance pensions relief, *(c)* retirement annuity premium relief and *(d)* investment income relief of occupational pension funds.

**Mr. Lilley:** Available estimates for 1988-89 are given below.

*Estimated direct revenue cost 1988-89*

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| Mortgage interest relief | 5,500 |
| —of which relief at the excess over the basic rate | 340 |
| Life assurance premium relief | 470 |
| Employees' contributions to occupational pension schemes allowed as a deduction for income tax purposes | 1,700 |
| Employees' contributions to occupational pension schemes not treated as taxable benefits in kind in the hands of the employees | 2,600 |
| Retirement annuity premium relief | 450 |
| —of which relief at the excess over the basic rate | 100 |
| Relief on investment income of occupational pension funds (assuming relief at the basic rate) | 4,400 |

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the saving to the revenue in the current financial year if *(a)* mortgage interest relief and *(b)* other non-personal allowances were progressively clawed back at the rate of 50 per cent. of income in excess of the higher rate threshold.

**Mr. Lilley:** It is estimated that the direct revenue yield in a full year at 1989-90 levels of income of withdrawing *(a)* mortgage interest relief and *(b)* other main reliefs from higher rate taxpayers at the rate of 50 per cent. on income in excess of the higher rate threshold is:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| (a) Mortgage interest relief | 700 |
| (b) Retirement annuity relief (including payments by employees), relief for Class IV National Insurance contributions, employees' superannuation contributions, charitable covenants and business expansion scheme relief | 650 |

Estimates are based on a projection of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes and are provisional; they assume that relief is withdrawn against liability to the higher rate of tax of 40 per cent. not just against liability to the excess of the higher rate over the basic rate.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the saving to the revenue in the current financial year if personal allowances were clawed back for the purpose of higher tax at the rate of 50 per cent. on income in excess of the higher rate threshold.

**Mr. Lilley:** I regret that the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for those with and those without investment income in 1988-89 the numbers in each income band up to a lower limit of £100,000 benefiting from mortgage interest relief; and if he will provide an estimate for 1989-90;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing the estimated number of tax units under age 65 years in each income band up to a lower limit of £100,000 in receipt of mortgage interest relief in the current financial year and the percentage with investment income; and if he will also distinguish between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples.

**Mr. Lilley:** The available information is in the tables. It is not possible to provide reliable estimates in all the detail requested not to provide separate figures for those under 65. Estimates are subject to revision.

*Tax units[1] receiving mortgage interest relief by range of total income 1988-89 (thousands)*

| *Range of total income* | *with no investment income* | *with investment income* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Up to £5,000 | 490 | 200 | 690 |
| £5,000-£10,000 | 430 | 1,400 | 1,830 |
| £10,000-£15,000 | 290 | 2,270 | 2,560 |
| £15,000-£20,000 | 160 | 1,550 | 1,710 |
| £20,000-£25,000 | 70 | 960 | 1,030 |
| £25,000-£30,000 | 50 | 430 | 480 |
| £30,000+ | 50 | 750 | 500 |
| Total | 1,540 | 7,560 | 9,100 |

[1] Single people and married couples.

*Tax units[1] receiving mortgage interest relief by range of total income 1988-89 (thousands)*

| *Range of total income* | *with no investment income* | *with investment income* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Up to £5,000 | 440 | 200 | 640 |
| £5,000-£10,000 | 420 | 1,280 | 1,700 |
| £10,000-£15,000 | 270 | 1,990 | 2,260 |
| £15,000-£20,000 | 160 | 1,720 | 1,880 |
| £20,000-£25,000 | 120 | 1,080 | 1,200 |
| £25,000-£30,000 | 60 | 550 | 610 |
| £30,000+ | 60 | 950 | 1,010 |
| Total | 1,530 | 7,770 | 9,300 |

[1] Single people and married couples.

## Life Policies

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his forecast of the value in the current financial year of *(a)* investment-linked, *(b)* other surrendered life policies, excluding pension refunds, *(c)* the profit on these policies, and *(d)* the liability to tax on those profits.

**Mr. Lilley:** In 1986, on the basis of a sample of companies, surrenders—broadly life policies "cashed in", in whole or in part, other than on maturity or death—amounted to some £3 billion. The information necessary to update this figure is not yet available, and no discrete estimates can be made of the value of investment-linked or other policies wholly surrendered. Tax on life assurance, in respect of all policies, is paid at the level of the life office on income and gains, and policy holders, in a minority of cases, may have further liability to tax at the marginal rate: no estimate can accordingly be made of profits or tax liabilities for a particular class and generation of policies.

### Junk Bonds

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what economic and financial effects have arisen in the United Kingdom economy due to the growth in the use of junk bonds.

**Mr. Ryder:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 20 July at column *263*.

### IMF (Quota Increase)

**Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the Government's response to the International Monetary Fund's proposals by Mr. Michael Camdessus for a quota increase.

**Mr. Ryder:** The size of any increase which may be made in IMF quotas is still under review.

### Civil Service Dispersal

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the estimated saving to the Treasury of the relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the south-east since 1979.

**Mr. Ryder:** This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost, since no records are kept centrally of savings achieved through relocation of central Government Departments. However, the Scottish Office report published in June 1988 evaluating the dispersal of part of the Overseas Development Administration from London to East Kilbride in 1981 offers evidence of the significant financial and other advantages which can be obtained through relocation.

### Inflation

**Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate for the rate of inflation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** The all-items RPI inflation rate in the year to June 1989 was 8·3 per cent., the same as in May. Underlying inflation is much better depicted by the increase in the RPI excluding mortgage interest payments; it rose 5·9 per cent. in the year to June 1989, down slightly from the 6 per cent. figure in May. Inflation may now have peaked and monetary policy will remain as tight as is necessary for as long as is necessary to ensure that it declines.

### Interest Rates

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next expects to meet representatives of the Building Societies Association to discuss the level of United Kingdom interest rates.

**Mr. Ryder:** My right hon. Friend has no plans to meet representatives of the Building Societies Association.

### International Monetary Fund

**Mr. Barron:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the outcome of the recent annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** The annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank will take place between 26 and 28 September 1989.

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many meetings he has had with the International Monetary Fund since 29 September 1988; whether the United Kingdom's interest rates, inflation rate, level of public investment or trade deficit were discussed; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** My right hon. Friend attended the spring meetings of the IMF in April. I refer the hon. Member to the reply that my right hon. Friend gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) on 4 May 1989, *Official Report*, columns 347-48.

### Domestic Credit

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will include in the *Official Report* a table showing the components of domestic credit, together with the increase in each year since 1980 and the current year to date; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** Data on the components of domestic credit are published in *Financial Statistics* table 11.7.

### Clearing Banks

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will include in the *Official Report* a table showing for the years 1959, 1969, 1979 and 1988 the assets and liabilities of the clearing banks set out in cash, call money and so on form together with the percentage in each category and the reserves held with the Bank of England in reserve ratios and special deposits.

**Mr. Ryder:** Figures for the assets and liabilities of United Kingdom banks, and banks' balances with the Bank of England are published in the *Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin*.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will include in the *Official Report* a table showing for the big four clearing banks the profit before and after tax, excluding exceptional provisions in 1959, 1969, 1979 and 1988, together with his forecast for the current financial year.

**Mr. Ryder:** The information requested is as follows:

| | *Pre-tax profits £ million* | *Post-tax profits £ million* |
|---|---|---|
| 1969 | 212 | 112 |
| 1979 | 1,571 | 1,081 |
| 1988 | 4,443 | 2,875 |

These figures aggregate relevant figures in the annual reports of Barclays, Lloyds, Midland and National Westminster. Comparable figures for 1959 and forecasts for the current financial year are not available.

### VAT (Free Ports)

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his reply of 19 July, *Official Report*, column *182*, to the hon. Member for Mossley Hill, whether he will now review the operation of existing Customs roles in freeport areas; and what consideration he has given to the representations of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, a copy of which has been sent to him.

**Mr. Ryder:** As the hon. Member will be aware, free ports were established in the United Kingdom in 1984 for an experimental period of seven years. The experiment is being reviewed this year by independent consultants. There will be a full examination of the rules administered by Customs and Excise which will take into account, among other matters, the representations of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company.

### EC Budgets

**Sir Richard Body:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will set out in tabular form the total net payments or total net receipts of each of the other member states for the European Economic Community budgets since 1979.

**Mr. Ryder:** As my right hon. Friend the former Paymaster General indicated in his reply of 5 July 1989, *Official Report*, column *176*, the information requested for other member states is not available.

### Bank Lending

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the increase in bank lending since May 1979; where the additional funds have come from; what effect he expects the increase in interest rates since the beginning of the year to have on banking profits; and what is his forecast of the increase in revenue to the Exchequer therefrom.

**Mr. Ryder:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 29 July 1988 at columns *735-36*.

### Overseas Assets

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the information provided in the written reply dated 16 March 1983, *Official Report*, column *164*, concerning the amount of tax collected on income earning and other assets held overseas; and if he will include in the table an estimate for each year of the total value of such assets, whether or not they have been assessed to tax.

**Mr. Lilley:** I shall answer when resources permit.

### Mortgages

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1979 the increase in mortgage funds for housing together with the increase in the value of the houses sold by reference to stamp duty or otherwise.

**Mr. Lilley:** I shall answer when resources permit.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1979 the estimated number of mortgages for domestic premises, the value of mortgages outstanding, and the cost of servicing the debt as a percentage of gross domestic product to one place of decimals.

**Mr. Ryder:** I refer the hon. Member to statistics published by the Department of the Environment in "Housing and Construction Statistics" and by the Building Societies Association in "Housing Finance".

### Investment Income

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing by range of income and tax status an estimate of the saving to the Exchequer in a full year by setting off investment income against mortgage interest qualifying for relief under the MIRAS scheme.

**Mr. Lilley:** I shall answer when resources permit.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for those above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units with an investment income in 1989-90 by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000, distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples, together with the average investment income in each case; and if he will provide separate figures for those with an investment income of more than £200;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for women above and for those below pensionable age, the estimated number of tax units with an investment income in 1989-90 by range of total income up to a lower limit of £100,000, distinguishing between single persons, one-earner and two-earner married couples, together with the average investment income in each case; and if he will provide separate figures for those with an investment income of more than £200;

**Mr. Lilley:** Available estimates are in the tables. All estimates are provisional and subject to a wide margin of error because they are based on a projection of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes and the coverage of investment income in the survey is incomplete. In some cases, investment income on which basic rate liability is satisfied by deduction at source is not reported. No reliable estimates can be given for single people and married couples with total income of less than £5,000.

*Table 1*

*Single people and married couples with investment income 1989-90*

| *Total income (lower limit)* | *Single people* | | | *Married couples* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | *without wife's earned income* | | | *with wife's earned income* | | |
| | *Number* | *Investment income* | | *Number* | *Investment income* | | *Number* | *Investment income* | |
| | | *Total* | *Average* | | *Total* | *Average* | | *Total* | *Average* |
| *£ p.a.* | *'000s* | *£ million* | *£* | *'000s* | *£ million* | *£* | *'000s* | *£ million* | *£* |
| | | | | *Aged under 65* | | | | | |
| 5,000 | 2,800 | 2,200 | 790 | 990 | 810 | 820 | 320 | 310 | 960 |
| 10,000 | 2,200 | 2,100 | 960 | 2,200 | 2,500 | 1,150 | 2,300 | 2,400 | 1,060 |
| 20,000 | 280 | 570 | 2,020 | 500 | 700 | 1,400 | 1,600 | 2,200 | 1,390 |
| 30,000 | 80 | 460 | 5,930 | 210 | 640 | 3,000 | 650 | 1,600 | 2,390 |
| 50,000 | 30 | 710 | 27,500 | 90 | 1,200 | 13,200 | 170 | 1,800 | 10,800 |
| ALL | 5,500 | 6,100 | 1,120 | 4,000 | 5,900 | 1,480 | 5,000 | 8,300 | 1,660 |
| | | | | *Aged 65 and over* | | | | | |
| 5,000 | 540 | 1,200 | 2,290 | 430 | 670 | 1,560 | 160 | 220 | 1,400 |
| 10,000 | 210 | 1,200 | 5,820 | 250 | 910 | 3,630 | 260 | 770 | 2,950 |
| 20,000 | 50 | 640 | 14,100 | 50 | 490 | 9,810 | 120 | 890 | 7,160 |
| 30,000 | 20 | 470 | 23,500 | 30 | 470 | 16,500 | 60 | 780 | 13,900 |
| 50,000 | 20 | 830 | 52,600 | 20 | 690 | 35,500 | 20 | 550 | 30,800 |
| ALL | 840 | 4,400 | 5,280 | 800 | 3,200 | 4,160 | 620 | 3,200 | 5,210 |

*Table 2: Single people and married couples with investment income of more than £200, 1989-90*

| *Total income (lower limit)* | *Single people* | | | *Married couples* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | *without wife's earned income* | | | *with wife's earned income* | | |
| | | *Investment income* | | | *Investment income* | | | *Investment income* | |
| | *Number* | *Total* | *Average* | *Number* | *Total* | *Average* | *Number* | *Total* | *Average* |
| *£ p.a.* | *000s* | *£ million* | *£* | *000s* | *£ million* | *£* | *000s* | *£ million* | *£* |
| *Aged under 65* | | | | | | | | | |
| 5,000 | 2,600 | 2,200 | 860 | 830 | 800 | 970 | 270 | 300 | 1,130 |
| 10,000 | 2,000 | 2,100 | 1,040 | 2,000 | 2,500 | 1,270 | 2,100 | 2,400 | 1,170 |
| 20,000 | 260 | 570 | 2,170 | 470 | 700 | 1,500 | 1,400 | 2,200 | 1,510 |
| 30,000 | 70 | 460 | 6,410 | 190 | 640 | 3,300 | 570 | 1,600 | 2,700 |
| 50,000 | 20 | 710 | 29,900 | 90 | 1,200 | 14,000 | 160 | 1,800 | 11,800 |
| All | 5,000 | 6,100 | 1,220 | 3,500 | 5,800 | 1,650 | 4,500 | 8,300 | 1,840 |
| *Aged 65 and over* | | | | | | | | | |
| 5,000 | 520 | 1,200 | 2,370 | 400 | 660 | 1,680 | 140 | 220 | 1,520 |
| 10,000 | 210 | 1,200 | 5,850 | 240 | 910 | 3,730 | 250 | 770 | 3,060 |
| 20,000 | 50 | 640 | 14,100 | 50 | 490 | 9,850 | 120 | 890 | 7,170 |
| 30,000 | 20 | 470 | 23,500 | 30 | 470 | 16,600 | 60 | 780 | 13,900 |
| 50,000 | 20 | 830 | 52,600 | 20 | 690 | 35,500 | 20 | 550 | 30,800 |
| All | 820 | 4,400 | 5,410 | 740 | 3,200 | 4,380 | 590 | 3,200 | 5,410 |

*Table 3: Single females with investment income and married couples where the wife has investment income 1989-90*

| *Total income (lower limit)* | *Single people* | | | *Married couples* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | *without wife's earned income* | | | *with wife's earned income* | | |
| | | *Investment income* | | | *Wife's investment income* | | | *Wife's investment income* | |
| | *Number* | *Total* | *Average* | *Number* | *Total* | *Average* | *Number* | *Total* | *Average* |
| *£ p.a.* | *000s* | *£ million* | *£* | *000s* | *£ million* | *£* | *000s* | *£ million* | *£* |
| *Aged under 65* | | | | | | | | | |
| 5,000 | 1,500 | 1,300 | 870 | 700 | 340 | 480 | 240 | 120 | 510 |
| 10,000 | 780 | 900 | 1,140 | 1,600 | 880 | 550 | 1,800 | 1,000 | 570 |
| 20,000 | 90 | 230 | 2,680 | 340 | 190 | 570 | 1,200 | 790 | 640 |
| 30,000 | 20 | 220 | 10,900 | 140 | 100 | 700 | 530 | 380 | 720 |
| 50,000 | — | 180 | 48,700 | 60 | 140 | 2,260 | 130 | 310 | 2,320 |
| All | 2,400 | 2,800 | 1,180 | 2,800 | 1,700 | 580 | 4,000 | 2,600 | 670 |
| *Aged 65 and over* | | | | | | | | | |
| 5,000 | 400 | 950 | 2,360 | 330 | 250 | 760 | 110 | 70 | 680 |
| 10,000 | 140 | 970 | 6,770 | 200 | 210 | 1,060 | 210 | 260 | 1,200 |
| 20,000 | 30 | 460 | 18,100 | 30 | 110 | 3,530 | 110 | 210 | 1,920 |
| 30,000 | 10 | 370 | 26,300 | 20 | 130 | 5,860 | 50 | 160 | 3,430 |
| 50,000 | 10 | 430 | 50,600 | 10 | 180 | 12,800 | 20 | 150 | 9,400 |
| All | 590 | 3,200 | 5,360 | 590 | 870 | 1,480 | 490 | 850 | 1,730 |

*Table 4*
*Single females with investment income of more than £200*
*and married couples where the wife has investment income of more than £200: 1989-90*

| Total income (lower limit) £ p.a. | Single people | | | Married couples | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | without wife's earned income | | | with wife's earned income | | |
| | Number '000s | Investment Income Total £ million | Investment Income Average £ | Number '000s | Investment Total £ million | Wife's Income Average £ | Number '000s | Investment Total £ million | Wife's Income Average £ |
| | | | | *Aged under 65* | | | | | |
| 5,000 | 1,400 | 1,300 | 950 | 540 | 320 | 590 | 180 | 110 | 650 |
| 10,000 | 720 | 890 | 1,240 | 1,200 | 840 | 690 | 1,500 | 1,000 | 670 |
| 20,000 | 80 | 230 | 2,970 | 290 | 190 | 650 | 1,000 | 770 | 750 |
| 30,000 | 20 | 220 | 11,500 | 90 | 90 | 1,000 | 380 | 360 | 970 |
| 50,000 | — | 180 | 50,500 | 40 | 140 | 3,250 | 100 | 310 | 3,060 |
| ALL | 2,200 | 2,800 | 1,290 | 2,200 | 1,600 | 730 | 3,200 | 2,600 | 800 |
| | | | | *Aged 65 and over* | | | | | |
| 5,000 | 390 | 940 | 2,450 | 210 | 230 | 1,140 | 80 | 70 | 880 |
| 10,000 | 140 | 970 | 6,810 | 170 | 210 | 1,210 | 180 | 250 | 1,430 |
| 20,000 | 30 | 460 | 18,100 | 30 | 110 | 3,900 | 100 | 210 | 2,130 |
| 30,000 | 10 | 370 | 26,300 | 20 | 130 | 6,090 | 50 | 160 | 3,610 |
| 50,000 | 10 | 430 | 50,600 | 10 | 180 | 13,200 | 20 | 150 | 9,880 |
| ALL | 580 | 3,200 | 5,510 | 440 | 860 | 1,960 | 410 | 850 | 2,040 |

## Financial Statistics

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for manufacturing, other industrial and commercial companies, and the financial sector the same information as given in table 14.3 of the "Annual Abstract of Statistics 1989" for 1979 and 1987; and if he will add a forecast for 1988.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Separate figures for manufacturing companies are not available. A subdivision of the corporate sector between financial and industrial and commercial (including manufacturing) for the years 1979 and 1987 is given in the tables. Definitive figures for 1988 are in the course of preparation and will be available in September 1989.

*Table 1: Corporate sector appropriation account[1]: financial*

| | 1979 £ million | 1987 £ million |
|---|---|---|
| *Income* | | |
| Income arising in the United Kingdom | | |
| Gross trading profits of companies and trading surplus of public corporations | | |
| After deducting stock appreciation[2] | −1,856 | −3,586 |
| Stock appreciation | — | — |
| Total[2 3] | −1,856 | −3,586 |
| Rent and non-trading income[4] | 15,856 | 40,086 |
| Total | 14,000 | 36,500 |
| Income from abroad[5] | 1,375 | 6,534 |
| Total income | 15,375 | 43,034 |
| *Allocation of income* | | |
| Dividend and interest payments[4 6] | 9,660 | 27,415 |
| Current transfers to charities from companies | 9 | 33 |
| Profits due abroad, net of United Kingdom tax | 281 | 48 |
| United Kingdom taxes on income | 758 | 1,673 |
| Royalties and licence fees on oil and gas production | — | — |
| Balance: undistributed income after taxation[7] | 4,667 | 13,865 |
| Total | 15,375 | 43,034 |

*Table 2: Corporate sector appropriation account[1]: industrial and commercial*

| | 1979 | 1987 |
|---|---|---|
| | | £ million |
| *Income* | | |
| Income arising in the United Kingdom | | |
| Gross trading profits of companies and trading surplus of public corporations | | |
| After deducting stock appreciation | 28,818 | 71,421 |
| Stock appreciation | 8,061 | 4,384 |
| Total[3] | 36,879 | 75,805 |
| Rent and non-trading income[4] | 3,567 | 8,996 |
| Total | 40,446 | 84,801 |
| Income from abroad[5] | 5,722 | 11,506 |
| Total income | 46,168 | 96,307 |
| *Allocation of income* | | |
| Dividends and interest payments[4 6] | 11,842 | 25,479 |
| Current transfers to charities from companies | 42 | 152 |
| Profits due abroad, net of United Kingdom tax | 3,711 | 5,461 |
| United Kingdom taxes on income | 4,305 | 13,500 |
| Royalties and licence fees on oil and gas production | 531 | 1,151 |
| Balance: undistributed income after taxation[7] | 25,737 | 50,564 |
| Total | 46,168 | 96,307 |

[1] Includes flows between the companies' sector and public corporations but excludes flows within the companies' sector.

[2] This represents the contribution of financial enterprises in the corporate sector to the gross domestic product. It is the difference between bank charges, commissions, etc., on the one hand and management expenses of the other.

[3] Before providing for depreciation and stock appreciation.

[4] Financial sector figures include payments to and receipts from industrial and commercial sector. Industrial and commercial sector figures include payments to and receipts from financial sector.

[5] After deducting depreciation allowances but before providing for stock appreciation.

[6] Excludes dividends and debenture interest payments by United Kingdom subsidiaries to their overseas parents.

[7] Before providing for depreciation, stock appreciation and additions to tax and dividend reserves.

## Mortgage Interest Relief

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing his estimate of the number of cases in which higher rate relief will be given on mortgage interest payments in the current financial year together with *(a)* the gross amount of interest qualifying for relief, *(b)* the amount of higher rate relief and *(c)* the number of recipients of working age and their distribution by personal tax category and by range of total income together with the average amount of relief given at the standard and higher rate of tax; and if he will add his forecast of the additional cost to the Revenue on the basis of this year's figures and rate of tax of mortgage relief as a result of the separate taxation of married couples.

**Mr. Lilley:** I shall answer when resources permit.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will provide a further breakdown of the numbers below £15,000 given in his answer of 29 July 1988, *Official Report*, columns *729-30*, concerning the distribution of mortgage interest relief and the percentage with investment income in the form of his answer of 27 March 1987, *Official Report*, column *310;* and if he will provide a forecast for 1989-90.

**Mr. Lilley:** It is not clear to which answer the hon. Member is referring.

## Pensions

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* (i) his estimate of the employers notional contribution to notionally funded and unfunded schemes, (ii) figures for the Civil Service showing the percentage contribution made by the Government and its employees and (iii) his best estimate of the proportionate split between sources of pension income in the cases quoted in sub-paragraphs *(a)* and *(b)* of paragraph 22 of the Inland Revenue paper, using as a basis the information given in his answer of 11 November 1988, *Official Report*, column *235*.

**Mr. Lilley:** I shall answer when resources permit.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the payment of a lump sum pension is subject to the maximum pension rules; whether the estimated cost of the lump sum referred to in the table given in his answer of 11 November 1988, *Official Report*, columns *357-58*, include (i) those who commute their pensions for a lump sum and (ii) provision for the beneficiary to replace the lump sum by an increase in pension; and at what cost to the Exchequer.

**Mr. Lilley:** Part of the benefits from a tax-approved pension scheme may be paid as a tax-free lump sum. The normal maximum lump sum benefit is 1·5 times final salary from an occupational scheme or 25 per cent. of the accumulated fund under a personal pension scheme. The estimated cost of the tax exemption for lump sum payments is derived from a survey of amounts paid out in lump sums on retirement in a given year.

## National Debt

**Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the total amount of national debt repaid by the Government over the last five years.

**Mr. Ryder:** Over the last five years as a whole, there has been a small net public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) of about £1 billion. However, in the last two years, there has been a public sector debt repayment (PSBR) totalling £18·3 billion and a further substantial net repayment is forecast for the current year.

## Gross Domestic Product

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the rate of growth in gross domestic product, in manufacturing output, and in employment and unemployment in the United Kingdom and other European monetary system countries since 1979; and to what he ascribes the difference.

**Mr. Ryder:** I shall answer when resources permit.

## House Purchase

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has for (i) West Germany, (ii) France, (iii) Italy, (iv) Holland and (v) Belgium on the amount in terms of local currency of lending to purchase dwellings, the current rate of interest and the cost of servicing such loans as a percentage of *(a)* real disposable incomes and *(b)* consumers' expenditure.

**Mr. Ryder:** I shall answer when resources permit.

## Privatisation

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his assessment of the effect of privatisation on the United Kingdom figures for (i) company profits and (ii) private and public sector investment since 1979.

**Mr. Lilley:** I shall answer when resources permit.

## Charitable Donations

**Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the value of one-off company donations to *(a)* charities and *(b)* professional arts organisations with charitable status in every year from 1986-87 to 1988-89, inclusive.

**Mr. Lilley:** Estimates of single donations to charities by companies are given in the table:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1986-87 | 4 |
| 1987-88 | 9 |
| 1988-89 | 19 |

Separate figures for donations to professional arts organisations with charitable status are not available.

## Capital Allowances

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his forecast for capital allowances other than first year allowances for plant and machinery and vehicles for 1987; whether he will gross up for each year since 1976 the implied value of corporate investment in company cars together with the loss to the revenue; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the annual increase in gross and net investment in plant, machinery and vehicles less the estimated figure for company cars.

**Mr. Lilley:** Capital allowances for plant, machinery and vehicles are estimated at £15 billion in 1987, excluding public corporations. The available data on capital allowances for companies' cars are very limited and not sufficiently detailed to serve as the basis for estimates of annual expenditure.

## Returnable Bottles

**Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to offer tax incentives to manufacturers and retailers who sell drinks in returnable bottles.

**Mr. Lilley:** My right hon. Friend has no present plans to introduce such tax incentives.

## Farming Partnerships

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide statistics on the taxation of farming partnerships on the same basis as that given in his answer of 14 November 1988, *Official Report*, columns *515-16*; and what is his estimate of the saving to the Revenue from aggregating the incomes of spouses in such partnerships for income tax purposes.

**Mr. Lilley:** The information could be obtained only at disproportionate expense.

## Life Assurance

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the gain to the Revenue in the current financial year if the anomalies described in the discussion paper in the taxation of life assurance, including pension and annuity business, were to be corrected in favour of a neutral regime.

**Mr. Lilley:** The discussion paper "The Taxation of Life Assurance" set out the difficulties involved in making direct comparisons between life assurance and other media, and went far beyond a simple listing of anomalies. No perfectly neutral regime was identified in the document, and no estimate of tax yield from such a regime can be made. The discussion paper outlined three broad options for reform, but I have nothing to add about extra yield to the answer given to the hon. Member on 24 July at column *544*.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the loss to the Revenue in 1988-89 and the forecast loss in the current financial year of single premium life assurance policies; and how much of the cost of writing such policies is offset against current profits.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The value of single premium policies effected in 1988-89 is not known, and no forecast of figures for the current year can be made. Nor are figures available for the value of single premium policies in force in 1988-89; and it is therefore not possible to give any meaningful estimate of the difference in tax yield which could have resulted had moneys invested in such policies been placed elsewhere. The costs of writing single premium policies are currently deductible immediately and in full under the income less expenses system, but from 1 January 1990 they will be deductible on the deferred basis prescribed in section 86 of the current Finance Act.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing which of the three key features of the wider tax regime applicable to investments listed in paragraph 3·3 of the 1988 consultative document on the taxation of life assurance apply to each of the options listed in paragraph 18 of the 1983 discussion document on the taxtion of pension funds; and what would be the consequential saving to the Revenue in the current financial year of (i) each option and (ii) taxing pension schemes on the same basis as unit trusts.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## Taxable Benefits

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is his estimate of the real and the taxable value of benefits subject to (i) special and (ii) general rules, together with the estimated revenue therefrom;

(2) whether he will bring up to date his reply dated 6 April 1987, *Official Report*, column *78*, concerning taxable benefits together with an estimate of (i) the amount by which the scale charges for company cars fall short of the true value of the benefit and (ii) the yield from taxing the full value.

**Mr. Lilley:** The available information, based on projections from data relating to 1985-86, on the taxable value of benefits and the tax yield arising is as follows:

| *Benefit provided by the employer— 1989-90* | *Taxable value £ million* | *Tax yield £ million* |
|---|---|---|
| Cars and free fuel for private use | 2,840 | 880 |
| Private medical insurance | 290 | 90 |
| Other expense payments and benefits | 470 | 150 |
| Total | 3,600 | 1,120 |

The Government's view is that the typical value to employees of being able to use their company cars privately exceeds the present scale charges. But the value to particular employees depends on a wide range of factors. It is not possible, therefore, to provide an estimate of the aggregate extent to which the private use of company cars is undertaxed, or of the additional revenue which would arise if the full value was used in computing income.

### Rent Income

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will include in the *Official Report* his forecast of the increase in rent income in 1989-90 as a result of the relaxation of rent controls, the amount which will be subject to tax and the expected yield and the extra amount which the Exchequer will have to pay out to tenants by way of rent relief.

**Mr. Lilley:** My right hon. Friend has made no such forecast.

### Child Benefit

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the amount by which child benefit could be increased on a revenue neutral basis if it was made taxable, the gross and net cost to the Exchequer of raising the benefit to £20 for the first child and £15 for subsequent children, the estimated saving to public authorities as a result of the consequential reduction in other benefits, the tax saving from the abolition of the additional allowance for income tax purposes and the estimated distribution of individual child benefits by range of income and tax status of their parents/guardians.

**Mr. Lilley:** The estimates requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Age Allowances

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing (i) the gain to the Exchequer in the current financial year at present rates of tax of abolishing the age allowances and (ii) the cost of retaining them without the income limit.

**Mr. Lilley:** The yield in a full year at 1989-90 levels of income of abolishing the age allowances for taxpayers aged 65 and over is estimated to be about £420 million. If the age allowances were retained and the income limit abolished, the cost to the Exchequer would be £220 million.

The estimates are based on a projection of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes and are provisional.

### Wife's Earning Exemption

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing how many names were excluded from the 190,000 households referred to in the footnote to his answer of 29 July 1988, *Official Report,* columns *729-30,* concerning households kept out of higher rate tax by wife's earnings exemption, and the distribution of the 190,000 plus any excluded wives on the same basis as in the table; and if he will provide an estimate of the saving to the revenue if (i) mortgage interest and (ii) other allowances were not deducted from total income in assessing liability to higher rate tax.

**Mr. Lilley:** The estimates requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Corporation Tax

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his forecast of the yield in revenue from corporation tax and advance corporation tax in the current financial year and in 1990-91 net of double taxation relief; and if he will include figures showing the amount of tax collected as a percentage of gross trading profit and as a percentage of the amount paid out in dividends.

**Mr. Lilley:** The forecast yield of corporation tax in 1989-90 is £22·4 billion of which advance corporation tax is £6·8 billion. A forecast for 1990-91 will be published in the next Financial Statement and Budget Report.

Mainstream corporation tax collected in 1988-89 was 19 per cent. of the gross trading profit in 1987. Advance corporation tax collected in 1988-89 was 32 per cent. of the amount of dividends paid out in 1988.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the yield to the Revenue from an increase in the rate of *(a)* corporation tax and *(b)* advance corporation tax to 50 per cent. in the current financial year, and his forecast for next year.

**Mr. Lilley:** The yield in a full year from increasing the main rate of corporation tax to 50 per cent. would be about £11 billion at 1988 levels of company profits and dividends. The additional yield from increasing the advance corporation tax and small companies rate to 50 per cent. would be about £2½ billion. These estimates take no account of possible behavioural effects following such a change.

### Graduate Tax

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received asking him to impose a graduate tax; what is his estimate of the likely yield from such a tax; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lilley:** I have received no representations asking me to impose a graduate tax and made no estimate of the possible yield.

### Life Assurance (Taxation)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the effect the restriction referred to in paragraph 26(a) of the Inland Revenue paper of June 1983, on the cost of tax reliefs for pensions schemes, would have on the amount of tax payable by life office-administered funds in the current financial year; and what would be the implications for the wider tax regime applicable to investments described in paragraph 3.3 and other considerations raised in the recent consultative document on the taxation of life assurance.

**Mr. Lilley:** There was no Inland Revenue paper of June 1983 on this subject.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the saving to the revenue in the current financial year if the tax on the incomings of life assurance offices had been as great as shown for 1968 in charts 11 and 12 of annex B to the recent consultation paper on the taxation of life assurance; and if he will provide similar figures on a 1959 percentage basis.

**Mr. Lilley:** The information necessary to support such an estimate is not yet available. It is not clear what the hon. Member's reference to a 1959 percentage basis means.

### EC Institutions (Payments)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the net payment of £1·97 billion to European Economic Community institutions forecast for this year (Cm. 603) is higher or lower than expected when he agreed the present budgetary arrangements; and what is the basis upon which this amount was decided.

**Mr. Ryder:** I refer the hon. Member to chapter 3 of "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1989-90 to 1991-92" (Cm. 603), and to paragraph 11 in particular.

### Customs and Excise Building, Dartmouth

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for the building at Baynards Cove, Dartmouth, currently used by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** The accommodation at Baynards Cove, Dartmouth, is too large for Her Majesty's Customs and Excise operational needs. The department is therefore seeking alternative smaller accommodation in the Dartmouth area and then to surrender the present building to the Property Services Agency.

### Suzanne Allen and Yvonne Knight

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what basis information held at Swindon 2 tax office on Suzanne Allen and Yvonne Knight was communicated to Swindon police.

**Mr. Lilley:** It is a strict rule that Revenue officials are not permitted to disclose personal and private information about the affairs of individual taxpayers except in certain very limited circumstances. Each Revenue official signs a statutory declaration to that effect on taking up duty in the Department. Disclosures are made to the police only in connection with the very serious crimes of murder and treason and then only with the express authority of the board.

No information about Suzanne Allen or Yvonne Knight has been communicated to the Swindon police.

### Customs Officers

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total number of Customs officers in 1979-80 and each succeeding year.

**Mr. Ryder:** The total numbers of Customs officers deployed at ports, airports and inland clearance premises for each of the fiscal years 1979-80 to 1988-89 were:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 7,231 |
| 1980-81 | 7,088 |
| 1981-82 | 6,861 |
| 1982-83 | 6,717 |
| 1983-84 | 6,552 |
| 1984-85 | 6,715 |
| 1985-86 | 6,880 |
| 1986-87 | 7,307 |
| 1987-88 | 7,684 |
| 1988-89 | 8,010 |

### Value Added Tax

**Mr. Rost:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what amount of value added tax was raised in 1988-89 from the installation of energy conservation investments in the home, as defined in the home energy fact file, published by the Department of Energy.

**Mr. Ryder:** I regret that information requested is not available.

### Selective Investment Brokers Limited

**Sir Charles Morrison:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether negotiations have taken place between the Inland Revenue and Selective Investment Brokers Ltd. since January 1985; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lawson:** Such information is confidential.

### Delors Report

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement setting out the nature of his obligations to consult European Community institutions or bodies on financial and monetary policy inherent in his budget strategy; what additional requirements are set out in the report of Mr. Jacques Delors which was presented to the Madrid meeting of the European Council; and if he will make a further statement setting out Her Majesty's Government's policy on such consultations.

**Mr. Ryder:** My right hon. Friend has regular discussions with his EC Finance Minister colleagues, on a wide range of economic and monetary matters, at meetings of the Economic and Finance Council. The Prime Minister set out the Government's views on the proposals made in the report of Mr. Delors in her statement to the House on 29 June on the outcome of the European Council in Madrid on 26 and 27 June—*Official Report*, columns 1107-22.

### EC (Contribution)

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the net contribution to be made by the United Kingdom to the EEC in the current calendar year; and what was the comparable total in 1979.

**Mr. Ryder:** The information requested is as follows:

*Net contribution to European Community budget (£ million)*

| *Year* | *Current prices* | *Constant [1]1989 prices* |
|---|---|---|
| [2]1989 | 1,966 | 1,966 |
| 1979 | 947 | 1,938 |

[1] GDP deflator at market prices.

[2] Estimate.

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the net amount paid for each year since 1979 to the EEC; what is the estimated amount the Government are likely to pay in the current financial year; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** The information requested is set out in the table. Details of the Government's latest estimate for 1989-90 are contained in the public expenditure White Paper, Cm. 603.

*Net payments to European Community institutions*[1]

| *Year* | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 841 |
| 1980-81 | 168 |
| 1981-82 | 117 |
| 1982-83 | 589 |
| 1983-84 | 836 |
| 1984-85 | 974 |
| 1985-86 | 822 |
| 1986-87 | 1,079 |
| 1987-88 | 1,664 |
| 1988-89 | [2]1,022 |
| 1989-90 | [3]1,970 |

[1] Excluding overseas aid: for domestic public expenditure planning purposes, part of the United Kingdom's contribution to the Community budget is attributed to the overseas aid programme.

[2] Provisional outturn.

[3] Estimate.

*Source:* Public Expenditure White Paper.

### Government Borrowing

**Sir Richard Body:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the total amount of borrowings by the Government from the banking system for each year since 1985.

**Mr. Ryder:** The table shows the total indebtedness of the public sector to the United Kingdom monetary sector.

*Public sector borrowing from United Kingdom monetary sector: amounts outstanding end-period*

*£ million*

| | *Sterling* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Central Government* | *Other* | *Total* | *Other currencies* | *Total* |
| 1985 | 10,347 | 6,927 | 17,274 | 1,938 | 19,212 |
| 1986 | 11,574 | 4,668 | 16,242 | 1,860 | 18,102 |
| 1987 | 11,792 | 4,192 | 15,984 | 1,037 | 17,021 |
| 1988 | 10,753 | 3,966 | 14,719 | 442 | 15,161 |
| Q11989 | 7,567 | 3,779 | 11,346 | 270 | 11,616 |

Indebtedness has fallen each year since 1985 and recently at an accelerating rate.

### Ken Dodd

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the cost to public funds of the recent trial of Ken Dodd.

**Mr. Lilley:** The total cost to public funds, including legal expenses and the estimated administrative expenses of the court, was £220,000.

### Laser Printers (Inland Revenue)

**Mr. Terry Davis:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Inland Revenue department is currently using any Siemens ND3, Siemens ND2, ICL LPS20, UNISYS 0777 or Storage Technology 6/100 laser printers.

**Mr. Lilley:** The Inland Revenue is currently using 18 LPS20 laser printers.

### Recycled Publications

**Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether unused official publications including Bills, *Hansards* and Order Papers are recycled; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder:** All unused official publications including those returned from the House to HMSO's publications centre are sold as waste paper for recycling.

### Post-tax Income

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the share of total national post-tax income taken by the richest 1 per cent., the next 9 per cent., the middle 60 per cent., and the poorest 30 per cent. in 1959, 1963, 1967, 1970, 1974, 1979, 1983 and 1988, or the latest available date.

**Mr. Lilley:** I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before the summer recess. Therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

### Exports and Imports

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the rate of growth of exports over the last 10 years; and what has been the rate of growth of imports.

**Mr. Redwood:** I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

### Manufacturing Deficit

**Mr. John Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the deficit in manufacturing trade in the first and second quarters of 1989.

**Mr. Redwood:** I have been asked to reply.

I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy in the Library.

### Company Finances

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has as to how many United Kingdom companies hold £1 billion or more in bank accounts or outside equities.

**Mr. Ryder** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Real Disposable Incomes

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing in terms of 1985 prices the increase in real disposable incomes between 1959 and 1973, 1973 and 1979, and 1979 to date together with *(a)* the contribution made by (i) the overseas trade surplus/deficit on current account and (ii) the revenue from North sea oil and gas and *(b)* the annual percentage increase in real disposable incomes in each period less the contribution from *(a)*.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* Estimates for real national disposable income (RNDI) at constant 1985 prices for the years 1966 to 1987 are given in table 1.1 of "United Kingdom National Accounts", 1988 edition.

The same table gives estimates, over the same period, for the "terms of trade effect". This is the contribution to RNDI made by changes in export prices relative to import prices. Estimates of the value added by the extraction of mineral oil and natural gas appear for the years 1977 to 1987 and in current prices in table 2.2 of the same publication; in volume terms expressed as an index with 1985=100 they appear in table 2.4.

Longer-run estimates for real national disposable income and for the index number version of value added by the extraction of mineral oil and natural gas are available via the Library of the House which has access to the CSO's computer-readable database.

### Current Account Deficit

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps the Government have taken to sterilise the inflow of capital to finance the deficit on current account; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the debt instruments sold for this purpose.

**Mr. Ryder** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The Government's funding policy ensures that any underlying change in the level of official foreign exchange reserves is sterilised over time. Since the balance of payments by definition must balance there are no further net inflows of capital to sterilise.

### Department for National Savings

**Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what consideration is being given to the privatisation of the Department for National Savings;

(2) what consideration is being given to the privatisation of the National Savings bank in Scotland;

(3) which companies have expressed an interest in buying the National Savings bank in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ryder** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* The Government have no plans to privatise any part of the Department for National Savings.

### Company Cars

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what evidence he has on the extent to which employers offer a company car instead of higher pay as an aid to recruitment; and by how much the chargeable addition to income for tax purposes for the use of a company car would have to be increased to make it uneconomic for the employer to provide and the employee to accept the use of a company car instead of an increase in pay.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The decision to provide a car instead of higher cash pay is a matter for employers. About 1·4 million employees have cars available for private use provided by their employers. The Government's policy is that there should as far as possible be neutrality between the tax treatment of remuneration in cash and kind. But the value of company cars to particular employees varies widely depending on a range of factors. It is not possible, therefore, to give a fixed point at which a chargeable addition to income for tax purposes would make company cars an uneconomic proposition for either employers or employees.

### United Kingdom Manufacturing

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the percentage gross and net operating surplus in 1988 and in 1973 of firms not less than 90 per cent. of whose business is in United Kingdom manufacturing; and what improvement in the rate of return he expects in 1989.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* I will reply to the hon. Member when resources permit.

### Double Taxation

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the net loss to the United Kingdom in tax revenue under double taxation agreements.

**Mr. Lilley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* This information is not available.

### Ivory

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, further to his reply of 6 June, *Official Report,* column *118,* he will report on the latest situation in respect of the five consignments of raw ivory held at Heathrow airport on 12 April.

**Mr. Ryder:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply my predecessor gave on 6 June *Official Report,* column *118.*

## DUCHY OF LANCASTER

### Justices of the Peace

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps he proposes to take to implement the declared policy of his predecessor to ensure that as wide a range as possible of people serve as justices of the peace within the Duchy, what measures he proposes to guard against political imbalance across the numbers of people so appointed; and what steps are taken to ensure the separation of his ministerial and non-ministerial functions in this respect.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** I fully support the answers given by my predecessor to the hon. Member on 13 March. With regard to the final part of the question, the offices and advisers for my different functions are completely separate.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Nitrates

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will make it his policy to ensure that any compensation paid to individual farmers for restrictions imposed on the use of nitrogenous chemical fertilisers is financed by a levy on the sale of those fertilisers.

**Mr. Curry:** No.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what is his estimate of the tonnage of nitrogenous fertilisers used in United Kingdom agriculture in each year since 1959;

(2) whether Her Majesty's Government have any plans to impose a tax on the nitrogenous content of bulk fertilisers of £200 per tonne of the nitrate content; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the tonnage of nitrate consumed on British farms in each of the past 20 years.

**Mr. Curry:** The Government have no such plans. Figures on total nitrogen consumption on British farms are not available in the form requested. Information on applications of inorganic fertilisers containing nitrogen is published annually on a hectarage basis in the survey of fertiliser practice. In addition, nitrogen is also present in variable quantities in farmyard manure and sewage sludge. Total amounts involved are not available on a national basis, but are estimated to be about one fifth of total nitrogen application.

### Food Transport

**Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action is now being taken to ensure that food is transported in the most hygienic conditions possible.

**Mr. Freeman:** I have been asked to reply.

The transport of food is already covered by the Food Hygiene (Markets, Stalls and Delivery Vehicles) Regulations 1966.

On 4 July 1989 we began consultation on proposed amending regulations to apply temperature controls to certain foods carried in delivery vehicles.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many letters were received from, and sent to, hon. Members by his Department in *(a)* January and *(b)* the whole of this Session up to 1 July.

**Mr. Gummer:** In January 1989 the Ministry received 721 letters which were designated for ministerial reply and 603 replies were issued. In the whole of the last Session to 1 July 1989 the figures were 6,123 and 5,289 respectively. The large majority of this correspondence was from right hon. and hon. Members.

### Civil Service Dispersal

**Mr. Cran:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress is being made in his Department's review, in line with Treasury guidelines, of the potential for the further relocation of Civil Service posts outside London and the south-east; and when he expects the review to be completed.

**Mr. Curry:** Officials of my Department are currently carrying out a detailed study of the potential for further relocation of headquarters work outside London and the south-east. I expect the results of this study to be available to me towards the end of this year.

### Food Act 1984

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has had concerning the amendment of sections 1 and 2 of the Food Act 1984; and how many of these have indicated a wish that they remain unaltered.

**Mr. Maclean:** The Government have received many representations in response to our proposals for re-enacting and updating the powers in sections 1 and 2. There has been general support for what we are proposing.

### Salmonella

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the causes of the cyclical occurrence of outbreaks of salmonella enteriditis over the last five years.

**Mr. Curry:** It has not been possible to identify any single cause for the increase in the number of incidents of salmonella enteriditis in poultry and animals reported under the Zoonoses Orders (1975) (1989) in the past five years.

**Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether there is scientific evidence available to his Department that salmonella enteriditis can reproduce inside an intact egg.

**Mr. Curry:** Evidence is available to show that salmonella enteriditis will multiply inside an intact egg if the egg is incubated at 37 deg. C.

### Nutrition Claims

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the result of the consultation exercise on the recommendations by the Food Advisory Committee for controls on the new generation of nutrition claims on food labels and in advertisements.

**Mr. Gummer:** I am grateful to the committee for its further advice following consideration of the responses to the consultation exercise.

Nutrition claims can provide a useful source of information for consumers seeking a healthy, balanced diet but consumers must be fully protected from misleading claims. I therefore welcome, and accept, the Food Advisory Committee's recommendations and in due course I shall be issuing, for consultation, proposed legislation which would implement the committee's advice. This is part of our general policy to ensure that consumers are properly informed about the foods they buy and eat.

I have arranged for a copy of the revised Food Advisory Committee's advice to be placed in the Library of the House.

### Milk Quotas

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of the capital value of milk quotas to British farmers.

**Mr. Curry:** I have made no such estimate.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the cost of higher milk prices as a result of quotas; and what was the cost of buying up and disposing of surplus milk and milk products before the quotas were imposed.

**Mr. Curry:** Since 1983-84, the year before quotas were introduced, the intervention price of butter (82 per cent. fat) has been reduced from 357·86 ecu/100 kg to the present level of 300·80 ecu/kg. The intervention price for skimmed milk powder has moved from 149·64 ecu/100 kg to 174·04 ecu/100 kg but intervention buying for both skimmed milk powder and butter has virtually been brought to an end. Despite the existence of quotas a substantial surplus still exists in the dairy sector; the Government have been urging the Commission to make further cuts in the level of export refunds and other disposal subsidies in order to ease the supply situation—and hence prices—on the open market.

Expenditure on surplus disposal measures for milk and milk products under the FEOGA guarantee section in 1983 amounted to 4,923 million ecu, not counting the offsetting effects of coresponsibility levy receipts.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the size of the United Kingdom milk quota in litres; how many million litres of quota have been sold in each of the past three years; and if he will provide an estimate of the average price paid for quotas in the first month of each quota year together with the implied cost per litre of output amortised over a period of three, five and 10 years, respectively, at current rates of interest.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* United Kingdom milk quotas on 1 April 1989 were as follows:

| | *Litres* |
|---|---|
| Wholesale quota | 14,503,970,784 |
| Direct sales quota (of which 5½ per cent. was temporarily suspended | 372,501,084 |

European Community regulations do not allow the sale of quota as such, but quota is transferred in proportion to the areas used for milk production when all or part of a dairy holding is sold, leased, or transferred by inheritance. The total volume of quota transferred in the United Kingdom in each of the last three quota years was as follows:

| *Year ending* | *Million litres* |
|---|---|
| 31 March 1987 | 646 |
| 31 March 1988 | 750 |
| 31 March 1989 | 546 |

My Department does not collect price data on transactions involving quotas. Information available from published sources suggests that typical values attributed to quota in England and Wales were as follows:

| | *Pence per litre* |
|---|---|
| April 1986 | 12½ to 14 |
| April 1987 | 25 to 27 |
| April 1988 | 27 to 30 |

Amortised costs over a number of years at various interest rates can be calculated by applying appropriate equivalent annual cost factors. These can be obtained from "Investment Appraisal in the Public Sector, Her Majesty's Treasury 1982" (page 40). A copy is in the Library of the House.

## Farm Costs and Incomes

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what provision is made by his Department for the cost of land in calculating farm production costs and farm incomes.

**Mr. Maclean:** There are various ways of allowing for the costs of land, which may be either tenanted or owner-occupied, in the calculation of farm costs and incomes.

In the calculation of measures of aggregate farming incomes, allowance is made for the rent paid on tenanted land. In respect of owner-occupied land, allowance is made for the cost of land maintenance and improvement but not for the purchase of land, the return to use of which is thus included within the resulting measures of farm income.

The treatment of land costs in the farm business surveys, which provide data by farm type, is described in pages 111-112 of the 1989 edition of farm incomes in the United Kingdom, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

## EC (Production Figures)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the EEC production figures for *(a)* rapeseed, *(b)* sunflowerseed and *(c)* soya beans on the basis given in his written reply dated 18 February 1988.

**Mr. Curry:** The information requested, which updates that contained in the Prime Minister's reply to the hon. Member on 22 February 1988, is as follows:

| | *Rapeseed* | *Sunflowerseed* | *Soya* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1987*[1] | | | |
| EC-10 | 5,945 | 2,807 | 1,802 |
| EC-12 | 5,955 | 3,907 | 1,808 |
| *1988*[2] | | | |
| EC-10 | 5,300 | 2,880 | 1,584 |
| EC-12 | 5,312 | 4,177 | 1,600 |

[1] Actual production figures. Data are from management committee statistics.

[2] Estimates of production adopted by EC Commission for the purpose of determining adjustments to common prices in 1988-89 under the maximum guaranteed quantity systems; or figures derived therefrom.

*Note:* All figures are in '000 tonnes.

## Agricultural Wages

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the figures shown in appendices VI and VII of Government economic service working paper No. 52 on wages and employment in agriculture.

**Mr. Maclean:** This information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## Agricultural Holdings

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date the number of agricultural holdings and tenanted holdings on the same basis as that given in his written reply of 9 May 1985, *Official Report,* column 502.

**Mr. Maclean:** The information requested is as follows. The definitions are the same as those given in the reply of 9 May 1985.

*Main Agricultural holdings in England and Wales*

*Thousands*

| *Year* | *Main holdings* | *of which rented or mainly rented* |
|---|---|---|
| 1985 | 183·6 | 51·4 |
| 1986 | 184·7 | 49·9 |
| 1987 | 185·8 | 48·8 |
| 1988 | 186·9 | 47·9 |

## Partnerships

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* *(a)* the number of whole-time partnerships and the number of partners, *(b)* the number of part-time partnerships and part-time partners, and *(c)* the number of mixed partnerships and number of whole-time and part-time partners

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing farm holdings by size in terms of ownership by *(a)* companies, *(b)* partnerships and *(c)* individuals at the latest census.

**Mr. Maclean:** This information is not available.

## White Sugar

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the ~~Minister of~~ Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the years since 1983-84 *(a)* the United Kingdom price for white sugar and *(b)* the world price, on the same basis as that given in his written answer of 9 May 1985, *Official Report*, column *497*.

**Mr. Curry:** The information requested is given in the table:

*Sugar prices*

| | *United Kingdom price £/t*[1] | | *World price £/t*[2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1983-84 | 364·57 | 1983 | 141·14 |
| 1984-85 | 364·57 | 1984 | 103·47 |
| 1985-86 | 368·96 | 1985 | 80·99 |
| 1986-87 | [3]372·37 | 1986 | 104·20 |
| 1987-88 | [3]389·69 | 1987 | 107·95 |
| 1988-89 1 July 1988 to 31 December 1988 | 386·40 | 1988 | n/a |
| 1 January 1989 to 30 June 1989 | [3]397·55 | | |
| 1989-90 | [3]401·96 | 1989 | n/a |

[1] The price given is the effective United Kingdom support price for white sugar, ie the intervention price plus the storage levy. The storage levy changed in July 1986, 1988 and 1989.

[2] The heading to this table in the reply dated 9 May 1985 should have indicated it gave the London daily price for raw sugar rather than white sugar. There is no single world price for white sugar. The raw sugar prices were obtained, as previously, from the International Sugar Organisation.

[3] Indicates changes in green rates.

## Wine

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1983-84 the *(a)* guide, *(b)* intervention, *(c)* threshold and *(d)* other prices for wine, and the amount spent by way of price support and other data on the same basis as that provided in his written reply of 2 May 1985, *Official Report*, column *201*.

**Mr. Maclean:** The information requested is provided in the tables.

*Averages*

*Guide price, activating price, reference price for wine and average weighted producer prices*

*ecu/per cent. vol./hectolitre*

| *Wine year*[1] | [2]*Guide Price* | [3]*Activating* | [4]*Reference* | *Average weighted producer prices* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 3·30 | 3·04 | 4·36 | 2·51 |
| 1985-86 | 3·30 | 3·04 | 4·36 | 2·61 |
| 1986-87 | 3·30 | 3·04 | 4·36 | 2·38 |
| 1987-88 | 3·23 | 2·97 | 4·36 | 2·44 |
| 1988-89 | 3·23 | 2·97 | 4·36 | 2·78 |
| 1989-90 | 3·22 | 2·96 | 4·36 | n.a. |

*Note:* All prices calculated on average of red and white wine (RI and AI) prices.

[1] Commodity year runs from 1 September to 31 August.

[2] The "guide price" is the equivalent of a target price

[3] The "activating price" is set at 92 per cent. of the guide price and triggers some intervention.

[4] The Reference price is the Community threshold price for imports.

*Costs of wine regime*

*MECU*

| *Year* | *Total cost of regime* | *Surplus disposal*[2] |
|---|---|---|
| 1984 | 1,223 | 940 |
| 1985 | 921 | 664 |
| 1986 | 631 | 462 |
| 1987 | 800 | 599 |
| 1988 | [1]1,546 | [1]724 |

[1] Provisional figures

[2] Distillation of wine/compulsory distillation of the by-products of winemaking.

*Source:* EC Commission financial reports (1984-87)
EC Commission working document (1988)

*Volume of Wine Distilled*

*millions of hectolitres*

| *Year* | *Volume Distilled Under 822/87* |
|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 29·9 |
| 1985-86 | 23·8 |
| 1986-87 | 44·5 |
| 1987-88 | 40·5 |

*Production, Imports and Exports of Wine*

*millions of hectolitres*

| *Year* | *Production* | *Imports* | *Exports* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 147·7 | 4·5 | 10·2 |
| 1985-86 | 142·7 | 4·2 | 8·5 |
| 1986-87 | 200·3 | 1·5 | 10·9 |
| 1987-88 | 209·0 | 1·7 | 10·6 |

1984-85; 1985-86 Community of 10. 1986-87 Community of 11. 1987-88 Community of 12.

## Common Agricultural Policy

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for all common agricultural policy products for each year since 1973 *(a)* public storage costs, *(b)* export refunds and *(c)* the quantities in both cases.

**Mr. Maclean** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* Information on the main components of expenditure under the common agricultural policy is set out in the financial aspects section of the Commission's annual publication, "The Agricultural Situation in the Community". Copies of this publication, for the years 1973 to 1988, are in the Library of the House.

These reports set out for each product the quantities held in public storage on a given date and total exports from the Community. Details of expenditure given in the same reports reflect budget costs in the year in question but do not relate directly to the quantities held in store, or exported, in those years.

### Dredging Vessels (Recording Equipment)

**Mr. Carttiss:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has decided to limit the provision of marine position recording equipment for dredging vessels to one authorised supplier; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry:** No decisions have yet been made on application of marine position recorders to dredging vessels.

### Chernobyl

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the total amount of compensation paid to farmers as a result of the losses arising from the radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl accident.

**Mr. Maclean:** Expenditure authorised to 30 June 1989 under the sheep compensation scheme 1986 has amounted to £6,284,286.

### Anthrax

**Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many cases of anthrax have been reported during the last seven years.

**Mr. Curry:** The number of cases of anthrax reported and confirmed in each year since 1982 is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1982 | 20 |
| 1983 | 14 |
| 1984 | 9 |
| 1985 | 6 |
| 1986 | 14 |
| 1987 | 6 |
| 1988 | 3 |
| [1]1989 | 18 |

[1] To date.

**Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what deficiencies of resources and materials were revealed during the recent outbreak of anthrax; and what steps are being taken to remedy them.

**Mr. Curry:** As was already known, the outbreak demonstrated that commercial supplies of anthrax vaccine had ceased to be available. We were already investigating the possibility of alternative sources and are continuing to do so.

**Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when the restrictions on public access to land suspected of being infected by anthrax were lifted.

**Mr. Curry:** Public entry to premises under restriction because of anthrax is at the discretion of the owner.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the number of animals by type that have left the Singret farm, Clwyd in each week since 19 April; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The following animals have left Singret farm since 19 April:

| | *Pigs* |
|---|---|
| 20 April | 19 |
| *Thereafter, week commencing:* | |
| 24 April | 185 |
| 1 May | 183 |
| 8 May | 249 |
| 15 May | 220 |
| 22 May | 269 |
| 29 May | 245 |
| 5 June | 205 |
| 12 June | 219 |
| 19 June | 150 |
| 26 June | 70 |
| 3 July | 210 |
| 10 July | 113 |

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food where the slurry from the pigs recently destroyed during an anthrax outbreak in north Wales is being dumped; what steps are being taken to eliminate the risk of contamination; and what is being done with the rest of the waste from the slaughtered animals.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* All slurry on the farm is being treated with formalin on site by the local authority, to inactivate any anthrax organisms that may be present. After treatment it is being disposed of on a licensed waste disposal site at Warrington in Cheshire.

The carcases of slaughtered animals are being incinerated on site and the ashes disposed of in an approved manner.

### Straw and Stubble Burning

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he is taking with regard to the recommendations of the straw and stubble burning report recently produced by the National Society for Clean Air and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maclean:** The views of the National Society for Clean Air have been carefully noted along with those of other interested organisations.

### Poultry (Monitoring)

**Mr. Nicholas Baker:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish the results of monitoring of poultry stocks pursuant to the Testing of Poultry Flocks Order 1989 and in particular the related costs of sampling borne by the poultry industry.

**Mr. Curry:** The Testing of Poultry Flocks Order 1989 requires the owners of all laying, breeding and rearing flocks comprising more than 25 birds and flocks of less than 25 birds which sell eggs for human consumption, to monitor their flocks for evidence of salmonella. To date there have been 562 reports of isolations of invasive salmonella. With regard to the cost of sampling I would refer the hon. Member to my recent reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) on 27 July.

### Fishermen (Taw/Torridge Estuary)

**Mr. Speller:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why he proposes to restrict the rights of people fishing with rod and line only from small boats in the tidal waters of the Taw/Torridge estuary; and what representations he has received on the effect of the proposals upon the amateur private fishermen unable to cross the Bideford bar in a small boat.

**Mr. Curry:** Proposals to establish a series of nursery areas in the coastal waters of England and Wales for the protection of juvenile bass were published on 8 June. These included a prohibition on fishing for bass in the River Taw, east of a line from the western end of Braunton Pill to the site of the former power station at Yelland, and the River Torridge, south of a line from Zeta berth to the opposite shore. Fishing for bass and other sea fish would be allowed between these points and the Bideford bar under permit. These restrictions would operate only from May to October. Representations have been received from a number of local interests including the Braunton Small Boat and Angling Association.

### National Consumer Council

**Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the National Consumer Council and what was discussed.

**Mr. Gummer:** I last met the chairman of the National Consumer Council, Baroness Oppenheim-Barnes, earlier today when we discussed food safety and other consumer topics for which this Ministry has responsibility.

### Edible Crabs

**Mr. Harris:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he intends to amend the regional minimum landing sizes for edible crabs as proposed by his Department in November 1988; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry:** Following careful consideration of the comments received from the fishing industry and other interests on the consultative proposals published in November 1988, the Fisheries Ministers have decided that a number of changes should be made to the provisions of the Undersized Crabs Order 1986.

From 1 January 1990 the minimum landing size of 115 mm for edible crabs *(Cancer pagurus)* will be revoked except for those crabs landed in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cumbrian sea fisheries district.The minimum landing size for edible crabs landed in Kent, Essex, north-east England, Wales north of Caemas Head, north-east England and Scotland will be increased to 125 mm. That for crabs landed in Somerset, Avon and Gloucestershire will be increased to 130 mm. In the Isles of Scilly the minimum landing size for female crabs will become 140 mm and that for male crabs 160 mm. At the same time British vessels will be prohibited from carrying edible crabs under 125 mm except in the Cumbrian sea fisheries district and the coastal waters adjacent to Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

Amending regulations will be laid before Parliament in the autumn. Further changes in the provisions of the Undersized Crabs Order 1986 will be considered once the Ministry's directorate of fisheries research has completed a detailed investigation into the state of crab stocks in the English Channel fishery.

### Marine Mammals

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has held discussions recently with fishermen's organisations concerning the reporting and monitoring of the incidental capture of marine mammals; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* The fisheries department will be liaising with fishermen's organisations about proposals for a monitoring scheme on incidental capture, once the details for this have been finalised. To date it has not been apparent that this phenomenon presents anything like a significant problem in our waters, but we will keep the situation under general review.

### Badgers

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will list for each year from 1970 to 1989 all the parishes in which tuberculosis has been found in badgers and the years for each of these in which tuberculosis positive were found; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will list for each year from 1970 to 1989, the parishes in which tuberculosis was found in cattle and the years for each of these in which cattle reactors to the tuberculosis test were found; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will list for each year from 1970 to 1989, parishes in which badger removal operations have taken place, and the years for each parish in which these operations have taken place; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* Only part of the data requested is readily available. I made arrangements for a summary table to be deposited in the Libraries of the House. Further information on the interim badger control strategy, adopted following Professor Dunnet's independent review is published annually. The 13th report on bovine tuberculosis in badgers will be published later this year.

### Shell Fish

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any proposals concerning the introduction of a quota system for prawn fisheries in United Kingdom waters; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* I have no plans. Fishing for prawns of the pandulus species is already subject to a minimum mesh size of 30mm except for pandulus montagui for which a minimum mesh size of 20 mm is permitted.

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he takes to ensure that shellfish farming of *(a)* alien species or *(b)* native species is compatible with the designation of special protection areas under the European Community rivers directive or designation as a site of special scientific interest; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to the replies given yesterday to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark).

### Potato Marketing Board

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Potato Marketing Board.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* I have not met the chairman but intend to do so at the earliest mutual date.

### Dairy Quota

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of the gross income from the sale of dairy quotas in each of the past three years, the amount of the capital gain, and the amount of capital gains tax payable thereon; and what is his forecast for the current financial year.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* I have made no such estimate.

### Regional Panels

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to his answer of 21 July, which of his regional panel members are organic farmers; and whether he intends to appoint more organic farmers to his regional panels.

**Mr. Maclean** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* No member of regional panels in England currently farms to a recognised standard of organic production. In considering future appointments to regional panels, regard is given amongst other factors, to the principal types of farming activities undertaken in the region concerned.

**Dr. David Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will consider appointing representatives of environmental or consumer organisations on his regional panels; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maclean** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The membership of regional panels is undertaken in a personal capacity; panel members do not represent organisations to which they may belong.

### Tenderisers

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he is planning to issue any new restrictions, control or advice on the use of papain or other tenderisers.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* We propose to issue guidance on the administration by injection of the enzyme papain to cattle before slaughter in the codes of practice which the Government propose to issue in response to the Farm Animal Welfare Council's report on the welfare of livestock (red meat animals) at slaughter.

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether recent research by the Farm Animal Welfare Council has proved that no traces of tenderisers administered to cattle shortly before slaughter remain as residues in the meat;

(2) whether the recent research by the Farm Animal Welfare Council on the effects of tenderisers on cattle has been considered by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Curry** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* I am not aware of any research by the council on the effects of tenderisers. Research was carried out by veterinary officials into the effects of the injection of the vegetable enzyme papain on the live animal. This indicates that traces of it remain in the meat after slaughter but that it will evaporate during cooking. Papain is a natural vegetable protein which in any case would be destroyed by the normal digestive juices. The results of the research were taken into account in reaching a decision on its use.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Immigration

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how long a person applying for entry clearance for settlement at the British post in *(a)* Manila, *(b)* Accra, *(c)* Lagos, *(d)* Kingston, *(e)* Nicosia and *(f)* Cairo on 31 March or the latest convenient date could expect to wait for (i) interview, (ii) referral of the case to the Home Office and the requested information being received by the post, (iii) decisions and (iv) an explanatory statement prepared by the post in the event of an appeal against a refusal to be dispatched to the immigration appellate authorities in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The information requested at (ii) and (iii) is not available. Processing times vary according to the circumstances of individual cases.

As to (i) and (iv) the position at 15 July was as follows:

| | *(i)* | *(iv)* |
|---|---|---|
| Manila | 7 weeks | within 3 months |
| Accra | 5 weeks | within 3 months |
| Lagos | 1 week | within 2 months |
| Kingston | 16 weeks | within 2 months |
| Nicosia | Normally same day (but 12 weeks for non-residents) | within 7 days |
| Cairo | Normally same day | within 10 days |

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how long a person applying for entry clearance on 31 March or the latest convenient date at each post in the Indian sub-continent could expect to wait, in each queue, for *(a)* first interview, *(b)* referral of the case to the Home Office and the requested information being received by the post, *(c)* decision after first interview, and *(d)* for the explanatory statement prepared by the post in the case of appeal against any refusal to be dispatched to the immigration appellate authorities in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** *(a):* I refer the hon. Member to the reply to the hon. Member for Leicester East (Mr. Vaz) on 17 July.

*(b)* and *(c)*: This information is not available. Processing times vary according to the circumstances of individual cases.

*(d)*: Average dispatch times of explanatory statements from receipt of an appeal are:

| | *Settlement* | *Non-Settlement* |
|---|---|---|
| Dhaka | 12 weeks | 12 weeks |
| Karachi | 15 weeks | 5 weeks |
| New Delhi | 23 weeks | 18 weeks |
| Madras | 4-6 weeks | 4-6 weeks |
| Calcutta | 5 weeks | 5 weeks |
| Islamabad | 6 weeks | 4 weeks |
| Bombay | 12 weeks | 12 weeks |

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many applications for naturalisation as British dependent territories citizens on the basis of a connection with Hong Kong have been *(a)* received, *(b)* granted and *(c)* refused for each year since 1985 and to the nearest available date.

**Mr. Maude:** The figures for applications for naturalisation as British dependent territories citizens on the basis of a connection with Hong Kong are as follows:

| *Period* | *Received* | *Approved* | *Refused* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1985 | 844 | 701 | 151 |
| 1986 | 861 | 759 | 98 |
| 1987 | 1,233 | 807 | 70 |
| 1988 | 1,016 | 1,074 | 60 |
| [1]1989 | 811 | 604 | 37 |

[1] January to June.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British dependent territories citizens from Hong Kong have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* been granted the status of British national (overseas).

**Mr. Maude:** A total of 70,268 applications for British national (overseas) passports have been received, of which 68,909 have been granted. The remainder are still being processed.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many explanatory statements related to entry clearance appeals were awaiting typing at (i) each post in the Indian sub-continent, (ii) in Manila, (iii) Lagos and (iv) Accra, on the latest available date; how many staff are employed, both full-time and part-time, to type statements; and when he expects any backlogs to be cleared.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** The information requested is given in the following table (as at 15 July):

| | *(a)*[1] | *(b)*[2] |
|---|---|---|
| Karachi | 38 | 1 |
| Islamabad | 60 | 13 |
| Dhaka | 233 | 5 |
| New Delhi | 50 | (5) |
| Madras | Nil | (1) |
| Calcutta | 4 | (1) |
| Bombay | 28 | (7) |
| Accra | 9 | (1) |
| Manila | 40 | 1 and (4) |
| Lagos | Nil | 2 and (4) |

[1] Numbers of explanatory statements awaiting typing.
[2] Staff whose duties include typing explanatory statements (staff employed on other typing work shown in brackets).

The backlog in Dhaka is due to recruitment problems and will be cleared as soon as the typing establishment is at full strength.

**Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the present waiting times to first interview for all categories of applicant in each country and at each post in the Indian sub-continent.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) on 17 July at column, *4-5*.

## Subsidiarity

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will state the treaty or other basis on which the European Council at Madrid adopted the principle of subsidiarity; for what purposes European Community legislation is to take precedence over that of members states; and what body of persons are to make the initial and financial decisions on whether or not national legislation is sufficient to achieve those purposes.

**Mr. Maude:** My right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development explained the concept of subsidiarity in the Adjournment debate on EC institutions on 4 July. This is a general policy concept rather than a specific legislative proposal. It therefore has no specific treaty base although an example of the principle can be found in article 130r. It is for the Commission to take subsidiarity into account when proposing legislation, and the Council to do so when taking decisions.

## Mr. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar

**Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when and by whom Mr. Kikmatyar was invited to the United Kingdom; with whom he had discussions during his visit; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** Mr. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar last visited the United Kingdom in November 1988 on a private visit at his own initiative. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials met him informally as part of their established practice of keeping in touch with a wide range of Afghan opinion.

## Israel

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all the agreements under which Israel has privileged access to the European market.

**Mr. Maude:** EC/Israel trade relations are covered by the 1975 co-operation agreement and subsequent protocols to take account of the accession of Greece, Spain and Portugal to the Community. As a result, free trade in industrial goods between the EC and Israel came into effect on 1 January 1989. There are also specific concessions for some Israeli agricultural products.

### Israeli-occupied Territories

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action Her Majesty's Government have taken to enforce the provisions of the Geneva Conventions Act 1957 in relation to breaches occurring in the Israeli-occupied territories.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We have frequently exercised our right as a contracting party to the fourth Geneva convention to raise with the Israeli Government breaches of the convention in the occupied territories. Questions of prosecuting under the 1957 Geneva Conventions Act are a matter for the prosecuting authorities.

**Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make it his policy that no produce originating from the settlements in the Israeli-occupied territories is given access to the British market.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** There are no arrangements for produce originating from Israeli settlements in the occupied territories to enjoy preferential access to the British market.

### "Twenty Questions on Defence"

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many copies of the leaflet "Twenty Questions on Defence" (second edition, published November 1988) prepared by the Central Office of Information for his Department and the Ministry of Defence, have been printed; how many have been distributed; to what outlets; what has been the cost to date; and if there are any plans to produce and distribute an updated and revised version.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** A total of 15,000 copies of the leaflet "Twenty Questions on Defence" (second edition) were printed when the publication was first issued in November 1988. These cost £3,035 and were distributed as follows:

*Foreign and Commonwealth Office:*

5,000 copies for distribution to members of the public in the United Kingdom and abroad in response to requests for information.

*Ministry of Defence:*

5,000 copies distributed as with FCO.

*Central Office of Information:*

5,000 copies for distribution to addressees on the FCO Arms Control and Disarmament Department's United Kingdom, overseas and United Kingdom diplomatic posts' mailing list.

A further 60,000 copies were printed earlier this year at the Ministry of Defence's request for distribution during the Ministry's "Britain in NATO" exhibition tour of the United Kingdom. This further print-run brought the total cost of the current edition of this publication to £5,965, shared equally between the FCO and MOD.

A third edition of the leaflet is planned for the end of this calendar year.

### Emmanuel and Judith Lurie

**Dr. Blackburn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will press the Soviet authorities for a speedy resolution of the case of the refuseniks, Emmanuel and Judith Lurie of Moscow.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We are continuing to press the Soviet authorities to resolve the case of the Lurie family once and for all in line with their international commitments. I raised their case with the Soviet ambassador on 25 July. We will not let up until the family is allowed to emigrate.

### Vladimir Raiz

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise with the Soviet authorities the case of Vladimir Raiz of Vilnius who is still awaiting an exit visa.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We have pressed the Soviet authorities about this case on a number of occasions—most recently when I saw the Soviet ambassador on 25 July. We will not let up until the Soviet Government have resolved it satisfactorily in line with their international commitments.

### Human Rights Conference (Moscow)

**Mr. Lawrence:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it remains Her Majesty's Government's policy to attend the 1991 human rights conference in Moscow provided that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics conforms to certain conditions; and to what extent those conditions are being fulfilled.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We shall attend the proposed Moscow human rights conference in 1991 only if there is a further sustained improvement in the human rights situation in the Soviet Union. While there has been progress in the past six months, significant problems remain—in particular the plight of long-term refuseniks who are still not allowed to emigrate.

### Human Rights

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further representations he has made to the Government of the People's Republic of China concerning human rights abuses in Tibet; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maude:** We have made it clear to the Chinese authorities on many occasions the real concern in this country about human rights in Tibet. While we shall continue to seek suitable opportunities to make our views known, our main aim in recent weeks has been to bring home to the Chinese authorities our sense of shock and outrage at the brutality with which they suppressed those who were demonstrating for democracy in Peking.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings Her Majesty's ambassador has had with representatives of human rights organisations in El Salvador; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** In the course of their normal duties, Her Majesty's diplomatic representatives in El Salvador maintain regular and close contact with the various Salvadorean human rights organisations.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of Turkey concerning abuses of human rights; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maude:** My right hon. Friend, the Minister for Overseas Development raised the subject of human rights during her recent visit to Turkey and made clear the concern felt in this country about Turkey's human rights record and the need for Turkey to comply with the international human rights conventions to which she is a party. We shall continue to monitor the situation closely.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations Her Majesty's ambassador has made to the Government of El Salvador concerning abuse of human rights.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** We raise our human rights concerns with the Salvadorean authorities, both in El Salvador and elsewhere, whenever it is appropriate to do so.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to meet President Cristioni of El Salvador.

**Mr. Sainsbury:** My right hon. Friend has no present plans to do so.

## Endangered Species

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many prosecutions were initiated by the Hong Kong authorities in the first six months of 1989 arising from illegal imports, exports and possession of endangered species.

**Mr. Maude:** In the first six months of 1989, 155 prosecutions were initiated against illegal imports, exports and possession of endangered species.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many restaurant inspections were carried out by the Hong Kong authorities in the first six months period of 1989 to ensure that no rare and endangered species of animals and plants were offered for sale as food; and if any seizures were made.

**Mr. Maude:** To prevent rare and endangered species of animals and plants being sold and consumed in restaurants, 139 inspections were conducted during the first six months of 1989. 0·4 kg of whale meat and three giant salamanders were seized.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many seizures of illegally imported endangered species were made by the Hong Kong authorities in the first six months of 1989; how many seizures were made of similar categories intended for export; and if he will give details of all seizures made including country of origin.

**Mr. Maude:** In the first six months of 1989, 149 seizures were made of illegally imported endangered species. Three seizures were made of similar categories intended for export. Details of all seizures are listed.

*Import (January-June 1989)*
*Seizures: 149*

| *Imports* | *Quantity* | *Exporting countries* |
|---|---|---|
| *Mammal* | | |
| Felidae (wild cats): live/carcases/meat/skin | 296 hd/pc | China, United States of America, Japan, Thailand, West Germany |
| Elephant: ivory/skin | 1,107 kg | China, United States of America, Japan, Thailand, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, France, Switzerland |
| Monkeys (live) | 5 hd | China |
| Pangolin: live/stuffed/carcase parts/meat | 62·1 kg+6 hd+4 pc | China, Singapore, United States of America, Thailand |
| Bear: skin | 1 pc | Canada |
| *Bird* | | |
| Bird of prey (owl)—live/dead/meat | 30 hd+1 kg | China, Thailand |
| Parrot | 71 hd | China |
| *Reptile* | | |
| Reptiles: skins/live/stuffed/carcase | 1,313 pc+5 hd | United States of America, Singapore, United Kingdom, China, Thailand, Gabon, Philippine |
| Sea turtle: live/stuffed/shell/egg | 35 hd+168 pc | Thailand, Singapore, India, China, Indonesia, Philippine, Vietnam, Malaysia |
| Tortoise (live) | 100 hd | China, Bangladesh |
| *Amphibian* | | |
| Giant Salamander: live/carcase/meat | 5hd | China |
| *Anthozoans* | | |
| Corals | 15 pc | Indonesia, Australia, Singapore |
| *Molluscs* | | |
| Giant clams | 16 pc | China |
| *Plant* | | |
| American Ginseng (root) | 0·42 kg | United States of America |

*Export (January-June 1989)*
*Seizure: 3*

| *Exports* | *Quantity* |
|---|---|
| Musk | 0·1 kg |
| Tegue lizard skins | 6,658 pc |
| Monitor lizard skins | 1,996 pc |

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of the sale by tender by the Hong Kong authorities of confiscated items permitted for commercial trade under CITES; what items were sold; to whom they were sold; and what amount was raised in each case.

**Mr. Maude:** The information requested is not immediately available. A further reply will be given as soon as possible.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of the Hong Kong authorities on implementation of CITES resolution conference 5.11.

**Mr. Maude:** The Hong Kong Government fully implement CITES conference resolution 5.11.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made by the Hong Kong Government in introducing new measures designed to enforce their responsibilities under the convention on international trade in endangered species; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Maude:** New legislation was passed on 28 June 1989 which provides for significantly increasing maximum fines for contravention of the law on protection of endangered species; tightening up transit controls; banning the import, export and possession of medical products purporting to contain rhinoceros ingredients; penalising persons who give false information in applying for endangered species licences; facilitating identifications; extending the power of search; and empowering the Government to release or dispose of endangered species.

### George Samoilovich

**Rev. Martyn Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise with the Soviet authorities the case of George Samoilovich, currently undergoing medical treatment in the United Kingdom, whose wife and son are being refused exit visas to join him.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We have underlined to the Soviet authorities on numerous occasions the urgent need to grant exit visas to the wife and son of George Samoilovich —most recently when I saw the Soviet ambassador on 25 July. We will not let up until the family is reunited outside the Soviet Union.

### Turkey

**Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent visit of the right hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) to Turkey.

**Mr. Maude:** My right hon. Friend paid a very successful visit to Turkey from 23 to 26 July. She held talks with the Turkish Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister and, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the permanent under-secretary and the political director. Later she travelled to Istanbul and Edirne where she visited the Bulgarian border and a refugee camp, and donated £300,000 to the Turkish Red Crescent for its work among refugees from Bulgaria and Iraq. The visit enabled my right hon. Friend to exchange views on a number of bilateral and regional issues.

### Vietnamese Boat People

**Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contribution the United Kingdom is making towards the costs of the repatriation of Vietnamese boat people from Hong Kong to Vietnam.

**Mr. Maude:** We plan to contribute around £1,300,000 in this financial year.

Parliamentary approval for this expenditure will be sought in a winter supplementary estimate for the "Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Other External Relations" vote. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £850,000 will be met by a repayable advance from the contingencies fund.

### Southern Africa

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will financially assist British business organisations such as chambers of commerce to attend the hearings in Geneva from 4 to 6 September held by the panel appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to examine the role of transnational companies in South Africa and Namibia.

**Mr. Redwood:** I have been asked to reply.

No. The Government believe that it is for companies and British business organisations themselves to decide on the basis of their own priorities and commercial interests whether to attend the hearings.

**Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will send observers to the public hearings, on the role of transnational corporations in South Africa and Namibia, to be held by the panel appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations which meets in Geneva from 4 to 6 September; and if the European Community will be represented in any capacity.

**Mr. Redwood:** I have been asked to reply.

The United Kingdom mission to the office of the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva will follow the proceedings of these public hearings as part of its normal coverage of United Nations meetings.

The EC has observer status within the United Nations system and will therefore be entitled to send an observer to the public hearing.

### Arms (Standardisation and Interoperability)

**Mr. Hill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which area of arms co-operation in the Atlantic Alliance notable progress has been registered in the last five years in efforts to increase the degree of standardisation and interoperability of military material; and what progress can be attributed to Western European Union initiatives.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I have been asked to reply.

Much effort continues to be put into extending and improving international arrangements for defence equipment co-operation, within both NATO, under the auspices of the conference of national armaments directors, and the Independent European Programme Group. In the latter, for example, 15 harmonised European staff targets have been agreed; a research and technology programme is being established; and the European defence market is being opened up. Collaboration on specific programmes is widespread; table 6 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989" shows the considerable number of projects in which the United Kingdom participates. The Western European Union has taken an interest in these and other areas, but progress on these issues within Europe as a whole is, and will remain, the responsibility of the IEPG.

### Military Aid

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the reasons for the increase in the budget for military aid to overseas countries from 1988-89 to 1989-90, set out in table 2.1 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989," volume two.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The funds in question are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. The reasons for the increase in the budget for military aid to overseas countries from 1988-89 to 1989-90 are:

a. the uplift of the 1988-89 provision to cover the effect of inflation; and

b. an increase in the assistance provided by Her Majesty's Government to the front line states in Africa for the purchase of non-lethal military equipment in support of agreed military training programmes.

### Peru

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under what circumstances John Boxhall and Brian Tristram could be extradited from Peru and charged with offences in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. John Patten** *[pursuant to the reply, 20 July 1989, c. 335]:* I have been asked to reply.

Persons may be extradited from Peru if they are accused or convicted of offences committed within the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom which are deemed to be extraditable under the terms of the Extradition Act 1870 and the bilateral treaty of 1907 between the United Kingdom and Peru.

### International Coffee Agreement

**Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current state of negotiations on a new international coffee agreement.

**Mr. Maude** *[pursuant to the reply, 30 June 1989, c. 578]:* The International Coffee Council on 3 July resolved (resolution number 347) to extend the international coffee agreement (1983) without quotas and virtually all its other economic provisions for a period of two years from 1 October 1989. The council also resolved to suspend the quota system with effect from 4 July. I regret that it has not been possible to publish resolution 347 of the council as a Command Paper before the parliamentary recess. I have therefore placed a copy of the text of the resolution in the Library of the House. I shall publish the resolution in the Command Paper series as soon as possible.

### Hong Kong

**Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweath Affairs what discussions he has had and what action is being taken, in secondary education in Hong Kong to lay the foundations for informed participation of youth in a democratic elective system in Hong Kong.

**Mr. Maude** *[pursuant to the reply, 25 July 1989, c.600]:* It is the Hong Kong government's policy to promote an awareness in schools of the developing system of government in Hong Kong, and thereby to encourage informed participation of young people in the system. The Hong Kong Government seek to achieve this by featuring the subject in the civic education curriculum, and in seminars, training courses and workshops for teachers: and by the distribution of teaching kits and videos to schools on elections and representative government.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Government Drivers

**Sir Anthony Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many Government drivers have passed either the Institute of Advanced Drivers test or the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents driving tests; if he will express this as a percentage of the whole; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

### Right to buy, Cannock Chase

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will initiate inquiries with the Cannock Chase district council as to the reasons for the alleged delay encountered by Mr. S. A. McConville of 27 John Till close, Rugeley, Staffordshire, since he first submitted his right-to-buy application on 8 June 1988; and if he will use his powers to bring the matter to a speedy conclusion.

**Mr. Howard:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

### UN Environment Programme

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to meet with Dr. Mostafa Tolba director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Minister for Environment and Countryside will next see Dr. Mostafa Tolba in London, at the conference on 3 October organised by the advisory committee on pollution in the sea.

### Hertfordshire Groundwork Trust

**Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the Countryside Commission regarding the activities of the Hertfordshire Groundwork Trust, and the proposed dumping of 700,000 cu m of waste material in an area of natural beauty in Hertfordshire.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** None. The tipping of waste material is a matter for Hertfordshire county council as the local waste disposal authority.

### Land Sales

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the sites referred to in his answer of 20 July, *Official Report*, column *344*, and indicate for each the local authority in which it is located, the price obtained and new owner.

**Mr. Moynihan:** I will write to the hon. Member.

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many times his Department has issued instructions to local authorities to sell land after approaches by members of the public to his Department; and if he will list these authorities for each year since 1979 and list for each authority how many times his Department has refused.

**Mr. Moynihan** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

### Conservation

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how much money the Nature Conservancy Council has spent on *(a)* grant-aiding voluntary conservation bodies land purchases, *(b)* Nature Conservancy Council's own land purchases, in each of the last five years at 1989 prices; and if he will also express this as a percentage of Nature Conservancy Council total budget;

(2) if he will report on progress in meeting the Government's obligations under the Ramsar convention and article 4 of the EC birds directive 79/409; how these international obligations will be administered in future; which proposed new SPAs he is considering; and when these will be declared.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Bathing Water

**Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to have produced from all the relevant services a full co-ordinated list of those bathing beaches around England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland which *(a)* reach and *(b)* do not reach the standards of water quality of directive 76/160/EEC; and if he will list the forecast dates by which those failing to reach this standard will attain it.

**Mr. Moynihan:** Details of the identified bathing waters and their compliance in the 1988 bathing season were given in the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) on 21 February and the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment at the Scottish Office to my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) on 13 April. The water authorities are currently drawing up investment programmes with the aim of bringing all bathing waters into compliance with the directive by the mid-1990s.

### Rents

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1970 the number of council dwellings, the amount of rent collected and the average amount of rent collected per dwelling, the total amount of rent rebates, rate rebates, housing allowances and so on to *(a)* tenants of local authorities and *(b)* tenants of private landlords and housing associations, together with the number of beneficiaries in each cases.

**Mr. Chope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what communications he has received from the Housing Corporation concerning the assessment of the percentage of income that constitutes an affordable rent.

**Mr. Chope:** Our exchanges with the corporation on rent issues are many and various. It is for individual housing associations to set rents at levels within the reach of people in low-paid employment.

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he possesses concerning the future level of rents, including those where they are defined as affordable; and what level of inflation he expects in such rents in the next three years.

**Mr. Chope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Lettings

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the number of dwellings available for letting in each year since 1970 in the private and public sectors, respectively, in total and as a proportion of the housing stock; if he will give a regional breakdown; and what is his estimate of the proportion in France, Germany and Italy.

**Mr. Chope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Caravan Sites

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the number of sites and pitches at each site provided for travelling people under the Caravan Sites Act 1968 by the local authorities at *(a)* Bradford, *(b)* Leeds, *(c)* Kirklees, *(d)* Calderdale and *(e)* Craven; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make it his policy to take into account the sites available in neighbouring local authorities when considering any application by Bradford for designation under the Caravan Sites Act 1968; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what discussions have taken place between officials of his Department and representatives at Leeds, Kirklees and Craven local authorities regarding implementation of the Caravan Sites Act 1968; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** Caravan sites for travelling people have been provided by the relevant local authorities as follows:

| *Local Authority* | *Site* | *Number of pitches* |
|---|---|---|
| Bradford | Bowling Back Lane/Mary Street | 24 |
| | Esholt | 16 |
| Leeds | Cottingley Springs (2 adjacent sites) | 36 |
| Kirklees | — | — |
| Calderdale | — | — |
| Craven | — | — |

The Secretary of State takes full account of all the relevant circumstances affecting applications for designated status under the Caravan Site Act 1968. These include the level of site provision in neighbouring authorities.

Officials of my Department have meetings and discussions with local authorities as required. Meetings have been held this year with all the authorities in West Yorkshire to discuss the need for gipsy sites and to encourage the formulation and implementation of appropriate programmes of site provision.

## Green Belt

**Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy in general on whether to refuse or allow planning consents for industrial purposes in green belt land; what criteria he adopts in considering any exceptions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moynihan:** Planning policy guidance note 2 indicates and describes that very special circumstances are necessary to justify development for industrial or other purposes that are normally inappropriate in the green belt.

## Derelict Land

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list by regions the allocations received for derelict land purposes for 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90 in real terms and constant value terms;

(2) if he will list by region the derelict land grant allocations for 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90 in real terms and constant value terms.

**Mr. Moynihan:** Derelict land grant allocations for the years requested are as follows:

*£ million*

| *DOE region* | *1987-88 (outturn)* cash prices £ million | constant prices[1] £ million | *1988-89 (forecast outturns)* cash prices £ million | constant prices[1] £ million | *1989-90* £ million |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern | 13·52 | 15·31 | 10·95 | 11·55 | 8·20 |
| North West | 21·15 | 23·94 | 17·98 | 18·97 | 15·75 |
| Merseyside Task Force Area | 8·33 | 9·42 | 7·91 | 8·35 | 5·95 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 9·75 | 11·04 | 13·65 | 14·40 | 12·00 |
| West Midlands | 16·63 | 18·83 | 16·16 | 17·05 | 13·00 |
| East Midlands | 8·23 | 9·32 | 8·28 | 8·74 | 8·15 |
| London | 1·05 | 1·19 | 0·77 | 0·81 | 0·75 |
| South West | 1·40 | 1·58 | 1·67 | 1·76 | 1·99 |
| South East | 0·61 | 0·69 | 0·45 | 0·47 | 0·70 |
| Eastern | 0·10 | 0·11 | 0·14 | 0·15 | 0·50 |
| Total | 80·77 | 91·43 | 77·96 | 82·25 | 66·99 |

[1] constant prices at 1989-90 values.

Comparable information for other grant regimes dealing with derelict land is not available. Urban development corporations, city grant and the urban programme all make a significant contribution towards the reclamation of derelict land. It is estimated that in the period 1987-88 to 1989-90 some £170 million (£180 million in 1989-90 prices) will have been made available for reclamation projects through these regimes.

## Parliamentary Questions

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of replies held over to October for substantive answers for questions tabled for written reply in the final week of parliamentary business before the summer Adjournment in each year since 1986.

**Mr. Christopher Patten:** None; it is my policy to answer all questions tabled for written reply in the final week of parliamentary business before the summer Adjournment.

## Sea Pollution

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of the latest meeting of the Paris commission on sea pollution recently held in Dublin.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The latest meeting of the Paris commission was held in Dublin between 19 and 22 June 1989. Progress was achieved across a wide range of topics relating to pollution of the seas from riverine inputs, atmospheric inputs and direct discharges. In particular, progress was reported on defining suitable control technologies for a number of industrial sectors.

The Paris commission has also carried forward work on pollution control arising from the second North sea conference and endorsed the agreements on the use of best available technology and the precautionary principle: the results of this work will be discussed by Ministers at the forthcoming North sea conference in the Hague next March.

The Paris commission continues to provide a valuable forum for developing measures for the protection of the north-east Atlantic waters.

### Seals (Deaths)

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table listing the monthly recorded details of deaths of seals, since June 1988, in United Kingdom coastal waters and beaches, broken down by areas covered by the water authorities.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### World Clean Air Congress

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations at, and papers for, the World Clean Air Congress to be held in the Hague on 11 to 15 September will be prepared by his Department.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Water Byelaws

**Dr. Blackburn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, following his recent meeting with the president and vice-president of the British Bathroom Council, he will make a statement on the water byelaws.

**Mr. Howard:** European Community procedures to harmonise product standards are not intended to change traditional practices which do not present barriers to trade. New European standards will specify different levels of performance for water fittings to suit the requirements of individual member states. In these circumstances, the United Kingdom water byelaws will continue in operation.

### Housing Improvements

**Mr. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many *(a)* general improvement areas and *(b)* housing action areas have been declared, per year, in each of the last 10 years; how many dwellings there have been in general improvement areas and housing action areas, per year, in each of the last 10 years; how many grants have been approved in general improvement areas and housing action areas, per year, in each of the last 10 years; and how many works have been completed in general improvement areas and housing action areas, per year, in each of the last 10 years.

**Mr. Chope:** Information on numbers of dwellings for which grants have been paid and total numbers of dwellings on which work has been completed inside general improvement areas and housing action areas in the 11 years up to 1986-87 is published in table 7.6 of "Housing and Construction Statistics 1977-1987". A copy is available in the Library.

It is estimated that in 1987-88, 4,300 dwellings in housing action areas benefited from grants, and work was completed on 5,700 dwellings in such areas. The equivalent figures for general improvement areas are 15,600 and 22,900 respectively.

The other information requested is as follows:

| | *Housing action areas* | | *General improvement areas* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Number of areas declared* | *Number of dwellings in areas* | *Number of areas declared* | *Number of dwellings in areas* |
| 1979-80 | 109 | 28,413 | 89 | 16,550 |
| 1980-81 | 59 | 17,540 | 84 | 12,569 |
| 1981-82 | 56 | 15,073 | 132 | 5,493 |
| 1982-83 | 96 | 26,856 | 159 | 9,509 |
| 1983-84 | 60 | 18,108 | 107 | 29,654 |
| 1984-85 | 32 | 11,510 | 76 | 20,779 |
| 1985-86 | 25 | 6,735 | 69 | 30,521 |
| 1986-87 | 23 | 5,059 | 54 | 18,227 |
| 1987-88 | 21 | 5,658 | 78 | 15,038 |
| [1]1988-89 | 21 | 6,308 | 29 | 7,775 |

[1] Provisional.

### Pollution Inspectorate

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many people employed by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution have *(a)* resigned, *(b)* taken early retirement, *(c)* taken voluntary redundancy and *(d)* left for other reasons since January 1988;

(2) if he will publish the headquarters address and telephone number of each regional office of Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution; on what date each will become operational; if he will give full details of all full and part-time posts for each office; if he will itemise each post on the current establishment which has been vacant or unfilled in each of the proceeding 12 months; and which posts in each region were vacant on 25 July or unfilled.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Paper (Phosphates)

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will in future print Government publications on paper which does not require environmentally hazardous phosphates for its production; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Government publications generally are handled by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, for which responsibility rests with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The environmental impact of phosphates depends on the circumstances in which they are discharged. There is no widespread problem of environmental pollution by phosphates in this country.

### Football Membership Scheme

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he intends giving guidelines to the proposed Football Membership Authority about what would lead to a disqualification from the national membership scheme for football for a supporter, other than a relevant conviction; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what consultations he has had, or proposes to have with police and emergency services concerning whether, under the proposals of the proposed Football Spectators Bill and associated national membership scheme, clubs should be able to open exit gates before the end of a football match; and as to the siting of neutral supporters and if he will make a statement;

(3) what consultations he is having concerning what guidance might be given to football clubs and to the

proposed Football Membership Authority as to what constitutes a disabled person under clause 5(2)(c) of the Football Spectators Bill and as to how football clubs should check if a child is under or over the age of 10 years in order to grant exemption from membership under clause 5(2)(c) of the Bill;

(4) what consultations he proposes to undertake concerning by what means the identity of a cardholder, under the proposed national membership scheme for football will be checked against the card on entry to the ground; and if he will make a statement;

(5) what discussions he has had with (i) the football clubs and (ii) any other organisation concerning financial assistance to those who cannot afford the price of a card under the proposed national membership scheme for football; and if he will make a statement;

(6) what guidance he proposes to issue to clubs at the commencement of the proposed national membership scheme for football registration as to what grounds for denial of membership there would be; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moynihan:** Subject to parliamentary approval of the Football Spectators Bill and the commencement orders for which it provides, it will be for the Football Membership Authority to prepare the national membership scheme required by the Bill. It is the Government's hope that a body set up by the Football Association and the Football League will be appointed as the Football Membership Authority. The football authorities have established a joint working party to prepare the development of the scheme, in consultation with my Department and the police and other bodies as necessary.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) on what occasions he met representatives of football supporters before publishing the Football Spectators Bill; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when he proposes to consult the Police Federation and Association of Chief Police Officers concerning the proposed national football membership scheme; if he will also consult the Football Supporters Association; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moynihan:** The Association of Chief Police Officers was represented on the working party which I chaired last summer on the national membership scheme. I and my officials discussed the scheme with representatives of the Police Federation in December 1988 and February this year and I shall be meeting the chairman of the federation again next week. The Government and the football authorities will continue to consult the police on the development of the scheme.

I met the Football Supporters Association and the National Federation of Football Supporters Clubs twice last year, before the publication of the Bill, and I made it clear to the Standing Committee considering the Bill that I would consider the possibility of involving representatives of the football supporters organisations directly in the running of the Football Membership Authority.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultations he is conducting concerning the legal structure of the proposed Football Membership Authority; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moynihan:** I told the Standing Committee considering the Football Spectators Bill that I would consider further the question of the constitution of the Football Membership Authority and would bring forward appropriate amendments to the Bill at its Report stage.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received seeking restriction on the numbers of temporary identity cards issued by football clubs under the proposed national membership scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Moynihan:** None.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what research his Department undertook which led him to state on 27 June *Official Report*, column *848*, that the number of clubs likely to be put out of business by the proposed national membership scheme for football will be zero; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moynihan:** There is no reason why the national membership scheme should put any football club out of business. Even without commercial exploitation of the scheme, the cost of high technology membership cards to individual supporters need be no more than £3·30 a year at current costs. There are few grounds in the country where spectators would pay less than that to watch one match. Indeed, if football clubs take a positive attitude to the potential of the national membership scheme, it can provide a commercial benefit to both them and their supporters.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what research his Department undertook which caused him to reject the advice of the Football League, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Football Association, the Professional Footballers Association and the Football Supporters Association as to the impractical nature of a comprehensive national membership scheme for football.

**Mr. Moynihan** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]*: The Association of Chief Police Officers, the Football League and the Football Association were all members of my working party on the national membership scheme which met last summer. They agreed a number of recommendations on the practical nature of a national membership scheme. I have also discussed the scheme with representatives of the Football Supporters Association, the National Federation of Football Supporters Clubs and the Professional Footballers Association.

### Resource Reallocation (Bedfordshire)

**Mr. Madel:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total amount of money being transferred from Bedfordshire county council, Mid-Bedfordshire district council and South Bedfordshire district council by way of resource reallocation in the current financial year; what are the estimated figures for those three authorities in the years 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Resource equalisation is one of the factors affecting the distribution of block grant. In order to estimate the effect of this factor alone, I have assumed that each local authority in England is spending at the level of its grant-related expenditure assessment. On that basis, I estimate that in 1989-90 there would have been an implicit transfer of £7·2 million from domestic ratepayers in Mid Bedfordshire (£2·1 million) and South Bedfordshire (£5·1 million) to ratepayers in other parts of the country.

Resource equalisation based on rateable values will end with the introduction of the new grant system in April 1990. There will, however, be a temporary safety net to phase in these arrangements.

## Youth Sport (Advisory Committees)

**Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to encourage local authorities to establish advisory committees for youth sport; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moynihan:** The School Sport Forum, which was established at the request of my right hon. Friends, the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Education and Science, recommended that county and metropolitan district councils should appoint advisory committees for youth sport. My right hon. Friends are considering this and the other recommendations of the forum.

## Regent's Park

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) from whom the Crown Estate Commissioners received a request to extend the gardens of St. John's Lodge in Regent's park as set out by John Nash;

(2) if he will list the organisations which occupy property in Regent's park on lease from the Crown Estate Commissioners together with the locations and acreage of the property concerned.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** These are matters for the Crown Estate Commissioners.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what proposals have been made to London Zoo concerning the management of the running track in Regent's park;

(2) whether there have been any consultations with the Bengali Sports Council about the proposal to include the running track in Regent's park in the land taken over by London Zoo;

(3) whether the staff of Regent's Park or his Department have consulted any of the users of sports facilities in Regent's Park about its future management.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** We await the Zoological Society of London's detailed proposals for the further 10 acres of Regent's park that it would like to lease under the terms of the Crown Estate Act 1961. Any impact on sports facilities will be considered very carefully and kept as far as possible to a minimum.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the Crown Estate Commissioners made an informal inquiry to his Department in relation to the reinstatement of the original garden of St. John's Lodge, Regent's Park; and when they were told the formal request would not be looked on favourably.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The informal inquiry was made in February this year and the response by the Department in July.

## Land (Licences)

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many licences for the use of land under his responsibility have been granted in 1989-90 before the terms were agreed.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I shall write to the hon. Member.

## New Parliamentary Building

**Mr. Rowe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide a progress report on phase I of the new parliamentary building now being constructed in Parliament street.

**Mr. Chope:** Under the terms of the contract let to Fairclough Building Ltd. in May 1987, construction of the building was required to be completed in May 1990. Although the work was already behind schedule, until January 1989 the contractor assured the Department that it saw no reason why the contract should not be completed on time, though it would be in a better position to report following a review in April 1989. Following that review the contractor has now reported that, unfortunately, the work will not be completed until October 1990, a delay of five and a half months. On the assumption that Fairclough Building Ltd. achieve its revised forecast the building will not now be ready for occupation until the Easter recess, 1991.

I have provided the New Building Sub-Committee with a detailed report on how this situation has developed and the action that has been taken. I understand that the Sub-Committee will be taking evidence after the House returns from the summer adjournment.

## Correspondence

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he hopes to answer the letter from the hon. Member for South Hams of 3 March to the Under-Secretary, enclosing one from Major E. G. M. Pearce, dated 27 February; and if he will make a statement as to the reasons for the delay.

**Mr. Chope** *[holding answer 13 June 1989]:* I will write to my hon. Friend.

## Pedestrians (Accident Compensation)

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many claims were made against local authorities in each of the years, 1988, 1987, 1986 and 1985 after accidents to pedestrians as a result of defects in roads and pavements; what proportion were accepted by the local authorities and their insurers; how much was paid out in compensation; and what advice his Department gives local authorities about dealing with such claims.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 26 June 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## Northamptonshire County Council (Committees)

**Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when a reply will be sent to the letter of 22 May from Councillor J. G. Vane to the Minister for Local Government concerning the committee structure of Northamptonshire county council.

**Mr. David Hunt** *[holding answer 7 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## Protected Species

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he has any proposals to issue licences for traditional pearl fishing in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he has considered proposals to place the freshwater mussel (Margaritisera margaritisera) on the schedule of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 as a protected species; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 11 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## Gipsy Sites

**Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any representations from Leicester city council about proposals to designate gipsy and travellers' sites in Leicester.

**Mr. Chope** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## Drinking Water

**Mr. Denzil Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what information he has as to the maximum permitted level of Atrazine in drinking water in *(a)* France, *(b)* the Federal Republic of Germany and *(c)* Italy; and what is the comparable figure for the United Kingdom;

(2) what information he has as to the maximum permitted levels of *(a)* trichlorethylene, (b) chloroform and *(c)* tetrachlorcarbon, in drinking water in (i) France and (ii) the Federal Republic of Germany; and what are the comparable figures for the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Howard** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## Special Waste (Dumping)

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has ordered a full investigation into the circumstances in which special waste from a disused gas works in Woking, Surrey, have to be dumped in a field outside Chobham; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* No. This is a matter for the local waste disposal authority to investigate under the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

## Loud Music

**Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent discussions he has had with local authorities to encourage them to use the existing laws under the Control of Pollution Act to stop the playing of loud music in residential areas; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* This issue has not been discussed with local authorities recently. Noise nuisance in whatever form can be a most unwelcome intrusion into people's lives and a great source of annoyance. Local authorities have extensive powers under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to control noise when necessary.

## Retail Developments (West Midlands)

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received regarding retail development on industrial land in the west midlands; whether he will meet a delegation from the West Midlands council's planning and transportation subcommittee to discuss the variations to the regional strategic guidance; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moynihan** *[holding answer 24 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## Clyde Submarine Base

**Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the contracts signed with the names of the successful contractors and the value of each of the contracts for those elements of the construction of the new facilities at the Clyde submarine base and the number and location of the jobs created by these contracts.

**Mr. Chope** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## Water Supply

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the dates and occasions when there has been a major breakdown in public water supply in each of the regional water authorities since their inception, together with a note concerning each relevant cause.

**Mr. Moynihan** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* This information is not held centrally at present. However, I expect the drinking water inspectorate, when established, to keep a record of major breakdowns in public water supply.

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment under what powers Her Majesty's Government will require suppliers of water to retain a given proportion of storage, filtration and other machinery and plant as standby capacity for occasional use in the event of human, mechanical, or biological failures or accidents.

**Mr. Howard** *[holding answer 25 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## Hampton Water Treatment Works

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a schedule of plant or equipment, sometime in the ownership of Thames water authority, which, if in commission, could have ameliorated or prevented, the recent failures arising from difficulties at the Hampton treatment works, for what reasons such plant was made redundant; and what steps that authority is now taking to reactivate such facilities or to install stand-by capacity.

**Mr. Howard** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## Midge Fly Infestation

**Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state each of the occasions when midge fly infestation, or similar cause, has interrupted public water supplies and the remedial or preventative action subsequently taken; and what future capital expenditure is contemplated by any regional water authoritiy to reduce risk of failures due to this cause.

**Mr. Howard** *[holding answer 26 July 1989]:* Midge fly infestation was a major cause of the failure of water supplies in south-east London recently, but I am not aware that such infestation has interrupted public water supplies previously.

Thames Water will be making a report to me on the recent incident and the report will be studied to see what lessons can be learnt for the future.

### Environmental Assessments

**Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his answer of 20 June, *Official Report,* column *70,* he will make copies of the decision letters available in the Library when he directs that environmental assessment is, or is not, required.

**Mr. Moynihan** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* Letters containing directions on whether or not environmental assessment is required for particular projects are placed on the appropriate local planning register where they are available for public inspection. My Department is making arrangements under which information about decisions on the need for environmental assessment will be made more widely available by being published in the *Journal of Planning and Environment Law.* If the hon. Member wishes to see any particular decision letter I would be happy to send it to her.

### Street Cleaning and Litter (Halton)

**Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has ever received any applications from Halton borough council under the urban programme for assistance for street cleaning and anti-litter operations.

**Mr. Moynihan** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* An application for urban programme support for an anti-litter campaign in Halton was approved in March 1983.

### Leaflets

**Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his answer on leaflets on 19 June, *Official Report,* column *51,* he will publish an update of the letters he sent to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East on 23 June.

**Mr. David Hunt** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* Most of the information remains as set out in the letter of 23 June from my right hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer). In order to meet high demand, however, certain leaflets have subsequently been reprinted. The new figures for these are set out below.

| *Title* | *Print run* | *Production costs*[1] *£* |
|---|---|---|
| You and the Community Charge: Your Step-by-Step Guide | 1,950,000 | 136,200 |
| The Business Rate leaflet | 235,000 | 23,800 |
| Exemptions leaflet | 581,000 | 34,000 |
| Second Homes leaflet | 240,000 | 14,900 |
| Rebates leaflet | 550,000 | 39,600 |

[1] All figures are rounded.

The final cost of the distribution of the short leaflet to all households is now likely to be approximately £565,000 rather than the estimated £560,000 quoted in the letter.

The cost of hiring display units in Crown post offices for the same leaflet has increased from £26,000 to £28,500 largely because of the extra costs incurred by the Post Office in temporarily withdrawing the leaflet during the court case initiated by Greenwich borough council.

### African Elephants

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement regarding Her Majesty's Government's response to the outcome of the second meeting of the CITES African elephant working group held in Botswana from 4 to 8 July.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The Government support the group's decision to seek a consensus of the African range states on a proposal to be made at the next conference.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions have taken place with the Hong Kong authorities in respect of CITES conference resolution 5.11; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to my recent answer—*Official Report,* Volume 156, column *477.* Our discussions are continuing and will cover the full implications of appendix I listing.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to commission studies into the feasibility of transferring African elephants from countries with a surplus to those where elephants are endangered.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* We would consider assisting with such research only if asked to do so by the African countries concerned. We have received no such requests.

### Football Matches (Attendance)

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment to what he attributes the rises in attendance at football matches over the last three seasons.

**Mr. Moynihan** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* A number of measures to counter football hooliganism have been taken over the past few years as a result of Government and public pressure. These include stronger police co-ordination both nationally and internationally, more co-operation between the police and football clubs, effective segregation of rival groups of supporters inside grounds and the introduction of closed-circuit television. The Government have also legislated to restrict the sale of alcohol at football grounds and to empower the courts to impose exclusion orders on convicted hooligans.

These measures have clearly contributed to the small rise in attendances at football matches over the last three seasons.

The further anti-hooliganism measures proposed by the Football Spectators Bill offer the prospect of attracting back to football many more of the millions of spectators who have been deterred from attending matches since the 1960s.

## Nile Crocodiles

**Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all applicants for licences under CITES regulations to import products made from the Nile crocodile in the period 1 March to 30 April 1989; and if he will state the country of origin and port of entry in each case.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]*: Details of individual import applications are confidential and cannot be released.

## Energy Control (House of Commons)

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what criteria he applied to veto investment by the Property Services Agency in an energy control system for the House of Commons as described in the recent report from the Energy Select Committee on the spending plans of the Department of Energy.

**Mr. Chope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

## GLC Playing Fields (Sale)

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received concerning the proposed sale of former Greater London council playing fields at South Oxley, Hertfordshire; and what action he is taking to ensure continued public access and use.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Department has received two representations expressing concern about the future of the playing fields, which lie within the green belt. The London residuary body is discussing their future with Three Rivers district council. No action by my right hon. Friend is contemplated.

## Housing Policies (Camden)

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the London borough of Camden's housing policies, with particular reference to its rent arrears and its right-to-buy progress.

**Mr. Howard:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

## Planning

**Sir Hal Miller:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to improve the efficiency of the planning system in dealing with planning applications and appeals.

**Mr. Howard:** The Government want the planning system to be effective in its function of regulating the use of land in the public interest, and efficient in its operation so that it does not impose unwarranted delays on development. Many planning authorities are failing to deliver an efficient service. There is a clear need for reform of some aspects of the system, to ensure that it is better focused to deal with the more significant development proposals and that adequate resources are available to do a proper job.

My right hon. Friend has published today a consultation paper "Efficient Planning" setting out a range of proposals which would improve the operation of the planning system.

The Government believe that it is a sound principle that those who seek planning permission should meet the cost of considering their development proposals. The paper therefore sets out proposals for the introduction of fees for planning appeals, and for increased levels of planning application fees.

The paper also contains proposals for local planning authorities to be able to give general permissions for specified types of development, which could remove the requirement for planning applications; and for planning permission to be granted automatically for development by householders if the local planning authority had not issued its decision in eight weeks.

Other proposals include a power enabling local planning authorities to turn away repetitious planning applications for developments substantially the same as schemes already rejected on appeal. There are also a number of proposals for minor changes to planning legislation which would improve its operation.

Most of the measures proposed would require primary legislation. The overall effect of the proposals would be to reduce the burden of development control procedures, and increase the resources available to operate the system effectively.

I am inviting views on these proposals by 29 September. My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales will be consulting about the introduction of similar measures.

## Cryptosporidium

**Mr. Ashby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has received the report of the group of experts on cryptosporidium in water supplies; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard:** Sir John Badenoch, chairman of the group of experts, wrote to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment on 25 July 1989 to present the group's interim report. Copies of the letter have been placed in the Library. The establishment of the group was announced on 2 March 1989, at column *286*, and an interim report was requested by the end of July.

The interim report says that the organism cryptosporidium has a worldwide distribution. Although it has long been recognised as a parasite of animals, it was not until 1976—a little over a decade ago—that it was shown to be capable of producing illness in man. Infected animals including man excrete the organism in their faeces in the form of minute oocysts which may cause infection if they are ingested.

In man, cryptosporidiosis is usually characterised by a self-limiting illness with diarrhoea, abdominal cramps, vomiting and sometimes fever that resolves in one to three weeks. It can affect persons of any age but is most common in children between the ages of one and five years. In patients with AIDS, and others whose resistance to infection is impaired, it is much more serious and may lead to severe and lasting disability.

Because of the organism's widespread distribution, the group indicates that it must be assumed that, from time to time, oocysts will be present in all surface waters including springs and shallow wells. Current methods of water treatment and disinfection properly carried out cannot eliminate entirely the risk of cryptosporidium passing into the water supply.

However, though the group recognises the potential that exists for giving rise to a very large number of cases through public water supplies it points out that an individual is much more likely to contract the infection if he comes into direct contact with the faeces of an infected person or animal.

The letter points to the need for high standards of maintenance and repair of water distribution systems, for extra monitoring at water treatment works in certain circumstances and for some modification of operating procedures should the organism be detected in significant numbers. Close collaboration between water undertakers, local authorities and health authorities is advocated. A co-ordinated programme of research is proposed for gathering information on the occurrence of cryptosporidium and the capacity of water treatment works to remove it.

I am advised that the expert group has spent considerable time examining the more general public health aspects of cryptosporidiosis and will make a fuller report in due course. In its interim report it identifies those most as risk from contracting the disease and puts forward simple precautions for prevention.

My right hon. Friends welcome the interim report and are grateful to Sir John and his colleagues for the considerable effort they have made so far in undertaking this study. The Departments will draw the attention of water undertakers, local authorities, health authorities and other organisations to the interim conclusions and recommendations. Ways of undertaking the proposed research are already under consideration.

## London Zoo (Car Park)

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of the licence to London Zoo for Gloucester Slips park;

(2) what is the term of the licence of Gloucester Slips car park to London Zoo.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** A copy will be placed in the Library. The licence will follow the standard form used for all licences in the royal parks. Licences are normally renewed from year to year and I would expect that to be the case for this licence, but my right hon. Friend has no power to grant licences in perpetuity.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment under what statutory authority his Department has granted a licence to London Zoo to use the Gloucester Slips car park.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The licence to manage the Gloucester Slips coach and car park will be given under my right hon. Friend's powers of management and control of the royal parks under the Crown Lands Acts 1829 and 1851.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the acreage of the Gloucester Slips car park to be covered in the licence to London Zoo.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Six and a half acres.

## District Heating

**Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the Building Research Establishment applied its own guidance which it gives to local authorities on the upgrading of district heating systems to itself in deciding to remove its own district heating system; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** I will write to the hon. Member.

## Homelessness

**Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Ealing, North of 19 July, *Official Report,* column *210,* on homelessness legislation, by what date he expects to publish his conclusions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has nothing to add to the earlier answer.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many people by London borough are described as homeless; and what plans he has to deal with this problem.

**Mr. Chope:** Latest estimates of households accepted as homeless in each London borough appear in table 7 of "Local Authorities' action under the homelessness provisions of the 1985 Housing Act: England", compiled by the Department. A copy is in the Library.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is reviewing the legislation and hopes to announce conclusions soon.

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list by London borough the number of people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation for each of the past five years.

**Mr. Chope:** The numbers of households temporarily resident in bed and breakfast accommodation as reported by each London borough at the end of the five years 1984 to 1988 appear in respectively: table 7 of "Homeless Households Reported by Local Authorities in England: Results for Second Half 1984: Supplementary Tables"; the corresponding publication for the fourth quarter 1985; "Local Authorities' action under the homelessness provisions of the 1985 Housing Act: England. Results for the fourth quarter 1986. Supplementary Tables"; and the corresponding publications for the fourth quarters of 1987 and 1988.

Latest reported numbers of households in bed and breakfast accommodation appear in table 7 of "Local authorities' action under the homelessness provisions of the 1985 Housing Act: England. Results for the first quarter 1989. Supplementary Tables".

Copies of all these publications are in the Library.

## Thames Water Authority (Land)

**Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about *(a)* total land holdings, *(b)* annual land sales and *(c)* income generated from it for the Thames water authority in each of the last five years.

**Mr. Howard:** At the end of 1988, the Thames water authority's estimated land holding was approximately

19,000 acres. Figures for proceeds from the sale of fixed assets are included in the published accounts of all water authorities, for years up to and including 1987-88. The unaudited accounts of the Thames water authority recently placed on public deposit included a figure for proceeds from sale of fixed assets in 1988-89 of £19·9 million. Figures for acreage of land sold in past years by Thames water authority are available from annual reports.

### Housing Investment

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much each local authority has spent in capital expenditure on housing investment for each year since 1979.

**Mr. Chope:** I have today placed a table giving the relevant information as reported by authorities on their annual HIP returns, in the Library.

### Vacant Properties

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much of the special housing investment programme enhancements to local authorities to use for bringing empty properties into accommodation units for the homeless has been taken up by local authorities *(a)* in total and *(b)* by each local authority; and how many units have been brought into use by the homeless as a result.

**Mr. Chope:** The additional resources, totalling £74·9 million, were fully taken up, and local authorities advise that as a result some 7,700 units have been brought back into use for homeless people.

For details of individual authorities' allocations, I refer the hon. Member to the announcements made on 20 January, 23 June and 18 July 1988.

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the expected outcome of the additional housing investment programme enhancement in 1987-88 for bringing empty property into use by the homeless; what are the revised figures for how many will be made available under the housing investment programme enhancements in the current year; and if there are any plans for additional enhancements in the next financial year.

**Mr. Chope:** I refer the hon. Member to the announcement made on 20 January, 1988 which gives details of the numbers of units made available under this initiative in 1987-88. No additional allocations have been made in the current year, and no decisions have yet been taken for the next financial year.

### HAT Tenants (Ballots)

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the ballots for tenants in housing action trust areas will be held.

**Mr. Chope:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) by my hon. Friend the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State on 24 May, *Official Report,* column *592.*

**Mr. Wells:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which tenants, in addition to secure tenants already provided for in the Housing Act 1988, will be able to vote in a housing action trust ballot.

**Mr. Chope:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave yesterday to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman).

### Combined Heat and Power

**Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when he intends to consult interested associations about the draft formulation of the formula rating for combined heat and power plant designed to ensure equal rating treatment with the electricity supply industry;

(2) when he intends to set out the new arrangements for the equal rating treatment of combined heat and power with district heating as against the electricity supply industry.

**Mr. Chope:** My officials are in discussion with the interested associations about a formula that will ensure the comparable rating assessment of all generators of electricity, including combined heat and power schemes from 1990, and we expect to announce our proposals for the new arrangements shortly.

### Council House Sales

**Mr. Thorne:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider extending the Housing Act right to buy provisions to council-owned property let to the elderly on the basis that it must be sold back to the local authority at the current value when it is no longer required by the named occupant or their spouse.

**Mr. Chope:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

### Evictions

**Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many eviction orders there have been in the private rented sector among those tenancies with restricted landlord-tenant contracts since the introduction of the Housing Act 1980.

**Mr. Chope:** The information requested is not available.

### Approved Landlords

**Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many organisations have been granted approved landlord status under the Housing Act 1980 to the latest available date; how many had provided tenancies; and of these how many were in sheltered housing-for-sale schemes.

**Mr. Chope:** A total of 370 organisations were approved under section 56 of the Housing Act 1980 before it was repealed. The Department carried out a monitoring exercise on the assured tenancy scheme last year, the results of which were placed in the Library. That exercise identified 76 approved bodies which were actually letting under assured tenancies. A substantial proportion of the accommodation provided is sheltered housing for the elderly—the Department does not have precise figures.

### Demolition

**Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the average number of dwellings demolished per year in England and Wales since 1979; and what proportion of these were private rented dwellings.

**Mr. Chope:** The available information for England is as follows:

| | Number of dwellings/Percentage | |
|---|---|---|
| | Net total demolished or closed (including slum clearance) | Percentage of which in private sector (including owner occupied) |
| 1979-80 | [1]37,300 | [2]— |
| 1980-81 | 38,900 | 62 |
| 1981-82 | 35,200 | 56 |
| 1982-83 | 24,800 | 54 |
| 1983-84 | 20,300 | 46 |
| 1984-85 | 26,600 | 38 |
| 1985-86 | 17,900 | 50 |
| 1986-87 | 16,000 | 45 |
| 1987-88[3] | 16,000 | 40 |
| Average over period 1980-81 to 1987-88 | 24,500 | 51 |

[1] Estimate.

[2] Not available.

[3] Provisional.

*Note:* Information for the private rented sector is not available.

For information on Wales, I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

## Magnox Reactors

**Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will ask the chairman of United Kingdom Nirex Ltd. to re-evaluate the benefits of the Bradwell nuclear reactor site for the construction of a repository for bulk radioactive wastes such as boiler, heat-exchangers and pipework from decommissioned Magnox reactors; and reactor components from submarines.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** No. The Government have accepted Nirex's recommendation that further exploratory work at Sellafield and Dounreay is necessary before any particular site for a disposal facility for low and intermediate-level radioactive waste can be decided upon. The facility is intended to accommodate both operational and decommissioning wastes. The Government intend to keep open the sea disposal option for low-level large items arising from decommissioning operations. Reactor components from submarines are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

## Ivory

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the current whereabouts and plans for future disposal of the 1,025 kilos of ivory exported from Zaire without a licence in June 1986 by Mr. Shivaz Virji of Ealing.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The Department has no information about a consignment in June 1986.

## Hazardous Wastes

**Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what initiatives he has taken at meetings of the European Council of Environment Ministers to ensure that proper border checks can be made on rail and road cargos of hazardous wastes at the joint borders of European Economic Community states following the creation of the European single market.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** National borders will still be relevant after the creation of the European single market in the control of shipments of waste. We have asked the Council of Environment Ministers to examine transborder shipments of all waste, not only of hazardous waste.

## Uranium

**Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what regulatory regime covers the environmental protection of uranium wastes and depleted uranium stored at BNFL Springfields, Chapelcross, Capenhurst and Sellafield, United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority sites at Harwell, Windscale, Winfrith and Dounreay and each of the Central Electricity Generating Board's nuclear plant sites, and the Central Electricity Generating Board's research laboratories at Berkeley and Barnwood.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Regulatory control is exercised in respect of radioactive waste discharges and disposals from nuclear site operators by HMIP.

Radioactive wastes from nuclear sites are disposed of under the conditions and limitations of site specific authorisations issued under section 6 of the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 by the authorising Departments (DOE and MAFF). These authorisations, which are kept under regular review, require the operator to meet strict disposal limits and to use the best practicable means to further limit discharges. They are given only if the Secretary of State is satisfied about the effect of the discharges on the environment.

## Radioactive Waste

**Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what volumes of low and intermediate-level radioactive wastes arising from reprocessed spent Magnox nuclear fuel from *(a)* the Latina reactor in Italy and *(b)* the Tokai Nura reactor in Japan are currently in store at (i) Harwell, (ii) Drigg, (iii) Sellafield, (iv) Chapelcross and (v) Aldermaston.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** This information is not kept by the Department. I have asked the chairman of British Nuclear Fuels plc to write to the hon. Member.

**Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what volumes of radioactive toxic and special wastes for which his Department has responsibility are located at Springfields and Capenhurst.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** The volumes of radioactive waste located at Springfields and Capenhurst are contained in the United Kingdom radioactive waste inventory, a copy of which is held in the Library of the House. Details of toxic and special wastes are held by the appropriate waste disposal authority.

## Environmental Protection

**Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many written questions on environmental protection and pollution issues he has declined to answer since May 1979 on the grounds that replies could be given only at disproportionate cost.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** No record is kept of the number of questions which are answered in this way.

**Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will set out the investments made between 1974-79, and 1979 to the present respectively, by Her Majesty's Government in *(a)* energy conservation and efficiency, *(b)* detoxification of rivers and estuaries, *(c)* research into acid rain pollution, *(d)* radioactive waste management and disposal, *(e)* controlling air and aqueous radioactive discharges and *(f)* the reprocessing of nuclear fuel from foreign contracts;

(2) what percentage of United Kingdom gross national product has been devoted to environmental protection in each year since 1979; if he has comparable figures for each year from 1975 to 1979; and what information he has for the gross national product/environmental protection expenditure ratio in other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries for the same time period.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Water Pollution

**Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if water companies will be open to prosecution for events such as outbreaks of cryptosporidium in drinking water and cessation of water supplies due to midge larvae infestation after privatisation.

**Mr. Howard:** I will write to the hon. Member.

### Sunderland Enterprise Zone

**Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, following the statement by the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) on 13 July, *Official Report*, columns 1148-57, he intends to proceed with the designation of the Sunderland enterprise zone.

**Mr. Hunt:** A fresh invitation to the Tyne and Wear development corporation to prepare an enterprise zone scheme has been issued today. This replaces the earlier invitation referred to in the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier) to my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) on 10 April, and incorporates revisions to the boundary of zone No. 1 covering land at Hylton riverside and Soundwick shipyard which were requested by the corporation. The effect of these is to replace a 10-acre site requiring much preparation with one that is ready for development. I am arranging for copies of the present invitation and map showing the land specified to be placed in the Library of the House. Meanwhile I understand that Sunderland borough council is continuing with steps towards the designation of those areas for which it is the enterprise zone authority (zone 2 at Castletown and zone 3 at Doxford park).

### Water Bill

**Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will reply to the points raised in the debate on the Water Bill on 3 July by the hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes as promised by the Under-Secretary of State, *Official Report*, column 85.

**Mr. Moynihan:** I wrote to my hon. Friend yesterday.

### Strategic Planning (London)

**Mr. Heddle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will now make a statement on strategic planning guidance for London.

**Mr. Moynihan:** I have placed copies of the strategic guidance for London in the Library today and will send my hon. Friend a copy.

I announced in the House that the guidance takes account of the comments received in consultation on the draft which the Secretary of State published on 6 March.

The purpose of the guidance is to help the local planning authorities in London to prepare their unitary development plans. It is not intended as a comprehensive "master plan" for London, but as a statement of the Government's policies on those matters relating to the development and use of land which need to be dealt with on a Londonwide basis. Within this framework, the guidance allows each borough wide freedom to draw up with the local community the unitary development plan for its area.

The guidance includes policies on business, industrial, retail and tourist development; road and rail infrastructure and the relationship between transport and land use; provision for additional housing for the next decade; protection of the green belt, metropolitan open land and other open spaces; conservation of the natural and the built environment; and preservation of the character of the River Thames.

The guidance marks an important further step away from the cumbersome, centralised planning of the 1960s and 1970s towards the effective and well-focused development plans London will need as it faces the opportunities of the 1990s.

Copies of the guidance are being sent to all London Members of Parliament.

### Green Belt

**Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment in what circumstances the controls embodied in green belt policy can apply to uses of land as distinct from building development on it.

**Mr. Moynihan:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

### Chlorofluorocarbons

**Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any further plans to regulate the sale of products containing chlorofluorocarbons; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Production and supply of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are already limited by the Montreal protocol, which should be amended next year so as to require their complete elimination by the year 2000. We will legislate against specific products only if industry fails to maintain its rapid reduction in CFC consumption.

### Tropical Hardwoods

**Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the policy of the Property Services Agency in respect of the use of tropical hardwoods.

**Mr. Chope** *[holding answer 20 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## London Residuary Body

**Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of the 65 applications by the London residuary body to his Department for consent to dispose of properties by means of voluntary sales to licensee occupiers at discounted prices.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

## Sea Levels

**Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies have been carried out by or on behalf of Her Majesty's Government to ascertain whether and to what extent sea levels can be expected to rise in the next 60 years as a result of the greenhouse effect; and what areas of the present United Kingdom coastline would be under water at the lowest and highest projections for sea levels.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** *[holding answer 21 July 1989]:* The Meteorological Office has made a major international contribution to modelling climate change including its impact on sea level. This work has contributed to the current consensus that the sea level rise which would follow a doubling of effective greenhouse gas concentrations could lie between 20 cm and about 1·5 m. Costs of defending the coastline increase with sea level rise.

The actual sea level rise over the next 60 years, and therefore the land area threatened, depends on the actual rate of increase in greenhouse gas concentrations. Providing the best available scientific advice on this and all other aspects of the greenhouse effect is the task of the intergovernmental panel on climate change, for which the science review panel is chaired by the Meteorological Office and funded by the Department of the Environment and the Department of Energy.

## Beaches, South Wales

**Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) which beaches along the South Wales coastline between Cardiff and the Gower peninsula conform to the water quality standards of Economic Community bathing water directive 76/160/EEC; and what consideration he has given to the merits of existing and proposed screened sewage outfalls along this coastline;

(2) which beaches on the south Wales coastline within 10 miles of Swansea attain the standards required under Economic Community bathing water directive 76/160/EEC.

**Mr. Howard:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

## Director General of Water Services

**Mr. Bevan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment where the office of the Director General of Water Services will be located.

**Mr. Howard** *[pursuant to the reply, 23 March 1989, c. 782]:* The Water Act creates a greatly improved system of regulating the water industry which will benefit the customer and the environment.

The appointment of the Director General of Water Services is a key component. As director, Ian Byatt will ensure that customers are protected against unnecessary price increases. At the same time he will ensure that the company have sufficient income to carry out their functions properly and to meet quality standards. He will encourage water companies to be more efficient. He will monitor standards of service. He will establish customer service committees which will investigate complaints and provide a forum for customers to put forward their views.

Financial provision is being made for the Office of Water Services in vote X.10 from 1 August. As previously announced, the office will begin operations in Birmingham on vesting day, 1 September.

## Local Government Finance

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the number of single and married persons over and under pensionable age who are likely to qualify for a rebate of poll tax; and how many of these are likely to be worse off under the new arrangements than at present.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Estimates of numbers expected to receive community charge benefit are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security.

My Department placed in the Library detailed estimates of the impact of the new system on household finances on 15 December 1988.

**Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table illustrating the estimated levels of the community charge in England and Wales in the current financial year if the cost of education were to be borne entirely by the Exchequer.

**Mr. David Hunt:** If the cost of education were to be funded by the Exchequer and in consequence an equal amount were deducted from the level of grant available to local authorities, the average community charge in England would be £274, as shown in the illustrative community charge levels placed in the Library on 19 July 1989. The level of community charge in each area would depend on the previous arrangements used to distribute the remaining Government grant and the proceeds of the uniform business rate.

**Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what liability to poll tax young people over 18 years of age in recognised apprenticeship schemes will face; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what liability to poll tax those over 18 years of age who are placed with employment training and other training schemes will face; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The people to whom the hon. Member refers will be liable to pay the personal community charge at the address of their sole or main residence unless they are exempt under the terms of schedule 1 to the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Depending on their income, resources and personal circumstances they may be eligible for rebates of up to 80 per cent. of the charge; if they are full-time students as defined by the Personal Community Charge (Students) Regulations 1989 they would pay only 20 per cent. of the personal charge for the area.

**Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of *(a)* the maximum and *(b)* the minimum initial standard community charge for each of the London boroughs.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I have made no estimate of the level of the community charge on introduction. Illustrative figures based on 1989-90 local government responsibilities and expenditure levels were placed in the Library on 19 July. The level of each class of standard community charge payable in each area will depend on the multiplier set by each charging authority.

**Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will update the answer to the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East, 2 May, *Official Report,* column *50,* listing all recent sources of legislation and official guidance on the operation of the community charge, and any further orders and regulations *(a)* laid before and agreed to by the House, *(b)* laid before, but not yet agreed to by the House or *(c)* yet to be laid before the House giving in each case an outline of the area of implementation affected.

**Mr. David Hunt** *[holding answer 29 July 1989]:* The following are the official sources of information and guidance about the operation of the community charge.

1. *Legislation*

*July 1988*
Local Government Finance Act, 1988
Housing and Local Government Bill

2. *Regulations laid before Parliament*

*March 1989*
Community Charges (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/438)

*March 1989*
Valuation and Community Charge Tribunals Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/439)

*March 1989*
Valuation and Community Charge Tribunals (Transfer of Jurisdiction) Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/440)

*March 1989*
The Personal Community Charge (Students) Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/443)

*March 1989*
The Personal Community Charge (Exemptions) Order 1989 (SI 1989/442)

*June 1989*
The Community Charges (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/1057)

*July 1989*
The Community Charge Benefits (General) Regulations 1989

3. *Regulation to be laid before Parliament*
These will cover the following areas:

Exchange of information between Community Charges Registration Officers in Scotland and CCROs in England and Wales

Properties occupied by ministers of religion

Form of demand note and accompanying information

Discounts

Co-owners

4. *Community Charge Practice Notes*
The Government, in conjunction with the local authority associations, are publishing a series of community charge practice notes. These provide detailed advice on the operation of the community charge and are circulated to local authority practitioners and others with a professional interest in community charge. The following practice notes have been issued to date:

*May 1988*
An Introduction to the Community Charge

*June 1988*
Exemptions

*August 1988*
The Register

*August 1988*
Data Protection

*August 1988*
Rebates

*October 1988*
Omission of Names from the Extract

*October 1988*
Appeals

*November 1988*
The Canvass

*November 1988*
Sole or Main Residence

*January 1989*
Data Protection No. 2

*February 1989*
Billing

*February 1989*
Collection

*March 1989*
Standard Charge

*April 1989*
Collective Charge

*April 1989*
Joint and Several Liability

*May 1989*
UK Service Personnel

*May 1989*
Diplomats and Visiting Forces

5. *Other Publications*
My Department is producing guidance for the general public on the community charge by means of a free booklet and series of supplementary free leaflets. Publications so far issued in this series are:-

*December 1988*
"You and the Community Charge:
(Your Step by Step Guide)"

*March 1989*
"You and the Community Charge:
Exemptions"

*June 1989*
"You and the Community Charge:
Appeals"

*June 1989*
"You and the Community Charge:
Students"

*June 1989*
"You and the Community Charge:
Second Homes"

*June 1989*
"You and the Community Charge:
Rebates"

Copies of these publications are available free of charge from Room P1/163, Department of the Environment, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each region the number of rated domestic premises in 1988-89, the estimated rate yield based on a charge of 1 per cent. of the capital value and the estimated cost of a rate-free deduction of, respectively, £10,000 per dwelling, £5,000 for each resident member as defined for electoral purposes, and £5,000 for each dependent resident.

**Mr. David Hunt** *[holding answer 27 July 1989]:* The table provides the information requested. Column 1 shows the number of domestic hereditaments as at 1 April 1988. Column 2 shows the yield from a 1 per cent. capital value tax, where the capital value is estimated by multiplying the average price for each region by the number of domestic hereditament properties. The average house price in each region was taken from the survey of building society mortgages. The costs of the three types of rate deduction are given in the following three columns. They are calculated by taking 1 per cent. of the products of:

(1) The number of hereditaments over £10,000.
(2) The 18-year-old and over population in each area and £5,000.
(3) The under 18-year-old population in each area and £5,000.

*Estimated yield from 1 per cent. capita value rate and costs for various deductions*

| | *Domestic hereditaments (000's) Column 1* | *Yield from 1 per cent. capital value rate Column 2 £ million* | *Cost of £10,000 rate free per hered Column 3 £ million* | *Cost of £5,000 rate free per adult Column 4 £ million* | *Cost of £5,000 rate free per child Column 5 £ million* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Region | 1,233 | 420 | 123 | 379 | 114 |
| North West Region | 2,449 | 975 | 250 | 946 | 297 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 1,936 | 783 | 194 | 759 | 234 |
| East Midlands Region | 1,550 | 768 | 155 | 302 | 92 |
| West Midlands Region | 1,999 | 1,039 | 200 | 694 | 219 |
| East Anglia Region | 799 | 574 | 80 | 154 | 47 |
| South East Region | 4,078 | 3,624 | 408 | 811 | 244 |
| South West Region | 1,810 | 1,221 | 181 | 357 | 101 |
| Greater London Region | 2,792 | 2,459 | 279 | 1,162 | 331 |

**Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to announce a minimum threshold percentage of eligible residents registered for the community charge prior to exercising his powers of central control.

**Mr. David Hunt:** My right hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer) explained in his answer of 25 July to my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) that where there is doubt as to whether community charge register data give a realistic estimate of an area's adult population, we propose to adopt an alternative for the purpose of calculating the relevant population to be used for distributing grant and business rates. We will be discussing with the local authority associations the criteria which might be used to identify doubtful cases.

**Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will indicate the detailed components used in calculating the expenditure needs of each local authority in England and Wales, and the method then used in establishing supposed overspending, in arriving at the indicative community charge figures given to the House on 19 July.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The method used to calculate the overspending figures contained in the table showing illustrative 1989-90 community charges is detailed in the explanatory notes accompanying that table.

Overspending was measured by comparison with grant related expenditure (GRE) assessment. The components used in calculating GRE's are set out in the Department's publication "The Technical Handbook of Grant-Related Expenditure 1989-90" which is available in the Library.

**Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the assumed contributions, in cash terms, to local expenditure for each authority from *(a)* Government sources and *(b)* business rates in the tables contained in the document, "1989-90 Illustrative Capital Value Rates and Local Income Tax", published on 19 July.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I refer the hon. Member to the replies given to him and to the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on 25 July.

Since data are not available for each local authority on either the capital value of domestic properties or on the taxable income of residents, I cannot provide the information requested.

**Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what was the total cost, in cash terms, of producing, printing and distributing the document, "1989-90 Illustrative Capital Value Rates and Local Income Tax" which was published on 19 July;

(2) what was the total cost, in cash terms, of producing, printing and distributing the 22-sheet document, "Department of the Environment 1989-90 Illustrative Community Charges."

**Mr. David Hunt:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley) to the hon. Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Grocott) on 24 July.

The cost of providing sufficient copies for the Vote Office, the local authority associations and others is estimated to have been about £600. The 22-page document headed "Department of the Environment 1989-90 Illustrative Community Charges" included details of the impact of capital value rates combined with a local income tax. The document was distributed through the Department's normal channels.

**Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to announce details of the rebate of up to 80 per cent. of the community charge to be made available to persons on low incomes; and when information on how to apply for such rebates will be sent to local authorities.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I will write to my hon. Friend.

# INDEX TO THE

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

## OFFICIAL REPORT

**SIXTH SERIES**

**VOLUME 157**

SESSION 1988–89

*18th July–28th July 1989*

## SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc, between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

### *Scope and arrangement of the Index*

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speaker's rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr. Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions.*

### *Abbreviations*

*Bills* 1R=first reading, 2R=second reading, Money res=money resolution, Com=Committee stage, Rep=Report stage, 3R=third reading, amendt/amendts=amendment/amendments, *=matter taken formally, without debate.

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